

About RESMISA Project

The action research project 'Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia' aims to increase production and consumption of nutritious small millets and associated pulse and oil seed crops in rainfed regions of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It focuses on overcoming existing constraints related to production, distribution and consumption of small millets and associated crops and uses gender sensitive participatory approaches. It pursues a multi-pronged research strategy related to conservation, productivity enhancement, value addition, post-harvest processing, promotion and policy action to raise the profile of small millets. The project has selected six research sites in the backward and tribal dominated pockets of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand states of India and one site each in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

This project is anchored by DHAN Foundation and Canadian Mennonite University. The project is implemented in South Asia by DHAN Foundation in India, LI-BIRD in Nepal and Arthacharya Foundation in Sri Lanka. The other South Asian partners are Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, All India Coordinated Small Millets Improvement Project of ICAR and WASSAN. This project is supported by Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSFR) promoted by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

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Accommodation

The participants are requested to make their own arrangements for accommodation at Coimbatore. The list of preferred Hotels is given below.

- Sree Annapoorna, R.S.Puram : 0422 - 4522333
- Vijay Paradise, Saibaba Colony : 0422 - 2452222 Mob: 98432 40302
- Sree Mangalam International, Gandhipuram: 0422 - 6739945



National Consultation on "Promotion of Small Millets"

Venue: Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore
Date: 5th & 6th August, 2014



Under the aegis of the
**Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed
Regions of South Asia (RESMISA) Project**

Organized by
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
DHAN Foundation
Madurai, Tamil Nadu



National Consultation on “Promotion of Small Millets”

Background

India is facing widespread malnutrition and related food insecurity issues. Among the children under the age of five years in India, 48 percent have stunted growth, 43 percent are underweight (Government of India, 2012). These figures remain stubbornly high, despite the country having the second-fastest growing economy in the world, with agriculture accounting for a significant part of that growth. On the other hand chronic and non-communicable diseases are on the increase. Recent research and epidemiological evidence across the world link the lack of dietary diversity for these health issues.

Small millets are one of the important food groups that had been moved out of the food basket in recent time. Small millets are more than just finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) and include kodo millet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), little millet (*Panicum sumatrense*), foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) and barnyard millet (*Echinochloa frumentaceae*). The health benefits of small millets are well documented (Varma and Patel 2013; Vijayalakshmi, 2013; Yenagi and Mannurmath, 2013). While cereals, in the current market context, provide a cheaper source of dietary calories, small millets offer better nutrition with various micro nutrients like vitamin B complex, calcium, iron and sulphur. All small millets are rich in dietary fibre and have low glycemic index and are known as both preventive and curative foods. Besides these nutritional benefits, small millet crops have the ability to adapt to a wider range of growing environments. Despite their superior nutrition qualities and climate change resilience, cultivation and consumption of small millets have declined. The area under cultivation declined from 7.22 million ha to 2.29 million ha (a decline of 46 % in finger millet and 80 % for the other small millets) between 1961 and 2009 (DHAN Foundation and WASSAN 2012). This decline in area has a direct bearing on overall decline in the consumption of all the small millets.

The factors that are responsible for the steep decline in the production and consumption of small millets in developing countries include production constraints, harvest and post harvest constraints, inadequate development and commercialization of attractive food products, less awareness of health benefits, non availability and more importantly inadequate policy support etc. Supply of rice and wheat at a subsidized price through PDS has drastically affected the consumption of millets especially small millets. There has been apprehension that excessive dependence on rice and wheat as staple diet has adversely affected the general health of the people across all economic classes. For an effective nutritional security, it is imperative to encourage production and consumption of these nutritious small millets.

Need for National Consultation on promotion of small millets

Considering the imperativeness of enhancing utilization of small millets, it will be possible only if all the concerned stakeholders take necessary initiatives in an integrated manner. Given the multiple challenges faced by the small millets sub-sector, it is thought appropriate to create a platform for all the stakeholders to come together for an in-depth discussion on promoting small millets for food use on priority basis. So a national level consultation is organized on the theme of promotion of small millets by Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia (RESMISA) Project.

Purpose

The main purposes of the national consultation will be,

1. To bring together all the stakeholders at the national level related to small millets namely small millet growers, consumers, seed companies, aggregators, small and large scale processors, food companies, manufacturers of machinery relevant to small millets, development and extension agencies, research agencies and policy makers and to create an atmosphere for interaction.
2. To create an environment for mutual understanding on the current status and the future needs of all stakeholders covering the following themes
 - i. Production
 - ii. Consumption
 - iii. Machinery for efficient production and processing
 - iv. Marketing chain for small millets
 - v. Value chain
 - vi. Development Extension
3. To generate actionable points and policy recommendations

Participants

About 100 participants of diverse stakeholders related to small millets namely small millet growers, consumers, seed companies, aggregators, small and large scale processors, food companies, machinery manufacturers, development and extension agencies, research agencies, policy makers and civil society organizations, students and funding agencies are expected to participate in the consultation meeting.