

REPORT

Millet's Food Festival and Recipe Training: Promotion of Production and Popularizing Consumption of Millets for a Healthy Future

Background

India proposed to the United Nations (UN) to declare the year 2018 as the year of millets. The proposal was assumed to have long term objectives, the country assumes that taking conscious measures for increasing production and popularizing consumption of millets could have many benefits for the future. If approved, may have many positive impacts and future perspectives for farmers, rain and dry land agriculture systems, food and nutrition security of the society as well as addressing global issues like the climate change. Aligning with the nation's vision of millets promotion and on the day of Kisan Diwas, NIRMAN is planning to organize an event to promote production and popularize consumption of millets, through creating awareness among the farmers and consumers in Odisha.

NIRMAN has organized a millets recipe training and millets food festival to bring together both the producers and consumers to create awareness about the need for increasing production of millets for the benefit of dry land agriculture systems, food and nutrition security of the society and combat climate change. Millets food festival was organized on the "Kisan Diwas" (National Farmers' Day), which is celebrated annually on 23' December. Kisan Diwas, has been chosen for celebration of this occasion with an objective to appeal to farmers about the significance of the year of millets, if approved by the UN and their role in increasing millets production in the future, for the benefit of the society and future generations. The same platform was used to organize millets recipe training for women and millets food festival in collaboration with the local SHGs. The millets food festival was used as an opportunity to create awareness among the consumers and public about the health benefits of millets, thereby popularizing consumption of millets.



About the Event

Millet Recipe Training cum Millets Food Festival was organized in Odisha, on 22-23 Dec. 2017, at Sikharpai village in Rayagada dist., by NIRMAN, a Bhubaneswar based NGO. More than 200 women participated in the program. On the day one, indigenous women have learned new millets food recipes. The millets food recipe training session was facilitated by Ms. Usharani and Ms. Janaki, (Sabala NGO, Vizianagaram, A.P.). The facilitators have shown around 10 new millets-based food recipes of millets halwa, millets cookies, millets laddu, millets muruku, millets pudding/kheer, etc. Most of the millets-based food recipes taught at the training are unfamiliar to the local women and SHGs. There was deliberation by the facilitators on the health benefits of consuming millets-based foods. The main focus of the millets recipe training session was to not only teach and popularize millets-based food recipes but also create awareness on the nutritional aspects of millets among the indigenous women and SHGs. One of the key messages of the session was “bring back millets-based foods for a healthy future”. It was not surprising to see that there was a lot of curiosity and excitement among the participants of the program.

On the day two, around 15 SHGs have participated in the Millets Food Festival Exhibition. An array of millets-based food dishes and snacks have been prepared and displayed by the SHGs at the food festival. Millet-based food dishes of finger millet porridge, finger millet ladu, finger millet chapati, finger millet arisa cake, little millets kheer, foxtail millet kheer, sorghum rice, sorghum pop-corn, etc, have been displayed. More than 500 people visited the venue to take a look at the display of millets-based food dishes. The event has garnered a lot of attention of the local folk.



Winners have been chosen by a panel of judges and two SHGs have been chosen as the winner and runner-up of the millets-based food festival. Sabitri SHG, Katagantha village had

been adjudged as the winner and Basumati SHG, Kumbharuda village have been adjudged as the runner-up for preparing most number of millets-based foods for food festival. More than 27 types of millets-based foods were prepared by the tribal women and displayed at the millets food festival.



The event was adorned by many interesting guests. The guests participated in the event includes, Mr. Santosh K. Samal, (DDM NABARD), Mr. Bijay K. Behera, (Horticulture, JE), Mr. Niranjana Gouda, (WASSAN Dist. Coordinator), Mr. Vinobha Nathan, Freelance Photographer, BBC, from Pondichery) and Mr. Prasant Mohanty, (Executive Director, NIRMAN). The Program was support by the Millets Network of India (MINI) and The National Foundation for India (NFI-THF).

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