

Satwik: Conserving diversity through culinary creativity



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With prices rising, consumers are suffering but farmers are not exactly gaining, either. The Satwik festival organised by Honey Bee network is bringing farmers and consumers together. Not all farmers, but those who grow their produce organically without using any chemicals.

Chaitanya and Sonal ben of Lok Mitra took the lead with the help of SRISTI to arrange an inspection of farms of all those farmers who wanted to sell their produce in Farmers' Hat at Satwik. This is still not enough to certify their produce as organic, but it is a step in the right direction to introduce certification of organic produce.

Jasdan Paryavaran Mahila Vikas Mandal has brought 45 members, with the majority being women. Arogya atta, which contains flour of nine grains -- wheat, bajra, gram, maize, barely, soybean, water chestnut, jowar and rice -- is nutritionally very rich.

Satwik is a grim reminder that if we do not create institutional space and policy then local agro biodiversity is bound to suffer. The demand for Thek which is a very rich source of iron, calcium and other nutrients, could directly contribute to the conservation of grasslands near Nal Sarovar and also enhance income of some of the poorest people collecting it.

Variety of curries made of moringa leaves, basella, brahmi muthia and khakhra made by Vasava tribal communities from south Gujarat, wood apple jam; bamboo shoot powder from Arunachal Pradesh, etc., are some other indications of how culinary creativity can help in reinforcing cultural diversity.

Not many people realize that a dearth of rainfall in such regions has not affected the natural minerals in the soil, and foods

grown here are invariable rich. If we create a market for such crops including minor millets then we also reduce if not eliminate poverty, and at the same time provide an affordable way of preventive health to the consumers of all classes.

Honey Bee network needs a lot of volunteers to take this movement to connect soil health with plant health and human health. All are welcome to the function till December 21 at IIMA and help children learn about their future responsibility.

MINDS ON THE MARGIN



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