



Nutritional security and value added products from finger millets (ragi)

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ABSTRACT

The present paper describes some of the important facts relating to nutritional properties of millets with few examples for their conversion into health and novel foods, which make their consumption acceptable to the common mass, particularly the urban population. Millets are the oldest foods known to humans and possibly the first cereal grain to be used for domestic purposes. Millets can be stored for many years without any substantial changes in properties under normal room temperature. Millet contains more fiber, minerals and vitamins, which are normally deficient in the Indian diet and has eight times more calcium than other cereals. Millets are generally converted to flour for the preparation of various food items. They can also be exploited for their nutritional benefits and value added nutritive health foods. Millet contains high amount of calcium (344 mg 100 g⁻¹ in case of ragi millet). This makes ragi based processed food products like malt, biscuits and cakes more suited for the growing children, expectant mothers and elderly who need more calcium and iron in their diet. Millets are also considered to be an ideal food for diabetics because of slow release of sugars to the body. Their high fiber content also checks constipation, high blood cholesterol and intestinal cancer.

Keywords: Cereal grains; Millet, Nutritional properties, Value added products and Processing.
