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# Business Line

## Nation-wide campaign for promotion of millets

K. V. Kurmanath



Millet Network of India, which has been promoting the usage of millets, will soon begin a nation-wide campaign to bring pressure on law makers.

Hyderabad, Nov 24:

Millet Network of India (MINI), which has been promoting the usage of millets, will soon begin a nation-wide campaign to bring pressure on law makers.

MINI members would write letters to the Members of Parliament and other people's representatives in their respective geographies.

MINI is an umbrella association of non-governmental organisations, agri-economists, scientists and intellectuals who are strongly pitching for promotion of millets and bring them back to the kitchens of India.

"The Public Distribution System is one of the most important affirmative action programmes launched by the Government. In 2010-11, more than 56 million tonnes of foodgrains (read rice and wheat) were procured and the offtake was more than 52 mt. This accounts for more than 25 per cent of the total foodgrains production," a MINI draft, which will be despatched to the MPs, has said.

Referring to the origin and raise of PDS focus on the rice, the network said that the thrust on rice and wheat has undermined the local food systems. Besides reducing focus on other foodgrains, the PDS philosophy has also undermined community control over their food and farming.

"One of the offshoots of the rice and wheat-driven PDS is that people have slowly stopped cultivating traditional landraces of foodgrains. This makes people completely dependent on markets and the centralised PDS for their food needs," the network said.

This also has hit the nutritional status of rural communities as rural households meet 68 per cent of the total protein requirements from cereals.

The draft letter asked the MPs to highlight these issues when the National Food Security Bill comes up for discussion in Parliament and bring millets back on the menu of the poor.

[kurmanath.kanchi@thehindu.co.in](mailto:kurmanath.kanchi@thehindu.co.in)

Keywords: [Promotion of millets](#), [Millet Network of India](#), [Members of Parliament](#), [public distribution system](#), [foodgrains](#), [rural households](#), [National Food Security Bill](#),

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