

CURRENT AFFAIRS

7th Jan. 2023

United Nations General Assembly: International Year of Millets 2023

Reference:

- In recent days, the United Nations General Assembly has accepted the International Year of Millets 2023 proposed by the Government of India.
- It has given the Government of India an opportunity to celebrate the International Year of Millets 2023 and establish India as the global hub of millets.
- The Prime Minister of India has given a call to observe the International Year of Millets 2023 as a "people's movement" across India.

What is Millet

- Millets are small seeded grasses that are often referred to as "nutrition grains". Whole grains are considered a storehouse of nutrients.
- These grains rich in beta-carotene, niacin, vitamin-B6, folic acid, potassium, magnesium, zinc etc. are also called superfoods.
- Cereals like Jowar, Bajra, Ragi (Madua), Maize, Barley, Kodo, Sama, Bajra, Sawa, Small grains or Kutki, Kangni and Cheena are millets i.e. coarse grains.

Importance and Benefits of Millet

- Millets are more nutritious than wheat and rice due to higher protein levels and more balanced amino acid profiles.
- They also contain various phytochemicals which have therapeutic properties due to their anti-oxidative properties.
- Apart from being suited to the climate, millet grains are rich in nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, dietary fiber and good quality fats.
- Millets are used as a staple cereal crop for millions of dryland smallholder farmers in Africa and Asia because they provide a range of benefits such as nutrition, income and livelihoods for farmers.
- Millets are also used to make food, feed, fodder, biofuel and alcohol.
- Sorghum and millet are mainly cultivated in Haryana, Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh as fodder crops.
- Millets help in providing employment for the people in the low rainfall areas.
- The effect of climate change is very less on coarse cereals as compared to other crops.
- Coarse grains are very important in the field of food processing for the manufacture of export items.

India's preference for millets

- In the year 2018, India trademarked millets as "nutritional grains".
- The Government of India had declared the year 2018 as the National Year of Millets to increase the demand for millets.
- Globally, the coarse cereals market is expected to grow by 4.5% between 2021 and 2026.

- The Government of India has recognized the importance of millets and has also accorded priority to millets for meeting several UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Government of India has included millet in the Public Distribution System to increase the demand for millet.

Millets Producing States:

- Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh etc.
 - At present about 50 million tonnes of coarse cereals are produced in India.
 - At present maize and millet are the most cultivated.
-

RACE IAS