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The Rising Popularity of Millets: A Healthy Future for India

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Millets are suddenly becoming the talk of the town especially with the United Nation's declaration of the year 2023 as International Year of Millets. This is a sign that the world is slowly waking up to the importance of this superfood. Millets are rich in essential nutrients and minerals which makes them an ideal choice for a balanced diet. They are also very cost-effective when compared to other cereals in the market. Not only are millets beneficial to consumers but they are also of immense value to farmers. Millets have the potential to increase their productivity and income. Moreover, the sustainable approach of using millets for the betterment of the world is a great way to go about it. Additionally, millets are a great option for those looking to reduce their environmental footprint, and the increased production of the crop will help to reduce India's environmental impact. This article talks about the ever-increasing popularity of millets and its significance for India as a wholesome superfood of the future.

Overview of Millet as a Superfood: Nutritional Benefits

Millets are one of the most ancient and traditional foods of India, The earliest evidence for these grains has been found in Indus civilization and was one of the first plants domesticated for food and have been a part of India's agricultural economy for centuries. Yet, in the modern era, they have been largely neglected and overlooked while other grains such as wheat and rice have taken the spotlight. Fortunately, things are changing. In 2021, the United Nations declared 2023 as the "International Year of Millets", in recognition of the important role that millets can play in helping to alleviate poverty, improve nutrition, and foster sustainable agricultural practices. This declaration has sparked a renewed interest in millets, and their potential health benefits for the Indian population.

Millets are small-seeded grains that have been around for centuries, but are now gaining popularity due to their numerous health benefits. These whole grains are naturally gluten-free, high in fibre and a good source of minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants. They are also low in carbohydrates and contain essential fatty acids which are beneficial for overall health. Millets are excellent sources of essential vitamins and minerals, including calcium, magnesium, iron, zinc, and niacin. They are also high in B-vitamins which are important for energy production and growth. The high fibre content of millets helps to reduce cholesterol levels, regulate blood sugar levels, and improve overall digestion.

Overall, millets are a great choice for a healthy diet and provide a variety of nutritional benefits. They are easy to prepare and are a great way to add variety and flavour to meals. Millets are a nutrient-dense food, with high levels of magnesium, phosphorus, and dietary fibre, as well as a good source of proteins and vitamins. They are also easily digestible, gluten-free, and have a low glycaemic index, making them a healthy choice for those with diabetes. They are also highly affordable and sustainable, making them an attractive option for those looking for a nutritious and affordable dietary option. The antioxidants found in millets have anti-inflammatory properties and can help reduce the risk of certain diseases such as heart disease and cancer. Additionally, millets are a rich source of essential fatty acids, including linoleic acid, which is essential for maintaining healthy skin and hair. Millets are also incredibly versatile and can be used in a variety of ways. They can be cooked and eaten as a cereal, added to soups and stews, or even used as a substitute for traditional grains like rice or wheat. They can also be milled into flour and used in baking and other cooking applications. Millets are also a great source of plant-based proteins, making them an excellent choice for vegetarians and vegans. So, try incorporating millets into your diet for a healthier future! What's more, millets are a sustainable crop, as they can be grown in low-rainfall areas and are resistant to drought and climate change. This makes them an attractive option for farmers in India, where the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent. As we are celebrating 2023 as International Year of Millets, there is a growing interest in the potential of millets to address poverty, improve nutrition, and foster sustainable agricultural practices in India. With the right support and initiatives, millets could become a cornerstone of India's food security and health in the coming years making India a healthier nation.

Millets: Why a smarter option over other core cereals

Millets are gaining in popularity due to their numerous health benefits. Millets are studied to be a healthier alternative to other cereals, such as wheat and rice. Compared to other cereals, millets are higher in protein, fibre, vitamins, and minerals. Millets are also low in fat and calories, making them an ideal choice for those looking to manage their weight and always watching out for calories! Furthermore, millets are gluten-free, making them a good choice for individuals with gluten sensitivity. When it comes to nutritional value, millets are a superior choice to other cereals. Millets are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals such as niacin, thiamine, riboflavin, and iron. They are also high in dietary fibre, which helps to improve digestion and regulate blood sugar levels. Additionally, millets are rich in antioxidants and other beneficial compounds, which can help to protect against a variety of diseases and health conditions. In terms of taste, millets are similar to other cereals, although they tend to be more nutty and earthy. Millets can be cooked in a variety of ways, such as boiled, steamed, or roasted. They can also be used to make porridge, pancakes, and flatbreads. With their versatility, millets can be used to create a variety of dishes that can be enjoyed by all. Overall, millets are a healthier choice than other cereals, serving numerous health benefits. With their nutritional value, versatility, and scrumptious taste, millets are a go to option for those looking to perk up their overall health and wellbeing.

Overview of the 'International Year of Millets' in India and its significance

The International Year of Millets (IYM) was launched by the Government of India in April 2021 to increase the nutritional security of India's rural population. Millets have been a part of India's cultural heritage since centuries, but with arrival of the Green Revolution in India the major cereals Paddy and wheat kind of overshadowed the importance of this wonderful cereal crop. The Prime Minister of India promoting MILLETS as "SHREE ANNA"

Mother of all Grains has again brought this crop into the limelight by claiming its importance at the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IYoM is a unique initiative to promote the consumption of millets, and to raise public awareness about their nutritional and health benefits. The IYoM is part of the Government of India's effort to build a healthier India, by promoting millets and other nutritious foods. This is a multi-pronged approach to promote millets, which involves creating awareness about millets and their nutritional benefits, encouraging farmers to grow millets, and providing incentives for millet consumption. The Government of India is also focusing on research and development of new varieties of millets, which can be grown in different parts of India. This will ensure that millets can be grown in all parts of the country, and that farmers will have the opportunity to grow millets and make a living from it. The IYoM is an important step towards improving the nutrition security of India's rural population. It will help reduce malnutrition and hunger, as well as improve the overall health of the population. This will lead to a healthier India and a brighter future.

Why Millets are Beneficial to Farmers and How it is Promoting Sustainable Agriculture

The intensifying popularity of millets have been a welcome development in India. Not only do millets are packed with numerous health benefits, but they are also economical and help to promote sustainability in agriculture. In recent years, millets have become an important source of nutrition for many people in India. Millets are known for their resilience and are well-suited to growing in marginal lands and unfavourable climates. They require less water and less fertilizer than other crops and can help to reduce the environmental impacts of traditional agricultural practices. Furthermore, millets are drought-resistant and have the potential to provide food security in times of drought and famine. Millets provide a reliable source of income for farmers, as they can be grown year-round, even in times of crisis. They also require less efforts and inputs than other crops, which reduces costs for farmers. Additionally, millets are known for their high nutritional content and are an important source of vitamins and minerals for those who consume them. Most recently the government of India has taken steps towards the promotion of the consumption of millets, including launching several initiatives to educate people about the health benefits of millets and encouraging farmers to grow more millets. The improved productivity of millets is largely due to the introduction of hybrid varieties, which have higher yields than traditional varieties. Additionally, the government has implemented various policies to encourage the cultivation of millets, such as subsidies and price supports. These policies have helped to make millets more profitable for farmers and more affordable for consumers. This has had a positive impact on both farmers and consumers, as it has increased access to nutritious and affordable food. Overall, the rising popularity of millets is helping to promote sustainable agriculture and improve food security in India. Millets provide an important opportunity for farmers to diversify their crop production. By including millets among their crops, farmers can better protect themselves against risks posed by changing weather patterns and market fluctuations and thereby making it a reliable source of income and nutrition and helping frame a healthier future for India.

Conclusion

Consumption of millets as direct food has significantly declined in India due to policies centred around Green Revolution-led food security from the 1960s onwards. During the journey towards food security, nutritional security was not the primary focus, which has resulted in the current state of malnutrition and the rise of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).The transformative role of millets in tackling lifestyle diseases, the benefits of

mainstreaming millets in public-funded programs and the growing realization of huge potential for export markets, especially, in midst of the Covid-19 pandemic are projecting them as immune boosters owing to their rich nutritional profile. It is presumed that the world is looking towards India's traditional foods, and it turned to be the mandate of the Government of India to scale up the interventions for increasing the millets area and production, diversifying the processing machinery and technologies, expanding the private food processing ecosystem and thus to cater to the various segments in domestic and export markets.

The future of millets in India shines bright. With the government's continuous support and the growing awareness of their health benefits, millets are likely to become even more popular in the coming years. In addition to being a healthy food choice, millets also have the potential to boost the economy, as they are more profitable for farmers and require fewer resources than other crops.

It is sure shot that the rising popularity of millets is good news for India, as it promises a healthier and secure future for the country. As more people become aware of the health benefits of the wonder crop millets, the demand for the crop is likely to escalate even further. No wonder with the right policies in place, millets can be play a key part in maximising the productivity and the overall economy of India.