

Women Empowerment for Sustaining Development



Workshop on **Eat Local Eat Healthy**

Building the capacity of Women and Farmers' Organisations

Organized by



Small Millet Foundation
A division of DHAN Foundation

Madurai Symposium 2019

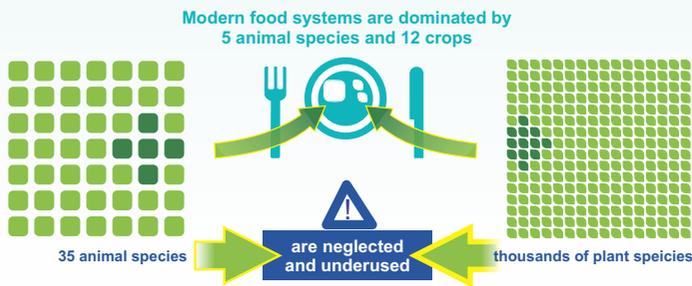
Thamukkam Grounds, Madurai
September 21, 2019

Background

Feeding 7.7 billion people nutritionally balanced diets produced in a sustainable manner is a global challenge we are facing. We are witnessing population growth and increasing urbanization, coinciding with an increase of health problems related to poor nutrition. A lack of available foods to constitute diversified diets is a crucial factor. Globally, the reduction of agricultural biodiversity in food systems is of increasing concern. Around 7,000 crop species have been used for human food since the origin of agriculture yet today only 3 crop species provide more than 50% of the world's calories from plants.¹ This is particularly the case in the developing countries like India, where diets often consist of starchy staples with not enough nutrient-rich sources of food, such as animal source foods, fruits, vegetables, beans and pulses. This is one of the reasons behind triple burden of malnutrition prevalent in India – coexistence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity. The Global Nutrition Report found that India has the world's largest number of stunted (46.6 million) and wasted children (25.5 million). Two percent of its under-five children are overweight. Twenty-three percent of women and 20 percent of men age 15-49 are underweight,

and almost the same percentage are overweight or obese (21 percent of women and 19 percent of men). The proportions have doubled in the last decade. Furthermore, dietary diversity is also related to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases, which are on the rise.

While this is the status on health and nutrition, we are a nation with a rich diversity of local/regional foods, which is a reflection of creative interaction of humans with their immediate environment and its biodiversity. Our local foods have evolved over a long period. Indian cuisine is known to be a well-balanced symbiosis between spices and herbs, offering very tasty dishes, which can boast surprising medicinal properties.² The weekly shandies/haats, bazaars or local markets augmented the local food systems. However, our food system has undergone many changes in the last 2 decades and is still changing very fast. Some of the changes include decrease in dietary sources, the consequent decline in diversity of food components and increasing use of processed foods. In terms of dietary sources, we are more and more focusing on foods sourced through farming, leaving behind uncultivated harvested foods. Cereal diversity and utilisation of traditional vegetables, minor pulses and minor oilseeds have come down. In terms of food provision, we are moving away from self-provisioning and increasingly dependent on markets. In this transition of the local/regional food system, we are slowly losing our links with our ecosystem and its biodiversity, and the associated knowledge and skills, with new generations not inheriting them. The economic, health, cultural and social values



Credit: Bioversity International

¹ https://www.bioversityinternational.org/fileadmin/user_upload/research/research_portfolio/Diet_diversity/Bioversity_International_Dietary_Diversity.pdf

² <https://www.humanium.org/en/indian-food-diversity/>

related to these links have eroded. Given our rich heritage of local/regional food systems, which are thoroughly validated by scientific methods of documentation and research, mainstreaming them could be one of important solutions to address the incidence of the triple burden of malnutrition and NCDs. In this regard, it is important to undertake various activities targeting the public, especially younger generations to help them in carrying forward the wisdom around local food systems. Simultaneously, educational efforts should be made to demystify the notions around food traditions and to draw a fine line between fad and fact.

About the workshop

With the above purpose in mind, Small Millet Foundation, a division of DHAN Foundation, organizes a workshop to build the capacity of women and farmers organisations on promoting local foods and dietary diversity, as they play a critical role in enhancing the wellbeing of its members.

Specific objectives of the workshop are,

1. To understand and appreciate the local/regional food systems and their contribution to nutrition
2. To learn participatory methods and tools to make members appreciate their local/regional food systems and motivate them to strengthen the same
3. To develop an action plan at the federation level to promote local foods and dietary diversity

This workshop is organized as part of **Madurai Symposium**, a biennial large-scale development event organized at Madurai, Tamil Nadu by DHAN Foundation. The theme of **Madurai Symposium 2019** is **Women**

Empowerment for Sustaining Development and the workshop contributes to nutrition enhancement of women and their 'agency' role as individuals and organisations in ensuring the nutrition of the family.

About 50 participants comprising office bearers and staff from eight to 10 women/farmers federations, and Dhanites will participate in the proposed workshop.

Participants

I. Opening session

10.00 AM Prayer and welcome

10.15 AM Purpose and background of the workshop

II. Technical Session

10.30 AM An orientation on the importance of local foods for nutrition

11.00 AM Participatory exercises on Food Resource mapping and ranking the sources

01.30 PM Lunch break

02.30 PM Understanding minimum dietary diversity requirements

03.00 PM Sub-group discussion to evolve action plan

04.00 PM Sharing of action plan in the plenary

III. Concluding Session

05.00 PM Concluding remarks and vote of thanks

Resource person: Mrs. Salome Yesudas, an expert on local food systems, Hyderabad

Place: Thamukkam Ground, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Date: 21 September 2019

Expected outcomes

1. Appreciation of their local/regional food system and understanding of the changes in the same by the participants
2. Building of capacity on various participatory tools to promote local/regional food system and dietary diversity
3. Development of an action plan for promoting local/regional food system and dietary diversity by each federation

For further information, please contact

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About Small Millet Foundation

Realizing the importance of small millets for addressing triple burden of malnutrition and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and for ensuring health of the planet and the economy, DHAN Foundation has started working on small millets since 2011. It has led two South Asian consortium research projects on small millets in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, supported by IDRC and Global Affairs Canada under Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF). These projects resulted in a set of technologies and working models developed on production, processing, value chain development and consumption of small millets. There is considerable need and scope for scaling up the learning across India. Towards this, DHAN Foundation has initiated an exclusive organisation, Small Millet Foundation (SMF) by 2018. Small Millet Foundation is engaged with 6,000 farmers in Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Jharkhand. It supplies quality seeds of various small millet crops and improved processing equipment to the interested agencies. It also offers training on small millet cultivation, setting up and operating small millet processing mills, value added food products and promoting consumption. More details on the activities, training manuals and publications of SMF can be seen at <https://www.dhan.org/smallmilletfoundation/>