

Importance and Benefits of Millets Cultivation in India

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Introduction

The word millets is used to describe small-grained cereals like sorghum, pearl millet, foxtail millet, little millet, kodo millet, finger millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, and brown top millet. One of the oldest meals are millets, which are small-seeded tough plants that can survive in dry climates or locations with little soil quality and rainfall. Millets are a group of cereal grains that belong to the *Poaceae* family, commonly known as the grass family. One of the first crops to be domesticated was millets. Millets were consumed by the population of the Indus Valley as early as 3,000 BC, and various types that are currently produced all over the world originated in India. Native cultivars of the crop are grown in West Africa, China, and Japan. Due to their short growing season, millets may very well fit into numerous cropping systems under irrigation as well as dryland farming.



They can also survive in poor soil or climate conditions and supply nutritious grain as well as feed for animals as a fodder. More than half a billion people in Asia and Africa mostly use millets as their primary source of nutrition today. Millets are now growing in more than 130 nations. They are typically cultivated in rain fed locations and require a lot less water than rice and wheat. Millets are mostly a kharif crop in India. According to data from the Agriculture Ministry, three millet crops—bajra (3.67%), jowar (2.13%), and ragi (0.48%)—accounted for nearly 7% of the nation's gross cultivated area in 2018–19. Millets are known as "nutrition powerhouses."

The Agriculture Ministry certified millets as "Nutri Cereals" on April 10, 2018. For the purposes of production, consumption, and trade, jowar, bajra, ragi/mandua, the minor millets kangani/kakun, cheena, kodo, sawa/ sanwa/ jhangora, and kutki, as well as the two pseudo millets buckwheat (kuttu) and amaranth (chaulai), which have "excellent nutritious value,".In millets found that anti-diabetic properties and low Glycemic Index in millet based food product which may be helpful in reducing the postprandial blood glucose level and glycosylated hemoglobin. Millet(s) also have antioxidant and antimicrobial properties and protein content. When compared to cereals, millets are also typically higher in total dietary fiber and total phenol content.

Shortlisted Logo and Slogan for IYoM-2023



पोषक अनाज है गुणों का खज़ाना,
 सस्ता-सुगम है इसे खेतों में उगाना ॥

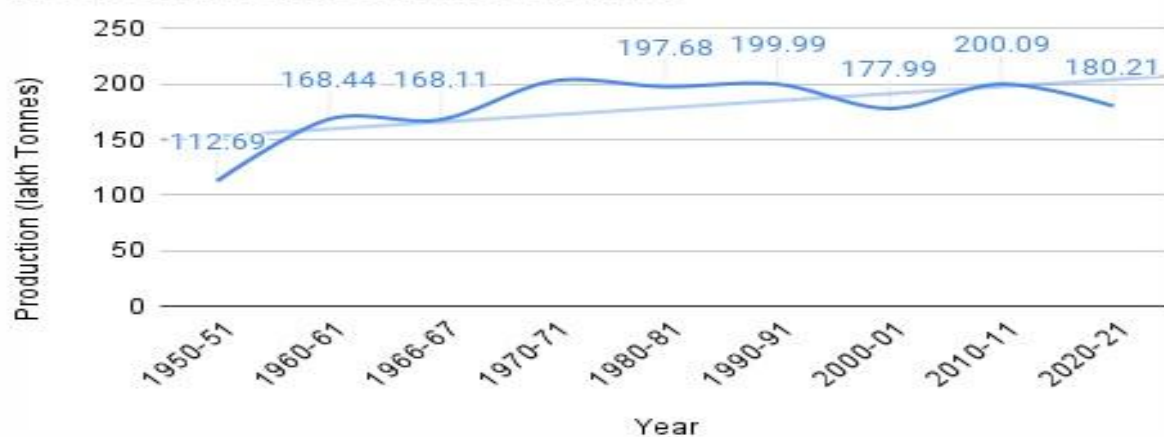
स्वस्थ थाली मिलेट वाली

Wheat was previously reserved for people who had greater financial position, whereas millets/motaanaj/coarse grains were only available to those who had less money. In the hillsides of Northern India, barnyard millet was also taken into consideration as a paddy alternative. However, Today the situation is exactly the reverse right now. People are now more concerned about their health and want products produced from millet. Following a proposal by India, which aims to establish itself as a major producer of millets, the United Nations has selected 2023 as the International Year of the Millet 2023.

Indian Millet Production Scenario

India is the largest producer of millet, Niger and Sudan follow next. India is both the world's top producer and exporter of cereal-related goods. In the financial years 2021–2022, India exported 12,872.64 USD million dollars' worth of cereals, or Rs. 96,011.42 crore. India is one of top 5 nations in the world for millets exports. From \$400 million in 2020 to \$470 million in 2021, millet exports increased globally (ITC trade map) In comparison with the previous year (\$59.75 million), India exported millets worth \$64.28 million in 2021–2022.

Production Trends of Millets in India



Although millet is not a common food crop in developed nations, it is a crucial component of many people's diet there. Where other crops will fail in dry, arid settings, millet grows under these conditions. Also, it is a nutritious grain that is rich in fibre and important nutrients.

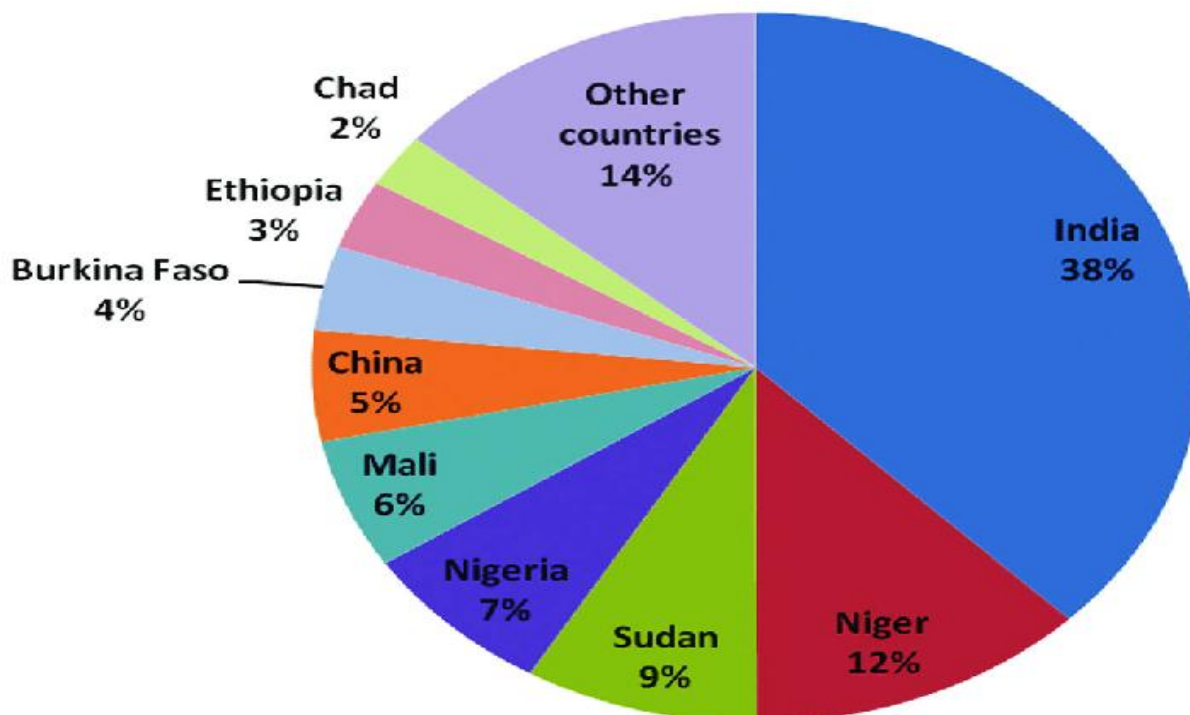


Figure 1: Millet production (%) in different countries of the world (FAO 2018).

Importance of Millets:

- Millets are extremely adaptable to a variety of ecological conditions, and they survive in rain-fed, desert climates with little need for water, fertilizer, or pesticides.
- Healthy, nutrient-rich crop: Cereals have a better micronutrient profile and bioactive flavonoids than other cereals.
- Due to their low Glycaemic Index (GI), millets are also associated to the reduction of diabetes.
- Iron, zinc, and calcium are all good sources of minerals in Millets.
- Patients having celiac disease they can eat millets because Millets are gluten-free.
- Millets have been reported to be effective for lowering blood pressure, weight, and BMI.
- In India, millet is commonly eaten with legumes, creating a reciprocal protein supplement, raising the amino acid content, and improving the overall digestion of protein.
- Urban residents have easy access to and comfort with millet-based value-added foods in the ready-to-cook, ready-to-eat category.



- Millets have two purposes: as food and as fodder.
- Millets cultivation contributes to release lower carbon content.

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