Government renames millets as Nutri Cereals

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According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, compared to rice Fox tail millet has 81% more protein, Little millet has 840% higher fat, 350% higher fiber and 1,229% higher quantity of iron. The government has renamed jowar, bajra, ragi and other millets as “Nutri Cereals”, dispensing with the nomenclature “coarse cereals”. The move is aimed at removing a lingering perception that these grains are inferior to rice and wheat, even as their health benefits are larger. In a notification earlier this month, the agriculture ministry said, “the central government hereby declares millets comprising Sorghum (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Finger Millet (Ragi/Mandua), Minor Millets — Foxtail Millet (Kangani/Kakun), Proso Millet (Cheena), Kodo Millet (Kodo), Barnyard Millet (Sawa/Sanwa/ Jhangora), Little Millet (Kutki) and two Pseudo Millets (Black-wheat (Kuttu) and Ameranthus (Chaulai) which have high nutritive value as “Nutri Cereals” for production, consumption and trade point of view.”

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Millets hold great potential in contributing substantially to food and nutritional security of the country and thus they are not only a powerhouse of nutrients, but also are climate resilient crops and possess unique nutritional characteristics, the government said. It highlighted that recent research findings show millets contain anti-diabetic properties and millet-based food have low GI and reduces the postprandial blood glucose level and glycosylated haemoglobin. To popularise the consumption of these nutritious cereals, the government has already decided to include millets in the Public Distribution System (PDS) with the objective of improving nutritional security of the country.  

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