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International year of Millets-2023

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International year of Millets-2023

Background

‘Millets’ were among the first crops to be domesticated in India with several evidence of its’ consumption during the Indus valley civilization. Being grown in more than 130 countries at present, Millets are considered traditional food for more than half a billion people across Asia and Africa. Millet is a common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed Nutri-cereals or Dryland-cereals and includes Sorghum (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Finger Millet (Ragi), Little Millet (Kutki), Foxtail Millet (Kakun), Proso Millet (Cheena), Barnyard Millet (Sawa), Kodo Millet (Kodon) and other millets. Millets are a good source of carbohydrates, protein, and various micronutrients, including iron, zinc, and vitamin B6. It is also gluten-free, making it a good option for people with celiac disease or gluten intolerance.

In India, millets are primarily a kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples. Millets are important by the virtue of its mammoth potential to generate livelihood, increase farmers’ income and ensure food & nutritional security all over the world.¹ However, despite its many benefits, millet is often overlooked by farmers, policymakers, and the general public in favor of other staple crops such as wheat, rice, and maize.

United Nations Resolution

The U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by India and supported by 72 countries, and declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets on 5th March 2021. The resolution is intended to increase public awareness on the health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under tough conditions marked by climate change.² The IYM 2023 and the push towards increasing millet production will contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“This International Year is a timely reminder of this important crop. And it provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of, and to direct policy attention to the nutritional and health benefits of millet consumption, the suitability of millets for cultivation under adverse and changing climatic conditions and creating sustainable and innovative market opportunities for many countries around the world for millets to benefit farmers and consumers globally.” Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), *Director-General Qu. Dongyu*

Objective of the International Year of Millets

- Elevate awareness of the contribution of millet to food security and nutrition.
- Inspire stakeholders on improving sustainable production and quality of millets.
- Draw focus on enhanced investment in research and development and extension services to achieve the other two aims

Millets in India

- ❖ In India, millets were traditionally consumed, but due to the push given to food security through Green Revolution in the 1960s, millets were rendered as ‘orphan crops’ – less consumed and almost forgotten. Before the Green Revolution, millets made up around 40% of all cultivated grains, which has dropped to around 20% over the years. Not only has the consumption of millets declined, but the area under production has been replaced with commercial crops, oilseeds, pulses and maize.
- ❖ These commercial crops are profitable, and their production is supported by several policies through subsidised inputs, incentivised procurement and inclusion in the Public Distribution System. This has resulted in changes in dietary patterns with preferential consumption towards fine calorie-rich cereals.
- ❖ Against this backdrop, the Government of India realized the importance of millets in building nutritional security in the country and made several efforts such as gazetting millets as Nutri-Cereals, the celebration of the National Year of Millets in 2018, several small-scale policies on millets and proposing the International Year of Millets to UNGA.³

³<https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NotelD=151249&ModuleId=3>

Global Scenario of Millets

Millets Area and Production Region-wise (2019)

| Regions | Area (lakh hectare) | Production (lakh tonne) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Africa | 489 (68%) | 423 (49%) |
| Americas | 53 (7%) | 193 (23%) |
| Asia | 162 (23%) | 215 (25%) |
| Europe | 8 (1%) | 20 (~2%) |
| Australia & New Zealand | 6 (~1%) | 12 (~1%) |
| India | 138 (20%) | 173 (20%) |
| World | 718 | 863 |

(Source: FAO Stat 2021)

Indian Scenario

- ❖ India produces more than 170 lakh tonnes of millet, which is 80 per cent of Asia's and 20 per cent of global production. While the Global average yield of Millet is 1229 kg/ha, the yield in India is 1239 kg/ha.
- ❖ India recorded 27 per cent growth in millet production in 2021-22 as compared to millet production in the previous year was 15.92 MMT.⁴
- ❖ India produces all the nine commonly known millets and is the largest producer and fifth-largest exporter of millets in the world.⁵
- ❖ The major millets producing states in India are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- ❖ Under National Food Security Mission (NFMS) programme, the NFMS-Nutri Cereals is being implemented in 212 districts of 14 states.
- ❖ India has more than 500 Start-ups working in the millet value-added chain, while Indian Institute of Millets Research has incubated 250 Start-ups under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana - *Raftar*.

⁴<https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NotelD=151249&ModuleId=3>

⁵<https://fpohub.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-White-paper-on-millets.pdf>

India: Production of Millets during the last 10 years⁷

(In Lakh Tonnes)



| Crop | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Jowar | 59.8 | 52.8 | 55.4 | 54.5 | 42.4 | 45.7 | 48.0 | 34.8 | 47.7 | 47.8 |
| Bajra | 102.8 | 87.4 | 92.5 | 91.8 | 80.7 | 97.3 | 92.1 | 86.6 | 103.6 | 108.6 |
| Ragi | 19.3 | 15.7 | 19.8 | 20.6 | 18.2 | 13.9 | 19.9 | 12.4 | 17.6 | 19.6 |
| Small Millets | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 3.5 |
| Total Nutri Cereals | 186.4 | 160.3 | 172.0 | 170.8 | 145.2 | 161.2 | 164.4 | 137.1 | 172.6 | 179.6 |

Steps Taken For Promoting Millets

- ❖ “Sub Mission on Millets” under National Food Security Mission since 2018.
- ❖ Millets included under *Poshan Mission Abhiyan* by Ministry of Women & Child Development.
- ❖ 200 Start-ups were supported through IIMR, Hyderabad.
- ❖ 67 Value added Technologies developed at Centre of Excellences.
- ❖ Release of 13 High Yielding varieties including bio-fortified varieties of millets.⁶

⁶<https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/Crops.pdf>

- ❖ To promote the shipment of Nutri-cereals, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry through its apex agricultural export promotion body, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has prepared a comprehensive strategy to promote Indian millets exports across the globe commencing December 2022.⁷
- ❖ NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) with United Nations World Food Program (WFP) on December 20, 2021. The partnership focuses on mainstreaming millets and supporting India in taking lead globally in knowledge exchange using the opportunity of 2023 as an International Year of Millets.⁸
- ❖ Union Budget 2022-23 highlighted that support would be provided for post-harvest value addition, enhancing domestic consumption, and for branding millet products nationally and internationally.⁹
- ❖ In a webinar, held on February 24, 2022, dealing with the positive impact of Union Budget 2022-23 on the agriculture sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon the corporate world to come forward in branding and promoting Indian millets.

'Special Millets Lunch'

Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to promote millets in the country and the world has organized a 'Special Millets Lunch' for MPs in the Parliament Courtyard on December 20, 2022. The luncheon served an elaborate curated millet buffet to highlight the diversity of Indian millet and the variety of millet cuisines.

⁷<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1874937>

⁸<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1783716>

⁹https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/budget_speech.pdf

State Initiatives for Millet development

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Odisha | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Odisha Millet Mission,2018• Ragi included under PDS-2018-19 in 7 Disticts |
| Karnataka | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organic Farming & Millet promotion "Savayava Bhagya Yojana"• Incentive to farmers- Rs.10000/ha for cultivation of Millets |
| Maharashtra | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting Millets through Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture |
| Telangana | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raithu Bandhu Samithi, exclusive Farmers' Producer Organization s for millets. |

Preparation for International Year of Millets

- ❖ Core Committee has been formed
- ❖ Consultation held with States, Processors, Chefs/ Nutritionists, Farmers/FPOs in June, 2021.
- ❖ Position paper on millets prepared by IIMR, Hyderabad and shared with stakeholders.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR) to be the Nodal Institute.
- ❖ International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to be the knowledge partner for IYoM 2023
- ❖ 6 Task forces constituted.
- ❖ Blueprint for 19 Ministries of Govt. of India prepared.¹⁰

Way Forward

The transformative role of millets in tackling lifestyle diseases, the benefits of mainstreaming millets in public-funded programs and the growing realisation of huge

¹⁰ <https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/Crops.pdf>

potential for export markets, especially, in midst of the Covid-19 pandemic are projecting them as immune boosters owing to their rich nutritional profile. Millets are coming to the global forefront, and the recent resolution by the United Nations General Assembly to observe the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets for emphasizing the importance of nutrition-rich crops in climate-changing conditions is one step in that direction. It is an obvious prediction that the awareness creation about millets would take place in more than 70 countries that supported India's proposal, and many other countries, and thus the demand for such foods too would increase. It is presumed that the world is looking towards India's traditional foods and it turned to be the mandate of the Government of India to scale up the interventions for increasing the millets area and production, diversifying the processing machinery and technologies, expanding the private food processing ecosystem and thus to cater to the various segments in domestic and export markets.

The International Year of Millet is an important initiative that aims to promote the cultivation, consumption, and trade of millet, a staple grain crop that is particularly important for food security in arid and semi-arid regions of the world. By raising awareness of the many benefits of millet and encouraging its cultivation and consumption, the IYM hopes to improve the livelihoods of millet farmers and enhance food security for millions of people around the world.