

THE HINDU Business Line

Millet group demands local sourcing clause in Food Security Bill

Our Bureau



Hyderabad, Dec. 9:

The Millet Network of India (MINI), a group of associations that is promoting consumption of millets, has expressed concern about non-inclusion of local procurement provision in the latest version of the National Food Security Bill.

In a letter addressed to Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh and Ms Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of United Progressive Alliance, MINI has demanded that this clause should be included again in the draft bill. This, it said, would go a long way in promoting production of millets.

“The first version of the bill had made two major recommendations that could have changed the fortunes of millions of millet growing farmers in the dryland areas mostly populated by Adivasi and Dalits,” Mr P V Satheesh, National Convenor of MINI, said in the letter.

While appreciating the move to include millets in the public distribution system in National Food Security Bill, he said the grain could address the issues of food security and nutrition.

“The logical next step should be to make local procurement as a requirement. All millets meant for PDS should be sourced within 10 km radius wherever possible. This will encourage local farmers to grow millets. But surprisingly the new draft doesn't contain this important provision,” Mr Satheesh, who is also the Director of Deccan Development Society, said.

The MINI, which comprises 140 non-governmental organisations, organisations and individuals, has been lobbying for some time for inclusion of millets in PDS. It circulated a note ‘Why Millets’ among 500 MPs, telling them how lopsided the decision that kept millets out of the system.

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