

Millet Economy: Current Status and Future Policies

One-day Workshop at MIDS

The Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS) organised a one-day workshop on “*Millet Economy: Current Status and Future Policies*” on Wednesday, May 3rd 2023 at the Adiseshiah Auditorium in its campus. The Inauguration began at 9.30 am, Prof. L. Venkatachalam, Officiating Director of MIDS, provided the Welcome Address while Dr. M. Umanath, Assistant Professor, MIDS, introduced the Workshop. Mr. A. Annadurai, IAS, Director of Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu began the proceedings with his Inaugural Address filled with statistical inputs on Millets and its consumption in Tamil Nadu.

The first session titled “*Why are millets the talk of the country?*” saw two presentations. The first one by Prof. K. R. Karunakaran (Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore) was titled “*Changes in food production and consumption pattern and its implication on diet and health of Indian households.*” Prof. Karunakaran said that there is evidently a direct link between the present rice-based food consumption pattern and double burden of malnutrition problem, and also that intake of more calories by the middle- and high-income people has resulted in more number of deaths in the country, when compared to the problems of undernutrition. Speaking upon the nutritional value of millets, Prof. Karunakaran insisted that by incorporating millets in the diet, we could reduce the prevalence of malnutrition problems as the millets are rich in micronutrients, minerals and vitamins. The second presentation titled “*Health benefits of millets and its role in eradicating nutritional deficiency*” was by Dr. Shobana (Senior Scientist & Head, Department of Diabetes Food Technology, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai). Dr. Shobana argued that millets heavily polished could deplete the nutrients in them and might make them like polished rice which is rich in carbohydrate.

A specially organised lunch with millets-infused menu was served at the workshop. The afternoon session saw Mr. Adithya Jothi, (Co-Founder & CEO, Millet Foundation, Chennai) present his views in a talk titled “*Millets processing, value addition and economics of agribusiness start-up opportunities.*” Mr. Jothi called for youngsters to become entrepreneurs to make use of the opportunities created by millet economy for the future. High tea was served with a millet-based snack refreshment before the final Panel Discussion took centre stage. The discussion was titled “*Future of Millets, Scope of Agriculture and Food Policy Measures for Diversified Diet and Nutritional Security in India & Tamil Nadu in specific.*” The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by Prof. L. Venkatachalam. The panel comprised Dr. Elumalai Kannan (Associate Professor of Economics, Centre for the Study of Regional Development CSRD, JNU), Dr. A. Amudhasurabi (Professor, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Thanjavur), and Prof. Karunakaran. In an engrossing talk, the panellists discussed the various policy instruments to promote millets to be in every Indian food basket and to make millets a part of the regular diets to alleviate the existing double burden of malnutrition problems and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Photographs from the workshop...



