



## Guidelines For Organising One-Day Seminar

### **Topic: Millets for Health and Sustainable Planet**

*NOTE: The One-Day Seminar should preferably be organised one day before the organisation of Rajya Stariya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani (RSBVP) for Children.*

Providing nutrition and food security to the growing population is the biggest challenge faced by various countries around the world. The changing environment and increased population rate have worsened the situation further, and in such adversity, millets have emerged as a ray of hope. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session has declared 2023 as the international year of millets, as proposed by India in 2018. Millets are a group of small-seeded grasses widely grown in many parts of the world for human and animal consumption and known for their resilient nature to grow in diverse climate conditions and nutritional benefits. In India, millets are known as “Mota Anaj,” and various varieties of millets like Ragi (finger millet), Bajra (pearl millet), Kuttu (buckwheat millet), Jowar (sorghum millet), Oodalu (barnyard millet), Kutki (little millet), Varagu (kodo millet), Kangni (foxtail millet), etc. are grown in different parts of the country. Millets are versatile crops that can be grown in very harsh environments with minimal water and other requirements. Millets does not require any use of fertilizers and pesticides as they are resistant to various environmental and nutritional stress conditions, thus contributing to decreasing soil and water pollution due to excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides. Millet farming also contributes to biodiversity by eliminating monoculture practices. Millets’ use of fewer resources than other crops like wheat and rice makes them an economically favorable and environmentally sustainable crop.

In recent times, there has been a growth in various lifestyle diseases like diabetes, thyroid disease, syndromes of the female reproductive system, obesity, and high cholesterol levels. The root cause of all these diseases is linked to the food we are consuming, and thus demand for a healthier diet option is increasing. Millet is a wholegrain, an excellent source of nutrition, and high in dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. The nutritional benefits of millet are making it a top choice for people in high-income countries who are looking for healthy and nutritious diet alternatives for major cereal crops like rice and wheat. The nutritional composition of millet helps manage various aspects of human health, for example. Millets are rich in dietary fiber, which improves digestion. Many varieties of millet have a low glycemic index, which means they do not result in a sudden spike in blood sugar levels, and their breakdown takes time in digestion and thus causes the gradual release of sugar in the blood stream. Foods with a lower glycemic index are beneficial for people with diabetes. Millets are a rich source of potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, and calcium that keep our hearts and bones healthy. Millets are also gluten-free and are suitable for people with gluten sensitivity. Millets are complex carbohydrates; their digestion in our body is slow, so they provide us with energy for a longer duration in comparison to traditional grains like rice and wheat. Millets, with all their nutritional benefits are the best choice for people with or without any disease. They help in body weight management, improve heart and bone health, act as an energy booster,

and are generally considered non-allergenic. Therefore, including millet in our diet can contribute to improved health and well-being. Considering the low cost of producing millets, their capacity to withstand diverse environmental conditions, nutritional benefits, and high demand make them an ideal grain for sustainable development. Promoting millet cultivation can create opportunities for farmers. Many small farmers can start millet cultivation, as it requires very few inputs and can be done on a small scale. Millet cultivation can serve as a tool for income generation and poverty reduction. Connecting small farmers from rural areas, especially those living in extreme ecological zones, to the nation's development and economy can be highly beneficial. Millet production will also lessen the dependence on other crops for consumption and promote the diversification of food in the diet. A diverse food system ensures that communities are not entirely dependent on a single crop, thereby enhancing food security. Millet cultivation can also promote cultural preservation; millets have been grown in India or other parts of the world since ancient times and consumed for generations by diverse cultures. Over time, communities from different cultures have developed different agricultural practices; their recipes and cooking styles also differ from one another. Millet production requires very few extrinsic resources and thus promotes traditional agricultural practices and cultural sustainability. In conclusion, millet can be very useful for sustainable development; its ecological resilience, rich nutritional values, economic potential, and cultural significance, make it a crop for present and future development. It can provide a way to reduce our ecological carbon footprint by using fewer resources; it can promote underdeveloped countries with less or no natural resources required for producing other crops like wheat, rice, and pulses to find modes of income generation and to contribute to the world economy.

Keeping above in consideration,

we intend to create awareness among teachers, educators, researchers and students about the importance of millet for health and a sustainable planet.

As a part of this endeavor a one-day seminar may be organized during the Rajya Stariya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani (RSBVP) 2023-24. During this One-Day Seminar on "Millets for health and sustainable planet", children, teachers, teacher educators and all concerned may be invited to generate ideas. The activities in this seminar may include

- Making people aware of importance of Millets and its various use.
- Organizing quiz competition based on advantages of millets for health and sustainable planet.
- Organising invited talks by experts in this field
- Letting students to take initiative to propose benefits of millets as a crop for sustainable future.
- Organising oral presentation of any innovative or exemplar work related to the theme of one day seminar.
- Encourage participants for an open house discussion on millets and related topic.
- Spreading awareness about the history of millets in India and world.