

Science Reporter



NUTRIENT-RICH FOOD BOOSTS INTELLIGENCE

The March 2016 edition of *Science Reporter* carried an article that dealt with the relationship between food and it's impact on the intelligence of a person (**Does Your Food Affect Your Intelligence?**). The article was very informative.

Some researchers have found that children who are fed with a diet packed with high fats, sugars and processed foods showed lower 'IQs' than those fed with fruits, vegetables, salads, etc. The



child's early life is crucial because the brain grows at its fastest rate during the first three years of life, hence nutrient inadequacy during this phase can have impact on the child's intellectual abilities & optimal brain growth.

There could be many impacts of food on brain development. For instance, excess intake of calories could reduce the flexibility of the synapse thereby causing damage to brain cells. Some other causes of low intelligence levels are stress, disease/infections occurring in infants after birth, long working hours in adults, etc.

Some foods that are said to enhance brain development are Omega-3 & 6 fatty acids, raw vegetables, fruits like blueberries, DHA-rich food

sources (sea foods), eggs, vitamins & minerals. Thus, providing nutrient-rich food to every child during their early stages of life can enhance their level of intelligence.

Sharath Chandra Kommu
MSc (Microbiology), Hyderabad

SPACE GARDEN – EXCITING PROSPECTS

The short feature article "**Today's Special: Salad...fresh from the space garden**" (June 2016) was very informative. The idea of space gardening elaborated in this issue is quite interesting. Growing vegetables in space could possibly solve the biggest issues of space travel such as high cost of eating. Furthermore, this could provide astronauts with fresh and nutritious food, and psychological comfort too.

The instrumentation and principle of Veggie, designed by ORBITEC in collaboration of NASA is well described in the



issue. It is also good to know about the solutions to the hurdles and obstacles faced while designing the Veggie. The problem of lack of gravity was resolved using plant pillows; reservoir of water was added to the base of plant pillows to solve the problem of watering the plant in weightlessness.

Amazingly, the plants grown in the space station were found to be cleaner than what one can get at the

grocery store. And it was also interesting to know that NASA is planning to use astronaut's waste fluids (urine) that can be converted into fertilizer and used in the space garden.

NASA's investigation into crop production in space holds out exciting promises for the future exploration of space.

Kuldeep Sharma
Amity University, Jaipur

SEAWEEDS AS FERTILIZERS

The article **Seaweeds – Promising Organic Fertilizers** published in the June 2016 issue of *Science Reporter* was very enlightening and encouraging. The article has lit up the new prospect of sea-wealth. Today, as we are more inclined towards organic farming and discouraging the use of chemicals in cultivation, the application of seaweeds as organic fertilizers is indeed a boon for us and our health.

Seaweeds have until now been mainly considered as a source of food, cosmetics, medicines and for the extraction of industrial gums and chemicals. Their potential to enhance the growth of plants, improve yield, confer high resistance against pests and insects and soil



conditioning opens up avenues for commercial production and consumption of seaweeds in countries like India.

The southern coast of India bears luxuriant growth of seaweeds. More than 200 species of seaweeds have been found in this area. Harvesting and extracting seaweeds can also provide employment opportunities and a source of additional income to the people living in coastal areas.

Developing seaweed cultivation techniques and effective strategies to establish seaweed farming on a commercial scale in our country is the need of the hour. But we also should not lose sight of the environmental impacts such as effects on water movement, changes in water quality, nutrient depletion and recycling, and so on.

Sonam Chaudhary
New Delhi

THE WHITE TIGER

The article **White Tiger: Nature's Gift to India** by Shakunt Pandey (SR, May 2016) was highly informative in which he explains about the history and declining population of the white tigers.

With declining numbers of Bengal Tigers, there are less chances of White Tigers



being produced. The breeding of white tigers is very difficult since most of them are born with deformities such as club feet, crossed feet, tendon problems, etc. A white tiger cub can only be born when both parents carry the unusual gene for white colouring.

Kirti Bansal
New Delhi

HAVE YOUR SAY

Email at
sr@niscair.res.in.