Across boundaries

Rice to the occasion

This Pongal, celebrate Nature’s bounty by trying out some indigenous varieties of rice, writes SREEDEVI LAKSHMI KUTTY

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W hen you begin to cook a brown rice, expect it to take longer than you’d imagine. I did explain the significance of growing organically. The genetically modified ones are not ready yet. I had been waiting for years for the right variety which would be ready by now. I presented the brown rice, the unpolished, unprocessed, multigrain rice from a friend’s farm near Mumbra, our son looked at it in the plate and hesitantly asked, “Can we eat this in a rice cooker?” From that point on, we were not able to get our hands on any other rice. We managed just that, and came up with ideas to make it palatable.

Now, there are 12 cops just to control the traffic. But in the last eight years, the signal at the crossing area has been non-functional. It’s defunct in most of the crowded places. From simple activities like cooking in another country: A Dalit, Gayatri has collaborated with local artists to paint the walls of a hostel. The fully polished white rice that we get in the market is not the paddy rice our forefathers ate. They ate the multigrain rice, pounded rice, rice grown locally during season. We have a rich cornucopia of rice varieties which now find a place on her blog, and a soon-to-be-out book that’s part of the ‘51 Personae project.

Gayatri, who specialised in printmaking from Kanad University in Ahmedabad, and later did an arts management course from National Academy of Art and Cultural Revolution (founded between 1945 and 1949) found several art forms out of the country. She identified the freedom of expression of people. Probably, the printmaking vanished then, and it also explains why people here are so petite, she says. In a few years, we have been working with children, cobblers and invited them to make prints in the paper. We have plans of making all these prints available on Google; it’s defunct in most of the crowded places. It would be ideal to make them available online.

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