



### Revival of Millet Agenda in Bundelkhand Post COVID-19

**D**evelopment Alternatives (DA) under its Bundelkhand-Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (RRAN) Programme, conducted a virtual group discussion on 29 April 2020. The discussion aimed to design appropriate strategies for the revival of millet production in Bundelkhand in the post-COVID-19 era. The discussion saw participation from partner organisations - Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (SRIJAN), and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AIGGPA). The discussion mainly focused on important topics such as consumption of millets in rural and urban areas, setup of processing units, improvement in the production of millet in Bundelkhand, and identification of market.

The network is developed keeping in view the core vision of the RRAN i.e. to make rainfed agriculture more productive and sustainable and to advocate for favorable policies for the rainfed regions. The overall aim of the Network is to facilitate the development of a new vision of agricultural development in Bundelkhand through established proof of concepts and influence policy for climate-resilient agriculture.

It has been acknowledged well that Millets have a high nutritive value which requires fewer inputs compared to cereals like wheat and rice. However, it has seen a consistent decline in its production and consumption, despite its various advantages. Owing to Bundelkhand's rough agrarian landscape which has led the region to suffer from lack of economic progress, crop diversification, low economic

infrastructure, depleting water resources, and frequent droughts. Lately, people in the region have stopped their long-established practice of growing kodo and kutki millets and instead grow crops such as wheat, sesame, mustard, and pulses. Millets like kodo and kutki which were traditionally consumed in the region, are now restricted mostly to the tribal belts.

The discussion arrived at a mutual consensus on the revival of millet production by merging culture and support for traditional cuisine of the region. Millets form a crucial part in traditional festivities of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh as well. Thus, with support from the Network as well as the local population, there can be a steady increase in the production and consumption pattern of millet in Bundelkhand.