



# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## MS SWAMINATHAN

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the topic details "MS Swaminathan". This topic has relevance in the Agriculture section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

### **For Prelims:**

*About MS Swaminathan?*

### **For Mains:**

*GS 3: Agriculture*

*Recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Report?*

*Swaminathan's Role in Advancing the Green Revolution?*

*Need For Evergreen Revolution?*

### **Why in the news:**

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, who recently passed away, played a pivotal role in ushering in the Green Revolution, which played a crucial part in addressing food insecurity in India.

### **Early Life and Education**

- Born on August 7, 1925, in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, he initially aspired to pursue a career in the civil services, successfully passing the civil services examination.
- However, driven by his passion for agriculture, ignited by events such as the Quit India Movement and the Bengal famine of 1942-43, he redirected his focus towards agriculture.
- To pursue his keen interest in agriculture, he enrolled at the Agriculture College in Coimbatore.

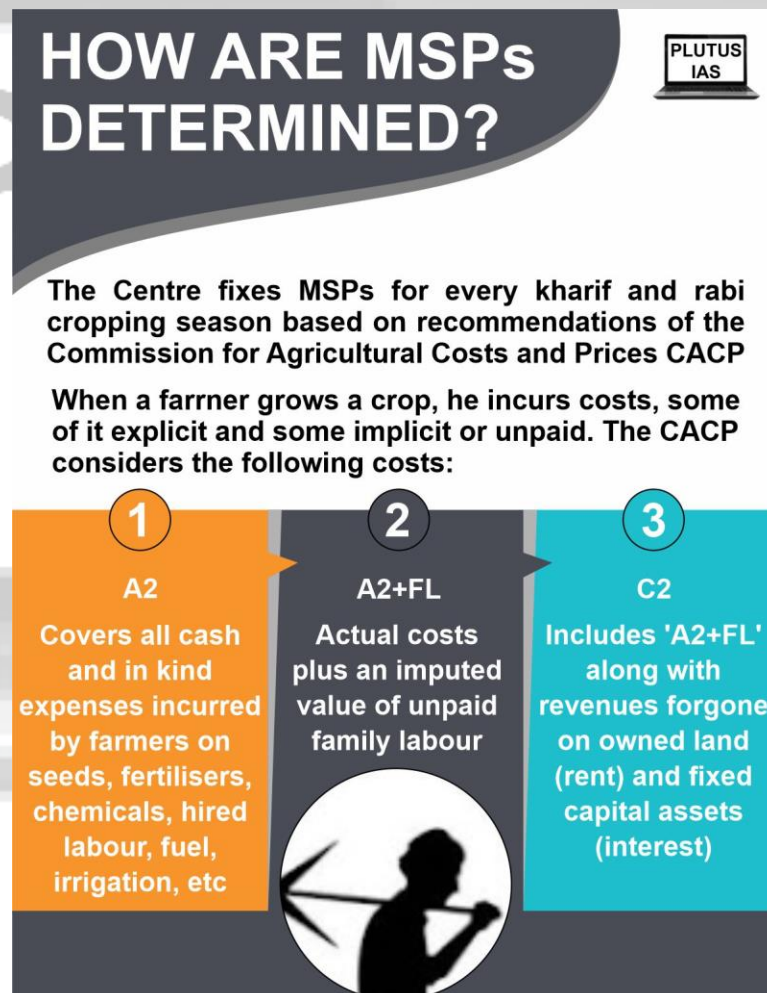
### **Diverse Roles in the Field of Agriculture**

- Swaminathan assumed numerous significant roles in the domain of agriculture, both within India and internationally.
- His notable positions included serving as the Independent Chairman of the Food and Agricultural Organization Council from 1981 to 1985, holding the presidency of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources from 1984 to 1990, and acting as the President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (India) from 1989 to 1996.
- Additionally, he undertook responsibilities such as being the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), among other notable positions.
- As the head of the National Commission on Farmers from 2004-06, he also lent his support to the farmers.

## Recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Report:

The recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Commission, also known as the National Commission on Farmers, encompass a wide range of measures to address the challenges faced by farmers in India and promote sustainable agriculture. Here are the key recommendations:

- **Increase in Public Investment:** There should be a substantial increase in public investment in agriculture-related infrastructure, including irrigation, drainage, land development, water conservation, research and development, and road connectivity.
- **Enforcement of MSP:** The commission emphasizes the importance of enforcing Minimum Support Prices (MSP) throughout the country to provide a safety net for farmers and protect their interests in the face of globalization.
- **C2+50%:** The commission recommends setting MSP at a level that provides a 50% margin over the comprehensive cost (C2), which includes imputed costs of family labor, rent of owned land, and imputed interest on owned capital.



- **One Nation-One Market:** To address problems related to cartelization among traders, the commission suggests establishing a unified national agricultural market, known as “One Nation-One Market.”
- **Market Development:** It advocates the development of domestic and international markets for local produce and simplification of the movement of goods by abolishing road tax and local taxes.

- **Land Reforms:** The commission recommends distributing surplus and wasteland, preventing the diversion of prime agricultural land and forests for non-agricultural purposes, and ensuring grazing rights and seasonal access to forests for tribals and pastoralists.
- **National Land Use Advisory Service:** Establish a service that can link land use decisions with ecological, meteorological, and marketing factors on a location and season-specific basis.
- **Regulation of Land Sale:** Create a mechanism to regulate the sale of agricultural land based on factors like land quantity, nature of proposed use, and buyer category.
- **Water Management:** Promote sustained and equitable access to water, increase water supply through rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge, and invest substantially in the irrigation sector.
- **Credit Access:** Expand access to formal credit systems for the poor, reduce the interest rate for crop loans, and implement debt recovery moratoriums during distress situations.
- **Agriculture Risk Fund:** Establish an Agriculture Risk Fund to provide relief to farmers in the aftermath of natural calamities.
- **Kisan Credit Cards for Women Farmers:** Issue Kisan Credit Cards to women farmers with joint ownership rights.
- **Crop Insurance:** Expand crop insurance coverage across the country and all crops, with reduced premiums and the creation of a Rural Insurance Development Fund.
- **Livelihood Promotion:** Promote sustainable livelihoods for the poor by improving financial services, infrastructure, human development, and business development services.
- **Healthcare:** Provide affordable health insurance and revitalize primary healthcare centers, with a focus on suicide hotspot locations.
- **Farmers' Commission:** Establish State-level Farmers' Commissions to ensure dynamic government response to farmers' issues.
- **Microfinance for Livelihood:** Restructure microfinance policies to serve as livelihood finance, providing credit along with support services.
- **Low-Cost Technologies:** Recommend low-risk and low-cost agricultural technologies to maximize farmers' income.
- **Market Intervention Schemes:** Implement Market Intervention Schemes for life-saving crops and establish a Price Stabilization Fund.
- **Village Knowledge Centers:** Set up Village Knowledge Centers to provide information on agriculture and non-farm livelihoods.
- **Income Parity:** Aim to ensure that the net take-home income of farmers is comparable to that of civil servants.
- **Breed Conservation:** Encourage community-based breed conservation through use.

#### **Swaminathan's Role in Advancing the Green Revolution:**

- **Crop Improvement:** Swaminathan dedicated his efforts to the improvement of crop varieties, with a particular emphasis on rice and wheat.
- **Pioneer of Semi-Dwarf Wheat Varieties:** He played a pioneering role in the development of semi-dwarf wheat varieties, designed to minimize lodging (stem bending) and enhance crop yields.
- **Collaboration with Norman Borlaug:** Through collaboration with Norman Borlaug, they introduced dwarfing genes into wheat strains, ushering in what became known as the "Wheat Revolution."
- **Acknowledgment of Green Revolution Challenges:** Swaminathan was acutely aware of the challenges associated with the Green Revolution, including issues like the **displacement of traditional crop varieties, concerns about soil fertility preservation, and the indiscriminate use of pesticides.**

- Additionally, he raised concerns about the risks associated with the **excessive exploitation of groundwater resources, highlighting the need for sustainable agricultural practices.**

### **Need For Evergreen Revolution:**

The concept of the “Evergreen Revolution” was introduced by Dr. M. S. Swaminathan to emphasize the idea of achieving continuous and sustainable improvements in agricultural productivity without causing harm to the environment and society.

Dr. M. S. Swaminathan coined the term “Evergreen Revolution” to highlight a pathway where increasing production and productivity align with both short-term and long-term goals of food production.

The central idea is to achieve higher yields while using fewer resources—less land, fewer pesticides, and less water. This revolution aims to create a sustainable and ongoing improvement in agriculture, ensuring its longevity and environmental compatibility.

### **Suggested Measures:**

- **Nutrient-Rich Pulses:** Enhance the production of pulses with a higher nutrient quotient to combat malnutrition.
- **Regional Crop Diversification:** Identify suitable crops for different regions based on soil types and weather conditions to optimize agricultural output.
- **Ecological Integration:** Incorporate ecological considerations alongside scientific methods to improve the effectiveness of the agricultural revolution.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Conduct anticipatory research to assess climate change adaptation and mitigation, involving farmers in the process.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Strive to achieve higher yields with fewer resources, including land, pesticides, fertilizers, and water, for long-term sustainability.
- **Innovative Technology:** Introduce Innovative Information and Communication Technologies (ITC) to provide farmers with weather predictions, sowing guidance, and market prices.
- **E-Kranti Service:** Implement the e-kranti service to offer farmers information on prices, online banking, and the option to buy or sell their produce online.
- **GM Food Crops:** Introduce genetically modified (GM) food crops to boost yields, resist diseases and pests, and enhance nutrition while managing environmental stressors.

### **Awards and Honors**

- Swaminathan was honored as the inaugural recipient of the World Food Prize in 1987 in recognition of his outstanding contributions to India’s wheat and rice production.
- He was bestowed with two of India’s most prestigious civilian honors, the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan, in acknowledgment of his remarkable achievements and contributions.

**Source:**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/ms-swaminathan-father-green-revolution-explained-8959892/>

### **Q1 Consider the following statements regarding the Evergreen Revolution in Indian agriculture:**

1. The Green Revolution focused primarily on increasing the production of cereals, whereas the Evergreen Revolution encompasses a wider range of crops.
2. Diversification of crops and crop rotations are key components of the Evergreen Revolution.
3. Dr. Norman Borlaug is often referred to as the “Father of the Evergreen Revolution”

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding Minimum Support Prices (MSP) in India:**

1. The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for all crops grown in India.
2. MSP is determined based solely on the production cost 'A2+FL' for each crop
3. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) of the Union government plays a key role in the final decision-making process regarding MSP levels.
4. MSPs are primarily aimed at benefiting consumers by keeping food prices stable and preventing inflation.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.3 Assess the multifaceted impact of the Green Revolution on Indian agriculture and society. Discuss the role of government policies to achieve sustainable and equitable agricultural development in India.**

**Rishabh**

## INDIA AGEING REPORT 2023

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the Topic details "India Ageing Report 2023". This Topic has relevance in the "Social Issues" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*What is India Ageing Report, 2023?*

**For Mains:**

*GS2: Social Issues*

**Why in the news?**

Recently, the "India Ageing Report 2023," co-authored by the United Nations Population Fund, India, in partnership with the International Institute for Population Sciences, was released.

**About the Report:**

- The report provides valuable insights into the current situation of population ageing in India, including the demographic and socio-economic status of the elderly population.
- It examines the policies and institutional mechanisms in place to address the needs of the elderly, as well as community efforts and corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- The analysis is based on data from the Longitudinal Ageing Survey in India (LASI) conducted in 2017-2018.

### **Key Findings of the Report:**

- **The Aging Trend: A Steady Rise**
  - The India Ageing Report 2023 highlights the consistent growth of India's elderly population since 1961. While the increase was slow until 2001, it is expected to accelerate significantly in the future.
  - The report suggests that by the end of the century, the elderly population could make up over 36% of the total population.
- **Gender Disparities: Longer Lives for Women**
  - The India Ageing Report identifies a growing disparity in life expectancy between men and women in India. In 1991, the ratio was 930 elderly women per 1,000 elderly men.
  - However, the report predicts a significant shift by 2031, with 951 men for every 1,078 women.
- **Low Awareness of Social Welfare Schemes Among Elderly**
  - The report highlights that the elderly population in India has low awareness about the social welfare schemes intended for them.
  - For instance, only 55% of the elderly are aware of the old-age pension scheme (IGNOAPS); 44% of the widow pension scheme (IGNWPS); and only 12% are aware of the Annapurna Scheme.
- **Disparity in Awareness**
  - The report reveals disparities in awareness of social security schemes not only between rural and urban areas but also across States.
  - Additionally, there is minimal awareness regarding the MWPS (Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens) Act among the elderly, with under 12% having any knowledge of it.
- **Low Utilization of Welfare Schemes**
  - The report finds low utilization of social security schemes, with only 30% of the rural elderly from below-poverty-line (BPL) households receiving benefits from IGNOAPS and only 24% of elderly BPL widows receiving widow pensions. The utilization of the Annapurna scheme is remarkably low across all sections of the elderly.
- **Statewide Disparity in Utilization**
  - There is a noticeable disparity across States concerning the utilization of welfare schemes.
  - The highest coverage of IGNWPS was found in Andhra Pradesh, with about 51% of widowed elderly receiving pensions, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Telangana with around 41% coverage.
- **Accessibility Challenge for Older Persons with Disabilities**
  - According to the report, access to social security schemes for older persons with disability is significantly lesser.
  - For example, only around 32% of the elderly with hearing and vision impairments availed the social insurance scheme.
- **Administrative Hurdles**
  - Extensive documentation and multiple administrative procedures are cited as key reasons for the elderly not availing the welfare schemes.

- These procedural requirements often pose challenges due to physical infirmities and lack of technical understanding among the elderly population.

### **Additional Information:**

#### **United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing: 2020–2030**

- The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) represents a worldwide partnership that aligns with the final decade of the SDGs.
- This initiative unites governments, civil society, international organizations, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector with the shared goal of enhancing the well-being of older individuals, their families, and the communities they inhabit.

#### **International Day of Older Persons**

- The International Day of Older Persons is observed on October 1st each year to raise awareness about the issues faced by older individuals and to celebrate their contributions to society.
- It aims to promote healthy aging, emphasize the rights of older persons, and encourage society to adopt policies that support their well-being.

#### **Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the “India Ageing Report 2023”:**

1. The report is primarily based on data from the Longitudinal Ageing Survey in India (LASI) conducted in 2017-2018.
2. The report predicts that by the end of the century, the elderly population in India could constitute over 50% of the total population.

#### **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: (a)**

#### **Q.2 Consider the following statements:**

1. The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing spans from 2020 to 2030.
2. This initiative is not aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. International Day of Older Persons is observed on October 1st each year.

#### **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 1 and 2

**Answer: (c)**

**Q3. Discuss the demographic and socio-economic aspects of India’s elderly population as highlighted in a recent report. Evaluate the challenges faced by the elderly in accessing social welfare schemes and analyze the potential solutions to address these issues.**