

Millet mantra on their lips

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Farmers, fitness freaks, cooking enthusiasts come together to celebrate the humble grain

"People know millets are good for health. But, for them, the big question is how to cook them," said P.V. Satheesh, director of the Deccan Development Society (DDS). The answer was found at Smart Millets for Smart Deepavali, a unique programme organised by the DDS in association with Disha Consumer Movement here on Sunday at PAAKA organic cafe near Tellapur. The event comprised cookery workshop, exhibition of a variety of millet products and millet cooking contest followed by a millet feast. Unique gathering With the participation of over 200 people, including small millet farmers, urban consumers, cooking enthusiasts, organic food freaks and health experts, the event was a unique gathering of both urban and rural people. "There is universal acceptance now that millets are the best answer to the health and nutritional problems, especially for the urban population. India, in spite, of its economic growth is a shamefully malnourished country. Much more shamefully, we are also far below in our nutrition status than the Saharan African countries which have become a symbol for poverty around the world," said Mr. Satheesh. He pointed out that India ranks high on the list of countries with a high rate of child malnutrition. "While children from poverty-stricken, rural background are under-nourished, those from urban middle class families suffer from over-nutrition or bad nutrition. A remedy for both lies in the quantity and quality of millets that we use in our daily food. They have the possibility of curing chronic illnesses that afflict us all," he added. This was the third event organised by Disha with farmers, said D. Raju, founder of the movement.

'Close to nature'

For the participants, the do was fun as well as enlightening. Niyudh, a 15-year-old who won a contest, said, "I enjoy assisting my mother in the kitchen and have developed interest in cooking. I had fun taking part in the contest and being judged for my skills. The event brought me very close to nature."

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