

Pulses Production and Issues

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Pulses occupy a unique place in India's nutritional food security. Pulses are an important part of poor man's food plate and India being a hub of 195 million hungry people, production of staple crops and their protection is the need of the hour especially when pulses have been a vital source of proteins to children, according to WHO reports. Recently, pulses have become a matter of concern among policymakers, especially many have pointed to the exceptionally high cost of certain pulses which is an indication of high food inflation.

In news: The state of agriculture in India

Placing it in syllabus: Agriculture

Dimensions

- Pulses in India
- Pulses Villages Programme
- Buffer Stock
- NFSA – Special Focus on Pulses
- MSP for Pulses
- Relevance of Pulses as a dryland crop

Content:

Pulses in India:

- Pulses are annual leguminous crops yielding between one and 12 grains or seeds of variable size, shape and colour within a pod, used for both food and feed. The term "pulses" is limited to crops harvested solely for dry grain.
- Besides serving as an important source of protein for a large portion of the global population, pulses contribute to healthy soils and climate change mitigation through their nitrogen-fixing properties.

- Bengal Gram (Desi ChickPea / Desi Chana), Pigeon Peas (Arhar / Toor / Red Gram), Green Beans (Moong Beans), ChickPeas (Kabuli Chana), Black Matpe (Urad / Mah / Black Gram), Red Kidney Beans (Rajma), Black Eyed Peas (Lobiya), Lentils (Masoor), White Peas (Matar) are major pulses grown and consumed in India.
- India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world.
- Pulses account for around 20 percent of the area under food grains and contribute around 7-10 percent of the total foodgrains production in the country.
- Though pulses are grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons, Rabi pulses contribute more than 60 per cent of the total production.
- Gram is the most dominant pulse having a share of around 40 per cent in the total production followed by Tur/Arhar at 15 to 20 per cent and Urad/Black Matpe and Moong at around 8-10 per cent each.
- Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are the top-five pulses producing States.
- Productivity of pulses is 764 kg/ha.

Reasons for low productivity of Pulses in India:

- **Agro-climatic conditions:** Indian agriculture is largely dependent on rainfall for its agricultural production, and especially the pulse crops are only grown in the rain-fed areas. However, the harsh truth is that the agro – climatic condition in India is comparatively less suitable for pulses, which hampers the cultivation of pulses across the country and around the year.
- **Low Yield and Pests:** Indian pulses are not much yielding genetically and are also vulnerable to pests which are a major hindrances to adoption of pulses by farmers.
- **Rainfed Conditions:** Being rain-fed, pulses often experience drought at critical growth stages. Therefore,

lack of drought and disease resistant varieties of pulse seeds is alarming.

- **Primitive Production technology:** Lack of information about the production technologies is a big gap leading to low productivity.

Poor availability of agricultural inputs: such as seeds, bio-pesticides and micronutrients is another big barrier.

Pulses Villages Programme:

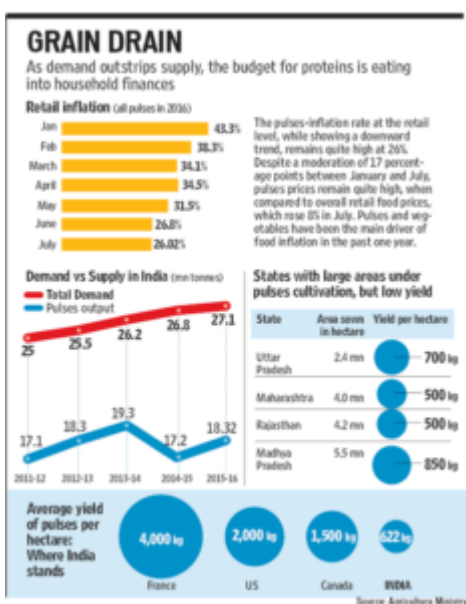
- It is a special initiative for pulses and oilseeds in dryland areas of 60000 villages under RKVY
- **Objective:** to provide services of mechanization on custom hiring basis, especially for soil preparation and sowing for improving production and productivity of pulses and oilseeds.
- **Criteria for Selection of States:** The scheme would be implemented in the States with more than 500000 hectares of pulses area. The states of M.P, U.P, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Tamilnadu, constituting nearly 96% of pulses area would be covered under the scheme.
- **Preference to rainfed areas:** Pulses villages in the Rainfed areas in the selected states with no assured irrigation source would only be targeted for the implementation of the programmes prescribed under the scheme.
- Entitlement of each State would be dependent on the area under Pulses and the states would be given the choice to take up any or all of the three broad large components for implementation.

Buffer Stock:

- The Budget has allocated Rs 2,700 crore to the price stabilisation fund (PSF) for 2021-22, which will be used

to create buffer stocks of onions and pulses to check price volatility in these commodities.

- This is 35% more than the allocation of Rs 2,000 crore in the last budget but 77% less than the actual expenditure of Rs 11,800 crore in 2020-21.
- The PSF will also be used to fund states that are looking to create their own PSFs.
- The government also created buffer stock of 2 million tonnes of pulses, which were distributed to control prices. It was also used for free distribution during the pandemic.



NFSA – Special Focus on Pulses:

- In order to meet the protein needs of people during COVID crisis, the Central government had decided to provide one kg of milled and cleaned pulses to each NFSA household for three months under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).
- Each month, 1.96 LMT of pulses are required to be distributed to NFSA households in the country through rations shops.
- This is the first time that the department of consumer affairs is carrying such a massive operation of pulses. This operation would involve about two lakh truck trips

and loading and unloading operation over a period of 4 weeks

- Under the PMGKAY scheme, every person is given 5 kg wheat or rice per month, while 1 kg of pulses per household are given under National Food Security Act (NFSA).

MSP for Pulses:

- The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd.(NAFED) and Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) are responsible to procure pulses under Minimum Support Price (MSP)
- But unfortunately, they procured an insignificant quantity [1% to 4% of output against 28% to 30% of cereals during 2012-13 to 2014-15] despite MSP for pulses in the last five years were higher than rice and wheat.
- Procurement was insignificant amounting to 6.56 lakh tons from July 2013- June 2014 reflecting no impact of higher MSP.
- The minimum support price given by the government was not sufficient to procure pulses especially tur dal and hence it ended leaving increase in prices of pulses.
- The Santakumar committee has observed that despite MSP being announced for 23 commodities substantial benefits accrue to wheat and rice growers in selected States leaving pulse-growers often receiving prices much below MSP.
- The absence of efficient marketing arrangement and production constraints created a huge gap between demand and supply resorting to imports.

Relevance of Pulses as a Dryland Crop:

- Since ages, pulses have been well integrated into the farming system of our country as the farmers would produce them by using their own seeds and family labour

without depending much on external inputs.

- With the advent of the Green Revolution, which promoted rice and wheat using external inputs and modern varieties of seeds, pulses were pushed to the marginal lands.
- This resulted in decline in productivity and land degradation.
- Thus, **pulses are still cultivated on the marginal and sub marginal land, predominantly under un-irrigated (Rainfed) conditions.**
- The trend of commercialisation of agriculture has further aggravated the status of pulses in the farming system.

Mould your thought: Highlight the issues surrounding the Pulses Production and Prices in India.

Approach to the answer:

- Introduction
- Discuss the production of pulses in India
- Discuss the problems with Production and Prices / Inflation
- Discuss the solutions to these problems
- Conclusion