



Introduction of Millets in ICDS, Telangana

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Summary of the Initiative

Government of Telangana initiated a strategy to revive consumption of millets and enhance the nutritional content of the Hot Cooked Meals served to children under ICDS, thus contributing to reduction in stunting, wasting, anemia and underweight target group. This initiative covers children age between 3 and 6 years, their mothers and community members and is implemented by District Administration, Vikarabad (2017-19) and Adilabad (2019-20) and with technical partner WASSAN (Watershed Support Services and Activities Network).

Situation before the Initiative

Telangana has a dryland area and millets were traditionally grown and consumed. However, over the year's area, production & consumption of millets has declined. Considering the nutritional and environmental benefits of Millets and with an objective to bring it back into the farms and plates, District Collector of Vikarabad in 2017 decided to engage mothers and children on the need to increase millet consumption through ICDS, as generational change must begin early with children.

Nature of the Initiative

A series of 3 Millet food festivals were organized to finalize the menu and build consensus around their inclusion in ICDS. Further, through the online National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) platform "count what you eat", energy and nutritive values of the recipe were calculated to meet the standards. Serving as a platform to spread awareness about benefits of millets, children and mothers were served dishes cooked with millets at these festivals and the feedback was collected from members of the community, mothers, people representatives, Anganwadi workers, helpers and kids. After an overwhelming positive response received from all stakeholders, it was broadly agreed that millets should be served at Anganwadi meals for kids at least every alternate day of the week. Foxtail millet khichidi & Jowar upma prepared with vegetables were finalized through participatory approach and it was decided to impart training to Anganwadi workers. It was tried for 3 months and based on the experience, necessary changes were made to the program. Pilot program was taken up in 45 Anganwadi Centers in 3 Mandals of the Vikarabad District with about 1000 children where millet based meals were served 3 times a week. Current coverage in the details of millets in ICDS in Vikarabad and Adilabad are mentioned below:

- District: Vikarabad
- Mandals: Doultabad, Doma, Bomraspet (3)
- AWCs: 45 (15 AWCs per mandal)
- Target Group; 3-6 Years Children
- Millets meal per week: 3 meals per week (Jowar Upma & Foxtail Kichidi)

- District: Adilabad
- Mandals: Indravelli, Narnoor, Gadiguda(3)
- AWCs: 45 (15 AWCs per mandal)
- Target Group; 3-6 Years Children
- Millets meal per week: 3 meals per week (Jowar Upma & Foxtail Kichidi)



Impact of the Initiative: Introduction of Millets in SNP has helped in establishing the market ecosystem, engagement with food cultures as well as large-scale engagement with women on millet food, their nutrition value and recipes. It has successfully enabled to get children used to millet based food much earlier and thereby has invested on re-generation of millet before food cultures.

Introduction of millets in ICDS has created a bulk demand by assuring procurement at scale and thereby stabilizing the market for millets. It has helped developing an ecosystem for millets by comprehensively focusing on production, trade, processing and so on. It has also helped in setting up of rural small industries for women SHGs/entrepreneurs. Overall, it has placed a public system for millets.

Source : Promoting Millets in Diets - Best Practices across States/UTs of India - A NITI Aayog publication

Source: <https://data.vikaspedia.in/short/lc?k=iP8uZxE1JSvOSNY4IOXClg>

