

## Focus on cultivation of minor millets

Tiruchirapalli: Seeking to give a push to cultivation and consumption of minor millets, Agriculture Department hosted a seminar on National Food Security Mission here on Friday. Speakers at the seminar pointed out that minor millets such as *cholam*, *cumbu*, *ragi*, *thinai*, *varagu* and *kudiraivaali* had been the staple diet of Tamil Nadu until a few decades ago. With changes in lifestyle and eating habits, consumption of minor millets had declined. However, in recent years, there had been an increase in awareness and awakening among people about the need for including minor millets in their regular diet. Speaking on the occasion, P. Asokan, Joint Director of Agriculture, Tiruchi, said that the government was taking various steps to increase the acreage, yield and consumption of minor millets. They were cultivated in rain-fed areas with very little water requirement and minimal use of fertilizers and plant protection measures. With very little investment, the farmers could get a good crop and with value addition they can double their income, he said. The primary objective of the NFSM-Nutri Cereals was to bring more area under minor millets and increase the production and productivity thereby increasing the consumption of millets, leading to a healthier younger generation. Experts from Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sirugamani, Vagarai Maize Research Station and other institutions spoke. An exhibition was arranged to highlight the importance of millets in the diet regime. A large number of farmers from millet-growing areas in Tiruchi district participated in the event.



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