



Food wastage

Description

Theme:

- According to the UNEP's (United Nations Environment Programme) Food Waste Index Report 2021, approximately 1 billion metric tonnes of food is wasted globally every year. In India, approx 6.88 crore tonnes of food is wasted, which is around 7% of global food waste.
- About 80 crore people regularly go to bed hungry. It is possible to resolve the hunger problem to a large extent if we fix the food wastage issue.

Causes of food wastage:

- The lack of accessible and affordable cold storage facilities is resulting in the wastage of food. Globally, 14% of the produce is wasted by the time it reaches retail markets. Moreover, 17% of the produce is wasted by the time it reaches the consumers.
- The lack of proper transportation facilities in several areas is also another reason for food wastage.
- Sometimes, when the price of food produce can't even cover the transportation expenses, farmers throw away the produce. Lack of awareness of which crops are in demand, and lack of support from the governments in the form of minimum support price are some of the reasons for this.
- Climate change is also causing food wastage. For example, the recent unseasonal rains spoiled so many crops.
- In general, so much cooked food is wasted in ceremonies.

Consequences:

- Food wastage results in an increase in food prices because decreased supply & same demand will result in an increase in prices. This will lead to many people going hungry or being malnourished.
- Spoiled food in landfills will release methane, a greenhouse gas. It is estimated that 8-10%



of the total carbon emissions are from food waste. So, wasted food affects the environment negatively and speeds up climate change.

- Food wastage affects the country's economy negatively.

What can we do:

- There should be more cold storage facilities built.
- Establishing food processing and packaging facilities near farms can prevent a lot of food waste.
- Proper transportation facilities can help in sending the fruits and vegetables to their destinations while the produce is fresh.
- Farmers should be guided by the governments about which crops are in demand and can fetch them good revenues.
- Governments should protect the farmers from the effects of climate change as much as possible. For example, informing the farmers about the expected unseasonal rains beforehand can help them in protecting the freshly cut produce. Moreover, providing tarpaulins can be helpful for them in protecting the produce. Moreover, encouraging climate-resilient crops can help farmers and will prevent food waste.
- To prevent the release of methane into the atmosphere, food waste should be used to manufacture biogas and organic fertilizers.
- Function halls should be linked to NGOs that distribute food to people who are in need.
- Awareness programs to prevent food waste at home should be conducted. Food banks should be established and they should be accessible to those in need.

Conclusion:

One billion metric tonnes of food is wasted globally every year. At the same time, approx 80 crore people go to bed hungry every day. So, preventing food wastage can fix the hunger problem to a great extent. Accessible and affordable cold storage facilities, proper transportation facilities, growing climate-resilient crops, and establishing food banks can help in preventing food wastage.

Photo by [Rachel Claire](#)

Your Turn...

What are your thoughts on food wastage? Do you take any steps to prevent food waste? Express your point of view through the comment section below. And subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

References:

- 'Aahara vrudha – teerani vyadha' article by *A.Shyam Kumar* in Eenadu newspaper dated 13th May 2023.
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