



MILLET MANIFESTO

**Jharkhand Assembly Elections 2024
Recommendations to the Election Manifesto**





मडुआ की संभावनाओं पर सरकार को दिया सहयोग पत्र

झारखंड में पलकिया फाउंडेशन ने सरकार को मडुआ (ज्वार, बाजरा, रागी) को जन वितरण प्रणाली और मध्याह्न भोजन में शामिल करने का प्रस्ताव दिया है। संस्था ने बताया कि मडुआ से न केवल खाद्य सुरक्षा में सुधार...

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रांची, हिन्दुस्तान ब्यूरो। झारखंड में जन वितरण प्रणाली और मध्याह्न भोजन कार्यक्रमों में मडुआ (ज्वार, बाजरा, रागी, कोदो, सामा आदि) और स्थानीय और देसी खाद्य पदार्थों को शामिल करने के लिए पलकिया फाउंडेशन ने झारखंड सरकार को सहयोग पत्र सौंपा। संस्था ने सरकार को राज्य में मडुआ की वर्तमान स्थिति और संभावनाओं के संबंध में श्वेत पत्र भी दिया है। संस्था के अनुसार, मडुआ को जन वितरण प्रणाली में शामिल करने से झारखंड संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सतत विकास लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने की दिशा में बड़ा और निर्णायक भूमिका निभा सकता है।

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इस संबंध में मुख्यमंत्री को लिखे पत्र बताया गया है कि राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण -5 के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक झारखंड में 67.5% बच्चे और 56.8% गर्भवती महिलाएँ एनीमिया से पीड़ित हैं। जबकि झारखंड के खानपान में स्थानीय फल, सब्जी और मडुआ शामिल रहे हैं। लेकिन औद्योगिक खेती के कारण हमारी खाद्य प्रणाली गेहूँ और धान पर निर्भर हो चुकी है। दूसरे तरफ भारत सरकार के विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय की एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक झारखंड के 24 में से 20 जिले जलवायु परिवर्तन से प्रभावित है। इस स्थिति के मद्देनज़र मडुआ राज्य के लिए एक वरदान साबित हो सकता है। फाउंडेशन की निदेशक महिमा बंसल ने कहा कि संस्था झारखंड सरकार का मडुआ की खेती को पुनर्जीवित करने में नीतिगत सहयोग करेगी। मडुआ से न केवल खाद्य सुरक्षा में सुधार होगा बल्कि स्थानीय सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं का संरक्षण भी होगा। इसके अलावा, यह राज्य की खाद्य और पोषण सुरक्षा के लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देगा और जलवायु-सम्बद्ध कृषि पद्धतियों को भी बढ़ावा देगा।

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As per the Indian State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017, Jharkhand's recorded forest area extends over 23,605 square kilometers, accounting for 29.62% of the state's total geographical area. These vast forests play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and are also intrinsic to the livelihoods, customs, and identity of the state's Indigenous populations. The state is home to 32 Scheduled Tribes, constituting more than one-fourth of the state's population. For centuries, tribal communities have maintained a deep and symbiotic relationship with the forests, depending on them for food, medicine, and shelter. Their traditional practices, including agriculture, culinary habits, and cultural customs, are inextricably linked to the rich biodiversity of the region.

However, this traditional relationship has been profoundly affected by historical shifts in India's agricultural and food systems. The focus on increasing crop yield, often through the introduction of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and large-scale irrigation projects, has sidelined traditional agricultural practices that were more attuned to local ecologies and community needs. It has also changed the relationship between producers and consumers. The stress on agriculture was to produce more rather than produce safe and healthy food. The process of cooking changed and it changed the consumption and eating patterns. Sophisticated cutlery and quick-fast cooking neo-culture invaded Indian kitchens.



Such a transition doubled with the extremities of climate change has a cascading effect on the purchasing capacity of farmers, food availability, and rising food prices resulting in a bigger food and nutritional crisis. Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Adaptation Planning in India Using a Common Framework report by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has identified 20 out of 24 districts of Jharkhand as relatively High and Moderate Climate Vulnerable districts. This intersection of biodiversity loss and nutritional insecurity can be effectively addressed through the application of traditional ecological knowledge and the revival of indigenous crop cultivation.

Hence, millets and other landrace varieties within local food systems are critical for fostering a comprehensive approach to nutrition, particularly in the context of climate change. Encouraging millet cultivation not only strengthens food security but also mitigates greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional crops. Following the International Year of Millets in 2023, many initiatives seem to be lined up by multiple government agencies. Therefore, in order to provide support, we propose recommendations in terms of increasing production, distribution, and adaptability related to millets among communities and consumers. Though Jharkhand is one of the states to introduce the Jharkhand Millet Mission Yojana, there are many elements on the production and consumption end that needs effective redressal. Hence, we request the political parties, the major stakeholders in policy-making to take note of the following points in their manifesto in the upcoming assembly elections:



For Farmers:

- Agroecological interventions with farmers need to be encouraged so that the production of millet can match the cycle of demand and supply.
- Effective inclusion of millet and local foods in mid-day meal schemes and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Schemes) and provide incentives to encourage their adoption.
- Ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) for millets, unpolished rice and pulses.
- Facilitate access to credit, technical assistance, and market linkages for farmers to promote increased production of millet and local foods.
- To introduce millets in each cluster, demonstration plots should be set up through the support of government programs. In each plot, all varieties of millets should be cultivated and farmers, consumers, and markets can then choose which millets they wish to procure. A diversity of millets brings nutritional diversity.



For Community:

- Rejuvenation of local knowledge systems for production and post-production handling of millets.
- Pre- and post-harvest support may be provided to millet growers at the Panchayat level. This should include the availability of quality seeds of indigenous varieties of millets, pulses, and rice and millet processing units.
- Strengthening the supply chain and storage facilities for millets and locally grown foods requires infrastructural investment.
- Collaborations between government agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors can help improve logistics and distribution.



For Women and Children:

- Women-led Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs) should be created and supported so that their contributions to the food and nutritional security of communities and the state are duly appreciated and remunerated.
- The inclusion of millet-based meals in anganwadis and schools on a regular basis has great potential to address the long-term problem of nutritional deficiency, anemia and chronic morbidity.
- Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) should be supported with local millet processing units and encouraged to establish supply chains with hotels, bakeries, etc. within the cluster and outside.
- Millet food festivals should be organized with women SHGs where recipe competitions introduce both traditional and new recipes.



A healthy outside starts from healthy inside.

For Urban Consumers:

- Millet and locally grown food through creative culinary experiences should be introduced in restaurants and hotels.
- The government should respond to consumer demand by directly procuring millets (of diverse indigenous varieties) from farmers.
- Food Festivals and symposiums should be organized to encourage consumers of ecologically-sensitive and socially-aware consumption practices.



Jharkhand's Way Ahead:

The state must establish the necessary infrastructure and implement a mandatory minimum price for millets, alongside a fair government procurement system at a Minimum Support Price (MSP) and an assured market for at least five years. Such measures would provide the stability required for private sector participation, encouraging investment and the development of market segments. With appropriate support, farmers can transition from chemical-based to organic, natural, and traditional farming practices. Facilitating this shift is essential to significantly reducing chemical pollution in soil, groundwater, and air. Consequently, promoting organic and traditional farming methods will enhance the overall quality of life for the general population.



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