

Bill No. LXXXVII of 2024

THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2024

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further to amend the National Food Security Act, 2013.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the National Food Security (Amendment) Act, 2024.

Short title and commencement.

5 (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government, may by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. In section 2 of the National Food Security Act, 2013 in clause (5), the following shall be substituted, namely:—

Amendment of section 2.

10 “(5) “foodgrains” means millets, rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined, by order, by the Central Government from time to time.”

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), the term “foodgrains” is defined as rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined, by order, by the Central Government from time to time. There is no specific provision for millets, such as, bajra, jowar, maize, ragi etc. as they have not been defined under “foodgrains” in the Act. However, to improve the level of nutrition amongst the beneficiaries covered under the NFSA, all the States and Union territories have been requested to procure millets and distribute for NFSA beneficiaries as per local consumption preferences and as per the guidelines issued by the Government from time to time. The United Nations, on India’s initiative, has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

Recognizing the nutritional value of millets and the fact that consumption of millets can significantly improve key nutrition parameters among children and women in rural and urban areas, the Government of India has created a sub-mission under the National Food Security Mission to encourage millet cultivation and its inclusion in Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). Now, millets are already a part of the TPDS. The procurement, storage, and distribution of coarse grains by the States and Union territories is done under the Decentralized Procurement (DCP) system.

The word ‘millets’ is used to describe small-grained cereals like sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), foxtail millet (kangni/ Italian millet), little millet (kutki), kodo millet, finger millet (ragi/ mandua), proso millet (cheena/ common millet), barnyard millet (sawa/ sanwa/ jhangora), and brown top millet (korale). Millets were among the first crops to be domesticated. There is evidence for consumption of millets by the Indus valley people (3,000 BC), and several varieties that are now grown around the world were first cultivated in India. West Africa, China, and Japan are home to indigenous varieties of the crop.

Millets can help combat health challenges such as obesity, diabetes and lifestyle problems as they are gluten-free, have a low glycemic index and are high in dietary fiber and antioxidants. Distribution of millets or coarse grains, such as, jowar, bajra and ragi in addition to rice and wheat under the National Food Security Act and other social welfare schemes including Integrated Child Development Services and Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirmal (PM-Poshan) is, therefore, required to ensure overall health and development of the citizens of the country. The Bill accordingly, seeks to amend the National Food Security Act, 2013 to include millets as a foodgrain to ensure targeted distribution and improve nutritional status.

Hence, the Bill.

IRANNA KADADI.

ANNEXURE

EXTRACTS FROM THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT, 2013

(20 OF 2013)

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

Definitions.

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(5) "foodgrains" means rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined, by order, by the Central Government from time to time;

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further to amend the National Food Security Act, 2013.

(Shri Iranna Kadadi, M.P.)