



## MY MEETING NOTES

National Workshop on  
Agricultural Extension and Nutrition Linkages: Towards Nutrition Security and Better Health  
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) &  
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)  
27 Feb-1 March 2017  
Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India



*TNAU and MANAGE jointly organized a National workshop on “Agricultural Extension and Nutrition Linkages: Towards Nutrition Security and Better Health” on February 27-28 and March 1, 2017 at Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India. Ms K Qudsiya Jamal participated in this training and shares her experiences here.*

### CONTEXT

Worldwide, with the concern being, a balanced and nutritional diet for all, be it infants or the elderly, we are currently witnessing a paradigm shift from food security to nutritional security. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), jointly organized a workshop on “Agricultural Extension and Nutrition linkages: Towards Nutritional Security and Better health” with the aim to help participants add this new dimension to agricultural extension.



## THE PROGRAMME

The workshop was organised into three sessions. Session I addressed the linkages between agriculture, biotechnology and nutrition. Session II focused on agricultural extension and community based intervention strategies and in Session III, presentations on crop diversity, gender and Knowledge Management Systems were made. The workshop aimed at promoting an integrated approach for sustainable nutritional security by engaging with agricultural extension.

### Inaugural Session

Welcoming the participants, Dr G Hemalatha, Professor, Food Science and Nutrition, Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, presented the objectives of the workshop and how the different sessions were planned. Dr N Ragupathi, Dean, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, Dr S Parvathy, Dean, Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai and Dr M Chinnadurai, Director CARDS (Centre of Agriculture and Rural Development Studies) also participated in this session and briefly addressed the gathering.



Dr. G. Hemalatha Professor, welcoming the gathering

### Session I: Agriculture, biotechnology and nutritional linkages

Dr M Chinnadurai, Director CARDS, in his presentation on linkages of agriculture and food systems on poverty and nutritional security, shared the estimates of population growth and the need for new yardsticks to measure nutritional security. He articulated the need for strengthening agricultural production along with nutritional sensitization to achieve rural and urban nutritional security.

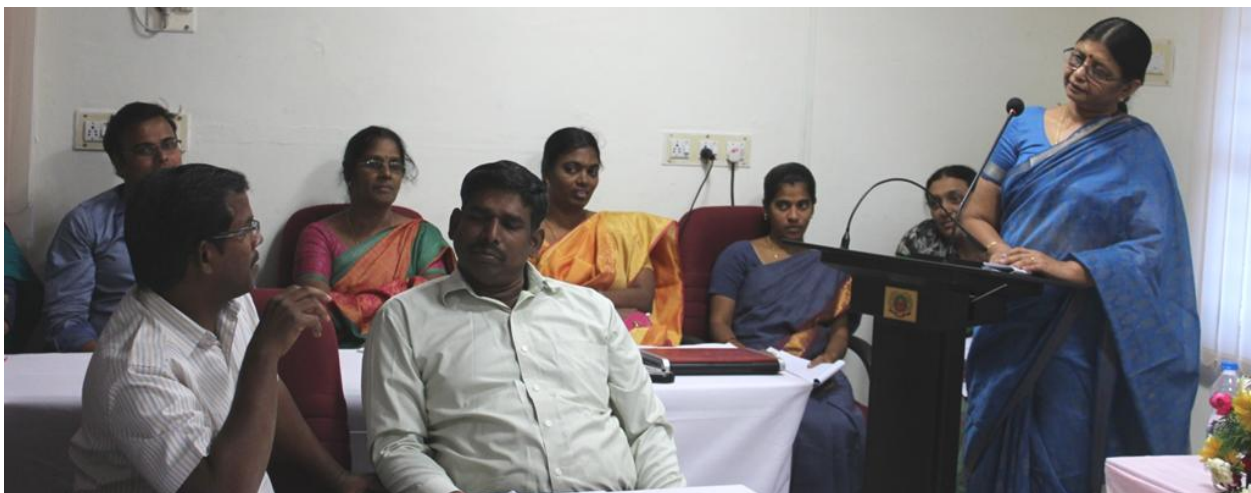
Dr Venkatesh B Athreya, Adjunct Professor, Economics, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth affairs (GoI), Tamil Nadu, briefed the participants on the food security and economic policies in India since Independence, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of different strategies.

Dr N Senthil, (Professor & Head) Project Director, Centre of Innovation, TNAU, talked about human evolution and domestication of crops over time. He shared his experience and the challenges faced in bio-fortification of crops for enhanced nutritional security and the various research initiatives for ensuring nutrition security through bio-fortification.

Dr S Kanchana, Professor & Head, Food Science and Nutrition, TNAU, in her presentation, focused on the research areas within the ambit of food processing for nutritional security. She dealt with post-harvest losses and different food processing technologies to mitigate post-harvest losses. She emphasized on the need for a multidisciplinary approach in achieving nutrition security, which she termed as "Multicolor Revolution" and that it was the need of the hour.

### **Session II: Agricultural extension and community based intervention strategies**

Dr Bhavani R, Program Manager, Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA), MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) briefed on various Projects of MSSRF including mangrove forest restoration, 'Fish for all' women enterprises and biodiversity conservation. She also shared her experience of reviving millet cultivation among the tribal farmers living in Kolli hill. She described her efforts in facilitating value addition of millets through processing, cultivation of medicinal wild fruits and tubers at the MSSRF centre at Waynad, Kerala, cultivation of wild rice, *Kaala Zeera* variety, in the Koraput region of Odisha, skill training for rural people in production of bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides, etc. She also elaborated on the LANSA project and its interventions on aspects of food security and its approach for sustainability and nutritional security.



**Participants interacting with Dr R Rukmini, Director, Food Security, MSSRF**

Dr R Rukmini, Director, Food Security, MSSRF, in her presentation, 'Food and Nutrition Security in India: Status and Issues', pointed out that food security could be achieved through enhanced food availability, accessibility, affordability and absorption. She further discussed the National Food Security Act, schemes such as Integrated Child Development Services, Public Distribution System, Mid Day Meals scheme, etc., and how to establish nutrition gardens. She stressed that a universal approach should be ensured by minimizing the inclusion and exclusion criteria to achieve food security.

Dr P Sethuraman Sivakumar, Senior Scientist, ICAR - Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in his brief presentation on 'Role of Food Choices Linking Health Concerns with Nutritional Security', highlighted the triple burden of malnutrition and the three waves of food revolution. He focused on food choices, motives for food acceptance/ rejection and its importance in nutritional security for ensuring better health.

The participants visited two small cottage industries (Gokul and Giri foods) once the sessions were over. The visit exposed the participants' to the process of production and marketing of nutrient based value added products. Each of the entrepreneurs spoke of their success and how there is an increasing demand for varied nutritional products lately. The participants interacted with the entrepreneurs to understand the nuances of starting an entrepreneurial firm for building nutritional security.

### **Session III: Crop diversity, gender and knowledge management systems**

Dr Krishna Srinath, Former Director, ICAR - Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Odisha, talking about the role of women in agriculture, stated, "without women what is agriculture?" She shared her experiences on gender issues in agriculture and the role of women in food security. She concluded that more projects and programs need to be implemented by strongly linking women to agriculture for enhancing nutritional and food security.



**Dr Krishna Srinath along with participants visiting Experiential Learning Exhibition Stalls at the Home Science College**

Dr D Puthira Prathap, Principal Scientist, Agricultural Extension, Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, in his presentation 'Knowledge Management for Improved Food and Nutrition Security', detailed the challenges faced in achieving food and nutritional security, stating that awareness on nutritional aspects, played a major role. He discussed in detail the types of knowledge, knowledge management strategies, pillars essential for knowledge management, activities for knowledge management in nutritional security and use of social media tools, where nutritional knowledge can be shared in various formats, namely lectures, articles, audios, videos, animations and so on.

Dr M Chandrasekaran, Director, Directorate of Planning and Monitoring, TNAU, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, while providing a brief overview on 'Trends and Patterns in Agriculture and Nutritional Linkages', presented the statistical trends of change in production and consumption rates at micro and macro levels.



Participants interacting with entrepreneur Ms Hema at Giri Foods

The participants also visited bakery units, entrepreneur development centre and experiential learning exhibition, at the Home Science College, Food Processing Department, TNAU, Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Participants were not only introduced to various technologies, equipment and handling procedures but also to the various schemes available for developing nutrition rich value added products for nutritional security at the Home Science College.

Towards the end of this session, Dr Saravanan Raj, Director, Agricultural Extension, MANAGE, Hyderabad, Telangana, interacted with the participants. His main focus was on process of linking nutrition to agricultural extension. He delved into why nutrition should be linked to agricultural extension and how it could be done? The participants shared their perspectives and experiences, and made some suggestions including, making farmers aware of nutrition for their health as well as for others; motivating farmers to becoming entrepreneurs; and addressing gender issues in nutrition and feed security.

The workshop came to an end with a valedictory program where the participants shared their feedback and suggestions. The participants shared their perspectives on how the workshop also helped them to learn from each other.

## OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

- The workshop was well planned with sessions held by resource persons from diverse fields. However, there was very little discussion on extension strategies for promoting nutrition security.
- Technical sessions especially on bio-fortification and post-harvest technologies provided latest updates on developments in these areas and how these could address nutritional security.
- Presentations by MSSRF resource persons on their ongoing projects gave a real-time picture motivating participants to take up nutrition related projects.

- Visits to small industries facilitated a better understanding on the demand and supply of different nutritious products.
- The Knowledge Management presentation gave insights on social media platforms usage to share and learn about nutrition sensitive agriculture.
- Active interaction was seen between participants and resource persons on all the days.
- The interactive session with Dr Saravanan Raj helped participants understand the role of agricultural extension in strengthening nutrition security.
- Group interaction during the concluding session helped in presenting a collective feedback on different sessions of the program.
- The resource materials were provided in CD-ROM to the participants.
- On the flip side, most sessions were in lecture mode and led to participants feeling fatigued during afternoon sessions. More group discussions, brainstorming sessions and experience sharing by the participants would have been useful.
- A few icebreakers/group activities in between tightly packed lectures could have session made the workshop more interesting to the participants.

### FINAL REMARKS

The workshop provided a platform for understanding the food and nutrition security linkages to extension. It also provided insights on the role of extension in promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture. However, three days are not sufficient to do justice to this important topic. It would take at least 5 days to cover this topic and to provide more space for participants to interact with the faculty and share their experiences. Nonetheless, I appreciated the opportunity to participate in the workshop.

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