



The Milleteer

The Monthly Newsletter of the Millet Network of India

Volume 1, Issue 2; Jun—Sep 2015

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About 'MINI'

Millet Network of India is convened by Deccan Development Society, which over the last 25 years, has been working with rural communities of Medak District and assisted them in their quest for food sovereignty. The Network has about 120 members across the length and breadth of the country, and is currently involved in a range of interventions in about 8 states including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

An Appeal

All the members of Millet Network of India who receive this newsletter are requested to make their contributions to it, so that it can be enriched and stories from different corners of the country where not only MINI works but from across the borders can be presented. Photo-features, stories, analytical articles, policy analyses and so on are all welcome.

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A silver lining in times of distress – Hope vs. Despair

Farmer's suicides in Telangana have reached 1400. This accounts to 30 deaths in every month and one every day. Medak district, which had known no farmers suicides reported 145 deaths this year. This is leading to a state of hopelessness in the agriculture sector.



It is indeed amazing to see how the situation in four mandals in Zaheerabad contradicts the hues of public and media on farmers desperations. No farmer so far has committed suicide in the four mandals of Zaheerabad despite their farming practice being completely independent on water, electricity and chemical fertilizers. The farmers in this region have been engaged in growing traditional crops with traditional methods (ecological and biodiverse farming). All these farmers express a high level of confidence and motivation who are an inspiration to other farmers.

Meedoddi Vinoda in Nagwar village, Raikode Mandal grows 18 variety of crops worth 2 lakh rupees in her 3 acre of land despite the unfavorable climate conditions using her own seeds and manure. Adjacent to her field is where Tenugu Yadaiah in his farm grows BT cotton as a mono crop with an investment of Rs. 50000/- and earns Rs. 80000/-. He buys seed, manure and pesticides from the external market adding to his borrowed knowledge of farming. His farm fails to fetch him food, fodder for his cattle, a pulse or an oil seed making him completely dependent on an external sources for all of these. In contrast, Vinoda could earn food (Jowar, Korra, pulses, oil seeds) sufficient for her whole family for an entire year making her completely self sufficient. These stories of Vinoda and Yadaiah reflects the current situation of Telangana farmers as a whole. If one story talks about self confidence and hope the other story talks about the hopelessness, dependency and desperation.

Today we are at the cross roads, one of which is to dream high in the path of destruction and the other to accomplish the small hopes and leading aspiration a well being and prosperous state. In order to make Telangana a people friendly State, Government should encourage farmers growing Millets and recognize them as natural assets of this region rather than neglecting these climate resilient crops. Making the traditional knowledge of these farmers as the foundation, we should build the Bangaru Telangana. This is high time for the state to declare Telangana a Millet State. In view of the acute water crisis, Government should declare water bonus for millet farmers who use no irrigated water at all to grow their crops.

Issues of searching for piecemeal solution for food and fodder security it should be dealt with a comprehensive approach that is possible with millet cultivation rather than finding discrete solutions.

Such an approach can save up to Rs. 50000 crores which can be used for welfare of farmers and other development activities in agriculture sector. This traditional method of agriculture contributing to environment and human wellbeing fare becomes a help worth thousands of crores to the farmer families.

pv satheesh, the director
Deccan Development Society (DDS)

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Former chief secretaries Alemtemshi Jamir, Banuo Z. Jamir at the millet festival at Chizami in Phek district on August 28. (Morung Photo)



A seed exchange ceremony between the farmers marked the harmonious spirit of sharing, typical of the farming communities, a beautiful symbolic ritual.



Millet fest brings NE farmers together: Hosted by North East Network (NEN), Nagaland

Millet festival was celebrated at Chizami on Friday 29th August 2015 under the aegis of North East Network (NEN) at NEN Resource Centre brought together millet farmers from different states of the North East. What was **originally regarded as poor man's fare, millet has today become a food for the affluent** across the globe, particularly because of the various health benefits it is known to provide.

In a productive gathering, millet farmers from Kiphire; Phek and Tuensang districts of Nagaland along with their counterparts of Manipur and Meghalaya vowed to revive and take millet cultivation on a larger scale in the North East region. Addressing the festival, former chief secretary of Nagaland, Alemtemshi Jamir who is also advisor to Sustainable Development Forum of Nagaland (SDFN) stressed on the need to take the millet festival to higher level.

He suggested that the festival should be made into an annual event, adding that it can become a promotional event for tourism and thus boost the economy of Chizami village. Jamir was also appreciative of the millet farmers in exchanging millet and other crop seeds during the celebration. Hewoto Sema, District Agriculture Officer, Phek said millets were grown as **an alternative crop for substitute staple food next to rice. He said the State's** agriculture department has come out with a new scheme of promoting the cultivation and production of millets under National Food Security Mission. **Former Chizami VCC Enyipelo Thopi said 'Etshunye' or 'Millet festival' is a 5-day celebration practised by the Chizami community.**

Banuo Z. Jamir, former chief secretary Nagaland released NEN video **production titled "Millets- Securing Lives."** The festival also honoured 18 women farmers, in recognition of their extraordinary contribution to sustaining agriculture and ecology through practising millet based bio-diverse farming. Francisco Rosado May, Agro-ecologist & faculty, Intercultural Maya University of Quintana Roo, Mexico also spoke on the occasion.

Khiamniungan women farmers, Sakraba women farmers and Thurutsusumi women farmers presented millet harvest song, Chakhesang work song and jhum farm melody. The festival was followed by exhibition of agro-biodiversity. The millet festival aim to create wider awareness on the importance of millet based agro bio-diverse farming, to celebrate, share and promote the diversity of local crops, food and traditional knowledge systems and to strengthen solidarity amongst ecological farming communities in the State and beyond.

Source: <http://morungexpress.com/millet-fest-brings-ne-farmers-together/>

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MINI Partner Review Meeting Update: A time for reflection and way forward on 'milletisation'

The MINI Secretariat organised a 2 – day partner level workshop to review the mid-way progress of the decentralised millet promotion programme during the first week of September 2015. The aim of this meeting was to listen from the network stakeholders of MINI and to evaluate how best the project was being implemented in their respective areas, collectively bring fore hurdles, if any that they were being riddled with, thus the meeting not only became a common platform to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, field experiences and so on but also to offer advice and mutual support, exchange ideas between the partners themselves.

Network Partners from states of Tamilnadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Karnataka participated in this workshop where individual presentations were delivered on the activities carried out, their instant outcomes if any, activities planned for the future, any specific challenges the members were encountering, if there is a way forward to that challenge and how best can it be dealt differently, action plan for the next 3—4 months, etc became the central theme of the discussion and dialogue. While the first session was on delivery of presentations, the post- lunch session ended with an open forum and brain storming on addressing common challenges and issues that the network partners were facing in their respective locations. It was further agreed, subject to feasibility and resources available by the members that, depending on their field area, scope and size of their work, each one of the network members will have to evolve differently through adopting strategies such as introducing millet foods and include syllabus in school programmes, introduction of millet food in Govt. run hospitals for T.B / HIV patients, postcard campaign and so forth in addition to what they were already doing.

Few glimpses of the meet...



MINI partner review meeting at SVDS Meeting Hall, Vizag



Mr Nekram of LVK, Himachal Pradesh at the meeting giving his presentation on millet promotion

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1) Release of Millet recipe booklet, compiled by SVDS & Sabala; 2) Presentations by Siba Prasad and Ajit Kumar Sahoo, Odisha



3) Participants engrossed in the discussions of the meeting 4) Millet lunch being served to the delegates of the workshop





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Medak (PKVY) and MINI Secretariat: Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (Traditional Farming Improvement Programme)



DDS/ MINI through the Sangham Women has acquired PKVY. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (Traditional Farming Improvement Programme) relatively new scheme launched by Government of India to support and promote organic farming and thereby improving soil health. The aim of this

scheme is to encourage farmers to adopt eco-friendly concept of cultivation and reduce their dependence on fertilizers and agricultural chemicals to improve yields which is similar to INSIMP. Government has made budgetary allocation of Rs. 300 Crore for the same in the Union Budget 2015-16. Organic farming practices in India have been used in traditional agricultural practices due to diverse presence of natural organic form of nutrients in different parts of the country. Indian climatic diversity and low input costs also help the growth of large number of crops throughout the year.

In response to DDS/ MINI efforts in promoting biodiverse based ecological farming and in an attempt to encourage mutually enriching exercise in promoting organic farming under PKVY in Zaheerabad region of Medak District, the Commissionerate of Agriculture, Medak Dt. officials held an interactive meeting with DDS farmers to understand their expertise / traditional knowledge and experience in promoting organic farming under PGS Certification and subsequently registering them under PKVY demonstration clusters. To this end, DDS / MINI has been proactive in identifying 3 cluster villages and Participatory Rural Appraisals – PRAs have been successfully completed. A total of 150 acres (3 units) of dry land will be brought under this scheme encompassing about 150 farmers. The Agricultural Department are to release a sum of 7 thousand per acre which amounts to the tune of 10.5 lac for the years 2015 – 16. The extension of direct financial support will benefit the participating women farmers for organically growing millets in their own lands.

- MINI Secretariat, Hyderabad

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Millet's Recipe Junction: Bhakarawadi—Crispy fried roll

Ingredients:

- 1) Jowar flour: 70 g
- 2) Gram flour (besan): 30 g
- 3) Salt: to taste
- 4) Turmeric powder: 5 g
- 5) Red chilli powder: 3 g
- 6) Oil: 5ml + to deep fry
- 7) Sesame seeds: 10 g
- 8) Dry coconut powder: 10 g
- 9) Ginger chopped: 2 g
- 10) Asafoetida: pinch
- 11) Cumin powder: 3 g
- 12) Pepper powder: 2 g

Method of preparation:

1. Mix together Millet flour, gram flour and salt in a bowl. Add turmeric powder, red chilli powder and oil. Add sufficient water to make stiff dough and leave it for 10 min.
2. Dry roast sesame seeds, grated coconut. In another bowl mix chopped ginger, pepper powder, cumin powder, turmeric powder, red chilly powder and Asafoetida.
3. Add roasted spices and grind well and keep it aside.
4. Divide the dough into balls and make it into chapatti, spread a portion of stuffing mixture and roll out thinly. Roll into flutes and seal the end with little water.
5. These rolls can be cut into pieces. Now, heat sufficient amount of oil and deep fry the pieces on medium heat till golden brown and crisp.
6. Drain onto an absorbent paper, serve hot or cold.



Courtesy: Miss G. Bhargavi, Home Scientist, DDS-K.V.K, Pastapur

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Monitoring team visiting a Kodo millet field and live interaction with farmers.



Ms Manjula shooting the ready to eat millet foods prepared by local women at a community hall, Kandagada village of Odisha

Participatory Monitoring Update: Ahinsa Club of Bolangir, Western Odisha

On 12th August 2015, Mr. Spurgeon Raj, Coordinator of MINI and Ms. T. Manjula, Ms. Reenamma, Ms Shobamma from DDS-MINI visited the project operational regions located in Bargarh district, Odisha. Mr. Siba Prasad Sahu, Secretary, Ahinsa Club accompanied the team along with community members and millet farmers to respective operational areas.

Visiting a Women Millet Farmer at Kandagada village

The team, after a warm greeting by the millet farmers of Kandagada village visited the millets farm of Ms. Laxmi Bariha. Later, the visitors headed to millets farm – finger millet and little millet cultivated by Ms. Mahima Bariha and three acres of land brought under mixed cultivation of millets by Ms. Betikhai Bariha. Ms. Betikhai has cultivated many crops such as Kodo millet, Finger millet, Little millet, Pearl millet, Green gram, Black gram, Cow pea, Sesame etc. over her land. The team discussed about the revival process of millets with Ms. Betikhai along with opportunities and challenges for processing, marketing and further promotion of millets cultivation.

Praising the successful approach of reviving the glory of millets by the women farmers, the team suggested organizing farmer exposure visit to Pastapur, where DDS has been working since the last 3 decades.

Visiting initiatives on Millets Food Preparation

The team from DDS-MINI saw a range of food dishes prepared by women members. There were cake, soup & *dosa* made up from finger millets, *sweet, dosa, upma, paisam*, and cake made up from little millets, fermented rice from Kodo millet etc. prepared by the community women. There was an interactive session on preparation, the ingredients used, their ratios, etc. The team highly appreciated the women members for valuing the millets food culture and advised to impart training programmes to the women.

Meeting with members of Millets Panchayat

Ahinsa Club under the MINI sponsored project has established Millet Panchayats at Gram Panchayat level clustering the millets in 10 villages. The Millets Panchayat has been engaged in day-to-day interaction with government and farmers in the local for awareness building, promotion and revival of millets crops in the region. During post-lunch of the day, the team met the Millet Panchayat members and interacted regarding the process of inception, activities carried out, future course of action etc. The community members presented *hallageet* (the song dedicated & related to farm, farming & farmer). The members exhibited 120 varieties of upland rice cultivars along with 15 millets varieties, 12 legume varieties and many more indigenous seeds. The members also narrated how they are conserving these cultivars through farmer-to-farmer seed exchange.

The DDS – MINI team video documented the community voices, processes and practices to revive the millets culture in the region. The team commended Ahinsa Club's approach for millets awareness and promotion in the Western Odisha region.

- MINI Secretariat, Hyderabad

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Indigenous Peoples' Global Meet in India: Shillong, India

3 – 7 November 2015



The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions.

Slow Food believes that it is senseless to defend biodiversity without also defending the cultural diversity of Indigenous Peoples. The right of peoples to have control over their land, to grow food, to hunt, fish and gather according to their own needs and decisions is fundamental to protect their livelihoods and defend the biodiversity of indigenous breeds and varieties.

Though different projects and events, Slow Food encourages and supports Indigenous Peoples to uphold their food traditions.

In 2011, the first Indigenous Terra Madre event took place in Jokkmokk, Sweden, bringing together representatives of indigenous communities from around the world to celebrate their food cultures and discuss how to bring their knowledge and vision of food production into modern times. The next Indigenous Terra Madre meeting will be held in Meghalaya, northeast India from 3 - 7 November 2015. With just a few weeks to go, the program and list of delegates is coming together and excitement is beginning to build.

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Find out more on the event website here:
<http://www.indigenousterramadre.org/shillong2015/>



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Agroecology leading the fight against India's Green Revolution : Putting Food Sovereignty Into Action (Snippets)

For the women farmers of Tamil Nadu life has long been a struggle, Ms Sheelu **Francis, Director of Women's Collective** told **Tristan Quinn**-Thibodeau, all the more so following the advent of 'Green Revolution' industrial agriculture. So now women's collectives are organising to restore traditional foods and farming methods, resulting in lower costs, higher yields, improved nutrition, and a rekindling of native Tamil culture.

"Agroecology means that we are free from chemical fertilizers and pesticides, growing many crops together - grains, lentils, beans, oilseeds - to create biodiversity, using maximum input from the land within the farm in order to produce food."

"Natural farming was introduced to us in the late 1990s. We were working with a women's group... and we realized, from an expense analysis of their income, that most of their income was being used for health, for medicine, because there were lots of health problems [in their families]."

Building ecological resilience to climate change...

At the same time as Ms Sheelu discovered how agroecology could help women economically, she was also involved in a 'participatory action research' project to study the impact of climate change on farmers. Her team learned that women in the community were managing climate change through growing millet, the traditional grain of Tamil Nadu.

Agroecology against the Green Revolution...

Millet also grows better when pulses like lentils and other plants are intercropped with it, adds Ms Sheelu.

Multi-level education in health and farming...

The Women's Collective works with families and communities to learn about the benefits of eating millet, as well as with the women farmers to discuss the reasons why they should grow millet and practice the traditional methods of saving seeds and agroecological farming.

Agroecology and the struggle for Dalit and women's rights...

Sheelu points out that the Green Revolution and the agricultural policies and practices that it promoted destroyed traditional farming that ensured healthy families and sustainable economies, exemplified in the shift from producing millet to producing rice.

But she also sees that race and caste oppression are responsible for this shift as well. Many of the women in Tamil Nadu that have traditionally grown millet are 'dalits', whereas rice is associated with lighter-skinned and richer castes.

For a complete article please click on the link below:

<http://www.theecologist.org/Interviews/2985620/agroecology-leading-the-fight-against-indias-green-revolution.html>



Reaping it rich: The farmers who grew a diverse mix of 18 traditional crops including jowar, foxtail, finger and barnyard millets and pulses on their land. - PHOTOS: Mohd Arif

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ONE MP – ONE IDEA AWARD: 1st Prize bagged by MINI partner, SA-BALA of Vizianagaram

On 29th of September '15, Ms Saraswathi of Sabala organization, Vizianagaram, an active Network member of MINI became the 'first of its kind' proud winner of the initiative 'One MP – One Idea' in 'Food & Agricultural' category. Upon presenting the importance on Millet cultivation, consumption and Millets as a whole concept, M.P. Dr. K. Haribabu lauded the idea of Millets as an indisputable crops of truth and an answer to multiple problems currently the society faces. After due diligence by the jury members, a Cash Prize worth Rs.1, 25, 000/- was awarded to Ms Saraswathi by Mr. M. Venkayanaidu, Minister for Parliamentary affairs in the presence of other dignitaries at Andhra University. This was a remarkable milestone on the part of Sabala, SVDS and MINI as stakeholders. **Addressing the felicitation function for winners of 'One MP-One Idea' competition on Tuesday**, Mr Venkaiah Naidu stated that the Centre would be spending crores of rupees on the urban missions in the next four years where the government was keen on evolving a public private partnership model to finance and successfully run these schemes. "Contests like One MP-One Idea help us find alternative solutions to day-to-day problems and critical ones ranging from education and skills to water and sanitation, health to housing and infrastructure, agriculture and energy," he added.

MINI Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Ms Saraswathi and Mr. Jogi Naidu in coastal region of A.P. for their enormous and relentless efforts in promoting the concept of Millets. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours!



Participants from various walks of life at the '1 MP– 1 Idea' event on Tuesday



Ms Saraswathi receiving the Cash Award from Mr M.Venkaya Naidu planked by others

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