

Case Studies

Decentralised Inclusion of Millets based recipes as hot cooked meal through ICDS scheme under Aspirational District Programme





Ms. Kanthi Jayamma

Nuguru Colony (V), Venkatapuram (M) Mulugu (D)

Kanthi Jayamma is a farmer from the Nuguru colony village of Venkatapuram mandal of Mulugu district. She lives with her 5 family members. Ms Jayamma's family is an agrarian family and solely depends on agriculture with their 3 acres of cultivable land.

Jayamma cultivates one acre of paddy, one acre of jowar and one acre of *raagi*. Traditionally, the ancestors of Jayamma and the ancestors of Jayamma's husband cultivated millets on large scale. Due to less productivity, the arrival of high yielding paddy varieties, assured markets for

paddy, commercial farming of cotton and chilli led to a huge decline of millets from their fields and plates. It is evident that lot of number of indigenous seeds of millets vanished from them over the past 20 years. There was a time, when farmers have two to three native varieties of *raagi*, *saama*, *korra*, *Jonna*, *sajja* etc.

Under the Inclusion of millets in the ICDS project, the project staff has conducted awareness meetings through village meetings from April to May 2021. The continuous awareness on health benefits of consumption and cultivation of millets is greatly communicated in the community.

Most of the farmers have a good association with the millets in their past. To support their interest and encourage the farmers to take up the millet's cultivation, free millet seed was supplied to the farmers who wishes to take up the cultivation.

Ms Jayamma has received seeds for two acres of land in July month. He has received white jowar and *raagi*. She has taken up the sowing in the month of August. All the package of practice was done with very minimal input. Millets respond very well to the organic inputs like farmyard manure, green manures. She has applied FYM and results are seen in the images.

'Once upon a time our staple diet is millets. It's started declining over the years and we are inclined towards white rice. Millets give enough energy to make us work in the fields without any hunger feeling. This requires very less inputs, thereby the cost of cultivation is less. We are happy that we have received quality seeds from the project staff to take up the millet's cultivation. We will plan properly in next year' shared Ms Kanthi Jayamma.



Jayamma and her mother-in-law while cleaning the harvest.



Raagi harvest from the Jayamma's field.

Mr. C. Laxmaiah

Bollaram (V), Venkatapuram (M), Mulugu (D)

Mr C. Laxmaiah is a farmer from the Bollaram village of Venkatapuram mandal of Mulugu district. He lives with his 5 family members. Mr Laxmaiah belongs to an agrarian family and solely depends on agriculture with their 3 acres of cultivable land. He cultivated one acre of Jowar and 2 acres of *raagi*.



Traditionally, the ancestors of Mr Laxmaiah cultivated millets on large scale. Due to less productivity, the arrival of high yielding paddy varieties, assured markets for paddy, commercial farming of cotton and chilli led to a huge decline of millets from their fields and plates. It is evident that lot of a number of indigenous seeds of millets vanished from them over the past 20 years.

Under the Inclusion of millets in the ICDS project, the project staff has conducted awareness meetings through village meetings from April to May 2021. The continuous awareness of the health benefits of consumption and cultivation of millets is greatly communicated in the community.

Most of the farmers have a good association with the millets in their past. To support their interest and encourage the farmers to take up the millet's cultivation, free millet seed was supplied to the farmers who wishes to take up the cultivation. From the project support, he has received seeds of Jowar and *raagi* in July and taken sowing in July 2021.

“Even though we get good income from the commercial crops like cotton and chilli, we love to cultivate these millets because the consumption of millets regularly keeps us healthy and make us work without tiredness. Children will have healthy growth if they consume from their childhood. We consume millets as *ambali* and *gatka*.” shares Laxmaiah.



C. Laxmaiah with his Raagi field



C. Laxmaiah with his Jowar field



Ms. Bostha Anusuya

Mahithapuram (V), Venkatapuram (M), Mulugu (D)

Bostha Anusuya hails from an ST community of Mahithapuram village of Venkatapuram mandal, Mulugu district. Ms Bostha Anusuya's family consists of 5 members. Ms Anusuya's family holds 5.5 acres of land.

Every year they cultivate cotton, maize and chilli in some pockets due to the easy market and assured prices after the harvest. Last year the cotton and chilli performed very poorly due to some weather calamities. Ms Anusuya's family suffered financial loss due to high investments as inputs.

Under the Inclusion of millets in the ICDS project, the project staff has conducted awareness meetings through village meetings from April to May 2021. The continuous awareness of the health benefits of consumption and cultivation of millets is greatly communicated in the community. It was the time; the Anusuya family wants to diversify their cropping systems from purely market-oriented to the consumption purpose and marketable surplus.

Ms Anusuya has registered her in the project and received seeds of *Jonna* and *raagi* in August 2021. She has sown 3 acres of jowar and 0.5 acres of *raagi* and 2 acres of paddy in her field.

'We buy *Jonna* and *raagi* from the market whichever the rate they fix. We were aware of health issues in consuming the same diet continuously. This year we will consume the harvest we are going to produce and there is a growing market for the millets. We will sell the surplus to the agents' shares Ms Anusuya in a happy tone.



Ms. Shyamala Bhadraiah

Gogupalli (V), Eturnagaram (M), Mulugu (D)

Shyamala Bhadraiah hails from Gogupalli village of Eturnagaram mandal of Mulugu district. He is head of a family of the size of 4. He cultivates three acres of land with paddy, little millet and other crops. He has received 2 kilograms of little millet for cultivation in his one acre of land on 30th July 2021. The sowing was done in October

2021. The cultivation of little millet involved very less use of inputs like water, fertilisers and pesticides etc.

The family of Shyamala used to cultivate the millets 15 years ago. Due to various factors like issues from wild animals, low yields of millets, no assured markets made the farmers of Shayamala’s village gave up the millet cultivation.

Some young generation farmers don’t even know the package of practices that need to be followed in millets cultivation.

Through the support of the project, CRPs conducted awareness meetings at the village to encourage farmers to take up the millets cultivation and diversify the cropping systems.

With the support of the project, seeds of little millet were distributed and technical support on various aspects of millets were transferred to the farmers through CRPs.

“Women of our community shown a lot of interest in cultivation and consumption of these forgotten grains, and they are guardians of these grains. Over the years, the area under millets and consumption decreased multi-fold. But still, the community fond of these grains and we wish the millets would come back in our fields” shares Bhadraiah.

Mr. Esam Babu

Gogupalli (V), Eturnagaram (M), Mulugu (D)

Mr Esam Babu hails from Gogupalli village of Eturnagaram mandal of Mulugu district. Esam babu heads a family of 4 members. He is a farmer and does farming on 5 acres of land. In 2021 Kharif, he has sown paddy in 4 acres and Jowar in one acre of land. With the support of the project, he has taken up sowing in one acre of land with Jowar. He has received Jowar seeds in August and sown them in September. Esam Babu's family used to cultivate millets 15 years ago. Lack of seeds, crop damage from wild animals, a shift in crop cultivation towards commercial farming, drudgery in millet cultivation resulted in a decline in millet cultivation.



Through the support of the project, the issue of unavailability of quality seeds was addressed by the distribution of quality seeds. Through serious community events on benefits of millet cultivation and consumption were taken up by the CRPs. This has created huge momentum on the forgotten grains.

With awareness, the farmers started enrolling on the project and taking up the millet cultivation. "Tribals are very much aware of the nutritional benefits of millets. There was a time we used to eat only millets and there were no lifestyle diseases when we used to eat millets. Everyone was healthy with diverse diets. Millets are part of the tribal traditions. The millets are the only items to be offered to the god after the harvest of our crops. These foods are very much liked by gods and us too. As time passes, we lost many varieties of millets from the fields. Nowadays it is very difficult to find desi varieties of millets" shared Babu.

He has harvested 200 kilograms of Jowar from his one acre of land.

Mr. Kurasam Laxmaiah

Ippalagadda (V), SS Tadavai(M), Mulugu (D)

Kurasam Laxmaiah hails from Ippalagadda Village of SS Tadavai mandal of Mulugu district. Mr. Kurasam Laxmaiah heads a family of 4 members. He holds 4 acres of agricultural land. He cultivates paddy in three acres of land and millets in one acre of land.

From the project support, Laxmaiah has received seeds of millets for one acre of land on 17th August 2021 and field preparations were done to sow the seeds on 27th of September 2021.

“When our indigenous crops like millets and pulses didn’t get a good price in the market, we were introduced the improved paddy varieties which are high yielding with the high inputs. At the same time, we were introduced to cotton and chilli and these commercial crops fetched good rates at the market. We started seeing lots of money in our hands with a cost of our soil health and people’s health” shares K Laxmaiah pointing at millets grown in his field after 20 years.

CRPs of the project gave awareness on the millet cultivation and health benefits of consuming millets.

The health benefits of cultivation and consumption of millets are not new to the community.

“Our ancestors were very healthy due to the food they have consumed. The occurrence of lifestyle diseases like diabetes, blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases are nil at that time. They lived for nearly 100 years without any diseases. This was only because of the food they consumed and the lifestyle they lived. It is high time to bring back the forgotten foods and include them in our daily diets”. Shares K Laxmaiah.

Mr. Mogipalli Paraiah

Kodishala (V), SS Tadavai(M), Mulugu (D)

Mogipalli Paraiah hails from Kodishala village of SS Tadvai mandal of Mulugu district. He lives with a family size of 4 members which includes two children. Sown one acre of paddy, one acre of yellow jowar and 2 acres of other crops. Received jowar seeds on 17th of July 2021 from the project support team and took sowing on 25th July 2021. It is sown in the marginal soils and got a harvest of 2.5 quintals. Surprisingly, they have taken up the millet crops after 20 years. The millet crop was sown in the marginal soils with low input costs unlike rice with a lot of inputs like seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

“Our parents used to eat wide range of millets like little millet, foxtail millet, bajra, black little millet etc. There was diversity among the food once consumed by our ancestors and they used to have very good health even at their old ages. 15 to 20 years ago, little millet, foxtail millet, bajra, black little millet are staple diets. They were eaten as broken rice, porridge and various malts. The incidence of diseases is very low due to the crops we used to cultivate and the food we used to consume” shared Paraiah.

The distribution of these forgotten grains by the staff from the project and the continuous awareness of the healthy benefits of millets growing and consumption helped us to take the cultivation and consumption.

Mr. Mogipalli Paraiah

Kodishala (V), SS Tadavai(M), Mulugu (D)

Mogipalli Paraiah hails from Kodishala village of SS Tadvai mandal of Mulugu district. He lives with a family size of 4 members which includes two children. Sown one acre of paddy, one acre of yellow jowar and 2 acres of other crops. Received jowar seeds on 17th of July 2021 from the project support team and took sowing on 25th July 2021. It is sown in the marginal soils and got a harvest of 2.5 quintals. Surprisingly, they have taken up the millet crops after 20 years. The millet crop was sown in the marginal soils with low input costs unlike rice with a lot of inputs like seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

“Our parents used to eat wide range of millets like little millet, foxtail millet, bajra, black little millet etc. There was diversity among the food once consumed by our ancestors and they used to have very good health even at their old ages. 15 to 20 years ago, little millet, foxtail millet, bajra, black little millet are staple diets. They were eaten as broken rice, porridge and various malts. The incidence of diseases is very low due to the crops we used to cultivate and the food we used to consume” shared Paraiah.

The distribution of these forgotten grains by the staff from the project and the continuous awareness of the healthy benefits of millets growing and consumption helped us to take the cultivation and consumption.

Mr. Chele Shiva Kumar

Kodishala (V), SS Tadvai(M), Mulugu (D)

Chele Shiva Kumar hails from Kodishala village of SS Tadvai mandal of Mulugu district. Mr C Shiva Kumar heads a family size of 4 with two children. He holds an agricultural land of 8 acres. Taken up 2 acres of paddy, one acre of millets and 05 acres of other crops.

He has received miller seeds on 8th August 2021. The land was prepared for sowing the millets before the seeds were received from the project. The millets were sown on 9th August 2021.

While cultivating the millets, he has faced issues from monkeys and birds. The millet crop was sown in marginal soils with very minimum inputs like fertilisers and water. He has harvested 200 kgs of jowar in January 2022.

Sharing the experience on the millets “ there was a time before 20 to 25 years, we cultivated all types of millets along with other vegetables. When we started going outside of our village for earnings, we somehow brought rice along with some earnings. We would like to thank the program for supporting in the distribution of seeds and conducting awareness programs in the villages on the benefits of cultivation and consumption of millets”.

Millets were staple diets of our tribals. Our ancestors cultivated and consumed them for a long. They ate healthy food with a good lifestyle which made them live for 100 years without any ailments.

There is a culture associated with the millets in the tribals. After harvesting, tribals bring the panicles of the millets and offers them to the tribal gods. Some grains will be picked, processed and made into food to offer to God. The offered food will be eaten by everybody.

Tribals prepare *raagi jawa* and *Jonna ambali* in summer to make them feel energised. *raagi jawa* and *Jonna ambali* were taken to fields by the farmers. There is a strong belief that eating millets control various diseases.