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**Poor man's staple diet is rich man's fare now**

Monday, 17 January 2011

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Hyderabad, January 17: Millets, which has been poor man's staple diet fore centuries, has n become a preferred fare of the richie rich living in Banjara Hills for the grain's nutritional val

This observation was made by S Malla Reddy, secretary of AP Rythu Sangham who attended the inaugural of the 12th Mobile Biodiversity Festival of Deccan Development Society held at Basantpur village in Medak district on Sunday.

Pointing out the strange irony in today's context, Malla Reddy underscored the significance o traditional regimen which was rich in nutritional value and accessible to the poor.

He also observed that cotton was slowly replacing food crops in most districts of the state ar attributed it to the change in the agricultural policy of the government which was influenced monopolist international companies such as Monsanto, Syngenta and Du Pont which have almost 80 per cent of stake in the seed market.

The annual Mobile Biodiversity Festival was organised by the farmers and farmers' groups le by Deccan Development Society, a nonprofit organisation, engaged for over two decades in t practice and promotion of ecological agriculture and the preservation of biological diversity.

The Mobile Biodiversity Festival is basically a colourful caravan of brilliantly decorated bullock-carts travelling along with singers and dancers across 70 villages spreading the message of the importance of retaining, reviving and rejuvenating agro-biodiversity both of crops and livestock.

The festival also attracts several national and international visitors who have come to participate, share similar concerns and express their solidarity with the farmers of Medak.

DDS director PV Satheesh, welcoming the guests, said that the DDS Sanghas had been sustaining their own PDS with traditional millets such as sorghum and foxtail millet in 120 villages.

Basantpur sarpanch Saranaiah Swamy, joint director of agriculture (Sangareddy) Chandra Sekhar, Sangareddy, scientist and head of the Area Research Station at Basantpur Vijay Kun deputy superintendent of police (Sangareddy) S Satyanarayana, Kalbemal MPTC Vijaya Laxn and Nyalkal former MPTC Srinivas Reddy also spoke.

--Agencies

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