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Isha's Cauvery Calling Launches Massive Farmer Outreach In Karnataka With 1,800 Panchayat Events

Isha's Cauvery Calling launches massive Farmer Outreach in Karnataka

2 August 2021, Bengaluru: Following its phenomenally successful efforts that led to the planting 1.1 crore saplings in the Cauvery basin districts spanning Karnataka and Tamil Nadu last year, the Cauvery Calling team is all set to launch another massive farmer outreach in Karnataka. The objective of the outreach is to popularize the ecologically beneficial and economically attractive tree-based farming model among farmers. The Rally for Rivers Board and Cauvery Calling Panel met today to formalize the objectives and the detailed action plan for the new initiative. The volunteer-led on-ground initiative is set to cover 1785 Gram Panchayats in 57 talukas throughout the 9 Cauvery basin districts in Karnataka which is home to 24 lakh farmers.

Sadhguru chaired the meeting and said "If we successfully implement this, this is not about Cauvery alone, this will be a game-changer for India and the whole tropical world." He added that the idea of Cauvery Calling is to

create a demonstrable model and make it a living example for the world to adopt and replicate. Sadhguru stressed on the need for deep community involvement to make the mission a success. "A deep involvement with farmers on the ground and policymakers at the top," he said will bring about holistic and lasting transformation.

Sadhguru has spoken extensively and repeatedly about the need to restore soil health and reverse desertification at several national and global forums. "What is good for farmers is good for the soil, and what is good for the soil is good for the nation. If we don't save the soil, the country won't be saved," he said.

Over the course of eight weeks, 1800 events will popularize the tree-based farming model among the farming community. Farmers, local administration officials from various government departments are set to participate in these events. The events will also act as a bridge between farmers and government representatives besides becoming a platform for knowledge sharing. The farmer outreach initiative will include awareness about state agroforestry schemes, incentives, eligibility criteria and the process of applying.

The Cauvery Calling Kannada Facebook page has reached 1 million farmers in the last one month. Making extensive use of social media platforms during the lockdown, the Cauvery Calling team has been engaging with 12,000 farmers every day via WhatsApp. No less than 16,000 farmers have been trained during the last 6 weeks by 25 resource leaders who are experts in all aspects of farming, soil health, hydrology and crop compatibility.

A unique feature of the on-ground initiative is that Cauvery Calling has appointed 890 'Mara Mitras' (Friend of Tree) at Gram Panchayats who will register the farmers' demands at their doorstep using a state of the art

mobile app. Establishing the demand from every village with details of farmers and details of species selected will help the Government to raise these saplings under various existing schemes for each gram panchayat for the planting season of 2022.

Hundreds of trained Cauvery Calling volunteers will participate in the Outreach. The volunteers are also being trained on strict adherence to social protocols while conducting events. Volunteers must be tested negative and have been vaccinated to be eligible to work on ground. They will use COVID-appropriate gear during community interactions and will be medically equipped.

The multi-stakeholder Cauvery Calling mission has farmer prosperity as its core objective besides restoring green cover and revitalizing the water and soil in the Cauvery river basin. By enabling farmers in the river basin to plant 242 crore trees on private farmlands for ecological and economic gain, the Cauvery Calling model will lead to increase in groundwater levels and reverse the depletion of river Cauvery, besides enriching soil nutrients and the water absorption capacity of the soil. The farming model has been tested on ground by Isha for more than two decades. It has proven to be an economic windfall for farmers as incomes have risen between 3 to 8 times.

Cauvery Calling is the world's largest farmer-driven ecological movement that promotes tree-based agriculture on private farmlands in the Cauvery river basin spanning Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Cauvery Calling will contribute towards many United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

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