



## **Integral Institute of Agricultural Science & Technology (IIAST) Integral University, Lucknow**

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### **A Guest Lecture on “Enhancing Nutritional Security Through Fruit and Vegetable Cultivation” on the occasion of World Soil Day**

On December 5, 2019, our department had the privilege of hosting Dr. Devendra Pandey for an insightful guest lecture on the important role of fruit and vegetable cultivation in addressing nutritional insecurity globally. Dr. Devendra Pandey, Principal Scientist, ICAR-CISH, Lucknow, is a renowned expert in this field. The Guest Lecture commenced with the Welcome Address by Dr. Saba Siddiqui, Department of Agriculture followed by a lecture.

The lecture began with highlighting alarming statistics on the widespread prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, also known as "hidden hunger", affecting over 2 billion people worldwide. Dr. Pandey explained how lack of access to diverse, nutrient-rich diets high in fruits and vegetables is a major contributing factor.

He emphasized that simply increasing calorie intake is insufficient, as micronutrient malnutrition can cause serious health issues including stunting, wasting, anemia, blindness and cognitive impairments in children. This perpetuates cycles of poverty and hinders human capital development.

Dr. Pandey provided compelling case studies demonstrating how these approaches have dramatically improved dietary diversity and reduced micronutrient deficiencies in pilot initiatives across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key challenges discussed included improving post-harvest infrastructure, access to inputs/financing for smallholders, empowering women farmers, and addressing climate risks through cultivating heat/drought tolerant varieties.

Overall, it was an extremely insightful lecture that underscored the immense potential of fruit and vegetable cultivation as a sustainable solution to alleviate hidden hunger and nutritional insecurity globally. Students gained valuable knowledge about innovative interventions bringing nutrient-rich horticulture to vulnerable communities worldwide.

The lecture was followed by an engaging Q&A discussing policy measures, research gaps, and the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration between nutritionists, agriculturists, and public



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health experts. We thank Dr. Devendra Pandey for sharing his invaluable expertise on this critically important topic.

Overall, it was an excellent guest lecture that deepened our knowledge nutritional security. We hope to have Dr. Devendra Pandey back in the future. Around 150 Undergraduate students of Agriculture attended the lecture, and all the queries put forward by the audience were categorically addressed by the expert. The audience found it very informative and quite relevant. The event was concluded with a vote of thanks. The program was actively supported by all the members of the Department.

### Glimpse

