



Campaign to create awareness on Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), Promote Millets and Backyard Kitchen Gardens among students, farmers and BMC members

Organised by

National Biodiversity Authority in collaboration with

M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

Background note

The Lifestyle for Environment (**LiFE**), was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP 26 in Glasgow in November 2021. Later, on the occasion of World Environment Day, on 5th June 2022, India furthered the vision of LiFE by launching the LiFE Global Movement. This movement envisions a circular economy by making mindful choices every day and in everyday activities and promotes a sustainable way of living which may impact the environment less, and promote a balance between the needs of the present generation with that of the future.

The United Nations with the aim to create awareness and increase production and consumption of millets, at the behest of the Government of India, declared 2023 the **International Year of Millets**. To commemorate this, Government of India is hosting various interactive activities around Millets and invites various stakeholders of millets value-chain to come forward and join hands to revive the forgotten glory of 'Miracle Millets' through the grand celebration of International Year of Millets - 2023.

Millets are small-grained, annual, warm-weather cereals belonging to the Poaceae (grass) family and were the first crops to be domesticated 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, and have been an integral part of our diet for centuries. Millets encompass a diverse group of cereals including major millets such as Sorghum {*Sorghum bicolor* (Jowar)}; Pearl Millet {*Pennisetum glaucum* (Bajra)}; Ragi {*Eleusine coracana* (Finger millet)}; and small millets such as Proso (*Setaria italica* Cheena); Kodo (Kodra, Arikelu); Fox tail millet {*Setaria italica* (Kangni/Korra)}; *Echinochloa crus-galli* (Barnyard Varai, Sawa); little millet {*Panicum sumatrense* (Kutki)} etc. cultivated in in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and is an important source of nourishment for millions of people. Consumption of millets is deeply rooted in Indigenous Peoples' culture and traditions and help guarantee food security in areas where they are culturally relevant. Rich in B vitamins like niacin and thiamine, millet is a nutrient dense alternative to rice. One cup of cooked millet contains 12 percent of the recommended daily allowance of protein and is loaded with minerals manganese and phosphorous. Millet is also low glycemic and gluten-free. In addition to a plethora of health benefits, millets are also good for the environment with low water and input requirement.

M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation initiated millet Research and Development work in mid-nineties in the Eastern Ghats. The activities involve a holistic value chain approach from 'farm

to fork', addressing highly interconnected aspects of conservation, cultivation, consumption and marketing of millets. Farmers were encouraged to conserve and cultivate diverse landraces of millets belonging to different species (Finger millet, little millet, Foxtail Millets, Proso millet and Kodo millet) under different cropping systems and through a wise blend of traditional and modern practices. MSSRF have helped farmer's organizations and self-help groups to establish locally suited processing millet and provided training on Value addition to millets and attempted to link it with value chain. Such initiatives were successful in Kolli Hills of Tamil Nadu, Koraput of Odisha, Mandla and Dindori region of Madhya Pradesh. MSSRF shared the best practices with Constituency partners in similar ecological region in the country to conserve and promote Nutritious crops. In the recent years Millets have been identified as a strategic crop to addresses issues related to Nutrition Poverty and valorized as "Nutricereals". Millets are also considered as vital crop for its climate resilient properties and recommended in rain fed agriculture systems and hill agriculture. The United Nation has also announced the year 2023 as International Year of Millets.

As part of the LiFE mission, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and National Biodiversity Authority of India (NBA) in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is organising programmes for college students, farmers and Biodiversity Management Committee members to enhance awareness on the nutritional benefits of millets and to ensue nutritional security.