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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Name of the Title	Page No.
1	Assessing Millets Consumption Behaviour among Youth of Delhi Urban: A Survey based Study <i>Shalini Gupta</i> National Forensic Science University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat <i>Rohit Kumar</i> Rashtriya Raksha University, Lucknow campus, Lucknow	01-07
2	Digital Marketing and It's Impact: Conceptual Framework <i>Ms. Jayashri Sadanand Lokhande</i> Research Scholar Department of Commerce and Management, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	08-11
3	Emotional intelligence and work- life balance among the faculty members of Higher Education Institution of Jammu and Kashmir, UT <i>Aabid Yousuf</i> Research Scholar, Gulzarpora Awantipora <i>Dr. Aasim Mir</i> <i>Dr. Gaurav Seghal</i>	12-15
4	Illuminating the Untapped Insights: A Systematic Literature Review of Employee Cynicism in the Workplace <i>Sneha P.</i> Research Scholar, Research and PG Department of Commerce, MES Keveeyam College Valanchery, Malappuram (D.T), Kerala, India	16-28
5	The Dynamics Of Employee Engagement: Investigating Its Influence On Job Satisfaction In The Workplace. <i>Vidhya S</i> Teaching fellow, MBA, IFMR GSB-KREA University <i>Vaneeta Aggarwal</i> Assistant professor, University of Madras	29-36
6	Effect Of Metacognition Mastery Program On The Creative Thinking Skills Of Primary School Students <i>Zeenath P. Y.</i> Research Scholar, Farook Training College, Research Centre in Education, University of Calicut. <i>Dr. Anees Mohammed C.</i> Associate Professor, Farook Training College, Research Centre in Education, University of Calicut.	37-42
7	Assessment of the Attributes of Good Leadership Practice of Middle-Level Leaders in Government Organizations. The Case of Some Selected Bureaus of Amhara National Regional State. <i>Chuchu Alebachew</i> (Corresponding Author) Amhara Leadership Academy, Ethiopia <i>Assabie Mihretie Kassa</i> Amhara Leadership Academy, Ethiopia <i>Muhabaw Takele</i> Amhara Leadership Academy, Ethiopia	43-56
8	Towards a Secure Digital Governance in India: Assessing Cyber security Initiatives and Strategy therefore <i>Prof. (Dr.) Shyam T. Shirsath</i> Department of Public Administration, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra, India <i>Mr. Swapnil S. Kumare</i> Department of Public Administration, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra, India	57-64
9	Impact Of Online Business On Retail Business And Analytical Studies <i>Pranit Prashant Khanderao</i> Department of Business Administration and Research, Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj College of Engineering, Shegaon.	65-71

Sr. No.	Name of the Title	Page No.
10	<p>The Digital Divide, Gender and Education – Challenges for e-Governance among the Tribes of Odisha Mr. Niranjan Sahu Faculty in Political Science, Govt. Degree College, Tentulikhunti, Odisha Dr. Gugulothu Srinu Asst Professor, Dept.of PA&PS, Central University of Kerala Periy, Kasaragod</p>	72-82
11	<p>Examining the Impact of Artificial Intelligence Technologies on Faculty Development: A Comprehensive Analysis for Educators and Scholars Ms. Vijayashri Machindra Gurme Research Scholar Sydenham Institute of Management Studies and Research and Entrepreneurship Education, University of Mumbai, India</p>	83-92

Assessing Millets Consumption Behaviour among Youth of Delhi Urban: A Survey Based Study

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Abstract

Presently the government and industrial sector are paying attention towards the SDG goal number 3 for health and wellbeing. To build health, wellbeing of people and dealing with major health issues such as malnutrition, diabetes, moreover resilience for farmers to combat climate change millets (Sorghum, Finger millet, Pearl millet, Kodo millet) play key role. To comprehend people behaviour, awareness and consumption practice in India's Capital, a study carried on 140 individuals from four major zones of Delhi using a questionnaire, and the remarks were imperilled to analysis using statistical tool. Among 140 respondents 81.3% people believe that millets are healthy and 13.7% of people are not sure about health benefits of millets. 33.8% of people believe that millets are rich in iron and good for overall health. The major reason found that respondents do not eat millets frequently belonged to the reactions such as not liking the taste (27.9%) and limited availability (24.3%). It was found that for creating awareness and reaching to urban consumers via social media platform range share 44.6%. There was a moderate positive correlation between family income and frequency of consumption i.e. r value =0.42. In conclusion, to boost consumption of millet in urban areas there is a need to develop delicious products to satisfy the taste of consumers, and also improving accessibility, affordability of millet products in urban local supermarkets.

Keywords: Millets, Health Benefit, Awareness, Consumer Behaviour

Introduction

In present scenario of uncertainty, most of the people are suffering from minor or major health issues due to poor food habits and consumption of fine cereals and junk food made of them led to rise in serious health issues. Moreover, farmers are also suffering from the pressure of producing demanded crops specifically wheat, rice, maize etc. Which result in overexploitation water, other resources, and soil pollution. Here climate change plays crucial role in causing these adversities due to human needs and action. Hence introduction of millet among the society is the need of an hour to deal with undernourished, malnutrition and further human health issues. Identifying nutritious and sustainable diet that can boost utility of underrated crops, like quinoa, pearl, finger, kodo millet, sorghum due to their climate resilience property and enriched nutrition value. It is quite clear that among edible plants, only three crops i.e rice, maize, and wheat, contribute to 60% of caloric intake. Instead, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have its determined goal of eradicating malnourishment by the year of 2030. To achieve goal, intrusions are necessary for replacing the common grains consumption (rice, wheat, and maize) with millets as nutritious grains. Millet crops are also known as super food that is beneficial for the people, planet, and farmer. Also, these are rich in protein ratio, minerals such as iron, zinc, and calcium which deliver health benefits to all generation and genders. These crops are known for their flexibility, survival ability under harsh environmental condition like high to moderate temperature ranges and in less fertile soil, and require less irrigation, resistant to pest, and low to no requirement of fertilizers (Saleh et al., 2013). Thus, possess minor carbon footprint than the present conventional staples.

India is the chief producer as well as consumer of different millet varieties in rural and semiurban areas. Customarily, various food products and beverages are being prepared from these grains however, their utility value in the Indian food basket has been weakened (Joanna and Kumar, 2019). From 1962 to 2010, India's per capita consumption of millets fell drastically. Likewise a study reported that per capita consumption of pearl millet declined in both rural and urban regions of India (Basavaraj et al., 2010). The consumption of refined grains increased, as it is studied and proven that consumption of refined grain is linked type II diabetes mellitus and obesity (Radhika et al., 2009). The Government of India started promotional initiatives among the citizens and supportive scheme for farmers for millet production. Government also providing funding assistance for entrepreneurs for manufacturing of millet related products at commercial scale. The perception on millet is changing in present scenario which shows greater health consciousness of people (Umanath et al., 2018) and is the right stage to assess current knowledge, and practices related to millets, which will lay the framework to promote millet as a staple food effectually. A limited number of studies have investigated the perceptions, and awareness on millets. Thus, present study is focused on assessing consumers' perceptions, consumption pattern and attitude on millets using a survey covering capital region Delhi, India.

Literature Review

India is facing the challenge of over nutrition in urban areas along with undernutrition in rural and urban slum areas. The prevalence of overweight or obesity, coronary disease, incidence of cancer is growing faster in urban areas compared with the rural areas (Umamageswari et al., 2023). The transition of food consumption patterns affects nutritional intake. Consumer awareness on nutritional diet has a strong relationship to the healthy lifestyle and disease prevention. The cereal market in India has also seen significant growth of more than 17% (Business Wire, 2019). Compared to rice and wheat, millet is considered five times superior in terms of nutritional value (Rao et al., 2017). But even after contributing 10% to India's foodgrain basket with an annual production of 18 million tons, it is not being consumed in the same proportion as mainstream cereals i.e. that is rice and wheat (Padmalini et al., 2023). Millets are sustainable food options to achieve nutritional security. Due to their favourable environmental qualities and health benefits, these crops are receiving a lot of attention (Sukumaran et al, 2023). Green Revolution and subsequent development policies by the government that emphasized promoting rice and wheat crops on account of food security, the consumption and cultivation of millet crops have declined drastically in recent decades. Owing to the mounting awareness of the nutritional, health, and environmental benefits of millets, interest has been revived in millet cultivation as well as consumption (NAAS, 2013; Anbukkani et al., 2017; Kane-Potaka et al., 2021). Millets thrive in arid regions, requiring only 300-400 mm of water thus conserving vital water resources. Environmental-friendly: Millets stand out as carbon-neutral crops, absorbing carbon from the environment equivalent to their carbon emissions, in contrast to rice and wheat. Millets exhibit unparalleled resilience in harsh, hot, and drought-prone environments, often as the last standing crop, securing their place as a sustainable food source amid worsening climatic conditions and a boon for small farmers (Sendhil et al., 2023). Further, the Indian government, recognizing the importance of millets, has launched several development initiatives to promote the cultivation and consumption of millets. Several state governments in India have also launched promotional programs like the Millet Village Scheme with respect to Kerala and Odisha Millets Mission in 2017 with respect to Odisha.

Research Objective

Present study is focused on assessing consumers' perceptions, consumption pattern and attitude on millets. Research objective is to collect primary data on awareness, attitudes, and consumption pattern among urban consumers in Delhi.

Method

To collect primary data on awareness, attitudes, and consumption pattern among urban consumers in Delhi, survey was conducted. Obtained data was statistically analysed to find out p value of significance and relationship between variables (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Irianto, 2015). Respondents was selected using non-probability; convenience sampling method was used which provided access to large numbers of women, men in selected study areas. People Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. Participants were informed upfront for study purpose and use of the data. As a result, a total of 140 individuals from different zones in Delhi including New Delhi, Old Delhi, Delhi Cantonment, Delhi NCR participated in the online survey. The participants were provided with a link of a IIMR factsheet about nutritional value of millets and millet recipes at the end of the survey.

Questionnaire and Data Analysis

An organized questionnaire was developed about benefits of millets and including its intake frequency, consumption patterns, socioeconomic information of the participants. Several reputed research papers were reviewed to ensure the validity and clarity of the questions (Joanna et al., 2021). The survey was administered to college students, and women in service, homemaker over the course of February-march 2024. Obtained numeric data were systematized, coded, and subjected to statistical analysis. In this study existing guidelines of sample size selection is depended on sample to variable ratio which suggests a minimum observation-to-variable ratio of 10:1 (Hair et al., 2018). 140 observations were subjected to analysis against 14 variables (questions) (Table 1). Inferential statistical tools, including correlation, and p value, were performed to examine the influence of socioeconomic factors, market availability on consumption habits, intake frequency and perceptions toward millets.

Results

Among the respondents, 120 were female and 20 were male, and their average age was between 18-19 years. In particular, women constituted an even higher proportion of grocery shoppers (Table 1). It was identified that the awareness of millets was prevalent from past years, 81.3% respondents thought millets are healthy, 13.4% of respondents were not sure that millets are healthy (Table 2). 27.3% respondent believe it is good for health of women, is high in iron (33.8%), and is good for diabetes (23%). The rest of the participants (45%) thought that

it was good for bone, and overall health. Most (64%) of the respondents were reasonably or 27.3% highly health conscious (table 2). Source of information on health and foods was, mostly through social sources, the largest being social media with 44.6% of the participants opting for it, while TV shows were the sources for 20.9%, and family and friends were the sources for 47.5%. The other influential information sources were courses (10.8%), newspapers (2.9%), and books 4.8% (Figure 1). Although there was a considerable proportion of consumers eating millets moderately (55.4%) consume once in a month, only 28.8% consume millet frequently i.e. more times a week. there was also a proportion of people who had never consumed millets (15.8% consumed millets never or up to two times a year, Figure 2). The most common form in which millets eaten as chapati, as reported by 55% of the respondents. Breakfast porridge, which is one of the traditional forms of consumption, stood at the top at 29.5% (Figure 3). Figure 4 presents the reasons stated for the consumption of millets. The major reason participant belief it is overall healthy food (62.1%). The second major reasons for eating millets as served at home (28.6%) and its taste (15.7%) (figure 4). The survey further enquired why people did not consume millets. Nearly 27.9% of the respondents did not like the taste followed by cooking time (25%) and limited availability (24.3%) (figure 5). Table 3 shows the correlation between the reasons stated for consumption of millets and family income of the respondents. The latter group, when not consuming millets frequently, attributed it to unfavourable taste and limited availability.

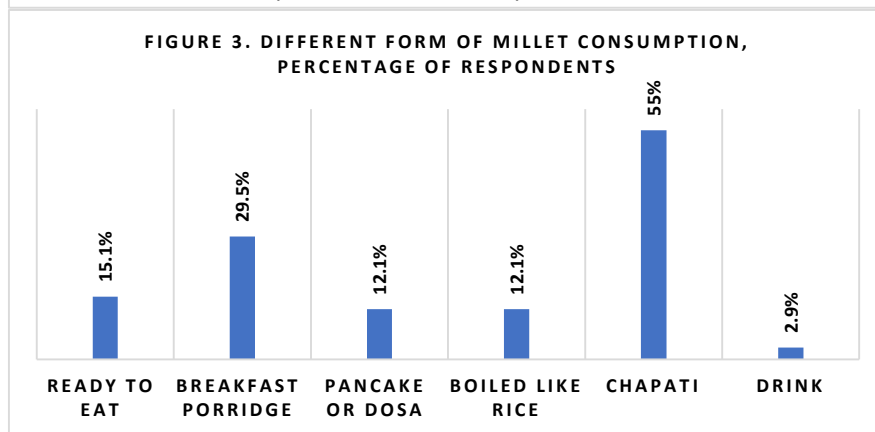
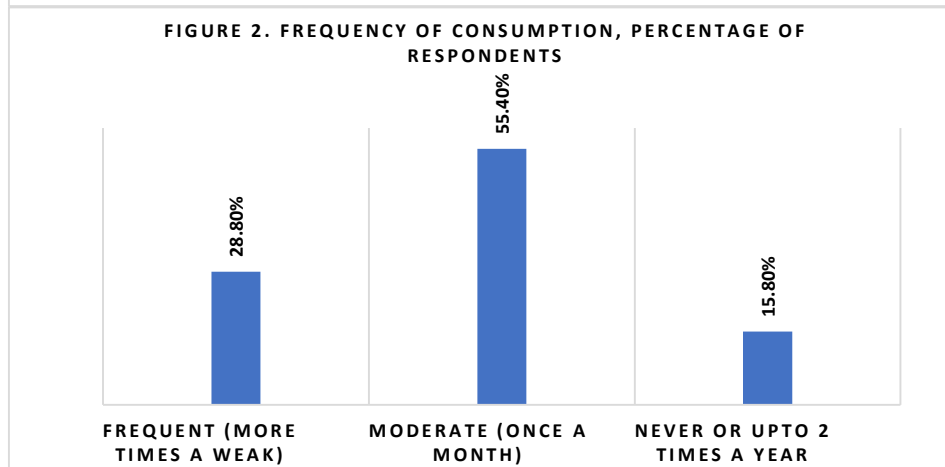
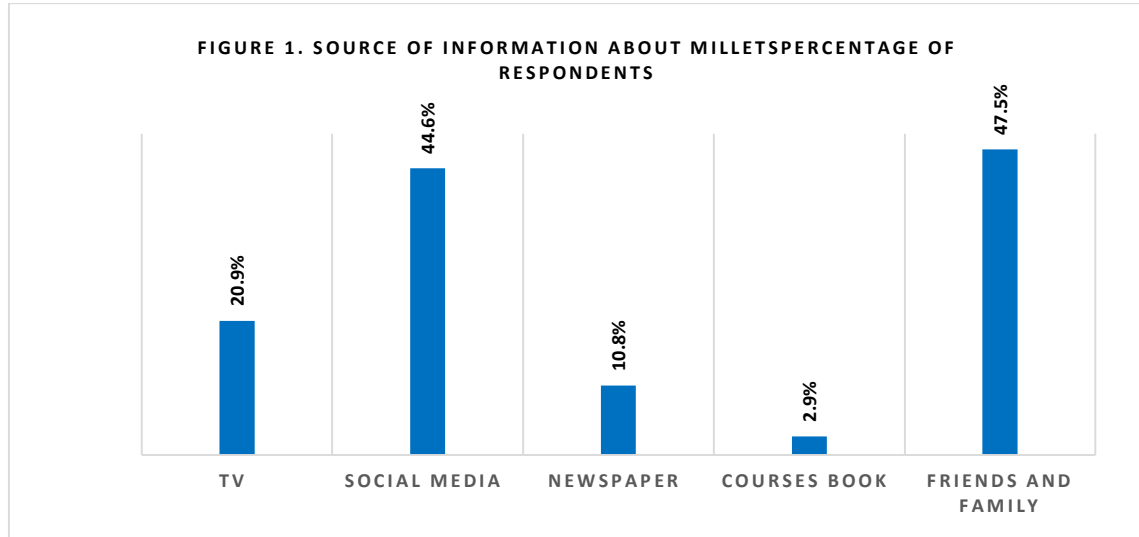
Table 1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Demographic Character	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GENDER		
FEMALE	120	85.71
MALE	20	14.28
AGE		
18-19	83	59.2%
25-30	57	40.7%
Education Level		
GRADUATE	100	71.42
POSTGRADUATE	20	14.28
INTERMEDIATE	20	14.28
Family Income		
<20000	16	11.42
20000-40000	30	21.42
40000-60000	25	17.85
>60000	69	49.25

Table 2. Health consciousness of the participants

Question	Answer	% of respondent
Do you think millets are healthy?	Yes	81.30%
	Maybe	13.70%
	No	0.70%
	Don't know	4.30%
What do you think is healthy about millets?	Good for women	27.30%
	High in iron	33.80%
	High in calcium	25.90%
	Good for diabetes	23%
	Good for pregnancy	4.30%
	Good for babies	5.80%
	Good for cancer	4.30%

	Other reasons (e.g., good for bones, skin, hair)	45.30%
How health conscious are you?	Very	27.30%
	Reasonably	64%
	Not so or not at all	8.60%



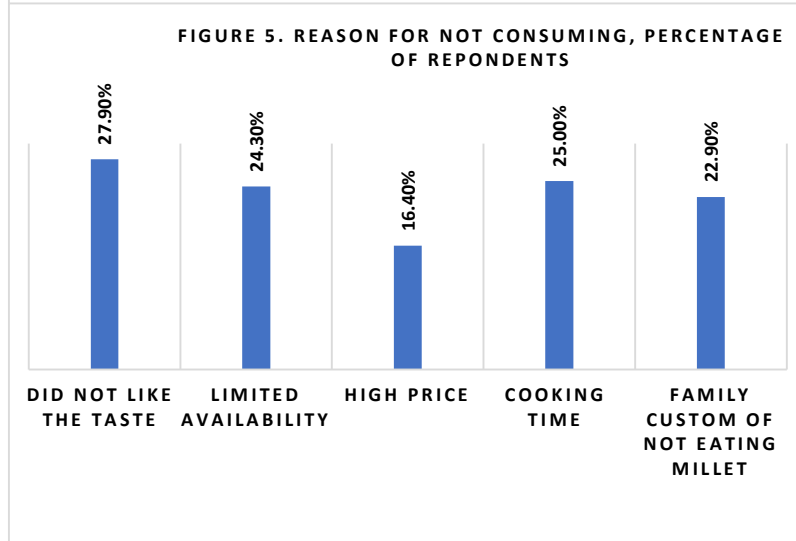
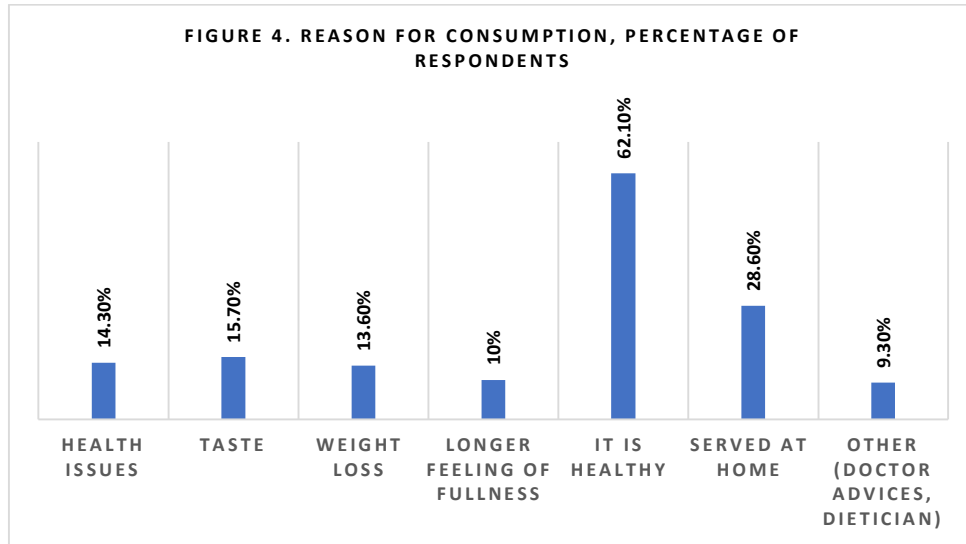


Table 3. Correlation between respondents’ family income and reasons for consumption and not consuming millets

Variables		r value	p value
Family Income	Frequency of consumption of millet	0.42	*0.058
	Reason of consuming millet	0.099	**0.013
	Reason for not consuming millet	0.08	**0.018
Frequency of consumption of millet	Reason for not consuming millet	0.18	*0.056

**Significant at 0.01%, *Significant at 0.05%

Discussion

India is one of the largest producers and exporter of millets, but millet production is still restricted to states namely Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, j revealed that health problems, weight loss, and taste were major factors for consumption as also reported by Kane-Potaka et al., 2021. Moreover, demographic factors such as age, qualification and income play significant role in consumption of millets as per the present finding, these factors are also evident in study Rizwana et al., 2023. However, there remains a significant knowledge gap in understanding the multifaceted drivers that influence millet consumption. Shah et al (2023) highlight regular consumers demonstrated a strong awareness of the environmental benefits of millet cultivation, while occasional consumers showed limited awareness and motivation. Present study reason for not consuming millets is limited

availability as also examined by Sukumaran et al 2023, if the supply would be sufficient to meet the demands in the near future and affordability can influence the consumption pattern India. financial assistance provided to promote farmers for better yield and production showed that millet production has been steadily increasing in India, driven by increasing demand for the crop due to its growing popularity as a health food. But again this demand is limited by different social classes with varied financial background. Despite its potential, millet production in India is still facing numerous challenges that need to be addressed such as the adoption of improved farming practices and post-harvest technologies. The development of new marketing strategies to increase sale and the promotion of millet consumption through reducing the market retail price and awareness campaigns, advertisements and social media platforms. Government schemes for Promotion of Millets: The Government has taken several steps for promotion of Millets and help farmers in cultivation of millets. Integrated Cereals Development Programmes in Coarse Cereals (ICDP CC) which comes under Macro Management of Agriculture, Rainfed Area Development Programme (RADP). Also, Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millet Promotion under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) to increase domestic and global demand and achieve the goal of nutritional security. The Government celebrated The National Year of Millets in 2018 in view of the nutritional value of the millets and Millets were included under the POSHAN Mission Abhiyan. In the current Union Budget 2023-24, the Government has renamed millets as Shree Anna i.e. best among all food grains (Raj et al., 2023). Equally important is understanding the initial knowledge, practices, and individual attitude toward these traditional crops while planning and implementing any nutrition-related interventions using them.

Conclusion

Present study conducted for assessing millet consumption behaviour among urban dwellers to know their health consciousness level and awareness about millet consumption. The above findings highlight the major factors responsible for millet consumption are health problems, weight loss, and taste. Moreover, demographic factors such as age, qualification and income also play significant role in consumption. High market value and limited availability of millet products are the reasons observed for not consuming it as a staple food in this study. The findings of this study may be useful for policymakers as well as different stakeholders, for instance food companies, nutritionists and researchers, who intend to promote consumption of millets under government programs. The findings imply a need to work on reducing market retail value on millet products, cereals and to promote the benefits of millets, create awareness of various ways of cooking millets to satisfy taste preferences and change the perception of millets, which would in turn lead to an increase in their consumption. The social media platform is emerging as a major source of information dissemination increasing awareness about millet.

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