



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Saffron

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Why is in news? Bumper Saffron crop cheers up farmers in Kashmir Valley

In the Kashmir Valley, farmers are happy with the bumper Saffron crop this year.

Iran, India, Spain and Greece are the major saffron producing countries with **Iran** occupying the maximum area and contributing about **88% of world's saffron production**.

Though, **India occupies the 2nd largest area** but produces approximately **7 per cent** of the total world production.

Kashmir saffron is renowned globally as a spice.

Saffron cultivation is believed to have been introduced in Kashmir **by Central Asian immigrants** around 1st Century BCE. In ancient Sanskrit literature, **saffron is referred to as 'bahukam'**.

It rejuvenates health and is used in cosmetics and for medicinal purposes.

The **unique characteristics of Kashmir saffron** are its longer and thicker stigmas, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemical-free processing, and high quantity of crocin (colouring strength), safranal (flavour) and picrocrocin (bitterness).

It is the **only saffron in the world grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m AMSL** (above mean sea level), which adds to its uniqueness and differentiates it from other saffron varieties available the world over.

Kashmir saffron, which is **cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir**, got the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2020**.

The GI Certification will also put an end to the marketing of Saffron cultivated in other countries under the garb of being produced in Kashmir.

The spice is grown in Pulwama, Budgam, Kishtwar, and Srinagar regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

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