

Saras Mela 2018 kickstarted with a bang

Organised by Kudumbashree Mission Saras Mela 2018, the national food and cultural expo, which would offer the best of traditional ethnic food and artistry was kickstarted at the ground near Market, Pattambi, Palakkad on 29 March 2018. Dr. K.T Jaleel, Minister, Local Self Government Department, Government of Kerala inaugurated the programme. He also inaugurated the food stalls set up at the Mela.

Saras Fair is not only a platform for the micro entrepreneurs to find market for their rural products, but also, this national festival is a platform which arrange the get together of the diverse yet secular culture of our country. Minister said.

Shri.Muhammad Muhsin, MLA, Pattambi presided over the function. Shri. S.Harikishore, Executive Director, Kudumbashree presented the report. Shri. Paloli Muhammed Kutty, Former Minister, LSGD was felicitated during the function.

More than 4000 Kudumbashree women took part in the procession organised prior to the inaugural function. Micro entrepreneurs from 25 states across the country including Kerala are taking part in the programme. Around 250 stalls are opened, out of which 100 stalls are of other states. The 70,000 sqft big pavilion and food court is the main attraction of the Mela. A sale of Rs 1 lakh was recorded on the inaugural day itself.

The handicrafts that would showcase the heritage and culture of each states, art forms, jewellery, fabrics, utensils etc would be for sale at the Saras Mela.

Apart from the stalls, 22 stalls are opened for food courts out of which 13 are from Kerala and 9 of them are offering cuisines from different states across the country. Dalbaati choorma, Kabakri, Puran Munde



Kheer etc are the few of the foods offered by the different states. 45 tables and 315 chairs are set up at the food court for serving the food.

The programme strictly follow the green protocol and is opened from 10 AM to 10 PM. Daily cultural programmes are also arranged in connection with the mela. Entry to Saras Mela is absolutely free.

Adding more colour to Kerala's festive days, Saras Mela 2018 is being an incredible opportunity to get acquainted with the cultural, artistic, traditional, and rich heritage values of different states across the country. The mela would come to an end on 7 April 2018.

Gothra Prayanam: Air tour for the tribals of Edamalakkudy



Kudumbashree Idukki District Mission organised tribal study tour 'Gothra Prayanam', study tour via flight for the tribes people of Edamalakkudy from Nedumbassery to Thiruvananthapuram on 27 March 2018. The trip was organised as part of the Tribal Integrated Development Project. The 20 membered team which comprised of 14 Kudumbashree members and tribal chieftains (oormoopans) was lead by Smt. Ramani, CDS Chairperson, Edamalakkudy and Smt.Eshwari, Panchayath Member, Edamalakkudy.

The team had a discussion with Shri. S.Harikishore, Executive Director, Kudumbashree regarding the sustainable development of Edmalakkudy. The had visited the tribal settlement at Vithura. The group also visited Secretariat and Legislative Assembly Complex and Shanghumugham beach as well. The team was accompanied by ST promoters, animators and officials of Kudumbashree Idukki District Mission.

The team made their return trip to Edamalakkudy via train. Kudumbashree Idukki District Mission organised such an air tour for the tribes people for including them in the mainstream, who were sidelined from the society for one reason or the other. Those were the moments of sheer excitement for the team of getting on to the plane for the first time.

Cafe Kudumbashree unit from Attappady excels at Saras Mela 2018

The ethnic foods prepared by the Kudumbashree unit from Attappady is of high demand at the Saras Mela being held at Pattambi. Vana Sundari Kozhi, the ethnic chicken recepie prepared by the Chaithanya Kudumbashree unit is being the main attraction of the food lovers those who pay visit to the food courts at Saras Mela 2018.

The recepies of Vana Sundari Chicken include the herbs that are available only in Attappady. 20 kg of Vana sundari chicken was sold in the first day of sale itself. Many of the people who visits the mela are asking for the recepies too. A plate including leg piece, dosa, salad and chutney is being sold at a rate of Rs 150 per plate. Single piece is available for Rs 70. A sale of Rs 4000 was recorded in the inaugural day and sale of Rs 13000 was recorded on the day following.

Apart from Vana Sundari Chicken the unit also prepare Chamayari Payasam, Chamayari Upmav, Ragi Vattayappam, Ragi Pazhampori, Ragi Churullappam, Ragi Putt Kadala, Ragi Ullivada, Ragi Kokkuvada, Salad, Chutney, Chukku Kappi etc.

Smt. Valli Chandran is the leader of the Chaithanya Kudumbashree unit. Smt. Rony Rengan, Smt. Sijimol,



Smt.Maruthy Raju and Smt. Vengy Maruthan are the other members. They had also took part in the Thudi fest and Malabar Craft Mela organised at Palakkad.

The Cafe Kudumbashree unit from the hamlets of Attappady had already won the hearts of the food lovers of Pattambi with their ethnic cuisines and are indeed excelling at the Saras Mela 2018.

Supply of Kadali Banana to Guruvayoor Devaswom by Kudumbashree Women of Thrissur

The Kudumbashree Women of Thrissur holds the pride in supplying Kadali Banana to the Devaswom of Guruvayur, Kadali banana being the favorite offering to the deity of Guruvayur Temple. The bananas cultivated by the Kudumbashree women of Thrissur district in purely organic way are therefore taken for poojas and are given away to the people as prasadam and are also used in preparing 'panchamrutham' (a sweet desert) as well. The JLGs of Thrissur had been supplying the Kadali Bananas to the Guruvayur Temple for the last 8 years since 9 June 2009. The JLGs had been supplying the bananas with the help of Mattathur Labour Co-operative Society.

The Mattathur Labour Co-operative society procures the plantains from the farmers at a rate of Rs 3.80 per banana finger. After deducting the labour costs the farmer will get Rs 3.15 per banana. Before giving away the bananas the JLGs paste the stickers on the plantain bunch which has the name and code of the JLG, date and the number of banana fingers. Vegetable Food Promotion Council gives the information about the actual market rate of the banana to the Mattathur Labour Co-operative Society. On receiving the plantain, the Mattathur Labour Co-operative Society pays the money to the farmers. Then, the society will take the banana to the Guruvayur Temple and stores the banana at the place provided by Guruvayur Devaswom for storing the banana. The raw bananas would be then smoked for ripening. The bananas are procured on Tuesdays and Fridays of every week. Out of those bananas the best 400 bananas would be taken for 'Nivedya' purpose and 7 boxes containing 300 bananas each are taken for giving away as prasadam.

When the authorities of Guruvayur Devaswom arrived at a predicament situation during when the Kadali Bananas weren't available for meeting the pooja purposes, Kudumbashree came up with the solution that they would cultivate and provide the kadali bananas upon the deal between the devaswom that it would be completely procured by the Guruvayur Devaswom. And



then the women started cultivating the bananas as Joint Liability Groups of 4 to 5 people. The harvested bananas from every group are collected by the Mattathur Labour Co-operative society. The women didn't had to worry about the marketing of the crops that they produce. How much they produce, the society procured it from them paying the money. The women farmers from Kudumbashree are growing these bananas under seven panchayaths of Kodakara block, and supplying them to the temple, ensuring a taste of homegrown plantain for the revered deity. Guruvayur Devaswom buys the kadali banana as per the conditions laid down in the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The seed of the Kadali banana is also procured by the Mattathur Labour Co-operative Society. They would procure the kadali seed from the JLGs at a rate of Rs 21 per seed. Only best quality kadali seeds are procured by the society to maintain the quality of the crop cultivated.

Kadali is a small and sweet fruited variety of banana which is mainly grown for offerings in temple and is known by names like Ambalakadali, Nivedyakadali etc. The average bunch weighs about 8-10 kg. Being taken for poojas, the market for the fruit is always

assured. It is also believed that Kadali Banana have contents of gold in it. The fragrant Kadali Banana has got medicinal features as well. It is believed by the followers that, Kadali Banana along with Yellow silk and lotus bud is the favorite offering of the deity. A total of 750 women from 150 Joint Liability Groups had been supplying 1.5 million of Kadali Banana to Guruvayur Temple every year.

Around 4000 to 25,000 Kadali Bananas are needed in Guruvayur temple based on the season. Earlier, to give this daily offering, the temple was dependent on supply from Tamil Nadu, as this special variety was on the verge of extinction in Kerala, which wasn't following organic method of cultivation, whereas Kudumbashree women follow organic method of cultivation. The project is implemented jointly by Kodakara Block Panchayath, Grama Panchayaths within the Block and the Kudumbashree Mission which aimed to supply pooja kadali required for prayer rituals to the Guruvayur temple daily by utilizing the Kudumbashree network. As a result not only would employment and income be generated but also the rare variety of 'Pooja kadali' banana which is facing extinction would be rejuvenated.

Famous Bakery of Idukki

INTERVIEW

Famous Bakery is a production and processing unit in Idukki district with almost 30 Kudumbashree members as workers. This unit is the Kudumbashree Oriented project of Byson valley Grama Panchayath. The project aims at the empowerment of women, eradication of unemployment and financial development of women in Byson Valley Grama Panchayath. Smt. Smitha Binu, leader of famous bakery unit shares the journey to their success story.

? Can you explain the aim of this unit apart from other such units?

As it is a Kudumbashree involved project its main aim is to empower women, eradication of unemployment and financial support for women in Byson valley Grama Panchayath.

? What about the fund allocation for initial investment and proper working of the unit?

It is a project of State Government concern and fund is allotted from Plan fund head where fund is allotted from State. In the year of 2013 the project got the life to mould it into reality. An amount of Rs. 80 Lakhs was allotted as initial investment for the assets such as building, machineries etc.

? Whether you got any financial support from any banks in your Panchayath?

24 November 2013 is an unforgettable day in our life because we started our production and processing unit as SBI Pottekkadu provided us financial support by providing an amount of Rs 5 Lakhs. We got full support from Panchayath as well as the members in the Panchayath.

? What is the structure of the work of this unit?

We started this unit with the support of a 13 member committee including Chairperson. At the early stage there were only 10 trained employees and by December 2016 the number of members increased to 30.



? How about the turnover/growth of the firm till today?

In the initial stage of year 2013, the monthly income was Rs 1.25 Lakhs which lead to a hike of Rs. 18 Lakhs by January 2017.

? Is there any creativity/innovation apart from this unit?

During the year 2015, with the confidence we gained from the success of Famous Bakery, we started a new unit like a sister concern for the production of chips, mixture, laddu etc.

? So you require a huge expense to find out the raw materials for your production and which is very costly. Is there any solution for that?

No. For that also we find a solution that to collect/supply agricultural products like tapioca, raw banana from other Kudumbashree units who cultivate these crops. So that we don't interfere agents and both the parties (buyer and seller) can make benefits eg. Materials costs high market value. Along with this we collect cleaned jackfruits as our climate in Idukki is best suited for jackfruit cultivation, in 2016. Till now it's a great success.



? Is there any master piece products which are fast moving in the bakery?

Bread and Carrot cake are very fast moving products in our bakery.

? What about the safety measures?

We focus more and more of hygienic products. We value the hygiene and quality of the products we supply in the market.

? What is the processing nature?

As we said we focus on hygienic environment, during the processing itself we make sure of the packing. There is no delay in packing. And we have transportation available for the supply of our products all over Idukki district. We need to more focus on the distribution level to make our products available across Kerala and so on.

? Can you say a few words about your uniqueness in this field?

This unit is involved directly by the Byson valley Grama Panchayath for its running. So it provided an amount of Rs 6.8Lakhs for the fixed assets apart from allotted money from Plan fund. Our motto is Social Commitment which is done through providing healthy, hygiene and fresh products in our markets.

Kadambari Apparel Park of Kasargod

Kadambari is a lingerie and bra brand marketed by Kudumbashree units in Kundamkuzhi, at Bedadukka Panchayath. With their commitment and effort they have made their own space and created demand for their product. Smt. Thankamani. M, leader of Apparel park unit shares their success story.

? 7 years back you started your journey with brand Kadambari, Could you please share that experience?

We started our apparel park in Kundamkuzhi under Bedadukka Panchayath. We are a team of 19 members. Generally our unit is known as Apparel park in the area but we are selling our product in the brand name of Kadambari to the shops.

As part of women empowerment Bedadukka panchayath is to promote ventures for women for their earnings. In 2011 Panchayath demanded a project for women for their long term earning and Kudumbashree District mission supported this idea, hence the idea for Apparel Park was formed.

? Your small venture is reaping big success. Could you share the secret of that success?

Within the 7 years of launch we made our own space and brand value with other competitors in the market. We always give priority to complete the work within the time period, this is the secret of our success.

? How do you find the finance in the first stage of venture and what was role of Kudumbashree in that?



Rs 32 lakhs was spent for the venture out of which Rs 1.5 lakhs was received as beneficiary fund, Rs 2.5 lakhs received as RMT fund from Kudumbashree, Rs 1.6 lakhs was received as innovation fund, Rs 1.85 lakhs was received for training and development. Apart from these Rs 18 lakhs was received from building planning fund, Rs 7 lakhs was taken as loan from farmers co-operative bank. Above all Kudumbashree District mission gave Rs 5 lakhs. All loans we repaid within 3 years after the launch.

? How did you survive in the initial days ?

In the initial days we had received only Rs 75 per

day as our wages, many often we spent money from our pocket to meet unit's expenses, but we didn't give up. Normally Rs 75 remuneration per day reached to Rs 250 and then to Rs 300. Within a year Kadambari made an own identity in the market and made a brand value. Things has changed, vendors started giving direct order to us. Now our unit has grown and our income touched Rs 2 lakhs per month.

Stitching need extreme care and importance in the make of apparels, we implemented that very effectively. We, 19 people work together with a collective mind for a dream, that is the secret of our success.