

Diversification of Agriculture for Achieving Food and Nutritional Security: Lessons from South India

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Agriculture development ensures the food, energy and nutritional security of any country besides, it is crucial for human health and well-being. Rural household diets in India indicated that, agricultural growth has contributed to growing calorie intake with marginal effect on the intake of protein and micronutrients. This in turn causes less impact of agriculture on household dietary diversity and nutrient adequacy. Predominance of high level of under-nutrition and a huge population depending on agriculture, the present global thinking on leveraging agriculture for nutrition security has stimulated the agricultural sector to realign its efforts not only to enhance food production but also to address malnutrition. In this regard crop diversification is a need of the hour not only for food and nutritional security but also for sustainable development. Agricultural diversification refers to the shift from the regional dominance of one crop towards the production of a large number of crops to meet the increasing demand of different kinds of food. The crop diversification has emerged as an important alternative to attain the objectives of output growth, employment generation and natural resources sustainability in India. The diversification of agriculture not only help to food and nutritional security but also natural resource management for sustainable agricultural development. Diversity in agriculture has greater impact on the agricultural indicators like; production and productivity efficiency, land use efficiency, energy use, water use, nutrient use, profitability, economic efficiency, employment generation and soil fertility management. Reorienting food systems towards improving nutrition is vital for achieving global goal of ending all forms of malnutrition. The study concludes that, through diversity of food and diets with nutrition-sensitive farming methods it is possible to achieve household nutrition security and health status.

Biography:

Dr. M Shivamurthy is currently the Professor (HAG) and University Head of the Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India. Visiting scholar for the Ghent University, Belgium and Humboldt-University, Berlin besides local coordinator for the International Masters in Rural Development. He carried out more than 15 externally funded research projects and research guide for 21 MSc and PhD scholars, has over 200 publications in reputed journals /proceedings and books. In recognition of his work he has received several national and international awards and presented papers at more than thirty international conferences and training programmes.

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