

## MILLETS IN THE GANGA RIVER BASIN



Ganga River is among the largest rivers in Asia, flowing roughly over 2,500 km and covering 26% of India's landmass. Agriculture is the primary livelihood source for most people in the river basin. The Ganga river, a perennial water source, is a source of surface and groundwater irrigation in the river basin.

Present day, agricultural practices, urbanisation and climate change impact have caused a highly vulnerable river ecosystem. Millets farming is a rescue in such scenarios as it supports natural farming with efficient water use. Currently, millets are cultivated only by marginal farmers in the Ganga river basin. Millets are important by virtue of their potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers' income and ensure food and nutritional security. Recognising the enormous potential of Millets, which also aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Government of India has prioritized Millets. Since 2018, Millets are rebranded as "Nutri Cereals".

NMCG-WII, project aims to promote natural farming and increase farmers' income in the Ganga River basin. The task towards this direction has been initiated by creating awareness of millet benefits and farming through several online and offline sessions for the Ganga Praharis. It has motivated several groups of farmers who willingly want to opt for natural millet farming. This will be followed by hands-on training of farmers on natural farming, processing and marketing with the support of other Governments and NGOs.



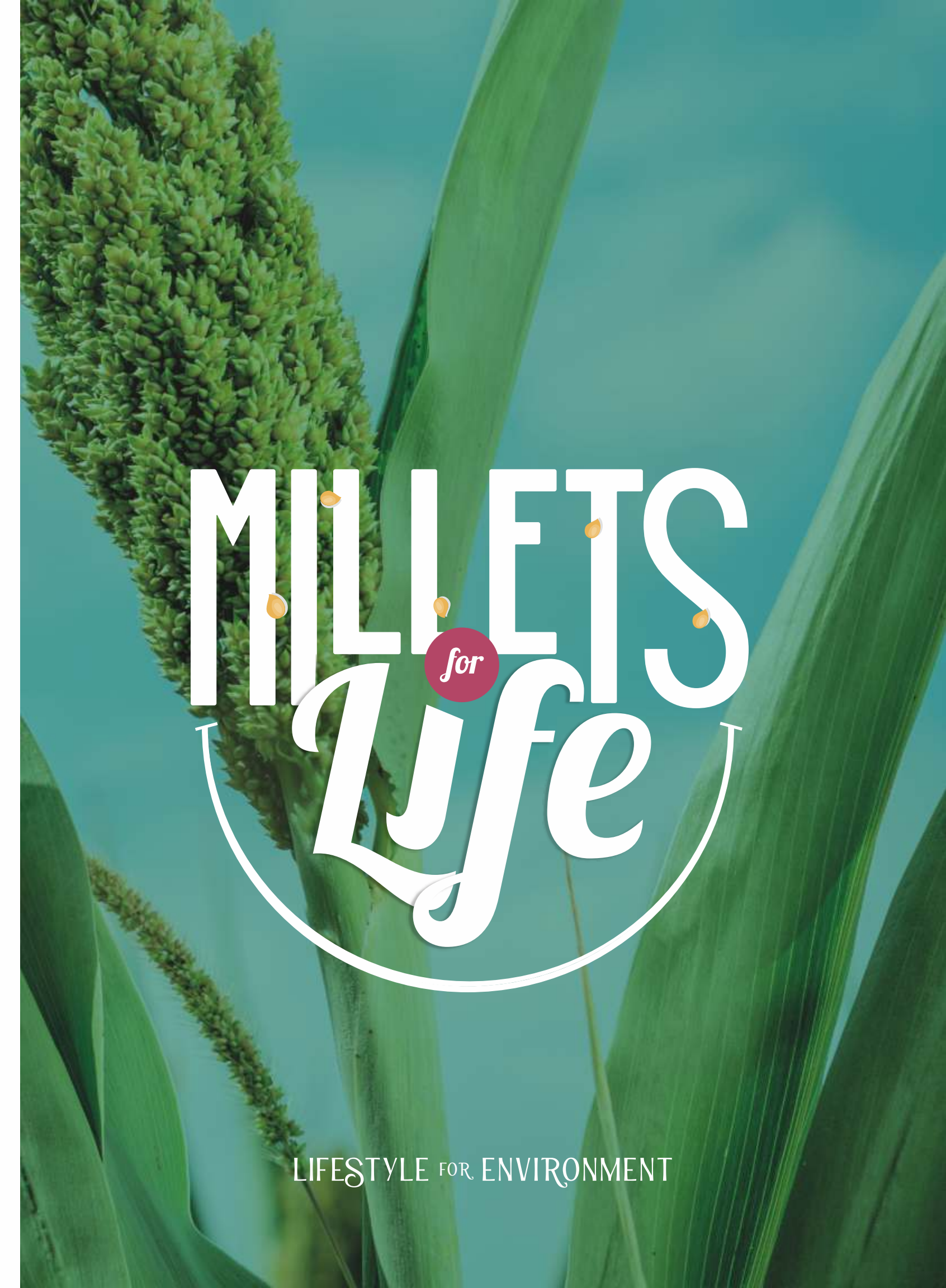
## NMCG-WII MILLET TRAINING

Training women under the aegis of "Jalaj" in preparing traditional and contemporary value-added items with millet has helped them generate an independent income. Ganga Praharis have been trained to prepare millet value-added products such as, cookies, salted snacks, premixes, rotli (Indian bread) and sweets with a larger shelf life with attractive packaging. Furthermore, setting up jalaj with millet kitchens, shopping outlets selling millet grains/ millet products, and linking millet products with urban markets ensures sustainable livelihood.

Jalaj's objectives are to constantly upgrade the skills of Ganga Prahari's ensuring GESI with the support of other Government and Non-government Institutions, thus creating a foolproof model for a robust river ecosystem with economically empowered communities.



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# MILLETS for Life

LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT

Namami Gange Programme, a Flagship Programme of the Government of India seeks to rejuvenate the Ganga River and the sustainable development of the Ganga Basin through "Arth Ganga". The Arth Ganga implies a sustainable development model with a focus on economic activities related to Ganga Basin which is the largest river basin of India having highest human density. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, first introduced this concept during the first National Ganga Council meeting held in Kanpur in 2019, where he urged for a shift to the model of Arth Ganga.



The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), has entrusted the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an Autonomous Institute of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, a project for planning ecological restoration of Ganga River through a project titled "Biodiversity conservation and Ganga rejuvenation". This project aims to develop a science-based ecological restoration plan for the Ganga River by involving multiple stakeholders. To elicit the participation of local communities in the Ganga restoration process, the WII has developed a motivated and trained cadre of volunteers, known as Ganga Praharis. Till date more than 3500 Ganga Praharis including 2026 women from 10 Ganga River basin states have been trained in various aspects on conservation and rejuvenation of these freshwater systems and its biodiversity. Considering the importance of linking conservation with development of local communities, and to align restoration efforts with livelihood security of people, the project came up with the concept of "Jalaj" which aims to realize the Arth Ganga by linking sustainable development and local livelihoods with rejuvenation of Ganga River.

Millet, one of the important traditional cereals of India can be an alternative cereal to wheat and rice which are more water intensive, have high efficiency of water use, require low input and hence are more environment friendly. Thus, millet farming can help to phase out climatic uncertainties, reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide, and can contribute in mitigating the climate change impacts. Spearheaded by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India the proposal for International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly. This initiative brought the significance of millets on the global stage to address issue like; food security vis a vis addressing environmental issue triggered by climate change impacts. In recent years, lots of efforts are being put to revive millets in India and the world. With this efforts are being made to educate farmers about better millets growing techniques.

-  **Brown top Millet**  
*Panicum ramosum*
-  **Foxtail Millet**  
*Setaria italica*
-  **Sorghum**  
*Sorghum bicolor*
-  **Finger Millet**  
*Echinochloa coracoma*
-  **Baruyari Millet**  
*Echinochloa esculenta*
-  **Kodo Millet**  
*Paspalum scrobiculatum*
-  **Little Millet**  
*Panicum sumatrense*
-  **Pearl Millet**  
*Pennisetum glaucum*
-  **Proso Millet**  
*Panicum miliaceum*

At the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India announced Mission LiFE, to bring individual behaviours at the forefront of the global climate action narrative. The Mission intends to nudge individuals to undertake simple acts in their daily lives that can contribute significantly to climate change when embraced across the world. LiFE plans to leverage the strength of social networks to influence social norms surrounding climate. The Mission plans to create and nurture a global network of individuals, namely 'Pro-Planet People' (P3), who will have a shared commitment to adopt and promote environmentally friendly lifestyles. Through the P3 community, the Mission seeks to create an ecosystem that will reinforce and enable environmentally friendly behaviours to be self-sustainable. Promotion of Millets as staple food source and a healthy life style can significantly contribute to the LiFE programme.



Goals towards promotion of Millet for LiFE are in line with the objectives of Jalaj initiative to establish symbiotic linkages between rivers and people and help achieve the goals of the Arth Ganga and G-20 summit. 26 Jalaj across the Ganga River basin have been initially inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti, Govt. of India.



## WHY MILLETS

