

UPSC EDITORIAL ANALYSIS 26 JUL 2021

EDITORIAL 1: LESSONS FROM INDIA'S FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE

Topic: General Studies Paper 3 (Issues related to Food security)

Context:

- As the second wave of COVID-19 infections has started to weaken, there is a need to focus on the impact on the food security and livelihoods of the poor and marginalised.
- There needs to be an analysis of policies and interventions that promise food and livelihood security, along with the strengthening of health support, as the pandemic continues.
- During the pandemic, there was a dramatic increase in World Hunger.
- As per, the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World', report around a tenth of the global population – up to 81.1 crore persons – were undernourished last year.



India's Food security:

- India has made a journey from Hunger to self-sufficiency in food production marked by the Green Revolution.

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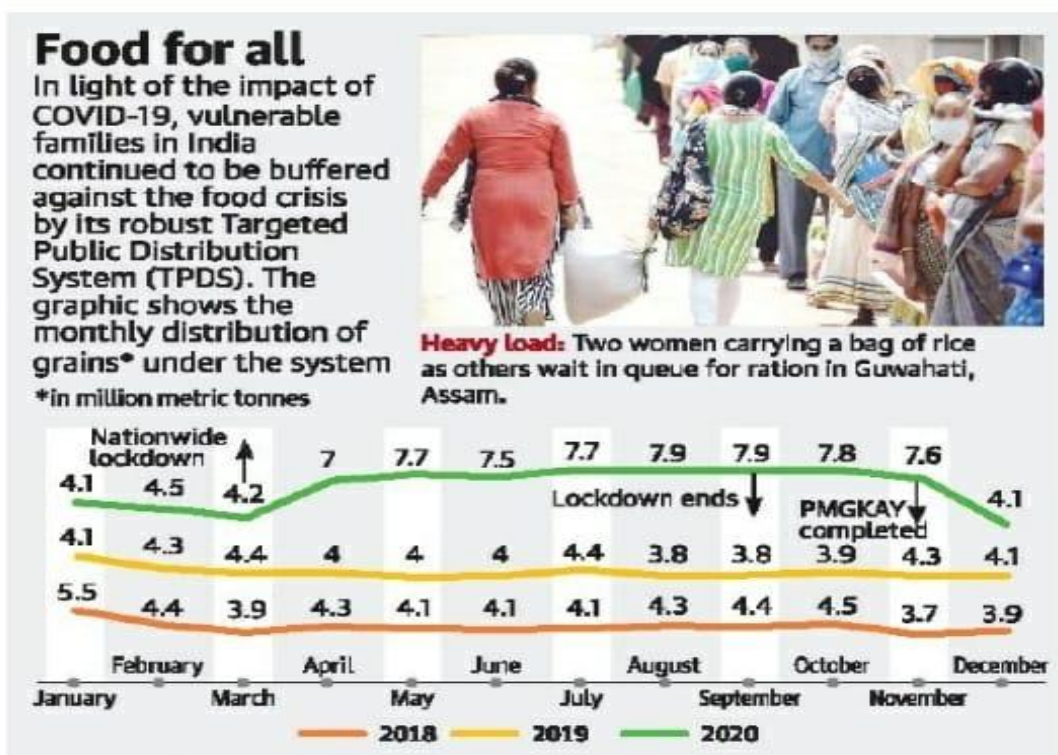
- In 2020, India produced over 30 crore tonnes of cereals and had built up a buffer food stock of 10 crore tonnes and it exported a record 1.98 crore tonnes of rice and wheat in FY21.

Pivoting safety nets

- During the Pandemic, vulnerable and marginalised families in India were buffered against the food crisis by its robust Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- During the pandemic, the States allowed the needy to make allocations for six months in one go, due to Which there was an unprecedented spike in the uptake of subsidised and free foodgrains during the lockdown.
- In India, The public distribution system became a lifeline for millions hit by the pandemic.

Increase entitlements

- In 2020, During the pandemic, entitlements given to National Food Safety Act (NFSA) beneficiaries was increased.
- For Example, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), 81.3 crore NFSA beneficiaries received an additional 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month and 1 kg of pulses per family per month, free of cost, for eight months from April to November 2020. Similarly, Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, 8 crore migrants were provided 5 kg of foodgrains per month, free of cost.
- Even the NGOs/civil society organisations were allowed to purchase rice and wheat at subsidised prices directly from nearby Food Corporation of India (FCI) warehouses.
- Rice was sold at ₹22 per kg (market price is ₹35 per kg) and wheat at ₹21 per kg (market price is ₹27 per kg) last year.



A bullet train to hunger

- In 2021, the NFSA scheme was reintroduced this year and extended till November.
- About 89% to 94% of the allocated foodgrains were distributed to beneficiaries.
- Under PMGKAY there was a total expenditure of ₹2,28,000 crore over 15 months.
- Addressing challenges
- The pandemic has highlighted the aspects of access and portability of food entitlements.
- To tackle rural economic distress, food support focuses on all risk groups, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, single women-led households, transgender persons, HIV-affected persons, displaced persons, refugees and orphan children etc.,
- India's PDS system has improved a lot, however, there are still a few steps to be taken to improve access and inclusion among the missing vulnerable population.

Way ahead

1. The introduction of the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme can be a game-changer, as it would allow beneficiaries to access their food entitlements from anywhere in the country.

Since there is huge migration from one state to another, this scheme would help in massive digitisation of the supply chain, distribution and access to ensure everyone benefits from anywhere in India.

2. Climate change will continue to affect agriculture and food security, there is a need to focus on programmes that help in building resilient agriculture that is adaptive to changing weather and

needs through the introduction of newer varieties of crops, efficient irrigation systems, and the promotion of crops as per the agro-climate zones.

3. One-third of all food produced is wasted, steps should be taken to prevent losses.

Lost or wasted energy used for food production accounts for about 10% of the world's total energy consumption, and annual greenhouse gas emissions associated with food losses and food waste is around 3.5 gigatonnes of the CO₂ equivalent. Hence steps need to be taken to improve infrastructure to minimize losses.

Conclusion:

- ✓ UN Food Systems Summit, the Nutrition for Growth Summit and the COP26 on climate change are coming up, this would provide a unique opportunity for advancing food security and nutrition through transforming food systems
- ✓ During the Summit, India has a central role to play by offering experiences and solutions to address the thought processes and models for a resilient, equitable, and food-secure world.

Reference:

Lessons from India's food security response: <https://thg.page.link/nXK8Fo7YnKJ6Y5Ve9>

EDITORIAL 2: GETTING INDIA'S MILITARY CONVERGENCE FORMULA RIGHT

Topic: General Studies Paper 3 (Internal Security)

Context:

- The Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat's described the Indian Air Force (IAF) as a supporting arm and the IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria's rebuttal has led to turbulence in the reorganisation process of the armed forces.
- The turbulence is mostly due to misinterpretation of an oversimplification by the Chief of Defence Staff.
- Various questions whether there is a problem with airpower? What about the IAF warning against splitting it into 'penny packets'? Is air power an adjunct? etc., needs to be answered.



Indian Airforce:

- Armies and navies will see airpower as an adjunct, history being the reason.
- In 2019, Air power theorist Tami Davis Biddle, after Analysing the experience of the United States, wrote that 'aerial bombing cannot control the ground.
- Airforce is an important and much-utilized military instrument for both deterrence and compellence. However, its ability to produce results varies.
- There is a need to understand the strategy under which circumstance airforce is more or less likely to achieve particular results or political ends'.
- From Vietnam to Afghanistan, airpower failed to deliver the promised results to the U.S., However, everyone acknowledges how greatly airpower can aid victories.

Issues before the IAF

- As per reports, the IAF is 25% short on fighter squadrons and there is also a service shortage of about 400 pilots.
- IAF is warning against splitting assets, as the service chief is responsible for the operational availability of assets and in future due to the non-availability of assets, He alone will be blamed for failures.
- For Instance, When the U.S. Navy faced a budget cut in 2015, Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations highlighted that with the cut, more ships and aircraft (will be) out

of action and in the battle, more sailors, Marines and merchant mariners (will be) killed, and (there will be) less credibility, to deter adversaries and to assure allies in the future.

- Further, IAF's objections are not only due to shortage but also the prospect of operational plans for the IAF being made outside the service.

Finding common ground

- There is a need for other forces to understand airpower.
- The 67-year-old naval air arm figures among the top 10 air forces of the world and has experience in every aircraft the IAF operates, there has been integrity between the supremely tough aircraft carrier and other small deck operations, there has to be integrity with the Indian Army too.
- There has to be an understanding that, rightly staffed apex joint organisation can help in professional operational plans for airpower, it just requires short term enhancement of professional military education.
- Synergy and hurdles
- With dwindling budgets and steadily deteriorating security situations, security forces understand the need to synergise but they are unable to coexist.
- For Example, there are Bitter fights over land, buildings, facilities, etc. and there is a lack of optimal operational synergising.
- For Example, The Andaman and Nicobar Command suffered from the lack of a substantial operational charter, and the services did not position appropriate personnel or resources there.
- Further, joint tenure did not benefit careers, hence there was no motivation for joint working.
- The U.S., when faced with the same problem, made joint tenures mandatory for promotions.
- Problem with the military synergy plan
- Reorganisation of various forces should have various consultation, simulation or tabletop wargaming, field evaluation and final analysis before implementation.
- Such analysis before implementation would help to have command and control, asset adequacy, individual service roles, operational planning under new circumstances and the adequacy of joint structures and clarity on Who gets to lead what.
- The Western Command between the Indian Army and the IAF, the Northern Command with the Indian Army, Maritime Command with the Indian Navy and the Air Defence Command with the IAF may be given a thought as a suitable option for Reorganization.

What is needed?

1. There is a need for a comprehensive National Security Strategy to guide the services to develop capacities that are required in their respective domains.
2. Changes must be made in professional education and inter-service employment to nurture genuine respect for others.
3. The armed forces must resolve their differences among themselves as politicians and bureaucrats can't do the same.

4. There should be quality staff, inadequate numbers, at apex joint organisations, to reassure individual services and those in the field that they are in safe hands.

Conclusion:

- ✓ India has to understand that what works for other countries need not work for us, there is a need for tailor-made solutions which are more practically suitable for Indian security forces (Army, Naval, Air).
- ✓ For genuine military jointness, a genuine convergence of minds is critical and Decrees of limitations have to be overcome to achieve success in coordination among various forces.

Reference:

Getting India's military convergence formula right: <https://thg.page.link/AQeTrkivEMmFU2zk8>

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