



NITK Director Prof B Ravi, Campco President S R Satishchandra and others release the book 'Areca Nut - History, Constituents, Cancer and Beyond' authored by Dr Prasanna Belur, at Campco head office in Mangaluru on Wednesday. DH PHOTO

Book shedding light on arecanut aspects released

MANGALURU, DHNS: The book 'Areca Nut - History, Constituents, Cancer and Beyond' provides clarity on the components present in arecanut. It is an important publication from the perspective of clearing doubts about the alleged presence of carcinogenic elements in arecanut, said Campco President S R Satishchandra.

Presiding over a programme organised by Campco here on Wednesday to release the book by Dr Prasanna Belur of National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), Surathkal, he said, quoting a report that ranked DK eighth among the 10 richest districts in the country, "Areca nut cultivation is one of the key contributors to the region's economy. Be it Bhoota Kola, Yakshagana, temple Brahmakalasha rituals, or education in this region, areca nut forms the economic backbone behind them. Therefore, a lobby against areca nut is natural. To counter it, there was a need for a scientific and historical foundation. This book provides such a foundation."

Releasing the book, NITK Director Prof B Ravi said there were immense opportunities for value addition and market expansion of areca nut. "More research is required on its health-related aspects. NITK is ready to collaborate on research related to improved cultivation practices, quality enhancement, harvesting technology, and

disease prevention. Over 300 researchers in our institution will extend support."

Economist Vigneshwara Varmudi said, "The concluding part of the book will be useful in presenting arguments before the Supreme Court that areca nut does not contain carcinogenic contents."

Author of the book Prof Prasanna Belur said, "I am also an areca nut grower. During Covid, when I had to stay home, I assisted in areca nut harvesting. For processing red areca nut, stored chogaru, a concentrated red liquid from the previous year was used. Though the lid of the can, in which 'chogaru' was stored, was loose, it had not spoiled. This sparked my curiosity about areca nut."

He said microorganisms had grown on the top layer of the stored 'chogaru', but its colour, smell, and taste had not changed. "After conducting research, we found that the antioxidants present in areca were responsible for it."

He said, "areca nut contains procyanidin, catechin, arecatannin, sinapic acid, and rhamnetin. "I do not understand why it is claimed that areca nut contains carcinogenic contents when it has procyanidin, which is used as a health supplement in the United States and Europe."

The book is available on Amazon and Flipkart, and its Kannada translation will be published within three months, he said.