30– 04 – 2024

News: Food Waste Index Report 2024

Food Waste Index Report 2024

- Food Waste Index Report 2024, was released jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), a UK based non-profit organisation, stressed the importance of expanding and strengthening data infrastructure to enable the tracking and monitoring of food waste.
- WRAP is a climate action NGO working around the globe to tackle the causes of the climate crisis and give the planet a sustainable future.
- The report defines "food waste" as "food and the associated inedible parts removed from the human food supply chain."
- Food Loss is defined as "all the crop and livestock human-edible commodity quantities that, directly or indirectly, completely exit the post-harvest/slaughter production/supply chain up to, and excluding, the retail level".

Magnitude of Food Waste

- In 2022, the world wasted 1.05 billion tonnes of food, amounting to one fifth (19%) of food available to consumers being wasted, at the retail, food service, and household level.
- That is in addition to the 13% of the world's food lost in the supply chain, as estimated by FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), from post-harvest up to and excluding retail.

Food Waste and Greenhouse Gas Emission:

- Food loss and waste generates 8-10% of Global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions – almost five times the total emissions from the aviation sector.
- It occurs while a third of humanity faces food insecurity.

Lower Disparity in Food Waste

- Since the release of the 2021 Food Waste Index Report, there has been a significant expansion in data coverage, resulting in a notable reduction in disparities in average per capita household food waste.
- Across high-income, upper-middle income, and lower-middle income countries, the observed average levels of household food waste differ by just 7 kg per capita per year.

Temperature and Food Waste Correlation

- Hotter countries appear to have more food waste per capita in households, potentially due to increased consumption of fresh foods with substantial inedible parts and lack of robust cold chain.
- Higher seasonal temperatures, extreme heat events, and droughts make it more challenging to store, process, transport, and sell food safely, often leading to a significant volume of food being wasted or lost.

Urban-Rural Disparities

- Middle-income countries display variations between urban and rural populations, with rural areas generally wasting less.
- Possible explanations include greater diversion of food scraps to pets, animal feed, and home composting in rural areas.

Lack Adequate System to Track Progress

- Many low- and middle-income countries continue to lack adequate systems for tracking progress to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030, particularly in retail and food services.

- At present, only four G-20 countries (Australia, Japan, UK, US) and the European Union have food waste estimates suitable for tracking progress to 2030.

Data Variance and Subnational Estimates

- Countries like India, Indonesia, and South Korea have only subnational estimates regarding food waste, highlighting a gap in comprehensive national data.
- The report suggests that this variance necessitates more inclusive studies to capture a clearer picture of the food waste landscape.