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Cauvery Calling: Rally picks up momentum

Politicians, industry leaders and famers join Sadhguru in events on Day 8 of rally

12 September 2019, Erode: Making a strong and clear case for the need for agroforestry in the Cauvery river basin, Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation said, “Agroforestry is not against agriculture. It enhances agriculture because agriculture thrives on rich soil. There is simply no other way...the richness of the soil is ensured because of the green litter that the trees are dropping continuously and also the agricultural practices can be taught as to how to use everything that comes up on the farm - except the crop; everything else must be ploughed back to the soil in whichever way possible.”

Sadhguru was speaking at Shri. Senthil’s farm in Mevani village in Erode district. Shri. Senthil has been an agro farmer for the past 10 years, one of the pioneers in the region. “Here is an ideal farmer who is growing turmeric with agroforestry. He’s growing yam with agroforestry. Now, he’s growing paddy with agroforestry...now, this is a demo farm. I want all the naysayers to come and visit a farm like this and understand agroforestry is not against agriculture,” said Sadhguru speaking at an event that was attended by several farmers from across the state.

Earlier in the day, the rally reached Mettur where Sadhguru spoke at the JSW Auditorium. “80% of our lands are with the farmers. Only 16 to 18% is with the government,” said Sadhguru explaining the rationale behind promoting agroforestry on farmlands in the Cauvery river basin which will enhance the basin’s capacity to hold water. Sadhguru clarified that the movement was not an afforestation initiative.

Sadhguru also said that it was important to create a conducive and encouraging atmosphere for the farmer to adopt agroforestry. “The farmer must be able to cut, transport and sell his trees wherever he wants. Trees must be changed from forest produce to agricultural produce,” said Sadhguru. This will encourage the farming community to take up agroforestry in a big way and allow farmers greater flexibility in selling their produce enabling them to increase their income significantly.

“Cauvery is our Mother, not an issue,” said Sadhguru addressing a public event at Excel Group of Institutions, Erode where he reiterated the enormous economic benefits that farmers can reap from agroforestry. “There is a farmer doing agroforestry in Gobichettipalayam with trees worth nearly a crore. There is another farmer with 4000 red sandalwood trees worth nearly 25 crore trees,” said Sadhguru.

The state governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have agreed to provide subsidies for the first 4 years for farmers who shift to agroforestry.

As the rally made its way from Mettur to Erode, farmers, women and children lined the streets every few kilometres waiting to welcome Sadhguru. None were disappointed – Sadhguru stopped to greet them at each point. Incessant rains deterred neither the riders nor the public as citizens seemed determined to demonstrate their commitment to support Cauvery Calling.

The Cauvery Calling motorcycle rally led by Sadhguru is touring districts in the Cauvery belt since 3 September where it began its journey at Talacauvery, the river’s birthplace in Karnataka. The 3500-km rally is consolidating on-ground multi-stakeholder support for concerted action to revive river Cauvery. Apart from local celebrities in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, several actors from the Hindi film industry are supporting the movement including Kangana Ranaut, Shah Rukh Khan, Juhi Chawla and Anumpam Kher among others. The movement has received record support from political leaders across parties, sportspersons, industry leaders, media, farmers and citizens from all walks of life.

The rally is on its second leg having recently completed the Karnataka leg which ended in Bengaluru on 8 September. At a mega event in Bengaluru, the Karnataka Chief Minister Shri. B.S. Yediyurappa pledged 2 crore trees for the movement. The rally reached Tamil Nadu yesterday. After travelling through several cities, it will culminate in Coimbatore on 17 September.

Cauvery Calling is a first of its kind campaign, setting the standard for how India's rivers – the country's lifelines – can be revitalized. It will initiate the revitalization of the Cauvery river by supporting farmers to plant 242 crore trees in the river basin. This will increase water retention in the basin, while enhancing farmers' income by 300 to 800% in 5-7 years and transforming the lives of 84 million people. Visit: CauveryCalling.org or call 80009 80009. #CauveryCalling.

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