

Saras Fair at Kannur

Saras Fairs play a major role in helping the Kudumbashree micro entrepreneurs find market for their products. Not only the micro entrepreneurs, Saras Fairs help the micro entrepreneurs from all across the country. Saras Fairs are being conducted in various places across the state as well as across the country. Kudumbashree members had been participating in various Saras Fairs being held at various locations all across the country. The Saras Fair held at Kannur district of Kerala stood out unique because of the participation of the people from various sectors of the society. The public wholeheartedly welcomed the Saras Fair and made it a huge success. It is the proper planning of the Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission and their co-ordination that made the event a great success. Not only record sales were recorded Let us know more about how Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission planned and organised Saras Fair at its best.

Saras Fair

Kudumbashree is one of the largest women organizations in the country working towards elimination of rural poverty. Kudumbashree is also designated as the State Rural Livelihood Mission under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) of Government of India which aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor, enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. Under National Rural Livelihoods Mission, 'SARAS Fairs' are conducted every year in the State with an objective to promote the products/commodities of poor rural women entrepreneurs.

Saras Fairs provide a platform for direct sales of rural markets, giving exposure to rural artisans/entrepreneurs to various aspects of marketing, and developing linkages with various other markets. The Saras Fair opens new opportunities for the rural artisans, improving their awareness level and exposing the richness of products from rural poor to the urban market. Wide participation from all over the country is organized in the Fair in which rural

entrepreneurs has brought an impressive range of rural products, which include handicrafts, textiles, artwork, furniture, items of daily use, edible items etc.

As the visitors show a lot of interest in these products, there will be huge sale of rural products. In addition to the direct sales, bulk orders for the products are also expected to be received during the Fair and the participation in the exhibition will give a fillip to the confidence and enthusiasm of rural artisans.

In short, Saras Fair is the national food and cultural expo, offering the best of traditional, ethnic food and artistry organised by National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) in cooperation with the Ministry of Rural Development and the respective State governments. It is a 11 long days stretched exhibition cum sale programme. The objective of the fair is to ensure market for rural entrepreneurs and to provide an opportunity to sell their products without any interference of any second person. Through this fair the rural artisans, craftsmen, and beneficiaries of Self Help Groups (SHG) across India would be able to exhibit and sell their products directly with customers, thereby earning additional income as well as a significant exposure. For the people of the place where Saras Fair be organised would be an incredible opportunity to get acquainted with the cultural, artistic, traditional, and rich heritage values of different states across the country. Undoubtedly, Saras Mela would add more colour to the lives of the people and bring along a feeling of oneness in unity in diversity.

Saras Fair at Kannur

The Saras Fair at Kannur was kick started at Government Engineering College Ground, Mangattuparambu, Kannur on 20 December 2019. The Saras Fair was held from 20 December 2020 to 31 December 2020. Shri. A.C Moideen, Minister, Local Self Government Department, Government of Kerala inaugurated the programme. That was the first Saras Mela of 2019-20 financial year.

Micro entrepreneurs from 28 states and 8 Union territories across the country took part in the programme. Around 250 stalls were opened. There are stalls from 28 states viz., Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

etc and also from 8 union territories including Lakshadweep. Also there are 130 stalls of Kudumbashree micro enterprises as well. In addition to this, there were food courts that make the concept of 'India on your Plate' a reality. A total of 22 catering units from 15 states across the country served food to the visitors through 22 counters and introduce the cuisines from different parts of the country. A total of 11 Kudumbashree units served the Kerala cuisines.

The handicrafts that showcased the heritage and culture of each states, art forms, jewellery, fabrics, utensils etc were for sale at the Saras Mela. Apart from the sales stalls, several food stalls were opened for offering cuisines from different states across the country. Different ethnic cuisines from different states across the country offered a new experience to the people. The programme strictly followed the green protocol and was opened from 10 AM to 10 PM.

Adding more colour to Kerala's festive days of Christmas, Saras Mela became an incredible opportunity for the people of Kannur to get acquainted with the cultural, artistic, traditional, and rich heritage values of different states across the country. Entry to Saras Fair was absolutely free. Saras Fair not only stood as a platform for the micro entrepreneurs to find market for their rural products, but also, that national festival acted as a platform which arrange the get together of the diverse yet secular culture of our country.

How the Sara Fair of Kannur stood out unique?

Unlike the Saras Fairs organised in the other parts of the country and even the ones organised in the other parts of the state, the Saras Fair held at Kannur stood out unique because of the way it was conceived and executed.

Though the Saras Fair at Kannur was proposed to be held during August 2019, it was later postponed because of the fear of the floods during the monsoon. The organising committee was already formed before August 2019 and after the floods, the organising committee had its meeting during November 2019. It is the proper planning and leadership that lead to the success of the Saras Fair. Shri. James Mathew MLA, Thaliparambu Constituencyis the Chairman and Shri. T.V Subhash IAS was the General Co-ordinator of the organising committee and Dr. M.

Surjith, District Mission Co-ordinator, Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission is the General Convenor of the organising committee.

Various programmes were organised prior to the event and also during the event to ensure the participation of the different fraternities in the society. As part of spreading the publicity of the event, 'Saras Deepam' was lighted in all NHG homes in connection with the Deepavali festival, to make the people know that the Saras Fair was going to be held soon. All NHGs welcomed the Saras with nature friendly products and they were already trained in making handicrafts. Saras stars were made by the NHGs and fixed in different areas in the district. Posters were shared extensively and a painting competition was organised for the publicity purpose.

In addition to that, sector wise seminars were organised to ensure the participation of different fraternities in the district. Seminars were organised on daily basis after the inauguration ceremony. Design Education in India (NIFT, Kannur), Innovative Enterprise opportunities in agricultural sector, the enterprise opportunities of Kannur International Airport, Nammal Namukkayi, the disaster management plan of the Local Self Government Department, Kudumbashree and Co-operative sector, Kudumbashree and JanaSevana Kendra and the Services provided to the non-resident keralites through NORKA Roots etc were the topics of the seminar.

Also, various programmes including DDUGKY- Talento Skill Competition, the get together of the BUDS children, get together of the home shop, nutrimix families, and Mehandi Fest, karaoke festetc were also organised. The fund was raised through sponsorship as well. All the CDS were well informed about the programme and they ensured participation from the various NHGs under their respective CDSs.

The Saras Fair was held at the ground of Government Engineering College, Mangattuparamba, Kannur had made a record sale of Rs 9.72 crores from the sales stalls and food stalls.

The details of the sales recorded at the Saras Fair held at Kannur are as follows:

Date	Sales Recorded from Stalls	Sales Recorded from Food Stalls	Sales Recorded from Stalls + Sales Recorded from Food Stalls
20.12.2019	Rs.8,06,386	Rs.1,11,930	Rs. 9,18,316
21.12.2019	Rs.33,25,865	Rs. 4,29,840	Rs. 37,18,905
22.12.2019	Rs.46,45,234	Rs. 6,47,400	Rs. 52,92,634
23.12.2019	Rs.52,45,970	Rs. 6,31,870	Rs. 58,77,840
24.12.2019	Rs.56,88,480	Rs. 8,28,390	Rs. 65,16,980
25.12.2019	Rs.92,12,940	Rs. 10,12,900	Rs. 1,02,25,840
26.12.2019	Rs.1,52,48,650	Rs. 8,06,190	Rs. 1,60,89,840
27.12.2019	Rs.1,07,77,260	Rs. 9,00,440	Rs. 1,16,77,700
28.12.2019	Rs.91,68,780	Rs. 9,30,050	Rs. 1,00,98,830
29.12.2019	Rs.1,04,82,290	Rs. 11,04,000	Rs. 1,15,86,290
30.12.2019	Rs.87,38,800	Rs. 9,96,660	Rs. 97,35,460
31.12.2019	Rs.46,51,195	Rs. 8,08,880	Rs. 54,61,765
Total	Rs. 8,79,91,850	Rs.92,08,550	Rs 9,72,00,400

In addition, various other cultural programmes were also included which added more beauty to the Saras Fair held at Kannur. People came to attend the meetings and bought the products from various stalls. The newly branded curry powders of Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission were also available for sale at the stalls at the Saras Fair.

With innovative yet, different approach, Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission was able to attract more people to the Saras Fair, help them increase the sales in each stalls as well. It is the planned approach of Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission made the Saras Fair held at Kannur a grant success. The other district may replicate this approach to help the women earn more out of such opportunities.