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### **Using agriculture to address poverty**



*The Hindu* Dr. John J. Kennelly, University of Alberta. Photo: M.J. Prabhu

A 42 month-long research programme conceived by the M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai and the University of Alberta, Canada was signed recently to use agriculture along with other interventions to address poverty and malnutrition in three regions known for rich agro-biodiversity.

#### **Support**

The Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF) of the International Development Research Centre, Canada offered assistance to support this research project.

“The aim of the project is to study the enigmatic contradiction between prosperity of nature and poverty of people and to improve the agricultural and nutritional status of 4,000 small farm families in Kundura block in Koraput district, Orissa, Kolli Hills in Namakkal district, Tamil Nadu and Menangadi panchayat in Wayanad district, Kerala,” says Dr. John J Kennelly, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Life and Environmental sciences, University of Alberta.

#### **Tribal communities**

“Most of these families belong to the marginalised tribal communities. The project will assist them to increase farm productivity and off-farm income through appropriate participatory technological interventions, application of eco-technologies and ICT-enabled knowledge system, value chain and market linkage, and to build their capacity,” he adds.

These interventions may encompass strengthening crop-animal-fishery integration, improving the natural resource base supporting agriculture, addressing gender-specific drudgery, promoting home gardens and local crops to improve nutritional security at individual, household and community levels.

#### **Process**

The process may involve local institutions (panchayats, banks, co-operatives) and assist in making appropriate choices and decisions on sustainable management and adding value to social and natural capital.

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