

Minor fruits for over all livelihood security and economic growth

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Towards the year 2050, the world population is projected to stabilize at around 9.2 billion. On the other hand, the natural resources the agricultural/ horticultural production base, especially land, water and biodiversity, are fast shrinking and degrading. For instance, by 2025, thirty per cent of crop production will be at risk due to the declining water availability. Thus, in order to meet the ever intensifying demand for food and primary production, more and more is to be produced from less and less of the finite natural and non-renewable resources. India abounds with a large variety of tropical and sub-tropical, minor and underutilized fruits. The fruits that do not occupy a large area to justify their economy of production are called minor fruits. They are usually growing in the homegardens, small orchards and in the natural forests. These fruits have both food and market value and different delicious foods like jam, jelly, squash, pickle and juice can be produced from these fruits. May, June and July are specially treated as fruit festival months in India when almost all the major and minor fruits are mature and available. A few minor fruits are available throughout the year. However, the availability of some of these minor fruits is highly seasonal. The most plentiful season is summer or rainy season (May to August) when Mango, Jackfruits, Litchi, Guava and Pineapple flood the markets. So, increased production of minor and underutilized fruits extending their growing season offers a major opportunity in India and also for nutritional security of large population.

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