

23 January 2018

Biologist moots integrated approach for ensuring food security

An integrated and holistic approach was required for developing proper technologies to ensure the food and nutritional security of the people in the country, eminent biologist Dr Manju Sharma said today.

"Malnutrition is still a grave issue in India. Every year 2.1 million children die of malnutrition in the country", she said here, citing a data of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Sharma, a former secretary of Department of Biotechnology, urged the scientists and professionals to take up challenging tasks for combating malnutrition. She stressed the need for launching different types of missions, along with international collaborations and interaction with social scientists as well, to address the food and nutritional issues in the country.

She was speaking after inaugurating a 21-day Winter School being launched by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) to train young researchers on latest trends in developing natural products from the sea against various diseases. Regular training and awareness camps should be organised, particularly involving women in rural areas, a CMFRI release quoted as having said in her address.

"A people-centred approach focusing on farmers, technological empowerment and rural community should be developed", she said adding that women should be given special focus in agricultural innovations.

Recalling her eventful tenure as the secretary of DBT, she said introduction of the genetically modified (GT) crops was a great move by the government after the green revolution.

"After the green revolution, the country now has moved to 'gene revolution'", Sharma said adding that introduction of BT cotton "made waves" in Indian economy. She also called for joint projects with private industries to transform the lives of people in rural areas.

Referring to Kerala, she said there should be a 'Kerala Model' in introducing technology-driven projects to upgrade the living standards of the rural community.