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Date: 23 April 2024

NAVIGATING PULSE IMPORT DYNAMICS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "NAVIGATING PULSE IMPORT DYNAMICS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ECONOMY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

India experienced a substantial 84% increase in pulses imports during the fiscal year 2024 compared to the previous year, reaching the highest level in six years. This surge was triggered by a decline in domestic production, leading India to authorise duty-free imports of red lentils and yellow peas.

THE REASON BEHIND HIGH IMPORTS

- **Falling Production, Rising Demand:** India's pulse production hasn't grown as fast as the increasing demand for these protein-rich legumes. This has led to a widening gap between what's produced domestically and what's needed to feed the population.
- **Stagnant Technology:** Pulse farming practices haven't seen significant advancements since the Green Revolution. Additionally, the area dedicated to pulse cultivation hasn't expanded much, leading to limited production growth.
- **Low Yields:** Pulse production is susceptible to weather fluctuations, causing yields to swing wildly from year to year. This inconsistency makes it difficult to consistently meet the country's pulse needs.
- **Rising demands:** India's population is on the rise, and so is its taste for pulses. As a vegetarian source of protein, pulses are increasingly valued in Indian diets.
- **Focus Beyond Production:** More research is needed to understand how factors like market access influence household pulse consumption patterns. However, the focus is more on increasing the yield of Rice and wheat.
- **Import Strategies:** While the government restricts pulse imports, some traders and companies find ways to bypass these restrictions. To ensure stable supply and manage prices, India is exploring long-term import contracts with new sources like Brazil and Argentina.

STATUS OF PULSES IN INDIA

STATUS OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN INDIA

- India stands as a significant player in the global pulse market, **producing 26% of the world's pulses while consuming 30% of the global supply**, making it both the leading producer and consumer of pulses. However, despite its substantial production, India also holds the title of the largest importer of pulses, underscoring the necessity for enhanced domestic production to meet the rising demand.
- India's dominance in pulse production is evident, **ranking first in both area under cultivation and total production, covering 35% of the global acreage and contributing to 25% of world production**. The positive trajectory reflects in the country's pulse production, which was 26.05 million tonnes during the period of 2022-23.
- However, despite these achievements, challenges persist in pulse production. For instance, the **average yield of pigeon peas, a commonly grown pulse in India, stagnated at 860 kg per hectare in 2022, a figure comparable to the average recorded back in 1961**. This stagnant yield emphasises the urgent need for advancements in production technology and farming practices to boost productivity.

STATUS OF PULSES IMPORT IN INDIA

- In the fiscal year 2023-24, India witnessed a notable increase in pulse imports, **totalling 4.65 million metric tons, marking the highest import volume since 2018-19**. This surge in imports is attributed to the inadequate growth in domestic pulse production, which has failed to keep pace with the escalating demand within the country.
- The imbalance between demand and supply is further compounded by the diminishing contribution of India to the global food grain market, dropping from 16% in 1950 to 8% in 2022-23.
- During the financial year 2023, **Myanmar emerged as the primary source of pulse imports for India**, supplying a quantity of 757 thousand metric tons. Additionally, significant import origins include Canada, Australia, and the United States, particularly for lentils and peas.

IMPORTANCE OF PULSE

- **Diversification of Crop:** Pulses serve as an essential component of crop diversification strategies for farmers. Cultivating pulses alongside other crops helps improve soil health by fixing atmospheric nitrogen, thus reducing the dependency on synthetic fertilisers.
- **Income Generation:** Pulses cultivation provides an additional source of income for farmers. Since pulses have a relatively shorter duration compared to many other crops, they offer an opportunity for multiple cropping cycles within a single agricultural season, thereby increasing the income potential for farmers.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Pulses cultivation acts as a risk mitigation strategy for farmers against crop failures and price fluctuations. Due to their ability to adapt to diverse agro-climatic conditions, pulses offer a more resilient option for farmers, especially in regions prone to erratic weather patterns.
- **Nutritional Value:** Pulses are an excellent source of plant-based protein, dietary fibre, vitamins, and minerals. Incorporating pulses into the diet promotes overall health and well-being, particularly for vegetarian and vegan populations who rely on plant-based protein sources.

- **Affordability:** Pulses are an affordable source of nutrition, making them accessible to a wide range of consumers, including low-income households. Their long shelf life and versatility in culinary applications further enhance their affordability and value for money.
- **Health Benefits:** Consumption of pulses is associated with numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity. Pulses are low in fat, cholesterol-free, and rich in soluble fibre, which helps in managing cholesterol levels and promoting digestive health.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTIONS

Q1. How does pulse cultivation contribute to improving soil health?

- (a) By depleting soil nutrients
- (b) By fixing atmospheric nitrogen
- (c) By decreasing soil erosion
- (d) By reducing soil fertility

Answer: B

Q2. Which bacteria are primarily responsible for nitrogen fixation in soil associated with pulses?

- (a) Escherichia coli
- (b) Azotobacter
- (c) Lactobacillus
- (d) Streptococcus

Answer: B

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

- Q1. Evaluate the socioeconomic implications of promoting pulse cultivation in drought-prone regions. How can the cultivation of pulses empower smallholder farmers, enhance rural livelihoods, and contribute to poverty alleviation in water-stressed areas?**
- Q2. Explain how pulses serve as a crucial source of nutrition for cereal-eating populations in India, particularly those lacking sufficient protein intake. What nutritional benefits do pulses offer, and how do they complement the dietary requirements of individuals dependent on staple cereals?**

[Himanshu mishra](#)

NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (NDRF)

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (NDRF)". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- The Centre government told the Supreme Court that the Election Commission of India had given it clearance to deal with Karnataka's issue regarding financial assistance for drought management in the state. The Supreme Court was hearing the suit filed by the Karnataka government against the Union government, demanding the release of drought relief under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
- The Attorney General (AG) of India, R Venkataramani, representing the Centre, informed the Bench, comprising Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta and senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Karnataka, of this, emphasizing the equality of both Union and State governments as partners within the federal system.

WHAT IS A NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUND(NDRF)?

- The Government of India manages the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), established under Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act of 2005, to meet emergency response, relief, and rehabilitation expenses during a natural or man-made disaster.
- The central government manages the funds for various activities, including search and rescue operations, immediate relief such as food, shelter, medical aid, restoration of essential services, and long-term rehabilitation. The primary objective of the NDRF is to supplement the state government's resources and provide immediate relief in case of severe calamities.
- NDRF is placed in the GOI's "Public Account" under "reserve funds not bearing interest." The government does not require parliamentary approval to withdraw money from this fund. Funds for the NDRF are allocated annually in India's Union Budget. Additionally, contributions from individuals, organizations, and foreign governments may be accepted into the fund.
- The National Executive Committee (NEC) within the National Disaster Management Authority is responsible for deciding the financial expenditures of the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). To ensure transparency and accountability, the NDRF's financial accounts are subjected to an annual audit conducted by India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). This process helps in maintaining the integrity of the fund's usage.

ABOUT THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT 2005:

The Disaster Management Act of 2005 is legislation enacted by the Government of India to manage disasters in India effectively. The Act was passed in response to the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters, both natural and man-made, and the need for a comprehensive framework to address them. **Key features of the Disaster Management Act 2005 include:**

- **Institutional Framework:** The Act establishes various national, state, and district institutions for disaster management. This includes the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

at the national level, State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) at the state level, and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) at the district level.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** It defines the roles and responsibilities of these authorities in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.
- **Preparation of Plans:** The Act mandates the preparation of disaster management plans at the national, state, and district levels. These plans outline disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery strategies.
- **Powers and Functions:** The Act confers powers upon the authorities to take necessary measures for disaster management, including issuing directions to other agencies and mobilizing resources.
- **Financial Provisions:** It provides for the creation of a National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Funds (SDRFs) to finance disaster response and relief activities.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** It promotes public awareness and education initiatives to enhance community resilience and disaster preparedness.

WAY FORWARD:

1. **Adequate Funding Allocation:** Ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to the NDRF annually to meet the needs of disaster response and relief operations. This could involve regular reviews of funding requirements based on assessing disaster risks and potential impacts.
2. **Transparent Utilisation:** Implement mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability when using funds from the NDRF. These could include regular audits, public disclosure of fund usage, and strict adherence to financial guidelines and procedures.
3. **Risk-Based Allocation:** Prioritize allocating funds based on assessing disaster risks and vulnerabilities in different regions. This would ensure that resources are directed to areas most likely affected by disasters and where they are most needed.
4. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Foster partnerships with the private sector, NGOs, and civil society organizations to leverage resources and expertise for disaster response and recovery efforts. This could involve setting up mechanisms for private sector contributions to the NDRF and engaging them in disaster risk reduction initiatives.
5. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Ensure that the NDRF has the flexibility to respond to evolving disaster scenarios and emerging challenges. This could involve establishing contingency funds or emergency reserves within the NDRF to address unforeseen disasters or emergencies.

Disaster management in India is a multifaceted challenge given its diverse geography, population density, and vulnerability to various natural and man-made disasters.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following statements about the National Disaster Response Fund:

1. The President of India controls the National Disaster Response Fund.
2. The central government does not require parliamentary approval to withdraw money from NDRF.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

- Q. How does India ensure equitable access to disaster management resources for all its communities, including the most vulnerable? Critically examine.**

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