

# Diversifying food plates of tribal farmer households of Dangas by changing behavior patterns around millets

## Presenters

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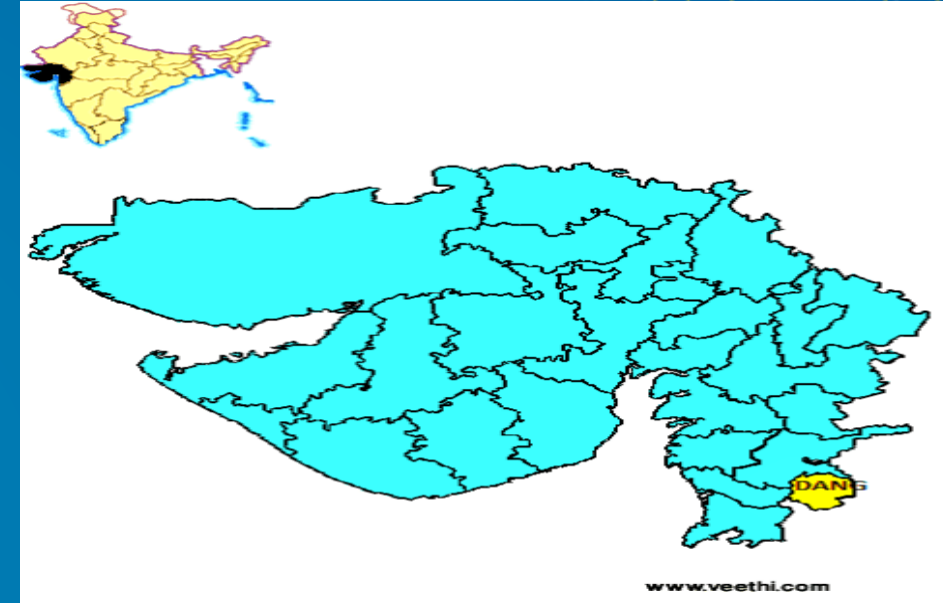
## Bird's-Eye View of India's Millet Journey

- Millets were consumed traditionally. Before the Green Revolution, millets made up around 40% of all cultivated grains, which has dropped to around 20% over the years.
- After a push to improve food security in 1960, millets were sidelined, regarded as “orphan crops” and almost forgotten about over a period of a time. Against this backdrop, the Government of India realized the importance of millets in building nutritional security and made several efforts such as gazetting millets as Nutri-Cereals, celebrating the National Year of Millets in 2018, small-scale policies on millets, and proposing the International Year of Millets to UNGA.
- Under National Food Security Mission (NFMS) programme, the NFMS-Nutri Cereals is being implemented in 212 districts of 14 states.
- According to 2020 data, India's millets exports have continuously increased at around 3 per cent CAGR in the last five years ending with 2020.



# The Dangs at a glance

- Small district of Gujarat state consisting 96+% of tribal people.
- Rich history of Finger millet, Barnyard millet, Sorghum and other millets along with green vegetables, mushrooms & fish
- Tribal communities include Korku, Bhil, Kotwaliya. Mostly dependent on agriculture or agriculture-based labor. Suffer very high poverty, illiteracy, and malnutrition rates, and water scarcity during summers leading to high migration.
- Millets are produced at large scale, but millet consumption has dropped significantly despite efforts in demand generation for millets.



## Background about the Intervention

- The programme targets tribal small holder farmers, including Korku, Bhil, & Kotwaliya in the Dang of Gujarat.

Areas enjoy a rich history of millets but changing food habits reduced their consumption drastically, including changing perceptions around millets being labelled as “Not a status symbol,” not as popular & trendy as western food options, and limited experiences of millet consumption with significant gender and intergenerational gaps.

- Pre-identified drivers of millet consumption include MDM & PDS distribution of white rice & wheat, process cost, income from paddy, & high migration.
- AKRSP(I) applies new behavioural insights to diversify food plates by increasing millet consumption and promoting household level millet production.



# Why millet consumption is critical for the Dang communities?

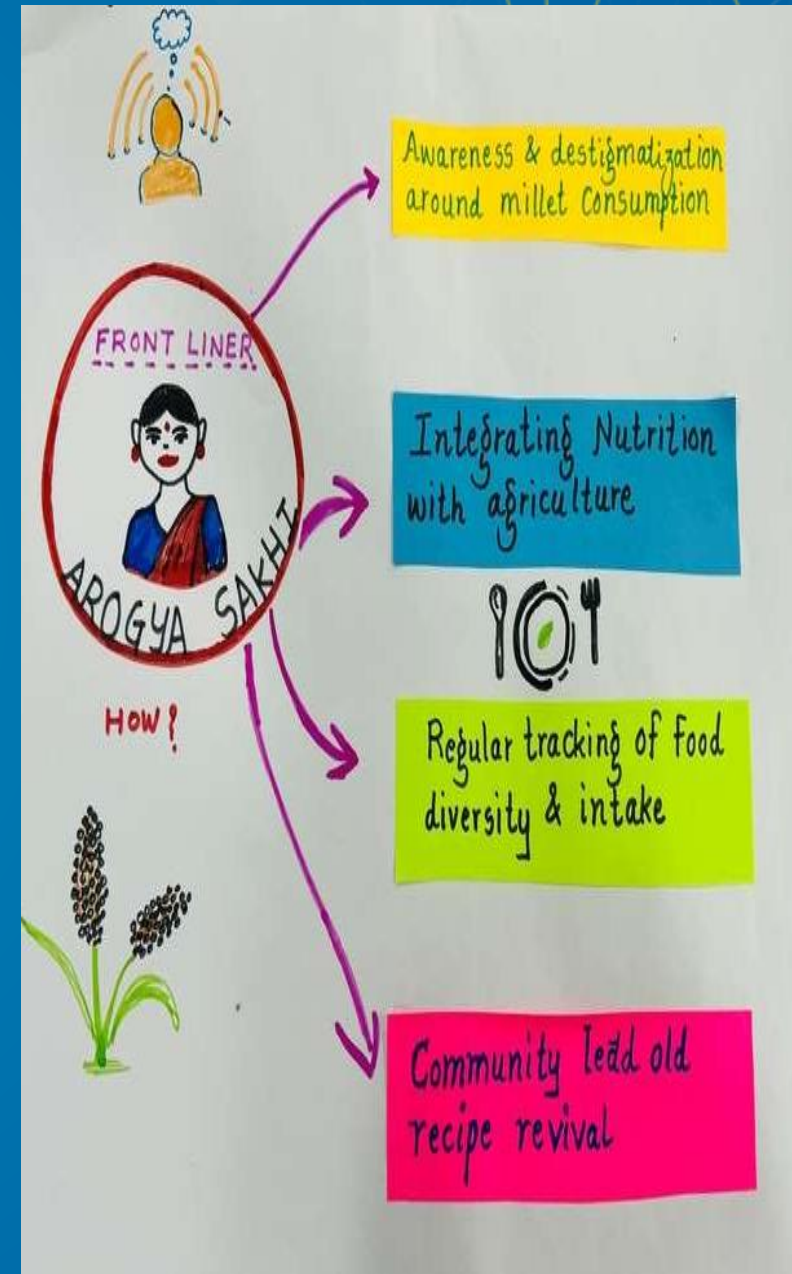
- Millets offer a nutritious, economical and climate-friendly alternative to tribal communities. They support soil health and control for erosions.
- Tribal communities exhibit hard and intense physical labor that requires increased nutrition needs for essential minerals like magnesium, phosphorus, iron, and calcium – plentiful in millets.
- Millets offer an opportunity to support the increased nutrition needs, and to diversify food plates with new combinations to be tested with available food options (mushroom, fish, & green vegetables).
- Previous efforts generating demand for millets focused only on SBCC and did not achieve the desired outcome for improved consumption





# Intervention Methodology

- Employs new behavioural insights integrating Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) messages with Human-Centred Design (HCD) principles to design an intervention targeting household millet consumption and production based on preferences and dietary habits.
- SBCC leverages mixed methods by frontline workers (Arogya Sakhi) using surveys, direct observation, and key informant interviews to deepen understanding of social and cultural factors influencing behaviours and to tailor messages.
- HCD prioritizes needs, preferences, and experiences of end-users to improve household millet consumption and production while diversifying household food plates with indigenous millets like Ragi.
- Prototype phase targeted 50+ villages of Dangs from 3 blocks. Pilot phase is targeting 1000 tribal smallholder farmers.



# Intervention Methodology



Increasing household level production of millet & connecting farmers with seed banks



Understanding drivers of household millet consumption by employing behavioral insights (HCD and SBCC)



Every household consumes daily & consistently a diversified plate with 2 servings of millet for at least 3-6 months





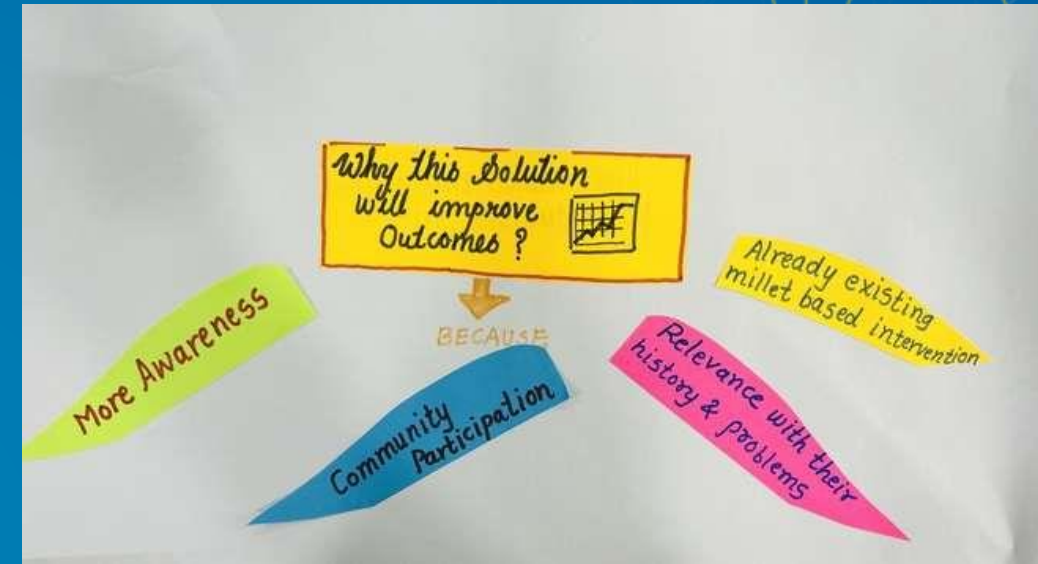
## Key Findings

- Nutrition assessments revealed inadequate intake of dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals and proteins among tribal small holder farmers.
- Millet consumption decreased and is replaced by white rice and wheat.
- Intergenerational differences exist where the young are no longer eating millets.
- Barriers include significant exposure to new food patterns, favouritism towards western diets, millets perceived as food of lower class, mass distribution of rice paddies, and promotion of wheat consumption in mid-day meals.
- Employing SBCC alone is not enough. Integrating SBCC with HCD is critical to visualize the end-user experience and tailor the intervention to those experiences that matter to them.



## Key Learnings

- Combining HCD with SBCC provided greater insights into understanding barriers to millet consumption and food plate diversity.
- Indigenous food plates are losing their importance despite being healthier and more climate resilient.
- Income friendliness of commercialized crops play a huge role here for changing the perspective against millets.
- Paddy, wheat & corn are getting acceptance widely due to their consideration for “status symbol”.
- Regular awareness visits of Arogya sakhis to farmer households are slowly changing the perspective about millets from “food of poor” to “healthy food”.
- Kids pick up the healthy habits faster. Once they adopt the taste of a particular millet-based recipe, it is comparatively easy to drive them towards healthier food options.
- Public distribution system play a huge role in building the narration about dietary choices. We are currently working closely with govt. to bring better results.



*Let's milleti-fy ,Let's healthi-fy !!!*

*Thank you*

