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'India is now marching ahead towards nutritional security after achieving self-sufficiency in food production'

The former CEO of National Rainfed Area Authority and agro economist Ashok Dalawai inaugurates a national symposium on Millets for Climate Smart Sustainable Agriculture and Sound Human Health at UAS Dharwad

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The former CEO of National Rainfed Area Authority and agro economist Ashok Dalawai has said that the country is now marching ahead towards achieving nutritional security, after achieving self-reliance in food production.

Inaugurating a national symposium on Millets for Climate Smart Sustainable Agriculture and Sound Human Health organised as part of the 15th All India Vice-Chancellors Meet at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad on Thursday, he said that in India, where over 10 types of millets are grown, the area under millet cultivation has been expanding in the last one decade.

"Though millets are widely cultivated in India, Green Revolution has taken place only in major crops such as rice and wheat. And, India ranks 106th in the global hunger index," he said and added that millets have the potential to mitigate malnutrition in the country.

"Millets are gluten-free and have low glycemic index. Processing and value addition of nutri millets is the need of the day," he said.

Mr. Dalawai called upon the farm universities to develop millet genotypes suitable for diversified soil and climatic conditions and also suitable for degraded land.

UAS Vice-Chancellor P.L. Patil said that millets being cultivated for thousands of years are staple food in many parts of the world, especially in Asia and Africa. The declaration of the International Year of Millets is aimed at creating awareness about the nutritional benefits of millets, promoting their cultivation and consumption and encouraging research and development efforts to enhance their production, he said.

“Millets are known for their resilience in different climatic conditions, adaptability to diverse soil types and also, their nutritional richness. They are a good source of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals. Additionally, millets are environmental friendly as they require less water compared to major cereal crops such as rice and wheat. Their cultivation can contribute to sustainable agriculture and food security,” he said.

Vice-President of Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA) Parvinder Kaushal presided over the programme. IAUA Secretary-General N.H. Kelawala, Dinesh Kumar, V.R. Kiresur and others were present.