

Empowering Scheduled Caste Farmers with Sustainable Agricultural Practices- CPCRI and KVK Dakshina Kannada Collaborative Efforts – A Success Story

To uplift the socio-economic status and ensure sustainable livelihoods of Scheduled Caste (SC) farmers in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, the ICAR-Central Plantation Crop Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, Kerala, in collaboration with the ICAR-Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Dakshina Kannada, implemented a series of innovative programmes under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP). Dr. Rajkumar, Senior Scientist (Nematology) and Nodal Officer of the SCSP Programme, successfully implemented the initiative at the grassroots level. Dr. T. J. Ramesha, Senior Scientist & Head, KVK, Dakshina Kannada, played a pivotal role in coordinating the programme across the district.

To operationalize this innovative initiative, seven neighbouring contiguous taluks—Sullia, Puttur, Kadaba, Ullal, Moodbidri, Bantwal, and Mulki—were selected with the support of the District Programme Manager of the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotional Society (KSRLPS), a state-level poverty alleviation programme aimed at enhancing rural livelihoods.

At the village level, commodity interest groups were formed with the assistance of Community Resource Persons – Krishi Sakhis, under the guidance of Taluk Programme Managers of KSRLPS. These groups served as a foundation for targeted interventions.

Capacity Development Programmes

Shri Jayaram K. E., Project Director & Deputy Secretary, Zilla Panchayat, Sullia Taluk officially launched the programme in the district. SC farmers received in-depth technical guidance on improved crop varieties, field preparation and planting techniques, manuring and fertilization practices, intercropping and mixed farming methods, integrated pest and disease management. Experts from various institutions and departments delivered these sessions. Seven training programmes were conducted across multiple locations, including Belthangady, Kaniyooru, Ramakunja, Kavalamudur, Mangalore, Aryapu, and Sullia Gram Panchayat. Dr. Ravi Bhat, Principal Scientist (Agronomy), Dr. Surekha, Senior Scientist, (Agronomy) and Dr. Rashmi, Scientist (Horticulture), ICAR-KVK, Dakshina Kannada were participated as resource persons for the training programmes

Institutional Convergence

The initiative was successfully implemented through convergence with multiple institutions and departments, including Taluk Panchayats, Department of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture, Women and Child Welfare Department, and the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotional Society (KSRLPS). This collaborative approach significantly amplified the programme's reach and impact.

Input Support

In addition to training, input support was provided to enhance field-level adoption. 5,000 high-yielding coconut saplings (var. West Coast Tall), procured from ICAR-CPCRI Regional Centre, Kidu (Karnataka), were distributed directly to 1657 SC farmers across the following villages and taluks:

- **Sullia:** 1,206 saplings to 304 farmers
- **Belthangady:** 582 saplings to 91 farmers
- **Ramakunja:** 1,101 saplings to 199 farmers
- **Kavalamudur:** 868 saplings to 362 farmers
- **Aryapu:** 438 saplings to 218 farmers
- **Mangalore:** 195 saplings to 128 farmers
- **Mulki:** 200 saplings to 100 farmers
- **Ullal:** 196 saplings to 98 farmers
- **Moodbidri:** 214 saplings to 157 farmers

This initiative covered 223 Gram Panchayats across nine Panchayat Samitis in the district.

Impact

The training initiatives significantly improved the technical knowledge and practical skills of the targeted SC farmers. Importantly, the adoption of scientific farming practices led to a 95% survival rate of the distributed coconut seedlings under field conditions.

The programmes success also sparked interest among farmers in neighbouring villages, promoting the wider adoption of these improved practices on a commercial scale and contributing to broader livelihood security.

The exceptional efforts of the Krishi Sakhis were formally recognized, with the district administration honoring them as the Best Krishi Sakhis, further reinforcing community-led development and empowerment.



Farmers during training on coconut cultivation-cum-seedling distribution at Sullia, Karnataka



Farmers during training at Kavalamudur Gram panchayat, Karnataka



Distribution of quality coconut saplings to SC farmers at Panchayat level



Coconut saplings in households of SC farmers of Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka

(Source: ICAR- Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, Kerala)