

Madhya Pradesh state collaborating with Civil Society to draw up Millet Policy

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Presentation on experiences of RRA Network to Principal Secretary, Agriculture Govt of Madhya Pradesh

Shri Kamal Nath, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh recently announced that a mission on millets will be launched in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The Government of Madhya Pradesh had discussions with SRIJAN on their experiences of promotion of millets in Madhya Pradesh and asked them to share experiences of civil society on the promotion of millets in different states.

As a follow-up to interaction with Govt of MP, a meeting on sharing of experiences of RRA Network on Revival of Minor Millets was held on 04.03.2020 under chairmanship of Mr Ajit Kesari IAS, Principal Secretary, Farmers Welfare & Agriculture Development (FW&AD) Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh. Mr Sanjay Singh IAS, Director of Agriculture, Govt of MP and Mr Jitendra Parihar, Deputy Director of Agriculture also participated in the meeting.

Representatives from SRIJAN, PRADAN, Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) and Working Group on Millets (WGoM) of Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) Network participated in the meeting. Mr Dinesh Balam, Convener of WGoM (Working Group on Millets) of RRA Network and Mr Raman Ahuja, Independent Value Chain Specialist participated in the meeting on behalf of WGoM of RRA Network.

At the outset, Mr Ajit Kesari IAS, Principal Secretary, FA&AD Dept, Govt of M.P. welcomed the participants. He said that the Government of Madhya Pradesh is planning to initiate a mission on coarse cereals and millets. He is very much interested to hear the experiences of the RRA Network especially on the promotion of minor millets such as *kodo-kutki*.

Mr Prasanna Khemaria said that RRA Network has been working on millets for more than 15 years. RRA Network has worked on the policy practice and research aspects of millets. It has played a seminal role in initiating large scale millet initiatives in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Odisha. RRA Network is currently engaging with Tribal Department, Government of Maharashtra for promotion of millets.

Mr Dinesh Balam, Convener, WGoM of RRA Network shared the experiences of *Odisha Millets Mission (OMM)*. Primary focus of OMM is to increase the consumption of millets especially in rural areas. Unique architecture where *Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCDS)* is providing research and policy support and engagement of NGOs in supporting FPOs for implementation of the project is the key reason for success. Another key aspect is to initiate work on consumption, production, processing, marketing, and procurement simultaneously instead of serially. WGoM is looking forward to building capacities of civil society organisations on millets and technically support them in engagement with Government.

Mr Raman Ahuja, Value Chain Specialist shared the importance of linking the millet production with ICDS/MDM/PDS for delivering the nutritional outcomes. He said that landscape-based approach should be adopted for millets. An integrated approach with a focus on linking markets, nutritional outcomes, investment in building consumer awareness on millets and supporting startups and other private sector investments will lead to the sustainability of the initiative.

Mr Prasanna Khemaria , CEO **SRIJAN** shared about the experiences of the SRIJAN in the promotion of minor millets. He said that processing is the major issue when it comes to minor millets. Investment in suitable processing technologies and good varieties will lead to an increase in the area of **kodo-kutki**. He shared that nutrition centric communication initiatives should be taken up by Government of Madhya Pradesh. SRIJAN is keen on engaging with Government of M.P. and CSR in promotion of millets.

Mr Animesh Mondal, Programme Manager from

SPS

shared about the experiences of SPS in promoting Jowar. In addition, he said that long term support needs to be provided to FPOs/FPCs to ensure viability of the millet promotion. He shared commitment of women farmers and success of RRPCL in collective marketing.

Mr Sameer from *PRADAN* shared about their experiences of promotion of millets in Dindori. They are now going to tie up with IIMR for technology adoption and promotion of millet specific FPO/FPC.

Mr Sanjay Singh IAS, Director of Agriculture, FW&AD Dept shared that Mission on coarse cereals and millets is broadly divided into three sub-projects with focus on

Kodo-Kutki Jowar and Barley Bajra

There are multiple challenges in productivity enhancement, processing, and storage of *Kodo- Kutki*. Government of Madhya Pradesh would be very keen to take the support of RRA Network in designing the millet policy as part of Mission on Coarse Cereals and millets, especially on *kodo-kutki*.

Brainstorming session on role of civil society in designing millet policy in Madhya Pradesh State

After detailed discussion, the following decisions were taken under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary, FW&AD Dept, Government of Madhya Pradesh:-

- A multi-stakeholder consultation shall be organised by the Government of Madhya Pradesh and RRA Network on for brainstorming strategies for Mission on coarse cereals and millets.
- RRA Network shall submit practical/implementable suggestions based on experiences of civil society to augment the design of the Mission on coarse cereals and millets with a focus on indigenous seeds, processing, agronomic innovations and the package of practices and millet value chain strategy.
- RRA Network shall share documents on relevant government orders/letters available on their experiences such as Odisha Millets Mission, *Comprehensive Revival of Millets of Andhra Pradesh*, Experiences of inclusion of millets in ICDS/MDM/PDS and others with DoFW&AD, Govt of Odisha.

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