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Reduction in the area of little millet and crop replaced in place of little millet in Haveri district of Karnataka

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Abstract

The focus of the study was to understand the reasons for the reduction in the area of little millet (*Panicum miliare*) as well as crop in place of little millet in Haveri district of Karnataka during 2011-12. The stratified sampling technique was employed to select 120 respondents comprising equal number of men and women farmers from four villages of Haveri district of Karnataka. The primary data required for the study was obtained through personal interview method using pre-tested schedule prepared for the purpose. Study revealed that 98.33 per cent of respondents expressed that low economic returns associated with little millet was the major reason for reduction in the area of little millet followed by rain interrupts the entire harvesting season of the crop (91.67%), severe losses of grains and fodder due to rain (91.67%), low yield (88.33%), shifting to other crops (83.33%), labour intensive and drudgery involved in processing of little millet (56.67%). Further, it was observed that less than fifty per cent of respondents expressed that easy availability of rice and wheat in PDS system (48.33%) followed by treating as poor man's crop and food (38.33%), fragmentation of land holding (30.0%) and no proper place to grow these crops (15.00%) are the reasons for reduction in the area. The overall results showed that 90.00 per cent of farmers were cultivating cotton crop in place of millet followed by maize (82.50%), groundnut (55.83%) and soybean (19.17%).

Keywords: Little millet (*Panicum miliare*), Public Distribution System (PDS), Haveri, Fragmentation of landholding

Introduction**Background and objectives**

Millet crops requires less water than any other grain crop and provides assured harvests in arid, semi-arid and mountainous regions of tropics and sub-tropics where monsoon failure and droughts are frequent, soil fertility is poor and land terrain is difficult. Among millet group little millet is one of the staple for households in many countries.

It was observed that little millets have suffered a 83.04 per cent loss of their cultivated area dropping from 28417 ha (2002-03) to 4818 ha (2008-09). Similarly, about 86.38 per cent decline in production from 24874 tonnes (2002-03) to 3387 tonnes (2008-09) was observed. While, in case of productivity 19.65 per cent decrease from 921 kg/ha (2002-03) to 740 kg/ha (2008-09) was observed (Anon., 2002 and 2008).

In India, food use of pearl millet has declined sharply at country level, its use as food through declining is still important in the major producing states. The decline in per capita consumption has paltry between 2000 and 2004 with consumption increasing in a few states, despite the overall decline in consumption a large share of pearl millet is consumed by the rural and urban poor while it only forms a small share in the basket of high income consumes. The increase in pearl millet production juxtaposed with its declining food use implies that its use in alternative uses has been increasing as indicated by the data from less than 5 to 55 per cent in 2004-05.

Alternative uses largely comprise demand for animal feed which includes mainly dairy and to some content in poultry, alcohol industry, starch industry processed from industry and export demand (Basavaraj *et al.* 2010) [4].

There has been a systematic decline in the production of minor millets, during post green revolution, this can be understood from the production trends of millets

vis-a-vis other crops such as rice and wheat that were relentlessly promoted for intensive farming in select few resource rich areas under irrigated conditions resulting increase in production of rice and wheat by 285 and 125 percentage, respectively, while millets to suffer a decline of (-) 2.4 percentage (Anon., 2011) [3].

In Karnataka, Haveri leads in little millet production with an annual cultivated area of 4818 ha producing 3387 tonnes with productivity of 740 kg/ha during (2008-09) was observed.

Little millet is widely cultivated in Haveri, Dharwad, Chitradurga, Belgaum and Tumkur districts of Karnataka (Anon., 2008) [2]. However, due to low yield and income farmers have been switched over to other crops like cotton and maize

There is declining trend of area and production of minor millets in major millet growing areas. These crops provide nutritious food to human beings and also to livestock. As it is traditional crop, supports livestock and both men and women farmers are involved in production of little millet. Considering the importance of millet cultivation in promoting agricultural development in the country in general, in the state of Karnataka in particular and Haveri district in specific, an attempt has been made in this study to understand the reasons for reduction in the area of little millet at farmer's level and also to know crop replaced in place of little millet. It helps to suggest appropriate extension strategies for further improvement of the millet cultivation in the country.

Resources and methods

The study was conducted in four millet growing villages of Haveri district namely Manthrawadi, Jekinakatti, Timmapur and Tadasa. A well structured interview schedule was developed to understand the trends in millet production as well as factor influencing the cultivation of little millet. The primary data was collected by personal interview method. The

sample was composed of 60 men and 60 women farmers selected by stratified random sampling procedure. Frequency and percentage were used to draw valuable inference from the research study.

Observation and analysis

Perceived reasons for reduction in the area of little millet

The content of the Table 1 and Fig.1 revealed that 98.33 per cent of respondents expressed that low economic returns associated with little millet was the major reason for reduction in the area of little millet followed by rain interrupts the entire harvesting season of the crop (91.67%), severe losses of grains and fodder due to rain (91.67%), low yield (88.33%), shifting to other crops (83.33%), labour intensive and drudgery involved in processing of little millet (56.67%). Further, it was observed that less than fifty per cent of respondents expressed that easy availability of rice and wheat in PDS system (48.33%) followed by treating as poor man's crop and food (38.33%), fragmentation of land holding (30.00%) and no proper place to grow these crops (15.00%) are the reasons for reduction in the area.

It clearly indicates that rain interrupts the harvesting period of little millet; it causes severe loss of grain as well as fodder. Low yield and economic returns is also major reasons for the switch over to other crops as expressed by farmers.

Table 1: Perceived reasons for reduction in the area of little millet cultivation.

Sl No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Low economic returns	118	98.33	I
2	Rain interrupts the harvesting season of the crop	110	91.67	II
3	Due to rain severe losses of grains and fodder	110	91.67	II
4	Low in yield	106	88.33	III
5	Shifting to the other crops	100	83.33	IV
6	Difficulty involved in processing of little millet	68	56.67	V
7	Easy availability of rice and wheat in PDS system	58	48.33	VI
8	Treating as poor man's crop and food	46	38.33	VII
9	Fragmentation of land holdings	36	30.00	VIII
10	No proper place to grow these crops	18	15.00	IX

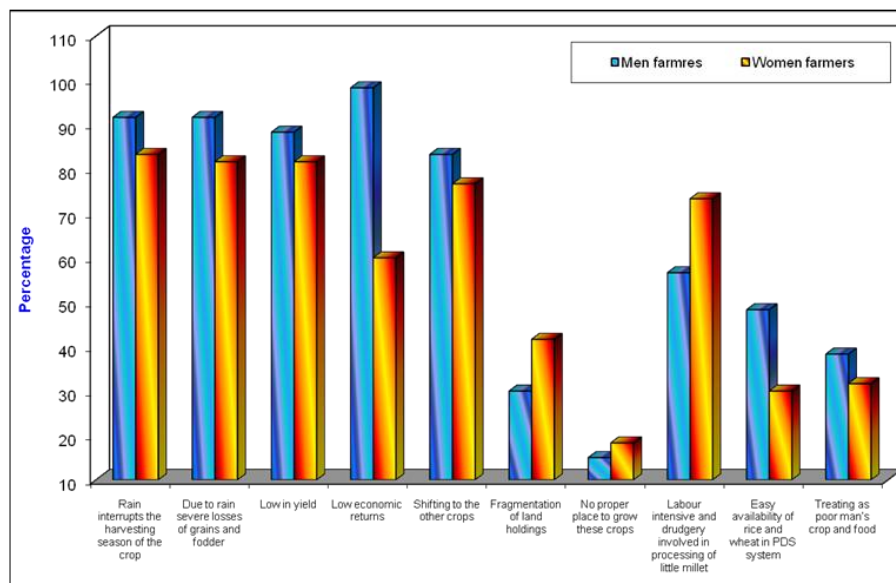


Fig 1: Perceived reasons for reduction in the area of little millet.

Crop replaced in place of little millet as perceived by farmers

The results presented in Table 2 and Fig. 2 highlights that 93.33 per cent of men farmers and 86.67 per cent of women

farmers expressed that cotton crop has been replaced millet followed by maize (90.00% and 75.00%), groundnut (58.33% and 53.33%) and soybean (18.33% and 20.00%).

The overall results showed that 90.00 per cent of farmers were

cultivating cotton crop in place of millet followed by maize (82.50%), groundnut (55.83%) and soybean (19.17%).

It clearly indicates that majority of the man and women farmers expressed that cotton crop has been in place of little millet followed by maize, groundnut and soybean. This might be the reasons like economic returns are better from these

crops because of market price quite consistently high and profitable compared to little millet, also many high yielding hybrids of these crops are available in the market made them to accept to these crops and neglected the little millet crop by farmers.

Table 2: Crop replaced in place of little millet as perceived by farmers, n = 120.

SI No.	Crops	Men farmers (n ₁ =60)		Women farmers(n ₂ =60)		Total (n=120)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Maize	54	90.00	45	75.00	99	82.50
2	Cotton	56	93.33	52	86.67	108	90.00
3	Groundnut	35	58.33	32	53.33	67	55.83
4	Soya bean	11	18.33	12	20.00	23	19.17

F – Frequency, % - Percentage

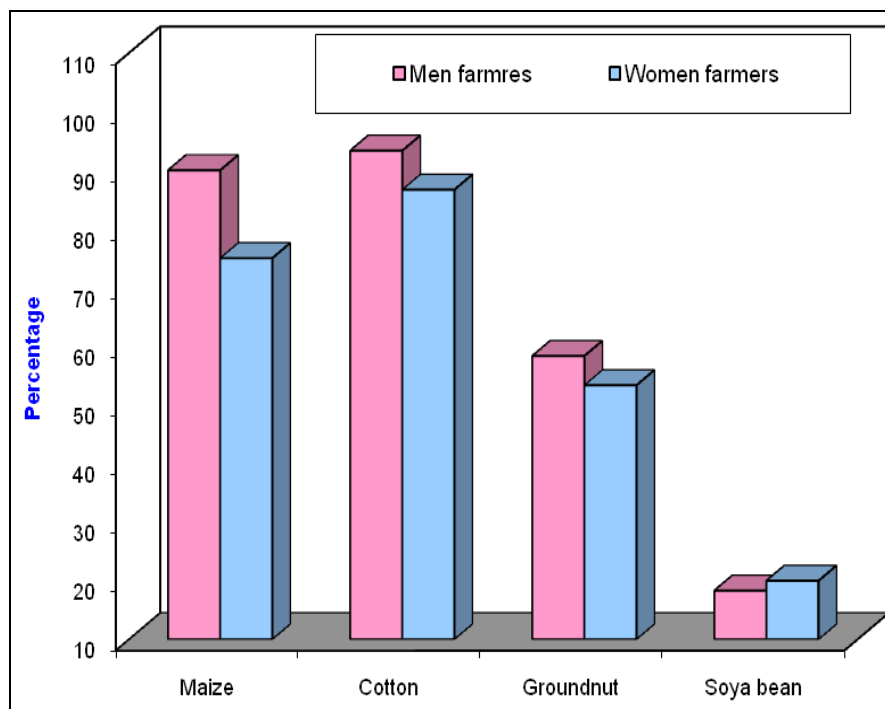


Fig 2: Crop replaced in place of little millet.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that low economic returns associated with little millet was the major reason for reduction in the area of little millet as perceived by the farmers. Mean while rain interrupts the entire harvesting period of the crop, it leads to severe losses of grains and fodder. Farmers growing cotton crop in place of little millet followed by maize, groundnut and soybean. The economic returns are better from these crops and market prices are quite consistently high and profitable compared with little millet.

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