

NUTRITIONAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN PROMOTION OF ETHNIC AND NOVEL FOODS OF 'LITTLE MILLET': A REGIONAL STAPLE CEREAL FOOD AND FEED IN INDIA

Nirmala Yenagi, Priyadarshni Deshmukh, Mamata mannurmah and Deepa Madalageri

University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India

Food processing is an integral part of agriculture production and utilization system. It also plays a key role in value addition, thereby increasing the income of the farmers, creating employment opportunities, diversifying the economy and foster rural industrialization. The processed food sector is expected to reach newer dimensions in future for providing better 'ready to use' and 'ready to eat' health foods, ethical foods, and traditional festival foods for better food and nutrition security. Further, well managed food processing units ensure that the producer gets remunerative price for his product and the consumer pays for higher and assured quality. Cereals and millets provide the cheapest source of calories in people's diet, but unfortunately the support for production and consumption of rice and wheat through Public Distribution System (PDS) has resulted in neglect of significant number of small rain fed farmers engaged in cultivation of various small millets. This has led to reduction in conservation, cultivation and consumption of these crops. The study was undertaken to better understand the traditional food processing technologies and religious beliefs towards consumption of little millet and their application in the fabrication of novel food by optimizing food ingredients and processing conditions. Small seeded little millet showed an advantage over other cereals due to several inherent technological, nutritional, therapeutic and sensory benefits in developing and promoting traditional fermented breakfast food "*paddu*", indigenous *papads* such as *nere happala* and *mudde happala* as side adjunct, fried snack *chakali*, sour dough bread as functional food for management of diabetes and gluten free bread as natural nutrient dense food for celiac patients. Hydrothermal treatment improved the milling, cooking and nutritional quality and also enhanced the therapeutic benefits. Millet incorporated foods were highly acceptable by the consumers and also showed good market potential in introducing millet as functional foods, fried snacks and fermented foods in bakeries, snack industry, catering centers and other food industries. Several training programs organized on value addition to millets, packaging, marketing of products and management of accounts and exposure visits contributed substantially to the knowledge level of the farmers, changing their outlook on the agricultural practices and the overall self-confidence of the individuals, in particular the women and the community.

yenaginirmalab@uasd.in