



## Resourcefulness of Konda Reddi's Tribe's Knowledge

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, forest officials learnt that the **bark of an Indian laurel tree or Indian Silver Oak (*Ficus microcarpa*)** stores water, particularly in the summer, as claimed by the [Konda Reddi tribe](#).

- The Indian laurel tree is native to Southeast Asia and regions of India, it thrives in tropical and subtropical climates. A glossy, **dark green-leaved evergreen tree**, its latex sap is used in making rubber products.
- Konda Reddi tribe is a [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group](#) inhabiting the **Papikonda hill range** (Andhra Pradesh) **in the Godavari region**. Their mother tongue is Telugu with a unique accent.
- [Papikonda National Park \(PNP\)](#) was declared a reserved forest in 1882, a wildlife sanctuary in 1978, and a [national park](#) in 2008.
  - PNP has **moist deciduous forests** and includes animal species such as tigers, mouse deer, gaur etc.

**Read more:** [Bills to Include PVTGs to ST List in Odisha and AP](#), [Empowering the Tribal Society](#).

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## Accelerating Crop Diversification in India

**For Prelims:** [Crop diversification](#), [Wheat cultivation](#), [Wheat blast disease](#), [Bananas](#), [Green Revolution in India](#), [Leguminous crops](#), [Biofuel](#), [MSP](#).

**For Mains:** Needs For Crop Diversification in India, Concerns Related to Crop Diversification.

[Source: DTE](#)

### Why in News?

In recent years, West Bengal has been witnessing a significant transformation in its agricultural landscape through [crop diversification](#), particularly in districts bordering Bangladesh.

- This shift is characterised by **farmers moving away from traditional wheat cultivation towards alternatives** like bananas, lentils, maize, and other crops.

### What are the Reasons Behind the Shift from Wheat Production?

- **Wheat Blast Disease:** The emergence of [wheat blast disease in Bangladesh in 2016](#) led to a two-year ban on wheat cultivation in border areas of West Bengal, including Murshidabad and

Nadia districts, prompting farmers to explore alternative crops.

- **Wheat blast disease is a fungal infection** caused by the fungus *Magnaporthe oryzae Triticum (MoT)* that primarily affects wheat crops.

- It manifests as dark lesions on wheat spikes, leaves, and stems, leading to severe yield losses.

- **Economic Viability:** Farmers have highlighted the economic advantages of cultivating alternative crops such as [bananas](#).

- The profitability of crops like bananas during peak seasons, coupled with stagnant wheat prices and concerns over water consumption, has contributed to the shift.

- **Shift to Higher Output Crops:** Maize cultivation has seen a significant uptick in the area as well, with production increasing eightfold from 2011 to 2023.

- While **maize prices may be lower** per quintal compared to wheat, **higher per-hectare output and demand from poultry** and food processing industries make it a lucrative alternative.

- [Pulses](#) and [oilseeds](#) production in this area has also surged.

Type of diversification	Nature of diversification	Potential benefit
Improved structural diversity	Makes crops within the field more structurally diverse	Pest suppression
Genetic diversification in monoculture	Cultivation of mixture of varieties of same species in a monoculture	Disease suppression, Increased production stability
Diversify field with fodder grasses	Growing fodder grasses alongside of food/pulse/oilseed/ vegetable etc.	Pest suppression, opportunity to livestock farming
Crop rotations	Temporal diversity through crop rotations (Sequential cropping)	Disease suppression, Increased production stability
Polyculture	Spatial and temporal diversity of crops (Growing two or more crop species within the field)	Insect, pest disease suppression, climate change buffering and increased production
Agroforestry	Growing crops and trees together (Spatial and temporal diversity)	Pest suppression and climate change buffering
Mixed landscapes	Development of larger-scale diversified landscapes through mixture of crops and cropping system with multiple ecosystems	Pest suppression and climate change buffering
Micro-watershed based diversification	Integration of crop with other farming components for year round income and employment generation, besides sustaining soil and environmental health	Insect, pest and disease suppression, climate change buffering and increased production, employment and income

## Why India Needs to Focus on Crop Diversification?

- **About:** Crop diversification refers to the **practice of growing a variety of crops** on a farm instead of focusing on a single crop.
  - The [Green Revolution in India](#), through the introduction of [high-yielding rice](#) and

wheat varieties, resulted in a substantial increase in food output, effectively reducing hunger and malnutrition.

- However, the monoculture of these crops led to a decrease in crop variety, causing the **decline of traditional, region-specific strains** and a loss of genetic diversity.
- For instance, India has **lost over 100,000 traditional rice varieties** since the 1970s due to the Green Revolution's impact.

◦ Therefore, there is a need to shift towards crop diversification to promote sustainable agriculture.

#### ▪ **Benefits of Crop Diversification:**

- **Risk Reduction:** In regions prone to drought, farmers can diversify their crops by growing both [drought-tolerant varieties](#) (like **millet** or **sorghum**) and **water-intensive crops** (like **rice** or **vegetables**).
  - If there's a water shortage, the drought-tolerant crops can still thrive, ensuring some level of harvest despite adverse conditions.
- **Soil Health Improvement:** Planting [leguminous crops](#) like **soybeans** or **peanuts** can fix nitrogen in the soil, benefiting subsequent crops such as **maize** or **wheat** that require nitrogen-rich soil for optimal growth.
- **Market Opportunities:** Diversifying crops can help farmers tap into niche markets or emerging trends.
  - For example, the **rising demand for organic produce** presents an opportunity for farmers to diversify into organic farming, which often commands higher prices in the market compared to conventionally grown crops.
- **Pest and Disease Management:** Intercropping or mixed cropping, a form of crop diversification, can help manage pests and diseases.
  - For instance, **planting marigold flowers** alongside vegetable crops can deter pests, **reducing the need for chemical pesticides** and promoting natural pest control mechanisms.
- **Source of Biofuels:** Crops like **Jatropha** and **Pongamia** are potential sources for [biofuel production](#). This can offer farmers additional income opportunities and contribute to India's energy security.

#### ▪ **Concerns:**

- **Market Risks and Limited Opportunities:** Farmers are often hesitant to switch from established crops like rice and wheat (**which have assured government support through MSP**) to lesser-known crops.
  - These alternatives may have fluctuating market prices or limited demand, leading to potential income loss.
- **Financial Constraints:** Diversifying crops can require **additional investment in seeds, equipment**, and even acquiring new knowledge about cultivation practices.
  - **Smallholder farmers**, who make up a significant portion of India's agricultural sector, may not have the financial resources to readily adopt these changes.
  - Also, Millets like Jowar, Ragi, and Bajra are gaining traction due to their high nutritional value and ability to thrive in marginal lands.
    - However, creating a robust market for these requires investment in **processing facilities** to convert them into **consumer-friendly products** like ready-to-eat mixes or breakfast cereals.
- **Lack of Infrastructure and Storage:** Perishable, diversified crops often require **specialised storage and transportation facilities** that may not be readily available in rural areas.
  - Without proper infrastructure, these crops can spoil quickly, leading to wasted produce and lost income.
- **Clash With Dietary Habits:** Crop diversification in India, particularly in regions where **rice and wheat are staples** for a significant portion of the population, could potentially disrupt the established market dynamics and consumption patterns prevalent in these areas.

## **What are the Steps Taken by the Government Regarding Crop Diversification?**

- **Crop Diversification Programme:** The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW)

has been implementing the **Crop Diversification Programme (CDP)** since 2013-14, as part of the [Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana \(RKVY\)](#), specifically targeting the Original Green Revolution States- **Haryana, Punjab, and Western Uttar Pradesh**.

- This initiative aims **to shift focus from water-intensive paddy cultivation to alternative crops** such as pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals, nutri cereals, and cotton.
- [Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture \(MIDH\)](#): It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa and bamboo.
- [Increase in MSP for Kharif Crops](#): The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved an increase in the [Minimum Support Prices \(MSP\)](#) for all mandated Kharif crops for the Marketing Season 2023-24.
- **Mera Pani-Meri Virasat Scheme (Haryana)**: It offers financial aid to farmers transitioning from paddy cultivation to water-saving alternatives like pulses, oilseeds, millets, and vegetables.

## Way Forward

- **Agri-Tourism and 'U-Pick' Farms**: Experiential tourism is gaining popularity. Creating **'U-Pick' farms** where tourists can harvest their fruits and vegetables directly from the field can be a win-win for India.
  - This provides farmers with additional income, fosters a connection between consumers and agriculture, and promotes appreciation for diversified crops.
- **Biofortification through Gene Editing**: Gene editing techniques like [CRISPR](#) can be used to develop crops with enhanced nutritional value.
  - This can address malnutrition concerns and create new markets for biofortified crops.
  - However, **ethical considerations and stringent regulations** need to be addressed.
- **Regenerative Agriculture for Sustainable Diversification**: Regenerative agriculture practices like **cover cropping, composting, and no-till farming** can be integrated with diversified crop rotations to create a more sustainable and resilient agricultural system.
  - This not only benefits long-term crop yields but **also sequesters carbon, mitigating climate change**.

### Drushti Mains Question:

Q. What are the key innovative strategies that India needs to expedite to accelerate crop diversification, ensuring sustainable agriculture, farmer livelihoods, and food security?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Mains

Q. How did India benefit from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M.S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? **(2019)**

Q. Explain various types of revolutions, took place in Agriculture after Independence in India. How have these revolutions helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India? **(2017)**

[Source: TH](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, India launched a **new database (Unite Aware platform)** to record crimes against UN peacekeepers and monitor progress in holding perpetrators accountable.

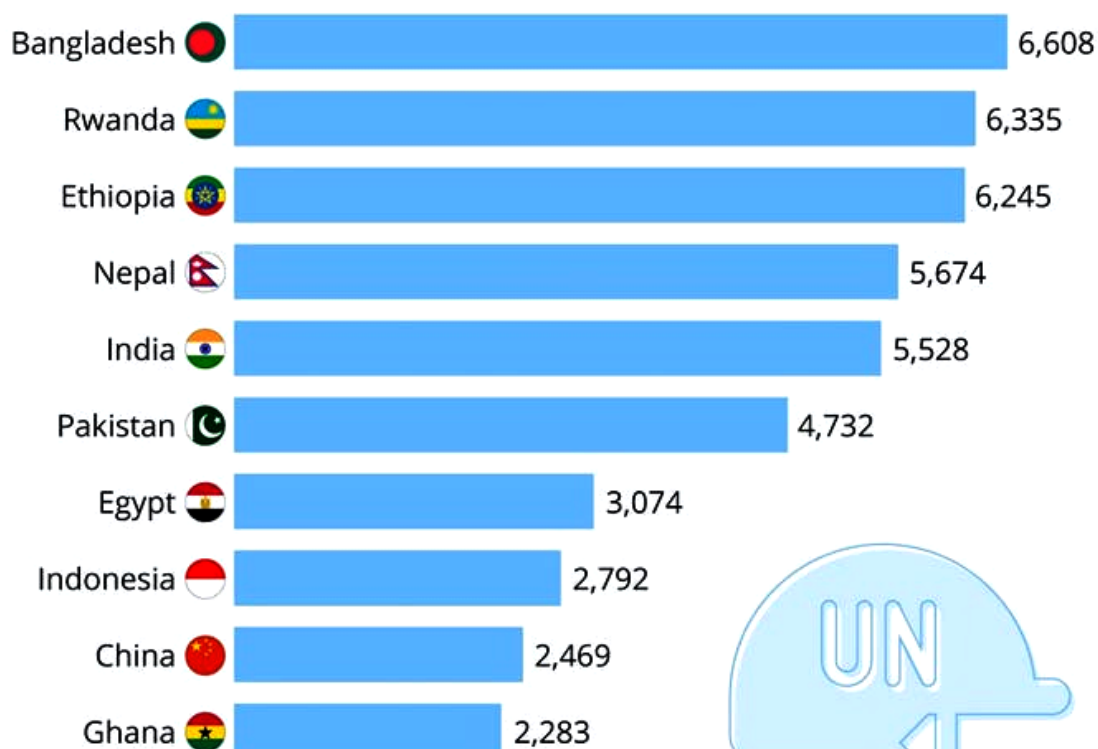
- It was launched by the India-led **Group of Friends (GOF)** initiative in its second meeting to promote accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

## What is the Use of the Database?

- The database will **serve as an online repository** to monitor and address cases of malicious acts against Peacekeepers.
  - It will facilitate comprehensive analysis and drive effective strategies for promoting accountability.
  - It is hosted on the **Unite Aware platform**.
- It implements the provisions of **UN Security Council resolution 2589** (adopted in August 2021) which called upon troops hosting **member states to bring to justice perpetrators of all acts of violence against United Nations personnel**.

## The Biggest Contributors To UN Peacekeeping Operations

Main contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations as of March 31, 2021\*



## What is GOF?

- **About:** On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022, **India launched a 'Group of Friends'** to promote accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. **It comprises 40 member states.**

- It calls on member states to **investigate, arrest, and prosecute perpetrators** of crimes against **peacekeepers (Blue Helmets)** in line with international obligations, and to promote **accountability both within and outside the UNSC in practical terms.**
  - India has lost 177 of its peacekeepers in the line of duty, the largest by far from any troop-contributing country.
- **Co-chairs:** India, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Morocco and Nepal.
- The GoF will convene **two meetings of its members per year**, organise and **host one event per year** to inform and galvanise support for promoting accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

## UN Security Council (UNSC)

The UN Charter vests the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the UNSC

### About

One of the **6 principal organs** of UN; established in **1945** by UN Charter

### Headquarters

New York City

### First Session

17 January 1946 at Church House, Westminster, London

### Membership

- 15 members - 5 Permanent Members (P5), 10 Non-Permanent Members elected for two-year terms (5 elected each year)
- P5 - the US, the UK, Russia, France and China

### Presidency

- Rotates every month among the 15 members
- India's Presidency for year 2022 - December

### Voting Powers

- 1 member = 1 vote
- P5 have **veto power**
- Members of UN sans membership of UNSC participate without vote

### UNSC Committees/Resolutions

#### Terrorism

- Resolution 1373 (Counter Terrorism Committee)
- Resolution 1267 (Da'esh and Al Qaeda Committee)

#### Non-Proliferation Committee

- Resolution 1540 (against nuclear, chemical and biological weapons)

### India and UNSC

- Served **7 times** as non-permanent member, elected for the **8<sup>th</sup> time** for 2021-22; **advocates for a permanent seat**
- Arguments for a permanent seat:
  - **43 peacekeeping missions**
  - Active participation in **formulating Human Rights Declaration (UDHR)**
  - India's **population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, cultural diversity, political system** etc.



**G4**

Group of 4 countries (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) which advocate each other's bids for permanent seats in the UNSC

### Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Movement

- Informally known as the **Coffee Club**
- Countries **oppose the expansion Permanent Seats** of UNSC
- **Prime movers of the club** - Italy, Spain, Australia, Canada, South Korea, Argentina and Pakistan
- Italy and Spain are opposed to Germany's bid; Pakistan - India's bid; Argentina - Brazil's bid and Australia - Japan's bid

### Major Challenges in UNSC

- Usual UN rules don't apply to UNSC deliberations; **no records of meetings kept**
- Powerplay in UNSC; **anachronistic veto powers** of P5
- **Deep polarisation** among P5; frequent divisions end up blocking key decisions
- **Inadequate representation** of many regions among of the world



## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims:

**Q. The Security Council of UN consists of 5 permanent members, and the remaining 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of (2009)**

- (a) 1 year
- (b) 2 years
- (c) 3 years
- (d) 5 years

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. With reference to the “United Nations Credentials Committee”, consider the following statements:**

1. It is a committee set up by the UN Security Council and works under its supervision.
2. It traditionally meets in March, June and September every year
3. It assesses the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report to the General Assembly for approval.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (2022)**

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 2

**Ans: (a)**

**Mains:**

**Q. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council. (2015)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/05-04-2024/print>

