

## **Focus on maize upsets millet group**

Our Bureau



Ready-for-harvest pearl millet  
Hyderabad, June 22:

The National Millet Network of India (NMNI), a national level advocacy group, has urged the Andhra Pradesh Government for its skewed policy of giving undue focus on maize, which is increasing.

The State Government has announced a subsidy for maize farmers. “While this sector in general, we have serious concerns about how it will affect food security and adversely impact millet cultivation in the State in particular,” Dr P.V. Satheesh said. He alleged that maize's use in the production of bio-fuels must have forced the area under millet to decrease.

“While Bt cotton had taken over all of black soil in the country, maize was going to take no land for nutrient-rich millets. This would eat into the millet area,” he said.

Mr Satheesh, who is also the Director of Deccan Development Society, wrote a letter to the Chief Minister, making a strong case for millets. He alleged that maize was an expensive crop. The maize grown in India, just about 35 per cent is used for human consumption. The rest is used in the cereal industry, production of starch, dextrose, corn syrup, corn oil and ethanol.

In the last 10 years, area under maize doubled to 8.56 lakh hectares from 4.52 lakh hectares and production increased from 14.72 lakh tonnes to 29.44 lakh tonnes. “A subsidy is normally given to save a crop from drought. Attention and promotion for maize, a highly successful and exponentially growing crop, from a food security point of view. Why is a crop that is not staple food in any part of AP is asked.

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