

On The Change of Consumer Behaviour in the use of Finger Millet in the Daily Food System with Special Reference to Kolar District, Karnataka State

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Abstract

Ragi is the main source of food for the poor people especially in rural Southern Karnataka. It is called in nick name as BADA VARA GANJI in the olden days. By this all the below poverty line people were using this millet in their daily food system. But now a days the use of Ragi in the daily food system has been changed. Even though most of the farmers are growing Ragi as a major agricultural crop, they opt to use other food grains like rice and wheat in the daily food system. The purpose of this study is to through light on the change of consumer behaviour regarding the use of Ragi in the daily food system.

Key words: Consumer, Millet, system, change.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 10th September 2007, the present Kolar district was formed by dividing the erstwhile Kolar district into Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts. The present Kolar district is the eastern gateway to Karnataka. It is famous for previous Kolar Goldmines. It is land locked district and hard rock terrain of Karnataka in the maiden (plain) region and covers an area of 3969 sq.km. The district lies almost in the central part of peninsular India, which has immense bearing on its geo-climatic conditions. This district experiences tropical climate throughout the year, Kolar district owes its prosperity and development to the existence of ancient tanks. There are 2980 tanks which are highest number in the state. The main occupation of people of the Kolar district is agriculture. In the absence of surface water irrigation system, groundwater is the main source of irrigation. The district has more than 29936 bore wells, which is also highest in the state.

The predominant crops grown in the district are ragi, paddy, maize, fruits, vegetables, finger millet, groundnut and pulses. Finger millet occupies about 45% of the total cultivated area.

Ragi also known as finger millet is an important millet grown extensively in various regions of India and Africa. Its scientific name is *Eleusine coracana*. It ranks sixth in production after wheat, rice, maize, sorghum and bajra in India. In India Ragi is mostly grown and consumed in Karnataka and to a limited extent in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Goa. Ragi millet is called in different names in local languages like Ragi in Kannada, Telugu and Hindi, Mandu/Mangal in Hindi, Kodra in Himachal Pradesh, Mandia in Oriya, Taidalu in Telangana region, Kezhvaragu in Tamil etc.,

The oldest evidence for finger millet dates to 3000 BC from what is now central Sudan where this grain was domesticated. India leads as the largest producer of finger millet in the World. It is used in Kenya to brew opaque beers. In other East

African countries, finger millet malt is often combined with pearl millet malt to make a variety of alcoholic beverages. Finger millet was analyzed in order to identify the varieties low in tannins and rich in amylase.

Farmers have been cultivating finger millet for thousands of years. It is still an important subsistence crop in small scale farming systems, particularly in the parts of eastern and southern Africa as well as in India. Karnataka State is the leading producer of ragi in the country. Tumakuru, Kolar, Bangalore, Chitradurga, Hassan and Mysore districts are the main producers which together provide 85% of the total area and 80% of its output in the state.

II. OBJECTIVES

- 1] To know why the people have to change in their behaviour in the use of finger millet.
- 2] To through light on the problems and Prospects of the Ragi growing farmers.
- 3] To know about the Marketing problems And opportunities relating to ragi millet.

III. FINDINGS

- 1] The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International year of Millets.
- 2] The government of Karnataka has been scaling up technologies with farmers, through mega programmes over the past six years. The include Bhoochetana, Bhoo Samruddi and the recently launched, Golden Agriculture village Scheme. The Karnataka Government is keen to ensure that these efforts are fully capitalized on, by investing in demand driven initiatives.
- 3] Much of the efforts to date have been to increase millet productivity at the farm level. Additional efforts are

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needed to develop the demand side, while also making sure the farmers benefit from this.

As Karnataka is the highest producer of ragi in India, Producing around 70 percent, an additional complementary initiative is to brand Karnataka ragi to build a unique image to further develop consumer interest in ragi.

- 4] Commonly seen as a traditional food for the poor, with low investment along the value chain, millets face any challenges too reach its full potential. This perception is set to change, as the health and environmental advantages of millets are being recognized by the governments and other actors in the food industry.
- 5] Millets are good from multiple points of view. So far our efforts have focused on the supply side and there's been considerable success in increasing yields and ore resilient varieties. But I feel the demand side has hardly been touched at all. We need a pull from the market to sustain the supply side. Ragi compares well on most accounts with quinoa and compares better on many other accounts. So what is holding the ragi back? That is what we want to find out and overcome through this initiative.- said by Krishna Byre Gowda, Minister for Agriculture, Government of Karnataka.
- 6] Dr. B. Dayakar Rao, Principal scientist at IIMR said "There are many reasons why millets are not a regular product in the consumer basket. One of the reasons is the fact that not many processing technologies have been developed yet. It's not enough to just brand a commodity and take it to the market, an entire value chain is needed. We are doing that and I am confident this partnership will make millets popular to consumers".
- 7] Millets often called nutria-cereals, are highly digestible, gluten free, have low glycemic index and are high in antioxidants. Recent studies have also shown that pearl millet has the potential to fight iron deficiency, the biggest nutrient deficiency facing the world, especially prevalent among women and children across India and sub-Saharan Africa.

IV. PROBLEMS

- 1] Consumers do not view millets as a modern product, limited awareness of health benefits, scientific information to substantiate any health claims, central and clear information about millets and the technologies, lack of grading and standards, need for more food processing technologies, breeding/varieties especially for processing qualities have to be developed.
- 2] In a country such as India where there is a high incidence of diabetes, millets being complex carbohydrates with low GI [glycemic Index] are indeed wonder grains and hence we have huge relevance in shifting consumers to millets and millet based products. We will communicate the same to consumers through the media.
- 3] In Kolar district 90% of the farmers are growing Ragi. But the neighbor state Andhra Pradesh has producing Rice largely and sell at lower price. So use of rice for daily food is more than the Ragi.

- 4] Even though Ragi millet is less cost and has more nutrient contents, wheat and rice cereals attracting more to use in the food system by the modern people.
- 5] No proper market in Kolar district to sell Ragi, only the Government of Karnataka has purchased limited quintals of Ragi for public distribution system on the basis of Ragi crop cultivating land from farmers.

V. CONCLUSION

Cereals and millets constitute a major component of diet consumed in developing countries like India. Finger millet is an important staple food in parts of eastern and central Africa and India. It is non acid forming food and easy to digest. It is considered to be one of the least allergic and most digestible grains available and is a warming grain so it helps to heat the body in cold or rainy season. However the use of finger millet is limited due to coarse nature of the grain and the behaviour of using it is diverted to rice and wheat because of it is meant for poor people and its color is black or its availability is more and price is very less compared to rice and wheat.

Ragi millet has high fiber content and outer cover of the grain is thick, which makes its processing difficult and gives a poor sensory quality. Lack of adequate marketing avenues of these crops has also led to their rapid decline both in production and consumption. Also an increasing taste for ill-polished rice is out competing these mountain crops. It is remarkable that despite the grain being an ancient food, research of millet and its food value is in its fancy and its potential vastly untrapped. Finger millet grain is highly nutritious, being richer in protein and minerals especially calcium and iron compared to rice. The products made from composite flours are nutritionally superior to their respective controls and can be successfully used for supplementary feeding programmes. Efforts should be made to educate people about nutritive value and health benefits of finger millet and its food products. Marketing system is very low for this ragi product. Major portion of this product purchased by the Government of Karnataka for the purpose of Public Distribution System.

VI. REFERENCES

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