



***Discuss the different strategies required for the country to achieve nutritional self-reliance.***

**KEY POINTS**

When the Indian economy eventually reverses the deceleration in growth, as it will someday, our demand for such will double in less than a decade. Climate change will further complicate efforts to salvage the future as inconsistent production gives recurring shocks.

**Strategies**

- Draw area production plans for animal husbandry and to grow crops to try and meet India's nutritional requirement considering agroecological zones and the changing climate. The aim should be to figure out a suitable basket of crops for each area.
- Based on these area production plans, only incentivise the identified crops and practices in each region by designing a risk and price support strategy for such crops, while allowing farmers the freedom to grow what they want.
- The present farm input (fertiliser, power etc) subsidy regime that incentivises production will need to shift to one of payment for farm eco-system services (for environmentally sustainable agriculture practices like improving soil health, rainwater harvesting, intercropping, planting trees).
- Investment in a robust market intelligence system can help government manage production and price spikes. It has to be independent of the ministry of agriculture, which must, more importantly, issue regular crop advisories to farmers.
- In addition to revamping of research and extension systems, and more so, to meet the expectations of traceability and quality produce, it requires stringent enforcement of regulations, collaboration with the private sector and extensive use of digital technologies.
- Lastly, if failure is not independently documented and we continue to frame policies as before, in all probability, we will be providing subsidised food to the masses and continuing with a MGNREGA job work programme to mitigate rural poverty into the distant future.

***What are the various policy actions that are needed to handle the plastic and bio-medical waste generated during the COVID crisis? Explain***

**KEY POINTS**

- The Centre should stitch together a national protocol that combines The Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, with the recently released Environment Ministry guidelines on 'extended producer responsibility' for producers of plastic
- With the onset of Covid-19, the exponential spike in the use of plastic — that too, of the single-use variety, exemplified by personal protection equipment — has created a mammoth crisis of plastic waste all over the world.
- It has rendered redundant the ban on single-use plastic in many parts of the world, including India, where the ban was imposed in 2016.
- What's all the more disturbing is the biomedical content in this waste, which could create a new set of health complications during the monsoon and the consequent contamination of soil and water.
- However, the special guidelines from the Central Pollution Control Board on the handling of biomedical waste generated in the wake of Covid-19 have not prevented the piling up of biomedical waste in urban centres.
- The Centre needs to stitch together a national protocol that combines The Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, with the recently released Environment Ministry guidelines on 'extended producer responsibility' (EPR) for producers of plastic.