

Krishimela 2018

Celebrating Science with Farmers

The state agricultural universities (SAU) are organizing on a regular basis. These days, many other agencies, including R & D agencies, NGOs and religious institutions organize *Krishimelas* at different times of the year marking a particular season, a special occasion, a festival etc.

The ICAR JSS Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) organizes a similar every year, which is unique in many ways.

In a bid to promote all-round rural development by means of nurturing folk art and traditional institutions such as annual fairs, cultural festivals and music concerts, the Suttur Sri Mutt has been organizing annual *Jathra Mahotsava* to pay tributes to *Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Bhagavatpadaru* (The Founder Pontiff of the Sri Mutt) at *Srikshetra Suttur* - a village 30 kilometers from Mysuru city. The Sri Mutt has a history of over 1060 years and the annual *Jathra Mahotsava* is celebrated in a salubrious atmosphere on the banks of Kapila River at Suttur.

JSS Mahavidyapeetha (JSS MVP), Mysuru, is a charitable institution (NGO) founded by the Sri Mutt. JSS MVP is striving to provide quality education to all, as it believes that education is fundamental to societal development. JSS MVP undertakes various projects and programmes in its pursuit of promoting education, health, agriculture and rural development; organizing exhibition and fairs, symposia, seminar, workshops and conferences is an integral, cross-cutting activity in rural and semi-urban areas.

ICAR JSS KVK is established by the JSS MVP during 1994. The KVK joins its host institution, JSS MVP, in the annual fair by way of organizing a large scale *Krishimela* every year, normally during the months of January - February. Apart from distinguished religious leaders many agricultural scientists, farmers, farmwomen, rural youth, political leaders, social reformers and noted academicians partake in the *Jathra*. For the KVK, It is an event organized to sensitize farmers on frontier technologies and for creating a marketplace for various stakeholders to come together and exchange information and products. It has become a very special event for farmers of the region.

The six-day, an integral part of the *Jathra*, includes live exhibition of crops and technologies, seminars on issues of contemporary relevance in agriculture sector, including thematic exhibitions, flower shows, agri/horticultural exhibition, cattle fair, display and sale of agricultural inputs, farm implements and equipments etc. Farmers with distinct achievements are also honoured on the occasion.

The *Krishimela* was organized this year from **13 – 18 January 2018**. The *Mela* was laid out on about three acres of area, including one acre of live-crop demonstration plot, one acre

model of Integrated Farming System (IFS) and the agri-expo The *Mela* served as a platform to create awareness among large number of farm families about various government programmes and schemes such as the *Pradhan Manthri Krishi Sinchaayi Yojana* (PMKSY), *Pradhan Manthri Fasal Bima Yojana* (PMFBY), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) etc. Information on financial programmes like *JanDhan Yojana* and Digital Banking were displayed and shared with farmers during the event.

The 2018 had the following components:

1. **One Acre IFS Model:** The KVK has developed an integrated farming system (IFS) model over the last 10 years. The objective of the model is to demonstrate that the small and marginal farmers can grow almost everything on **one acre** to meet their household requirement, except salt. The model included 116 different crops and 4 allied enterprises this year. The seasonal crops included cereals (including the super food, chia), pulses, oilseeds, commercial crops, vegetables, medicinal plants as well as fodder crops. The perennials included silver oak, casurina and teak along the fence as source of timber, mango, sapota, banana, pomegranate, lime as sources of fruits, as also drumstick and coconut trees. In addition, the model included allied enterprises such as small-scale dairy, vermicomposting and azolla units and a farm pond with fish.
2. **Horticulture crop cafeteria:** Various types of vegetables, fruits and flowers were grown on another one acre land. The crop diversity included 45 different horticultural crops, including the different native vegetables and the exotic vegetables like lettuce, pakchoy, Chinese cabbage etc.
3. **Indigenous varieties:** A special attempt was made this year to showcase 42 varieties of finger millet; the varieties were chosen from a national award winning seed conserver farmer. The live demonstration included short, medium and long duration varieties, varieties with medicinal value, varieties suitable for different recipes and varieties with different size, shape and colour of grains.
4. **Indigenous livestock show:** As many as 20 farmers from Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Mandya districts brought cows, bulls, buffaloes, sheep and goats, rabbits and poultry birds for display. The livestock show included cattle breeds viz., *Devani*, *Sahiwal*, *Gir*, *Malnad Gidda* and *Hallikar*, *Murrah* buffalo, *Thalchery* and *Jamnapari* goat breeds, *Bandur* sheep rabbit, and Turkey birds as also the ornamental fish species.

5. **Agri Expo:** As many as 140 stalls were set up and were occupied by 125 different institutions and individuals. The Agri-Exhibition had display of an array of seeds, fertilizers, pest and disease management inputs, products and market information related to various crops, state-of-the-art technologies, specimens and models. UAS, Bangalore, development departments such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fishery, sericulture, *Zilla Panchayat*, private agencies and SHGs had put up stalls to promote their respective products and services. The *Mela*, for the first time, included exclusive display and sale of minor millets through 20 stalls and a cooking competition where millet recipes were prepared, on the spot.
6. **Agri Seminar:** A seminar was organized on the main dais on the topic, “Farmer Producer Organizations – Opportunities and Challenges’ in which the Chief General Manager (CGM) of NABARD and the Chairman of the successful FPO in Mysuru shared their experiences. Two books were released on the occasion, one on pulses and another on millet recipes.

While the Minister for Higher Education, Govt. Of Karnataka inaugurated the, the Chief Minister, Govt. Of Karnataka participated in the valedictory function. The Vice President of the Republic of Mauritius, His Excellency Paramshivum Pillai Vyapuri was the special guest of honour during the Agri Seminar.

The was an occasion that served many purposes – introducing new crops, varieties,

How different is this *Krishimela* from the ones organized by SAUs?

The *Krishimela* in Suttur gets richer with religious, cultural, social and educational dimensions added by various organizations, including JSS group of institutions.

The scale of Suttur *Krishimela* may be small in comparison with the SAUs but boasts of crop and technology diversity, diversity of audience (farmers-students-agri enthusiasts from various walks of life including R & D as well religious institutions. While the SAUs have access to resources including financial and human resources, the KVK manages to put up an enormous show with a mere 10 staff and a budget less than Rs. 10 lakh.

The *Krishimela* in Suttur is organized ‘outside’ the normal agricultural seasons. For instance, the UAS, Dharwad organizes its *Krishimela* during Kharif whereas the UAS Bengaluru organizes during Rabi. The preparations for Suttur *Krishimela* start in the middle of winter (Sept. –Oct.) and culminate at the beginning of summer (Jan-Feb).

This duration poses enormous challenges to grow over 160 crops, live, and synchronization of fruits, vegetables to coincide with the 6 days of *Krishimela* is all the more challenging.

While the SAUs focus on demonstrating their experimental plots, the emphasis of the KVK in Suttur is to present an enormous diversity of crops and varieties. No other *Krishimela* can boast of as many crops as 160 in a singular event.

The KVK, being hosted by an NGO, has the advantage attracting and displaying technologies and products of public as well as private agencies whereas the SAUs concentrate largely on their own technologies.

technologies and agro products for farmers, 'learning by doing' for the staff of KVK, unfolding crop and biodiversity before the children, inducing interest in farming among urbanites and offering a platform for the people's representatives and religious leaders to express their concerns and interest in farming and farmers. By this way, the KVK is building its visibility across the district and beyond. Enterprising farmers, artisans and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) make use of the *Krishimela* for setting up their own stalls to display their skills and sell their products. Farmers develop contact with various sources agricultural information and inputs including seeds and planting material, fertilizers and secondary/micro nutrients, range of bio agents and chemical pesticides, farm machinery, banking etc. The *Mela* inspires farmers and induces confidence among them in successful and sustainable farming.

The farmers visiting sought for seeds, inputs and more information regarding various crops and received guidance from the KVK technical staff. About **three lakh** visitors witnessed the *Krishimela* and appreciated the diversity of crops, technologies, agencies and events. Thousands of students obtained practical knowledge, especially regarding many unseen and unheard-of crops. The one-acre IFS model was particularly appreciated by many visitors and the entire *Krishimela* received excellent media attention. The crops, flowers and the 'Selfie garden' turned out to be the special attractions to many visitors which witnessed thousands of selfie photos.