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Study on millets consumption patterns and awareness of its health benefits among adolescents of Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract
This paper investigates millet consumption patterns and awareness of its health benefits among adolescents in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 120 adolescents participated in the study, with 78 females and 42 males. Primary data on millet consumption patterns and awareness were collected using Google Forms. Millets play a crucial role in contributing to the nation's food and nutritional security, particularly as they are rich in essential nutrients. India, being the leading producer of millets globally, produced 10.9 million tons in 2019 (Das *et al*., 2019). Post-pandemic, there is heightened awareness of millets across age groups. The study findings indicate that a significant proportion (91%) of respondents consume millets because they are served at home, with ragi (finger millet) being the most preferred millet among adolescents. Additionally, a majority of respondents (64%) expressed a preference for consuming millets during breakfast.

Keywords: Millets, adolescents, consumption pattern and health benefits

Introduction
Millet, an ancient grain utilized for diverse purposes such as human food, animal feed, and fodder, is recognized for its high nutritional value, earning it the moniker "Nutri-Cereals." Belonging to the Poaceae family, millets are small-seeded grass species. The name "millet" itself is derived from the French word "mille," meaning "thousand," reflecting the potential of a handful of millet to contain up to a thousand grains. While millets were once widely consumed in India, the 1960s' Green Revolution, with its emphasis on food security, led to a decline in their popularity. Millets were relegated to the status of "orphan crops," experiencing a decrease in consumption and fading from widespread recognition.

Worldwide, millets totaling 31.719 (1000 MT) were produced. India is the world's largest producer of millet (41.04%), with Niger coming in second (11.94%), and Africa being the major consumer. In terms of individual crop production in India in 2020–21, pearl millet ranked first.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian government recognized the potential of millets to feed the world and create a demand for them both domestically and internationally. As a result, the UNGA passed a resolution designating 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Seventy-two nations backed India's motion, and in March 2021 the United Nations General Assembly declared 2023 to be the International Year of Millets.

Millets are recognized for their relatively higher protein content compared to other major cereals. The protein content in millets makes them an essential source of plant-based protein in various diets. Millets are abundant in dietary fibers, which consist of both soluble and insoluble forms. The dietary fiber. content in millets contributes to various health benefits, including improved digestive health and management of blood sugar levels. For example, barnyard millet (Echinochloa frumentacea) contains approximately 11-15% dietary fiber.

Earlier adolescents were not known much about millets. The older/elder generations of prakasam district used to depends upon the millets only not on rice because of its climatic conditions and soil type this district cultivates millets in large scale when compared to rice the cultivation. Ragi, Bajra and jowar was the most consumed millets throughout the district. Earlier they have also consumed foxtail millet also but later it has been decreased. Generations from 1990's were not aware of these millets. After the sudden instance of the Covid pandemic Everyone was very conscious about their health so started eating all the healthy foods from that time onwards again millets shown their existence in the market and after that UNO

declared 2023 as IYOM conducted so many awareness programmes, and some special events on millets in which they were educating the people/ society about the how healthy are millets, and what are its health benefits.
This study will help us to know about the consumptionpatterns and awareness of its health benefits among Adolescents of Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology
The study was conducted with a sample of 120 adolescents from Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh. Primary data on millet consumption patterns and associated health benefits were collected through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. In addition to the primary data, secondary data supporting the study was gathered from research articles obtained through search engines such as Google Scholar, Google, and Krishikosh. The combination of primary and secondary data sources enhances the comprehensiveness and depth of the study, providing a well-rounded understanding of millet consumption patterns and related health insights among adolescents in the specified region.

Results and Discussion
Among the oldest foods that humans have ever eaten are millets, such as ragi, bajra, and jowar. There is evidence that millets were consumed by the Indus valley civilization, making them one of the first crops to be domesticated in India.
The present study has been carried out among the adolescents of Praksam district in which 55 percent of the females and 45 percent of males have been participated in the study.

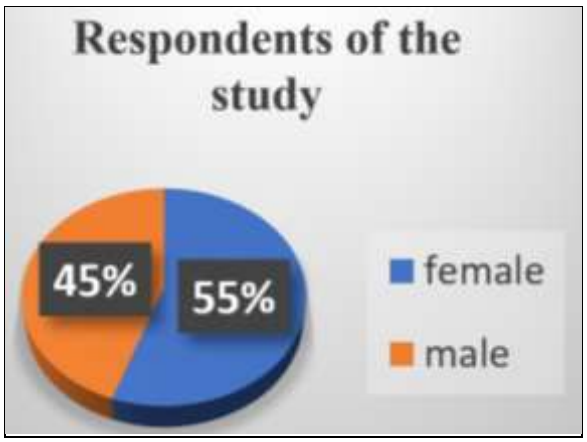

Fig 1: No. of male and female adolescents participated in the study.

Majority (65%) of the adolescents were aware of only three millets followed by 28% of the respondents were aware of five millets and very few (7%) respondents were aware of eight millets.

Table 1: Awareness on millets by adolescents.

S.no	No. of Millets	Known (percent)
1.	3	65
2.	5	28
3.	8	7

Majority (91%) of the respondents were said that millets are healthy whereas 9 percent of the respondents were said that millets are unhealthy.

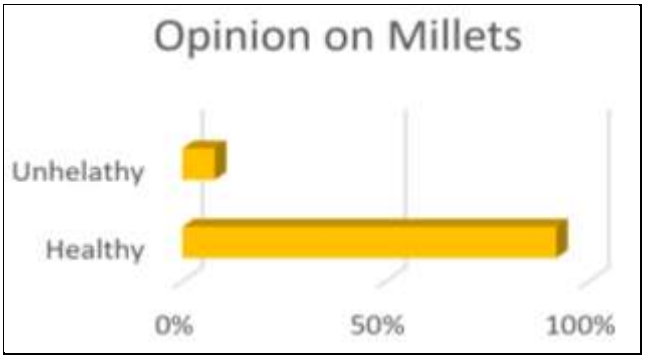

Fig 2: Opinion on millets by adolescents.

Majority (60%) of the respondents know that millets are high in iron content followed by 17 percent of the respondents were aware of that millets are high in calcium, followed by 15 percent of the respondents know that millets are good for diabetes and 7 percent and 1 percent respectively know that millets are good for Constipation and Cancer.
Few studies stated that millets are rich in various B-complex vitamins and other essential vitamins. For example, pearl millet (Pennisetum glaucum) is known for its high content of niacin (B3) and thiamine (B1). Dietary fiber content in millets contributes to various health benefits, including improved digestive health and management of blood sugar levels [7].

Table 2: Health benefits of the millets according to the respondent's view.

S.No	Health Benefits	Percentage (%)
1.	High is Iron	60
2.	High in Calcium	17
3.	Good for Constipation	7
4.	Good for diabetes	15
5.	Good for Cancer	1

Most of the respondents (53%) were having millets twice in a week followed by 21 percent of the respondents were consuming millets on everyday basis while 19 percent of the respondents were consuming once in a month and very few (7%) of the respondents were consuming thrice in a week.

Table 3: Consumption frequency of millets by Respondents

S.No	Consumption Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Everyday	21
2.	Twice in a week	53
3.	Thrice in a week	7
4.	Once in a month	19

Most of the respondents (43%) were consuming ragi followed by pear millet with32 percent of respondents and 25 percent of the consuming jowar among the respondents.
Few studies revealed that majority of the people were consuming Ragi followed by Bajra and Jowar where as people were consuming Foxtail millet [4].

Table 4: Types of millets consumed by the adolescents.

S.No	Type of Millet	Percentage (%)
1.	(Ragi) Finger millet	43
2.	(Jowar) sorghum	25
3.	(Bajra) Pearl millet	32

Majority of the respondents (91%) were consuming the millets because of being served at home followed by 6 percent of the respondents were consuming millets by its taste and a very few (3%) of the respondents were consuming because of their health issues [7].

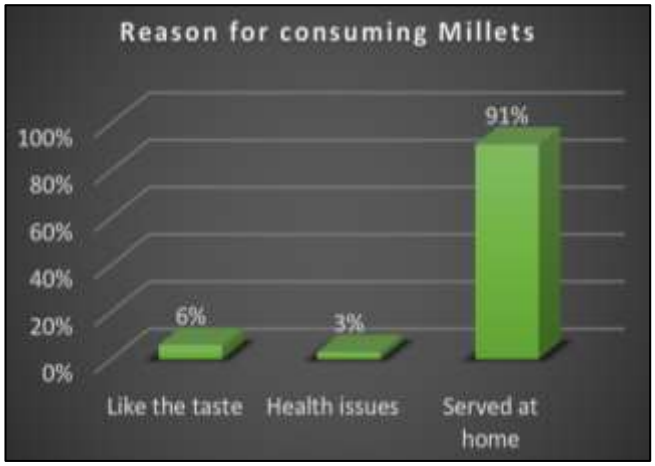

Fig 3: Reason for consuming millets by adolescents

Most of the respondents (64%) were having millets in their breakfast followed by 21 percent of the respondents consuming in dinner followed by 13 percent consuming millets in snacks and less (2%) respondents were having millets in their lunch.

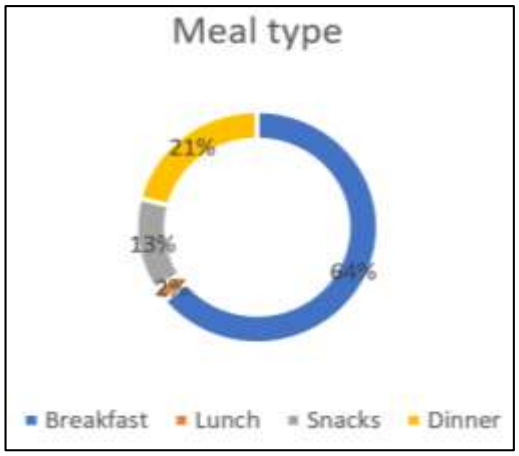

Fig 4: Preference of consuming millets

Conclusion

The younger generation exhibits a limited inclination towards millet utilization, having been accustomed to processed and junk foods, resulting in various health issues. Recognizing this challenge, the government of India has undertaken initiatives to reintroduce millets into the market. This endeavour aims to benefit farmers, consumers, and the environment, promoting a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. Several state governments have also launched awareness programs, with the Government of Andhra Pradesh incorporating ragi malt into school mid-day meal programs. Ragi, Bajra, and Jowar have been identified as the most consumed millets by adolescents in the Prakasam district.

The study indicates that awareness of millets primarily comes from sources such as television and peer groups and majority of the respondents preferred to consuming the millets in their breakfast. Despite diverse motivations, including weight loss and perceived health benefits, a significant number of respondents consume millets, often influenced by parental encouragement. Remarkably, the study reveals an increased consumption of millets among adolescents in recent years, particularly in the post-COVID era, reflecting a positive shift towards healthier dietary choices.

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