

# MILLET EXPORTS IN INDIA AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

**Dr. Mugdha Deshpande**

*Associate Prof. Dept of Commerce*

*Dayanand Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur.*

**Abstract**

Since olden times millets have been consumed as the staple food in India. Though archeological records suggest wheat was cultivated in India since the Harappan times, it was the emmer variety. Wheat cultivation gained ground in India after the introduction of high yielding breeds during the green revolution. With the dominance of Rice and Wheat, Millet acquired the identity of a poor man's food over time.

During recent times the health conscious urban population is recognizing the benefits of millets and turning to it again. Also millets is the choice of people who are looking for plant based gluten free diet options. Rujuta Divekar well known nutritionist advocates eating locally grown fruits vegetables and grains to reduce health problems.

India is the fifth largest exporter of millets in the world and had a share of 41% of world production in 2020. It produces nearly 12 million metric tons of millet annually. Global millet market is expected to grow over 12 billion USD by 2025. India contributes nearly 20% of global demand value. In this scenario, India is a key player in meeting the world food requirement for millets.

This paper tries to focus on India's production and export capacity of millets and analyses the

records of millet exports of the past five years. Also the problems faced by farmers in millet production are analyzed.

**Key words**

*Millets, exports, global food demand*

**Introduction**

The year 2023 has been declared as the International year of millets in the UN General Assembly's 75th session. The Indian Government launched Millet Mission in 2018 as a part of the National Food Security Mission for promotion of technological intervention, improved seed quality and minimum support price for Jowar and bajra.

Termed as a nutri cereal millet is finding favor among Indian farmers for being a climate smart, drought resistant crop. It can grow in arid zones with infertile soil and rainfall as low as 350-400mm and a cultivation cycle completed within 70-100 days. Some varieties of pearl millet can survive temperatures as high as 46 degrees.

**Millets commonly grown in India**

Sorghum (Jowar), pearl millet (Bajra), finger millet (Ragi), little millet (Kutki), small millet (Samai), foxtail millet (Kangni), proso millet (Barri), barnyard millet (Jhangora), kodo millet (Kodra), two pseudo millets (buckwheat and kuttu), Amaranthus (Chulai) and other millets.

**Millet exports in India(2016-2021)**

	2016-17 (in mmt)	2017-18 (in mmt)	2018-19 (in mmt)	2019-20 (in mmt)	2020-21(in mmt)
Exports to top 10 countries	59260	60834	61004	54200	75114.5
Exports to other countries	23602	20265	21683	20806	11371

Total Exports (In million metric tons)	82862	81458	82687	75006	86486
Value of Exports(In rupees)	170.0	162	192	203	200
Value of Exports(In US \$ million)	25	25	28	28	26.97

The top three importers of millets from India in 2020-21 were Nepal (USD 6.09 million), UAE (USD 4.84 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD 3.84 million). The other seven destinations in the top-ten list of India's millet export are Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, UK, Yemen, Oman and Algeria.

**State wise millet production in India (Top 10 states)**

State/UT	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Andhra Pradesh	1864.55	2531.17	2321.57
Assam	108.05	131.27	151.17
Bihar	2525.45	2020.88	2109.08
Chhattisgarh	331.53	370.51	368.45
Gujarat	1802.8	1786.28	1759.59
Haryana	972.76	1098.4	1417.58
Himachal Pradesh	767.53	767.72	764.49
Jharkhand	468.04	525.12	669.51
Karnataka	5519.9	6813.62	7931.22
Kerala	0.62	0.68	0.69
Madhya Pradesh	5147.2	5029.43	4953.65
Maharashtra	3096.69	4392.59	6082.11
Odisha	169.14	237.06	281.81
Punjab	421.32	433.29	417.63
Rajasthan	6993.32	7333.29	8360.94
Tamil Nadu	3707.97	3493.23	3469.99
Telangana	2155.72	3138.89	1922.9
Uttar Pradesh	3948.85	4388.53	4604.39
Uttarakhand	251.67	265.77	270.32
West Bengal	1741.48	2018.05	2443.6
Other	1064.86	972.59	1023.13
<b>All India</b>	<b>43059.45</b>	<b>47748.37</b>	<b>51323.8</b>

**Support Machinery for millet production and export**

**Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** helps promote exports and remove bottlenecks in the supply chain by enabling exporters find new markets and facilitate shipment of millets.

It organizes trade fairs and exhibitions to enable direct contact between the exporter and importer. Since organizing physical exhibitions and international trade fairs is not possible on account of the Covid-19 outbreak, APEDA has developed its own Virtual Trade Fair (VTF) application to facilitate interaction among exporters, producer organizations and international buyers.

In March 2021, APEDA organized its first Virtual Trade Fair – India Rice and Agro Commodity Show, which saw the participation of millet exporters also. A series of Virtual Buyer-Seller Meets (BSM) with Embassies, importers, exporters and product associations from India have been organized.

APEDA has signed an MOU with Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) for making a strategy for promotion of millets and millet value added products. It has initiated a study on ‘Refinement of Millet Value Chain for Export Markets: Preparation of export strategy in wake of International Year of Millets, 2023’ through IMMR.

Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, in her union budget (2022-23) speech, announced assistance for post-harvest value addition and branding of millet products in the domestic as well as global markets.

16 programmes are being planned by APEDA for promotion of Millets and Value Added Products of Millets in UAE, Indonesia, USA,

Japan, UK, Germany, Australia, Republic of Korea, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. During the promotion programme, Buyer Seller Meets, Road Shows and participation in major international events will be organized to promote Millets and Value Added Products of Millets.

**Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR)** is a premier agricultural research institute engaged in basic and strategic research on sorghum and other millets under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

IIMR coordinates and facilitates Millets research at national level through All India Coordinated Research Projects on Millets, Pearl Millet and Small Millets and provides linkages with various national and international agencies.

At the national level, the Government of India has been promoting the cultivation of millets on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security, following recommendations by a committee headed by NITI Aayog. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated 17 biofortified varieties of eight crops, which included two varieties of finger millets and one variety of little millet,

On October 16, 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the FAO. As a part of the government's initiative under the National Food Security Act, state governments have been advised to procure millets at minimum support price and distribute them under the public distribution system (PDS).

India's National Nutrition Mission, POSHAN Abhiyaan, has also advised state governments to include millets under large public system delivery channels such as Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-Day Meals etc.

### **Benefits of Millet cultivation for the Ecosystem**

Land degradation has been a major problem in India, causing massive economic losses year after year. Drought-tolerant crops with low

dependence on chemical inputs would put far less pressure on ecosystems.

The inter-cropping of millets with other crops is especially beneficial because the fibrous roots of millet plants help in improving soil quality, keep water run-off in check and aid soil conservation in erosion-prone areas, thereby restoring natural ecosystems.

### **Benefits of Millet cultivation for the farmers**

According to Indian Institute of Millet Research Director Vilas A Tonapi Multi, mixed and intercropping is must for sustainable livelihoods. In dry lands monoculture has driven farmers to bankruptcy.

In this era of climate change, which has distorted our weather pattern, millets come as a redeemer for farmers.

The Green Revolution, despite its many benefits, ignored millets and instead concentrated on rice and wheat. Now, there is no diversity in our food in terms of nutritional value. Our food habit is going in the negative direction

### **Problems**

Millets require significant processing due to their coarse texture and taste to make them fit for human consumption. this process is often cost intensive and not a commercially viable option for farmers. Lack of timely inputs storage and transport facilities are limiting factors for small and marginal farmers. Some other problems are

- Low bulk prices of Millets in India and high MRP
- Government schemes and efforts are unable to reach the farmers
- Low crop productivity and high labor intensity
- Easy availability of other grains
- Lack of know-how on ways to use small millets
- Improper suitable processing units close to millet fields

## Conclusion

Considering the global demand increase for millets it is foreseen that India will play major role of providing for the food requirement. According to Mr. Vilas Tonapi director, Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) for this we need to increment millet production by at least by 40%. 14 States in the country are currently on a mission to cultivate millets incrementally.

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