

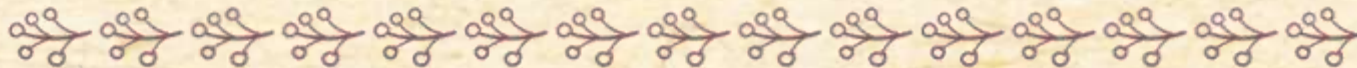


PROCEEDINGS

The People's Convention

Millets for Millions

24 – 25th February 2023 | New Delhi | RRA Network



The People's Convention

Millet for Millions

24 – 25th February 2023 | New Delhi | RRA Network



Ecosystem Partner



Knowledge Partners



Collaborating Networks



Strategic Partners



Contributing Partners



“I am humbled by the knowledge, leadership and entrepreneurial spirit of farmers in rainfed regions whose work parallels those of well-endowed institutions.”

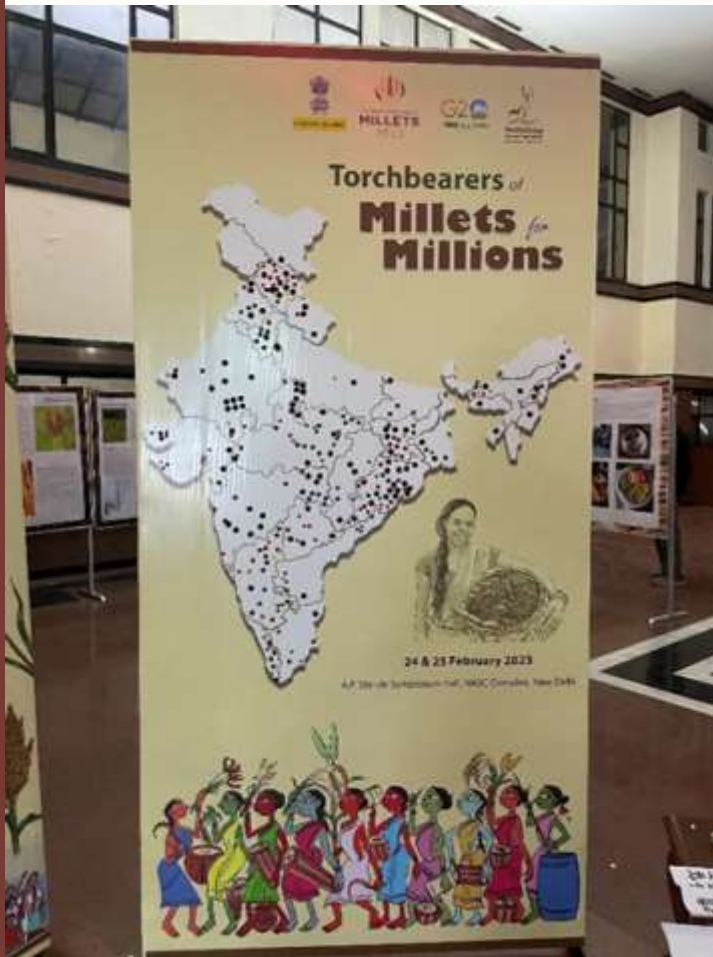
- Dr. Ashok Dalwai,

CEO, National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA), Government of India, New Delhi



Day 1

24th February



INAUGURATION

The People's Convention: Millets for Millions was inaugurated by farmers from different regions of India ceremoniously pouring, into traditional pots and baskets, indigenous seeds, native soil, and water from their respective lands. It was a sacred ceremony that symbolised the diversity of rainfed areas, millet varieties and cultural traditions. Welcoming all the participants, from 28 different states and union territories, **Dr. Sabyasachi Das**, *National Coordinator of RRA Network*, stated that the objective of the Convention was to collaboratively deliberate on how millets be consumed and produced by millions of people, benefitting rural stakeholders.



SUPPORTING THE MILLETS AGENDA OF THE PEOPLE

The chief guest, **Dr. Ashok Dalwai**, *Chief Executive Officer, National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA)* noted that this was a unique millet convention where the dignitaries were not scientists or government officers, but common people. Recognizing the vast experience of people on millets, Dr. Dalwai pledged to millets to millions of people.

Mr. D. Narendranath, *Chairman, Advisory Board of RRA Network* said that Millets for Millions is a vision statement for the larger economy, ecology, society, and culture.

ACKNOWLEDGING REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION OF MILLETS IN INDIA

Dr. Rajeswari S Raina, *Professor, Shiv Nadar University (SNU)* publicly felicitated Shri Periyapatna Venkatasubbaiah Satheesh, founder of the Deccan Development Society, and Dr. Annadana Seetharam, Former Project Coordinator for Small Millets, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, for their lifetime's work on research and people-centric approaches to millets.



■ **Shri Periyapatna Venkatasubbaiah Satheesh**, regarded as one of the greatest visionaries of rainfed farming, has been internationally recognized for his work on Millets particularly with women farmers.



■ **Dr. Annadana Seetharam** has pioneering work spanning over four decades in millets, advocating for breeding and promoting of local seed systems on millets, and strengthening them through seed hubs, cooperatives and community managed seed systems in rainfed areas.

मिलेट्स की कहानी - मिलेट्स की ज़बानी

उनके उत्पत्ति स्थान, विविध प्रकार और नाम। उनकी विशेषताएँ - कम संसाधन, विषम परिस्थिति में उगने की क्षमता, विभिन्न बीजों। मानव संस्कृति के अनेक ताने-बाने के जूझने और जलवायु परिवर्तन के इस दौर में उनकी प्रासंगिकता।

हम अफ्रीका, जापान से, भारत से, चीन से
रंगों से मिले रंग, तो हुए रंगीन से

हम बाजरा, सामा हैं हम, बंटी-बरगु-नाचनी, हम थे - हम हैं
हम कोदरा, जोन्ना हैं हम, पीली हरी बंगनी, हम थे - हम हैं

थोड़ी सी मिट्टी चाहिए, थोड़ा-थोड़ा पानी
थोड़ी सी धूप-छाँव ये हमारी निशानी
सहाराओं से, जंगल तलक, मैदान से परबत तलक
हम थे - हम हैं

रहें ना अकेले, अकेले ना चलें
हम सात-नी-बारहनाजा साथ में चलें
इक दुसरे को थाम के, मिल के रहे हैं इसलिए
हम थे - हम हैं

कथाओं में, किताब में, रिवाज़ों-रीत में
मुहावरों में, छंद में, गीतों में प्रीत में
कई दर्द में, कई मर्ज़ में, गरमी बरखा सर्द में
हम थे - हम हैं

यहाँ-यहाँ सारे जहाँ में मिलेंगे
जो चूल्हों पे सजें तो, शेतों में खिलेंगे
इन्साँ पले, धरती फले, हम थे - रहेंगे
आबोहवा बदले भले, हम थे - रहेंगे

हम बाजरा, सामा हैं हम
हम कोदरा, जोन्ना हैं हम
हम थे - रहेंगे, हम थे - रहेंगे

चिनप - चार्ल, 24.02.2023



हम थे, रहेंगे - Millet Song



Our warm thanks to the RRA Network and all those who helped us understand the world of millets.
Released on the occasion of People's Convention - Millets for Millions, 24-25 February, 2023, New Delhi.

+91 98250 48830 | loknaad@gmail.com | www.loknaad.in

RELEASE OF MILLET THEME SONG

Smt. Charul Bharwada and **Shri Vinay Mahajan** from *Loknaad* gave a soul-touching rendition of the Millet Theme Song that they had composed specially for this event, based on their original research of work songs of the rural people who cultivate and consume millets.

The song titled "*Hum the, rahenge!*" (We were there, will be there) celebrates the origins of millets, its varieties, and affirms that millets have always been at the centre of people's lives.



RECOGNISING INSPIRATIONAL CONTRIBUTION ON MILLETS

Dr Ashok Dalwai and **Shri D. Narendranath** felicitated the following millet farmers from across the country recognizing their inspirational contributions on millets.



■ **Padma Shri Nek Ram Sharma**, a champion of organic and natural farming in Himachal Pradesh, who preserved and promoted 40 varieties of traditional seeds.

■ **Smt. Bibi Jan Halemani**, the convenor of Bibi Fatima Self-Help Group from Kundgol, Karnataka, who has set up a community seed bank to revive the cultivation of a variety of millets.

■ **Smt. Aruna Tirkey**, an indigenous food revivalist from Jharkhand, who leads a restaurant and resource centre called Ajam Emba, which revives the "great taste" of millets, a key initiative towards mainstreaming adivasi food systems.

■ **Smt. Lahari Bai**, a young woman from Dindori, Madhya Pradesh, famous for conserving and protecting 150 varieties of millets, mostly minor millets.

■ **Shri Sukdeb Silpadia**, an organic millet farmer from Koraput, Odisha, who has done multi-location trials of 22 millet varieties with Odisha Millets Mission.

■ **Shri Ali Akbar Sheikh**, a young dynamic farmer from Dhubri, Assam, has been promoting millet by supplying seeds & conducting field demonstrations of improved millet seeds.



INTRODUCTION TO THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Five roundtable discussions, focusing on key aspects of the millet value chain, were the central point of the event, where practitioners and policy-makers deliberated upon the most feasible pathways of taking millets to millions (farmers, entrepreneurs, and consumers). **Shri Gagan Sethi**, *Founder, Centre for Social Justice*, introduced the themes of the five roundtable discussions that were as follows:



Millets in public diets through PDS and ICDS to mitigate malnutrition.



Promoting people-centric approaches in the millet processing ecosystem



Enabling support services for strengthening local millet markets



Strengthening agro-biodiversity of Millets through Community-managed Seed Systems



Breaking barriers in Millet productivity through sustainable intensification and multi-cropping systems

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Farm Songs from Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. Farmer groups from Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan performed songs documented as a part of “Our Farm Songs” book documented by Loknaad and RRA Network. They performed their farm songs which revolve around their everyday agricultural practices like tilling, transplanting, harvesting and threshing of millets.

Beru Bevaru Kala Balaga, Karnataka



Community members from *Beru Bevaru Kala Balaga* cultural group, coming from rural Karnataka performed contemporary songs based on reminiscing of the generations long legacy associated with millets. The songs are scripted such that millets themselves share their stories and experiences over the ages.

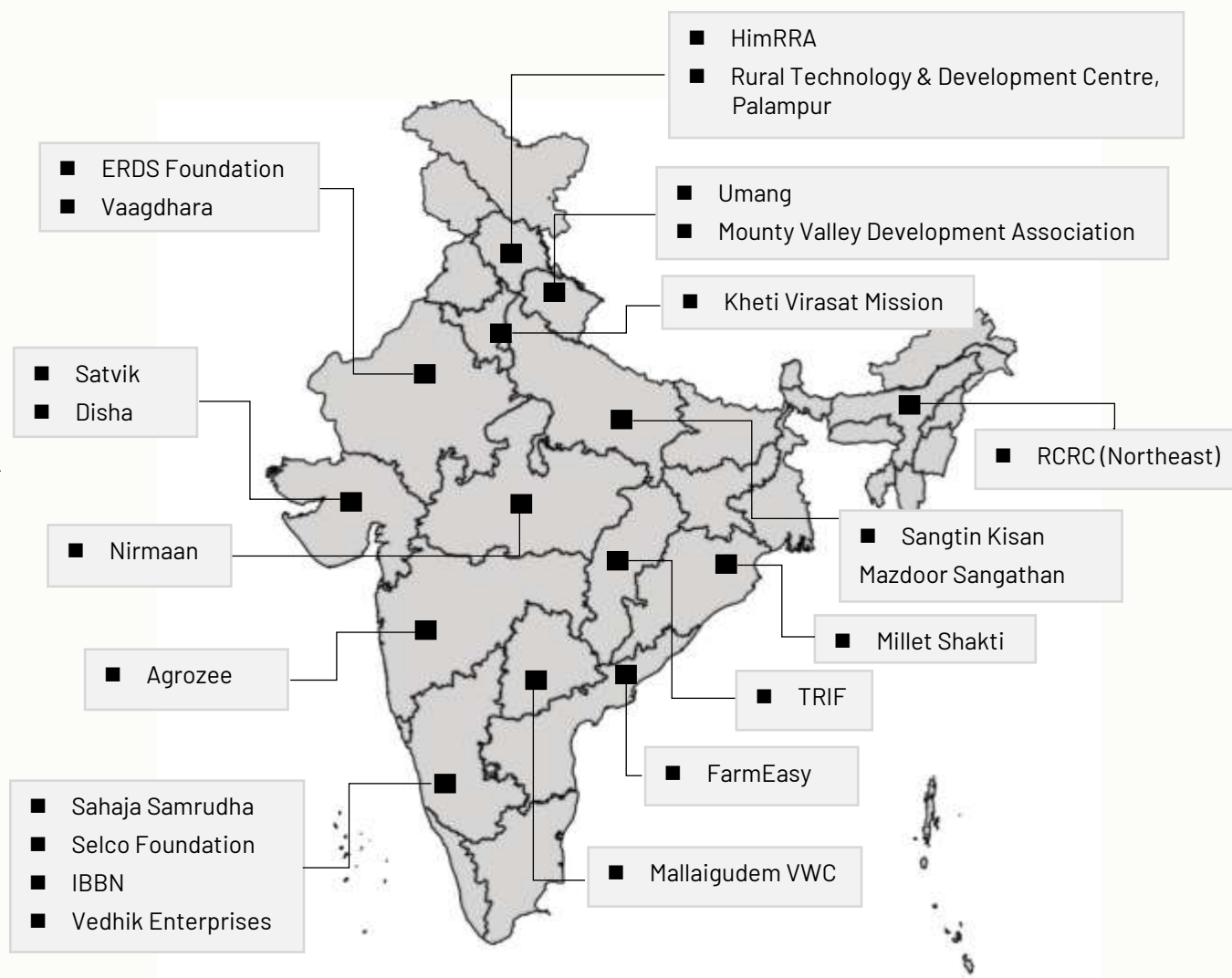
Cultural Group from Kutch, Gujarat

The performers from *Maldhari* community (a pastoral community from Gujarat) performed songs called *Sindhi* and *Joriya Pawa* - they are usually sung by herdsmen when they are moving or resting with their livestock through the terrains of Kutch. Some of the songs are also associated with calling of rains, finding fodder and water and entertaining the animals.



STALLS

The Convention invited organisations working on millet conservation to exhibit their millet work Stalls by these organisations showcased the significant role of millets in Indian food systems. The stalls depicted the uniqueness of each state's millet production methods and showcased a main millet of the state. Pictures and documentation of millets and millet products and their agroecological systems were showcased, along with artworks made with millets. The principles and design of multi-cropping systems of millet cultivation were also exhibited in the stalls. 150 varieties of millets, 30 ragi varieties, 6 foxtail varieties, 7 little millet varieties, 9 other millet varieties, 10 varieties of pulses, local millet delicacies like Multi millet ladoo, Millet cookies, Millet cracker, Millet khakhra, Millet poha, etc., were displayed to represent various aspects of India's traditions and diversity in food systems. Overall, these stalls were an excellent platform to showcase the rich diversity associated with millets.





“The Government of India will work on validating and synchronizing the decentralized knowledge system of millets of the local communities with the scientific knowledge of the universities. Food security, so far, has been very centralized, but today we need a decentralized system which will be complex, but we have sufficient experience on the ground to work this out..”

- Shri. Manoj Ahuja,

Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,

Government of India



Day 2

25th February



PANEL DISCUSSION: STATE MILLET MISSIONS - INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES BY THE STATES



Smt. Ashwini Kulkarni, *Director, Pragati Abhiyan*, who moderated the session stated that a Glocal (Local to Global) multi-sectoral approach was needed for promoting millets noting that local resilience is key to combating global climate change.



Dr. Arabinda K. Padhee, *IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha*, shared highlights of the Odisha Millet Mission (OMM), internationally acclaimed for effecting a decentralised and agroecological approach to food systems. OMM has worked on end-to-end solutions for the millet value chain. Millets are distributed as an additional supplement in tribal districts in the public distribution system, and excess supply in a district is pushed through additional increases in PDS to reduce storage. Odisha was the first state to determine standard operating protocols for sale of seed of landraces. The government has announced a Minimum Support Price for 3 millets and benchmarking of prices for minor millets (small millet and foxtail millet) is underway. Post-harvest and processing have empowered rural entrepreneurs with limited capital. Consumer awareness has been successfully created, with celebrities appointed as brand ambassadors.



Smt. Chahat Bajpai, *IAS, Additional Collector, KB Asifabad district, Telangana* gave an overview of the introduction of millets in ICDS in that district. Anganwadi workers and women SHGs are central in this award-winning initiative, where the millet value chain is localised. Local procurement and processing is important due to the low shelf life of processed millet. Policy reforms by the Government of India would make it easier to introduce millets in public welfare schemes.



Dr Ajab Kumar Negi, *Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture, Government of Himachal Pradesh* said that about 1.25 lakhs of farmers have been practising natural farming in the state and millets are suitable under this agriculture practice. His department has undertaken millet awareness events in all districts of Himachal Pradesh and farmers will be identified, trained and motivated to grow millets.



Shri Jayaram Killi, *National Mission Manager (Livelihoods), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)* said women and Millets are inseparable as Millets in most parts are taken care of by women. One such example is OMM (Odisha Millet Mission) where women have been leading the Millets agenda starting from Production to Marketing. Similar initiative has been taken up by NRLM where Ministry of Rural Development is supporting 9 crore women involved into SHG groups with the promotion of Millet Production, enhancement, Area expansion, Infrastructure creation, Primary & Secondary processing and dietary diversification to address climate change, nutritional security & realize better price to farmers.

Comments from Audience

“Civil Society Organisation (CSO) have played a crucial role in designing OMM. We should keep that in mind.”

- Dr. D.K. Sadana

“Organisational development of the CSO Sector is a crucial need, beyond one’s project implementation.”

- Mr. Dinesh Balam



PANEL DISCUSSION: FORMULATING A COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY WITH PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS AND DONORS



Shri D. Narendranath and **Shri Prasanna Khemaria** moderated this discussion with participants representing the Axis Bank Foundation, Edelgive Foundation, Welthungerhilfe, and the Agroecology Fund. A collaborative strategy involving philanthropic institutions and donors was formulated to support millet-based food systems that empower rural communities as that would help in achieving SDG targets. The need for collective action and the role of civil society organisations in catalysing, demonstrating, and recommending scaling strategies as well as the importance of research and knowledge sharing was highlighted.



Shri Harshvardhan Dhawan, *Program Lead, Axis Bank Foundation* noted that women self-help groups had been key to scaling millet production and thus there was a need to empower women in millet farming and processing.



Ms. Deepa Gopalakrishnan Sundar, *Head, Sandbox Grants, Edelgive Foundation* highlighted the role of millets in promoting community resilience and addressing climate change.



Ms. Nivedita Varshneya, *Country Director, Welthungerhilfe* highlighted the need for millet for billions, focusing on urban and rural consumer education.



Mr. Minhaj Ameen, *Director, Agroecology Fund* emphasized the need to sensitize philanthropy to the necessity of agroecology and use the concept of payment for ecosystem services to reward farmers for their agroecological practices.

PRESENTATIONS ON ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS BY ANCHORS AND PRACTITIONERS



Millet in Public Diets through PDS & ICDS to mitigate Malnutrition

Moderator

Ms. Aashima Chaudhary,
Associate Director, WASSAN

Anchor

Ms. Bhagya Laxmi,
Associate Director, WASSAN

Invited Speakers

- Mr. T. Nandakumar *IAS Retd Senior Fellow, FOLU (India)*
- Shri Harihar Acharya, *ADO, Dept. of agriculture, Govt. of Odisha*
- Shri Shailendra Tiwari, *Incharge, NDR Unit, Seva mandir*
- Dr. Subrata Dutta, *Country Director (India), Pure Earth and Vice President, Council for Promotion, Research and Trade in Traditional Foods*

Issues

Centralised seed development for multiple locations and their popularisation through released varieties for subsidised distribution is an inappropriate strategy for millets.

Recommendations

- Decentralised / localised seed systems are best suited for millets promotion
- A community led Mapping of Seeds, Knowledge and Ecosystem based wisdom including innovative cultivation methods to bring out local priorities
- Agro-ecological based evaluation (nutrition and resilience) for location-specific Traditional/ popular varieties
- Decentralised Seed System to facilitate quality seed access with WSHGs / FPOs - Locally produced & consumed, Community seed banks, farmers' networks, custodian farmers.
- A framework on Research in Farmers' fields with Research Institutes and Universities - Revisit breeding objectives, Ecosystem based approach, Cropping systems
- Establishment of Millets Corridors (Custodian Network) value chain-Seed, grain, processing, food, market.

Experience / Observations

- ADPC of Sundargarh district of Odisha described the process flow of ragi laddoo supply chain in the ragi laddoo in ICDS program of the district. Supply of ragi from TDCCOL godown to ragi cleaning unit and then cleaned ragi to THR unit where ragi mix is prepared and supplied to Aanganwadi centres. Pre-school students between 3-6 Years are served four laddoos weekly. WSHGs are part of the supply chain.
- Representatives from Bhadrachalam district of Telangana state shared how millet meals and snacks were introduced in ICDS in that district with the help of WCDA, NITI Aayog and WASSAN. Millet food festival was organised during local festivals to create demand among consumers. In collaboration with ICRISAT, one processing unit was established. Initially the pilot project was started with 100 AWC but now it serves another 1058 centres in the district.



Strengthening Agro-biodiversity of Millets through Community-managed Seed Systems

Moderator

Dr. K.S. Varaprasad,

Working Group on Seeds Systems - RRA Network

Anchor

Shri. Krishna Prasad, *Director, Sahaja Samrudha*

Invited Speakers

- Dr. R.B. Deshmukh, *Vice Chancellor, MPKV, Rahuri*
- Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti, *ASHA Network*
- Dr. Oliver King, *Director (Biodiversity), MSSRF*
- Dr. Khizer Baig, *Special Officer Seeds, VNMKV - Parbani*
- Shri Nekram Sharma, *Padmashree Awardee*
- Shri Harshavardhan, *Axis Bank Foundation*
- Shri Chandra Mohan Chand, *BAO, Kalhandi*
- Dr Hanumaratti, *UAS - Dharwad*
- Ms Anitha Reddy, *Sahaja Samrudha*
- Mr Uday Nagubandi, *WASSAN*

Total Participation 148 (One hundred Forty Eight)

Issues

- Increasing evidence is available on potential impact of millets on nutrition indicators at local/ district level. How the Public Distribution System and ICDS, MDM and others are enabled to include millets in the supplementary nutrition programs
- For the Millet economy to evolve, it needs assured bulk demand for a period of time for the market players and investors to find their markets and establish value chains.

Recommendations

- Develop the FAQs for state preferred millets
- Budget Allocation by the central government to invest upfront
- Decentralised processing - Block/cluster level stock point - processing units can be established - moving materials to AWCs to minimise transportation charges and storage pest management
- Behavioural changes - campaigns, food festivals and recipe competitions, etc.
- Culturally acceptable recipes need to be documented and promoted
- Incentivisation of millet farming based on their limited use of water / natural resources

Experience / Observations

- The rabi sorghum variety called *Maldandi*, which has good quality for consumption, was released in 1935 and still exists today because farmers conserved it and it evolved through natural selection, developing some good characteristics. It has been crossbred with around 500 good quality samples, resulting in wonderful varieties suitable for different soil types. Analysis has been done at the Solapur-dryland research station to determine which varieties are suitable for shallow, medium, and deep types of soils, where moisture conservation and water holding capacity differ. Varieties such as *Mouli* and *Anuradha* are suitable for shallow soils, while *Chithra* and *Suchithra* are suitable for medium-deep soils. *Vasudha* and *Yasodha* are suitable for deep soils where moisture conservation is low.
- Traditional systems like *Naagu paddathi* and the knowledge of rural women involved in farming should be utilised for seed sharing and distribution. Some millet varieties can sustain with just 1-2 rains, such as *suryanandi korra*, *manusha korra* and other types of foxtail millets.



Breaking barriers in Millets productivity through sustainable intensification and multi-cropping systems

Moderator

Prof. Srijit Mishra, IGDR, Mumbai

Anchor

Dr. M.L. Sanyasi Rao, WASSAN

Invited Speakers

(A) NICHE LANDSCAPES FOR MILLETS

- Ms. Ashwini Kulkarni *Director, Pragati Abhiyan*
- Mr. Soumik Banerjee, *Independent Researcher, Balaghat - Madhya Pradesh,*
- Mr. Jacob Nellithanam , *Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch, Chhattisgarh,*
- Mr. Prabhakar Adhikari , *Secretary, PRAGATI. Koraput*

(B) SUSTAINABLE MILLETS CULTIVATION

- Dr. T.S. Sukanya, *Professor (Agronomy), ZARS, GKVK, Bengaluru*
- Dr. Samuel Patro, *Principal Scientist & Head, AICRP on Small Millets, Vizianagaram*
- Mr. Susanta Sekhar Chaudhary, *Senior Programme*

Invited Speakers

(C) MILLET-BASED INDIGENOUS MULTI-CROPPING SYSTEMS

- Dr. Ajay Kumar, *Asst. Professor, VCSG, Uttarakhand Univ. of Horticulture & Forestry, Rani-chauri*
- Mr. Pramel Gupta, *Director, Regenerative Agriculture, GREEN Foundation, Bhopal*
- Mr. Pravin Muchhadiya, *Project Director, Satvik, Bhuj, Rajasthan*

Total Participation

40 (Forty)

Issues

- Promotion of monocrops of HYV or hybrids of few millets uniformly across multiple geographies using intensive chemical inputs as is the case in many recommendations of the SAUs/ ICAR disregard the economic and ecological advantages of millet promotion and undermine its potential.

Recommendations

- Millet promotion should not follow locally adapted traditional varieties under agro-ecological methods that are giving better results.
 - * Millets come up well in multiple terrains including marginal lands.
 - * Multi-crops and mixed farming systems integrating livestock are to be of focus
- Need to use 'System Productivity' as a metric rather than factor productivity (yield of one crop, against inputs).
- Remunerative prices (and MSP) will encourage farmers to invest, make more effort and get better productivity.
- Machinery is required for practices like line sowing/ weeding suitable for different terrains for ease of millet cultivation
- Millets are niche crops and they are 'easy-crops' – can be cultivated with ease as intercrops, in multi-crop systems, as relay crops in rice fallows and for reviving fallow lands in rainfed areas. They can be cultivated in multiple soil and land types, in different terrains and agro-climatic situations.
- Promoting millets for self and local consumption is an easy-to-target strategy to reach scale.
- Millets promotion in the above lines need to be included in NFSM programs with different promotional strategies appropriate for millets.

Experience / Observations

- A systematic study conducted at AICRP centres Bengaluru, Kolhapur, Mandya, Jagdalpur, and Vizianagaram during 2019-20 and 2020-21 demonstrates enhanced productivity with the cost-effective technology of the Guli Ragi for sustainable production.
- WASSAN's work with 261 farmers indicated an average increase in yield of finger millet of 3.15 t/ha compared to the conventional method where the yield ranges from 1.7t/ha.



Promoting People-centric approaches in small millet processing ecosystem

Moderator	
Dr. Dwiji Guru, <i>The Millet Foundation</i>	
Anchor	
Ms. Supriya Gowda, <i>SELCO Foundation</i>	
Invited Speakers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Peter Bakos , <i>Transfarm Technologies</i> • Mr Laxmi Narayan , <i>Millet World</i> • Mr Vikram Sankaranarayanan , <i>Borne Technologies</i> • Mr. M. Jagan , <i>WASSAN</i> 	
Total Participation	45 (Forty Five)

Issues

- Large population of people who used to consume millets (and are consuming) are leaving it because of hardships in processing.
- Needs focus on public initiatives to strengthen the millet processing ecosystem nearer to the consumption.

Recommendations

- Program to develop a support ecosystem to set up and strengthen Hamlet and Cluster scale decentralised small scale millet processing
 - * Practitioner driven R&D and innovations
 - * Covering on-farm, post-harvest, primary & secondary processing
 - * Improving nutrition retention & utilisation in local communities
 - * Standardisation of parts & components
 - * Pest management through machine design & practices
 - * Skill Development - all stakeholders in the value chain
 - * Sustainable energy-based solutions & energy efficiency of supply chain
- GST exemption for small scale millets processing machines & for millet rice

Experience / Observations

- Mr. S. Lakshmi Narayana Reddy, Founder, Millet World: If all people start consuming millets, then each village will need at least 2 processing units.
- Mr. M. N. Dinesh Kumar, Founder, Earth 360 Eco ventures: The challenge is the R&D efforts for improving the existing machines for the small and micro scale processing are very limited as there is severe lack of public investment in to this niche, the manufacturers are not in a position to undertake such R&D investment, this has limited the scope of the development of a robust ecosystem for the decentralised processing technology solutions for millets.



Enabling support services for strengthening local millets markets

Moderator

*Shri. S. Balakrishnan,
CEO, Vrutti*

Anchor

*Ms. Arya Raj (Vrutti) and
Ms. Gijivisha Khattry (WASSAN)*

Invited Speakers

- Dr. Prakash Kammardi, *Retd. Professor of Agriculture Economics, UAS Bangalore*
- Aleen Mukherjee, *COO, NCDEX Institute of Commodity Markets and Research*
- Dr. Usha Dharmaraj, *Sr. Technical Officer, Department of Grain Science and Technology*

Total Participation

80 (Eighty)

Issues

- The current focus is on urban organised, valued added and branded markets & exports.
- Strong local short-chain markets and markets for millet as staple for a large percentage of the population are not into public discourse on IYOM.

Recommendations

- Availability and accessibility of Primary processing of millets are key to increasing household consumption and catering to Block level markets. Support such a decentralised enterprise ecosystem to emerge.
- Support introducing millets into local food ecosystems – eateries, tiffin centres, snack food – by promotional investments, training and experimentation
- Planned strategy for extensive communication on millets – breaking myths, nutritional benefits, recipes, dietary intake levels and others; work with multiple stakeholders including health care system and ongoing programs
- R&D on millets product diversification for local food systems.
- Create space for millets in all the existing schemes such as FPOs, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and others.
- State procurement and creating consistent bulk demand – for introduction into the Supplementary Nutrition Programmes – ICDS/ MDM and PDS.
- State procurement policies should ensure that the emerging state procurement markets stay with SHGs and FPOs.
 - * Unlike the paddy-based system – millets in public nutrition programs must promote a method of – “storing raw grains in bulk” and encourage processing nearer to the final distribution points.
- Also, decentralise millet procurement around the ‘final distribution points” by involving FPOs/ SHGs.
- Millets are not allowed in the government warehouses as the standards are not developed/ notified by WDRA; millet traders/ FPOs are not able to access warehousing finance nor take advantage of the NCDEX ecosystem.

Experience / Observations

- We should not think of removing Rice and Wheat from people’s diets to add millet. All of them have to co-exist. Therefore, we need a Millet Promotional Council which can help us break the myths, create awareness and do training around millet and millet-based products. (Dr Usha Dharmaraj, Senior Technical Officer, Central Food Technological Research Institute)
- A farmer from Himachal Pradesh: If we make a Millet-based recipe at our home, my mother-in-law will not make me to feed my child. She will say it is a poor man’s meal and if I am cooking it only, I will have to eat it. My family is not in favour of my child eating millet at home and they are not even aware of the nutrient value it contains.

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON THE ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Guest of Honour

Shri. Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, India

Chief Guest

Prof. Ramesh Chanda, Member, NITI Aayog, New Delhi

Guest of Honour

Dr. Arabinda Padhee, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Employment, Government of India

Guest of Honour

Shri. T. Nandakumar, IAS Retd., Senior Fellow, FOLU India

Guest of Honour

Dr. Ashok Dalwai, IAS, CEO, National Rainfed Area Authority, New Delhi

Moderator

Shri. A. Ravindra, Executive Secretary, WASSAN, Hyderabad



Shri Manoj Ahuja emphasised the **need for a decentralised food system and knowledge** systems that were in sync with local knowledge. He further suggested that the Government of India should work on validating the local knowledge system with agricultural universities. He concluded his speech by speaking about the need for building economic viability over time to promote millets and other rain-fed crops.



Prof Ramesh Chand stressed the need to increase millet production through investments. He suggested **developing state-wise recommendations to increase millet production**.



Smt. Chahat Bajpai spoke of the need for **small-scale user-friendly machinery** for processing millets. She suggested that state governments introduce **localised Public Distribution System (PDS) for millets** in selected districts.



Dr. Arabinda Padhee emphasised the need for flexibility in guidelines and processes to enable district magistrates to make decisions based on local conditions. He recommended increased investments in millet crops and long-term R&D support for at least 10-20 years as well as including millets in MGNREGS and watershed practices. Additionally, he suggested providing medium-term incentive support to farmers for regenerative practices, location-specific seed selection and purification processes, availability of implements to reduce drudgery, and exploring the potential of branding and marketing in both domestic and export markets. He emphasised the need for a multi-stakeholder approach for behavioural change that is community-driven, gender-responsive, and farmer-centric.



Shri T. Nandakumar asked the Government dignitaries to offer policy recommendations that are beneficial for the public good such as **extending the MSP prices to all millets and not just the three major millets**. He emphasised the need to **shift research priorities from building food security to farmers' income security** and to identify which seeds work best for which agroclimate and practices.



Dr. Ashok Dalwai emphasised the importance of **millets becoming the fulcrum of agriculture and a driver of a farmer-centric and nutrition-centric approach to agriculture**. He supported **the idea of a national decade of millets for taking up an enabling support system to take millets to millions**.

MILLET PHOTO CONTEST

The Millet Photo Contest garnered almost 200 entries that were submitted online from across the country, from farmers, civil society organizations, universities, government employees, and freelancers.

The judging panel comprised of:

- 1 Shri Nek Ram Sharma,
Farmer & Indigenous Seed Saver, Padma Shri Awardee 2023
- 2 Smt. Chahat Bajpai, IAS
Additional Collector, KB Asifabad district, Telangana
- 3 Mr. Vikram Nayak,
Cartoonist & Film maker
- 4 Ms Isha Banerjee,
Communication Officer, Welthungerhilfe India



2nd

Jagadish Mandya
Growing with Smiles

The criteria for judging were based on the aesthetics of the photo, its potential to tell a story, and how well it highlighted the cause of millets. **3 Winners and 4 Special Mention Awards were declared at the event.**



1st

Kulaswami Jagannath Jena
*Pearl Millet Cultivation as Traditional Agriculture
by a Woman belongs to Paraja Tribe*



3rd

Satya Sainath
Custodians of agricultural heritage



1st

Special Mention | Mahesh Londhe
Inclusion of Millet based food millet laddoo, millet cookies, millet rava sheera in schools and ICDS Mid-day Meal.



2nd

Special Mention | Nihar Ranjan Bemal
Ancient process to extract millet



3rd

Special Mention | Ajaya Kumar Behera
The millet grain is not only a food;
it is an emotion as well



4th

Special Mention | Jagadish Mandya
Millet Girl

मिलेट्स संकल्प



हम धरती के किसान

हम लोगों के संस्थान

हम हों सरकार में, या हों बाज़ार में
मिलेट्स हमारे हैं, हम उनको थामेंगे

अपनी कलाओं में, अपनी शिक्षाओं में
अपने विज्ञान में, अपने संचार में
अपने आहार में, अपने विचार में
उनको संभालेंगे, उनको संवारेगे

मिलेट्स हमारे हैं, हम उनको थामेंगे
उनको संभालेंगे, उनको संवारेगे



Millets Sankalp

Written and Composed by Vinay - Charul

On the occasion of People's Convention - Millets for Millions.

24-25 February, 2023. New Delhi.

+91 98250 48830 | loknaad@gmail.com | www.loknaad.in

PEOPLE'S OATH

The congregation of farmers to policymakers, researchers to social workers, everyone, holding millets' seeds in their hands, took a pledge to harness, develop, cultivate, consume, cherish and promote millets in life. The Millet Sankalp was scripted by Charul and Vinay, who led the participants through this lyrical pledge.

VOTE OF THANKS

Dr. Sabyasachi Das gave the vote of thanks stating: 'It's great to see the collaboration and effort put in by various stakeholders to make this event successful. It's heartening to know that farmers from all over India, scientists, government officers, and civil society organizations have collaboratively mapped the issues related to promote millet cultivation and consumption.'



The Convention was concluded with all the participants singing the National Anthem. ■







The People's Convention

Millet's for Millions

24 – 25th February 2023 | New Delhi | RRA Network

Ecosystem Partner



Knowledge Partners



Strategic Partners



For more details, please visit <https://milletsformillions.rainfedindia.org>

Mail at secretariat@rainfedindia.org | Visit at www.rainfedindia.org

