

Millets: Ecological & Cultural value

who grew, continue to; how & why do they?

Dwiji Guru

19th May 2020

About the Know Millets Webinars

▲ Different aspects of millets

- ✦ Ecology
- ✦ Historical context
- ✦ Sustainable food systems
- ✦ Community centric
- ✦ Nutrition & Socio – economics
- ✦ Technology & Engineering

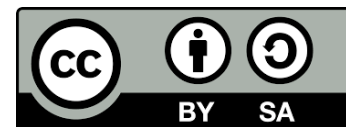
Sustainable food systems perspective



Please note slide number
for easy reference during Q&A



<http://themillet.org/kmw2020>
+91-99000-54878, dwiji@themillet.org



2 of 11
19/05/2020

In this presentation

- ▲ Millets in the ecosystem
 - ✦ With Flora
 - ✦ With Fauna
- ▲ Cultivating & Consuming millets
 - ✦ Historically
 - ✦ Recently
- ▲ Summary



Millets - paleobotany & evolution

- ▲ Millets are all part of the Grasses (Poaceae) family
 - ✦ Anywhere between 120 to 65 Million years ago
 - ✦ More than 800 genera, 12,000 species, at least a few hundred thousand varieties
 - ✦ Adapted to almost every geography
 - ★ Among the first to grow when
 - ★ The ice melts in the polar regions
 - ★ It rains in a desert
 - ✦ Energy transfer pathway from Flora to Fauna (one of many)



Millets and other flora

- ▲ Ground cover
- ▲ Bushy roots
 - ✦ Adapted for survival
 - ✦ Fit into various ecosystems
- ▲ Tenacious
- ▲ Vigorous



Millets and fauna

- ▲ Bird feed
- ▲ Nourishing for many
 - ✦ Circle of life
- ▲ Primate indulgence
 - ✦ Juice from the stalk
- ▲ Pathway of polyphagy & bio-diversity development?



Millet cultivation & consumption

▲ Cultivation

- ✦ Low inputs
- ✦ Localized cultivation systems
- ✦ Contingency crops even to this day

▲ Consumption

- ✦ Stores well
- ✦ Needs skill and/or effort



Millets C & C – Historically

- ▲ Those who lived in the
 - ✦ Economic margins
 - ✦ Social margins
- ▲ More ‘cos of TINA
(there is no alternative)
- ▲ Paddy & wheat:
aspirational foods



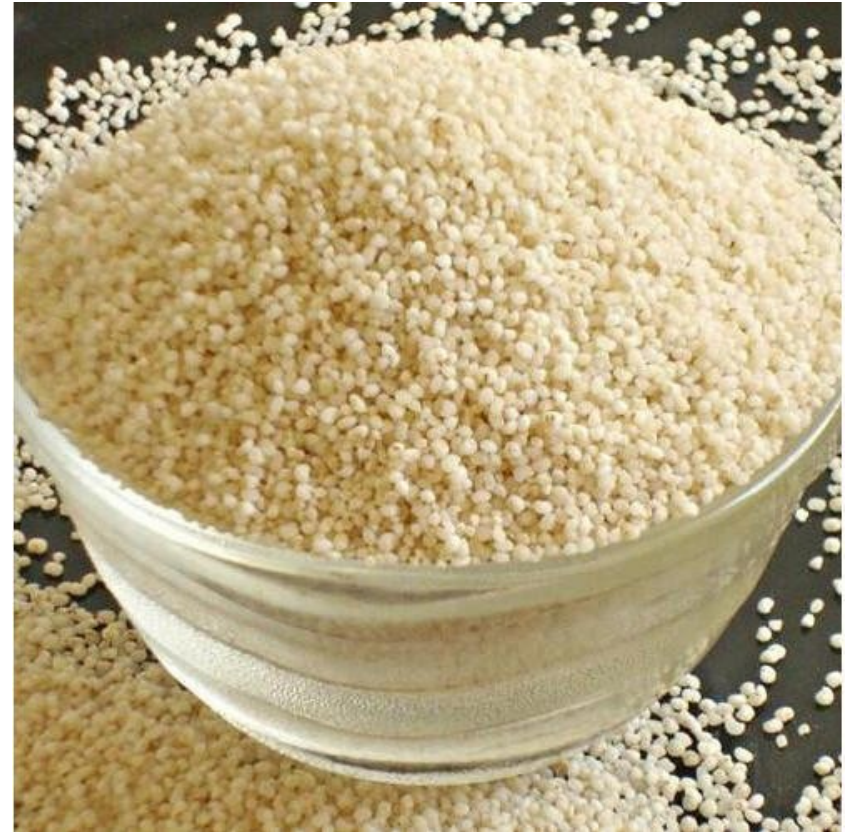
Millets C & C – Recently

▲ Traditional Communities

- ✦ Rarely part of current C or C
- ✦ Decreasing access & agency

▲ New adopters

- ✦ Have purchasing power
- ✦ Fed by market
 - ✦ Not just the food
 - ✦ Knowledge too



Summary

- ▲ Millets are inevitable
- ▲ Central consideration in developing the food system
 - ✦ Ecological parameters
 - ✦ Social parameters
 - ✦ Economics parameters
- ▲ Learn from experience





Thank you !

For more info ...

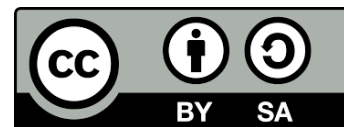
<http://themillet.org>

<http://millets.wordpress.org>

<http://rainfedindia.org>



<http://themillet.org/kmw2020>
+91-99000-54878, dwiji@themillet.org



11 of 11
19/05/2020