



Saffron Production Declines in Kashmir Valley

Why in News?

The [Kashmir Valley](#) has experienced a notable **decline in production of saffron** due to insufficient rainfall.

- The harvest, traditionally **carried out from mid-October to November**, is primarily concentrated in **South Kashmir's Pampore**, famously known as the "[Saffron Bowl of Kashmir](#)."

Key Points

- **Rainfall Deficit in Kashmir:**
 - Srinagar meteorological department reported a 79% **rainfall deficit** from 1st October to 14th November 2024, following a 26% deficit during the monsoon, **severely affecting agriculture**, including saffron.
- **Government Initiatives:**
 - The [National Mission on Saffron \(NMS\)](#), launched in 2010-11, **aims to address challenges in saffron cultivation**.
 - In **2020**, [Kashmiri saffron received the Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#), with efforts underway to position it as a globally recognized brand.
- **Farmers' Demands:**
 - Farmers emphasize the need for operational borewells and enhanced funding under NMS to ensure sustainable saffron cultivation and address ongoing challenges.
- **Saffron:**
 - Saffron is a **plant whose dried stigmas (thread-like parts of the flower)** are used to make **saffron spice**.
 - Saffron cultivation is believed to **have been introduced in Kashmir by Central Asian immigrants** around the 1st Century BCE.
 - It has been **associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine** and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.
 - It is a **very precious and costly product**.
 - In ancient Sanskrit literature, **Saffron is referred to as 'Bahukam'**.
 - It is cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - **Types:**
 - There are **three types** of saffron available in Kashmir **Lachha Saffron, Mongra Saffron and Guchhi Saffron**.
 - **Importance:**
 - It **rejuvenates health and is used in cosmetics** and for medicinal purposes.
 - It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and **represents the rich cultural heritage of the region**.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- A GI tag is a **name or sign used on certain products** that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
- The GI tag ensures that only the **authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory** are allowed to use the popular product name.

- It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
- A registered GI is **valid for 10 years**.
- GI registration is overseen by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

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