

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 363
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 27/03/2026

PLANS TO INCREASE MILLET CULTIVATION IN PUNJAB

*363. SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has formulated any plans to increase the area under millet cultivation in Punjab as part of efforts to diversify cropping patterns and reduce dependency on water-intensive crops like paddy;
- (b) the steps being taken to ensure the availability of high-yield and drought-resistant millet seeds to farmers in Punjab and the extent of distribution, in the last three years; and
- (c) whether Government is promoting value-added products of millet in Punjab to create better income opportunities for farmers, if so, the specific initiatives undertaken in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN)

- (a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 363 TO BE ANSWERED ON 27/03/2026 REGARDING “PLANS TO INCREASE MILLET CULTIVATION IN PUNJAB”.

(a) to (c): The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) is implementing various schemes to promote Crop diversification including the National Food Security & Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) under which, Millet (Shree Anna) cultivation is promoted. Interventions under NFSNM are being implemented across 28 States and 2 Union Territories (UTs) including Punjab, for enhancing the production of various crops including Millets (Shree Anna) through area expansion and productivity improvement. Under NFSNM, for the financial year 2025-26, an Annual Action Plan of Rs. 34.60 lakhs (Central share +state share) was approved for the state of Punjab to promote Millet cultivation in the state. The Approved Plan for NFSNM -Shree Anna includes assistance to the farmers through the state for demonstration, seed distribution, seed production, INM & IPM distribution, training etc.

Further, the Crop Diversification Programme (CDP) under the Pradhan Mantri - Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) is also being implemented in the Original Green Revolution States viz; Haryana, Punjab & Uttar Pradesh since 2013-14 to divert the area of water guzzling paddy crop to alternative crops like millets, pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals etc. In 2025-26, an Annual Action Plan of Rs. 103.75 cr (central share + state share) has been approved for the state of Punjab for various interventions supporting crop diversification from Paddy to other alternative crops.

The Indian Council of Agriculture Research ensures the production of Breeder Seeds of new varieties/hybrids of millets. A total of 110 varieties of millets have been released during the last three years. High-yielding, climate-resilient, bio-fortified varieties or hybrids that are resistant to insects, pests and diseases, as well as of short and medium duration (less than 10 years old) that outperform existing prominent varieties are promoted under NFSNM. In Punjab, a total of 140 quintals of certified seed of millets have been distributed under the scheme during financial year 2025-26.

The Government has been taking various initiatives to promote millet cultivation, processing and consumption across the country along with incentivizing food processing units, and exporters engaged in millet-based products. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is implementing the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) from 2021-22 to 2026-27 and one component of the scheme focuses on Millet-Based Products, with an outlay of Rs. 800 crores (PLISMBP). Under the scheme, 29 applicants have been incentivized with an amount of Rs. 793.27 crore in the country including three projects in Kapurthala, Patiala and Jalandhar districts of Punjab.

Further, under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme, Millets and millet-based products have been identified as One District One Product (ODOP) in 21 districts of 11 States and 17 Incubation Centers have been approved in 10 States having Millet processing lines. Under PMFME, 4,612 micro food processing enterprises have been approved with subsidy of Rs.91.20 Crores for millet processing units across the country. In Punjab, 5 micro food enterprises for millet units have been approved subsidy amounting to Rs. 0.25 crore under the scheme.

The Indian Council of Agriculture Research – Indian Institute of Millets Research (ICAR-IIMR) Hyderabad, through its Centre of Excellence (CoE) and "Nutrihub" technology business incubator, have developed diverse portfolio of value-added technologies including Ready-to-Eat (RTE) and Ready-to-Cook (RTC) products (e.g., millet pasta, vermicelli, cookies, puffs, and flakes). These processing technologies are available for licensing to startups, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and entrepreneurs from across the country including Punjab. Farmers from Punjab actively participated in the training programs on "Entrepreneurship development on millet value added products and marketing" organized by IIMR's Nutrihub in early 2019, which aimed to create awareness and provide training on startup and business opportunities in the millet sector. The ICAR-IIMR, Hyderabad have also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Punjab-based entities for promoting value-added millet products and for supporting initiatives with technical backstopping for millet promotion.

In addition, the Punjab Government have informed that the state is organizing exhibitions, fairs, state, district and village level camps, talks in schools and colleges to create awareness among the consumers and farmers about the health benefits of millets. The state is also promoting value added products of millets to create better income opportunity for farmers. The state Government has informed that they have initiated a state project "MERA" (Millets for Encouraging Soil Restoration and Healthy Food Accessibility) for boosting farmers income and consumer health. The main components of the "MERA" are production, promotion, processing, marketing and consumption of organic millets. Further, the Department of Food Science and Technology, Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana has developed dual purpose varieties of bajra and sorghum with good popping potential and high nutrition value and these are being promoted among farmers.
