J Nutr Food Sci 2017, 7:6 (Suppl)
DOI: 10.4172/2155-9600-C1-051

Promoting future smart food for achieving food and nutrition security

Lipy Adhikari
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Nepal

Food and nutrition security is a worldwide concern from decades. Nonetheless, agricultural intensification today is increasingly relying on a narrow range of crops due to commercialization. As stated in the FAO report (1996/2009a) of the several hundred thousand known plant species, some 120 are cultivated for human food, but just 9 supply over 75% of global plant-derived energy intake and of these, only 3 (wheat, rice and maize) account for more than half of it. Genetic resources of the Neglected and Underutilized Crop Species (NUS), recently named as Future Smart Food (FSF) by FAO, are vital for sustainable agriculture. The role of FSF used by indigenous farming communities becomes extremely important for food and nutrition security. FSF have high nutrient content; can grow in extreme climatic conditions and in most difficult terrains with minimal inputs. Unfortunately, FSF are fast disappearing because of the standardization of agricultural practices, mono-cropping trends and changing food habits skewed towards few commodity crops, dominating food systems at all levels. Reports claim that lack of diversity in food often leads to micronutrient deficiencies, further increasing health risks in people. Traditional crops like buckwheat, millet, barley are often pronounced as foods of poor, replaced with high-value commodities to generate more income. Evidence suggests that with the replacement of finger millet in the diet, cases of anemia are reported in the women of Nepal. Globally, such practices have given rise to heavy genetic erosion, also leading to the erosion of cultural diversity associated with their use and appreciation.

lipy.adhikari@icimod.org