



Mains Practice Question

Q. Millets production comes with a lot of health, agricultural and nutritional benefits. Discuss.

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Approach

- Start your answer by giving a brief about Millets.
- Discuss the significance of millet production.
- Conclude your answer suitably.

Introduction

Millet is a **collective term referring to a number of small-seeded annual grasses** that are cultivated as grain crops, primarily on marginal lands in dry areas in temperate, subtropical and tropical regions.

Some of the common millets available in India are Ragi (Finger millet), Jowar (Sorghum), Sama (Little millet), Bajra (Pearl millet), and Variga (Proso millet).

India is the largest producer of millet in the world. It Accounts for 20% of global production and 80% of Asia's production.

Main Body

Significance of Millet Production

- **Nutritionally Superior:**
 - Millets are less expensive and **nutritionally superior to wheat & rice** owing to their high protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals like iron content.
 - Millets are also **rich in calcium and magnesium**. For example, Ragi is known to have the highest calcium content among all the food grains.
 - Millets can **provide nutritional security** and act as a shield against nutritional deficiency, especially among children and women. Its high iron content can fight high prevalence of anaemia in India women of reproductive age and infants.
- **Gluten-free a low glycemic index:**
 - Millets can help tackle lifestyle problems and health challenges such as **obesity and diabetes as they are gluten-free** and have a low glycemic index (a relative ranking of carbohydrate in foods according to how they affect blood glucose levels).
- **Super Crop at Growing:**
 - Millets are **Photo-insensitive** (do not require a specific photoperiod for flowering) & resilient to climate change. Millets can grow on poor soils with little or no external inputs.
 - Millets are **less water-consuming** and are capable of growing under drought conditions, under non-irrigated conditions even in very low rainfall regimes.
 - Millets have **low carbon and water footprint** (rice plants need at least 3 times more water to grow in comparison to millets).

Conclusion

Millets have got a lot of advantages both from a health as well as from a climate change perspective. It is due to this reason the Government of India is emphasizing increasing millets production.

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