2

Guidelines For Organising One–Day Seminar

Topic: Millets for Sustainable Future and Health

Note: One Day Seminar should preferably be organised one day before the organisation of Rajya Stariya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani (RSBVP) for Children.

1. Millets for Sustainable Future & Health

The ever-increasing world population along with climate change are undoubtedly amongst the top crises facing the world today. Increasing population means increase in the demand for food with the required nutrition. However, it is increasingly becoming difficult to meet food requirement due to various factor such as reduction in the availability of arable land, depleting soil quality, reduction in the quality and quantity of food produced due to increase in pest infestation, increased use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, crop loss due to extreme weather events, flood, drought, etc. Much of these issues are exacerbated by climate change. The ultimate result is— scarcity of nutritious food impacting health of the people.

Given the situation that we are in, we have to figure out how we can feed the increasing world population with nutritious food in the face of various challenges including climate change. Millets have been found to be an effective measure to tackle this issue due to the many advantages it provides in terms of its nutritional value as well as its resilience to grow in adverse climatic conditions. Some of the health benefits millets provide are: they are rich in essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and other dietary fiber and also contain several important micronutrients such as magnesium, phosphorus and iron; millets are also known to be a good source of protein. In terms of resilience, unlike other crops such as wheat or rice, millets are hardy crops with its roots growing deep which break the soil and improve water drainage; they can grow in regions with low rainfall and require minimal chemical inputs thereby maintaining the soil quality. These make millets a sustainable choice to achieve food security.

However, there are challenges associated with growing millets. For example, challenges in terms of procurement of quality seeds, dealing with pests, reduction in the quality of millets such as un-hulled or broken grains due to poor processing facility, etc.

Keeping in view the above, students can consider the following areas in order to prepare models/ exhibits:

- Maintaining soil quality by growing millets
- Dealing with pests and diseases
- Quality seeds for major and minor millets to farmers
- Improving processing machines which provide high recovery of 70-80% of grains and reduced un-huled and broken grains
- Conservation of water by growing millets compared to other crops such as rice or wheat
- Nutritional value of millets
- Conservation of soil models by millet cultivation compared to other crops
- Popularization of millets such as developing communication strategies on how awareness can be generated
- Models on how increasing population can be fed with nutritious food with millets as an option
- Models on effective distribution of millets
- Models displaying environmental, economic and health benefits of millets to farmers, consumers, and environment