

Mattupetty to become “model livestock village”

Staff Reporter

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Mattupetty village near Munnar in Idukki district is slated to become the first ‘model livestock village’ in the country.

Minister for Animal Husbandry C.Divakaran, told The Hindu that the formal declaration in this connection will, be made during the second week of November as part of the Golden Jubilee celebration of Kerala formation.

The programme is being implemented through a Rs.2.61-crore project supported by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The Project work will be implemented through the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KIIDC).

Mattupetty already has a farm of the Kerala Livestock Development Corporation (KLDC) perched picturesquely on hillsides and it is this farm, which will become the core center of the model livestock village. Every year, five lakh visitors come to the farm. The Government now intends exploiting this potential of the farm into a farm tourism programme.the farm will provide the major attraction in the model livestock village.

Managing Director of KLDC Anil S.Das said the programme would be a unique venture to provide livestock knowledge and recreational facility for visitors. Through the project-a fool proof system-will be implemented to overcome any bio-security problems posed by the visitors on the farm.

Dr. Das said the prime attraction of the farm would be an info-entertainment center. Through a segment caller ‘house’ cattle sheds housing all the high yielding and rare cattle breeds from the Indian sub-continent would on show. It would be a facility through which the visitors could observe and learn various aspects of cattle breeding and rearing.

Dr. Das said the center would also exhibit state-of-the-art technology equipment used for livestock development. The project would comprise an agri-supermarket to purchase agricultural products of the area, honey and teakwood mementos. There will be a museum for exhibition of live stock products. The added attractions at the center would be an aviary and an aquarium.

Since the farm is located an the banks of the Mattupetty Dam catchments area, boating facilitated would also be arranged for the visitors as part of the programme.

NABARD for three-tier credit for rural areas.

To start from regional rural banks, says chairman Thorat

Special Correspondent

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Chairman of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Y.S.P.Thorat is in favour of a three-tier credit flow to the rural area with focus on micro-credit. The rural areas particularly rural cultivator

- “The credit inflow to rural areas was far from satisfactory”

- NABARD was looking at ‘meaningful district-level planning in agriculture’

- It wants to empower people in interior areas with their participation.

families are not getting credit at the right time as well as in the right quantum making them largely dependent on unorganized sector credit.

Speaking to The Hindu after launching the Rural Habitat Development Scheme of the Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) Dr.Thorat said that despite the efforts of the government the credit inflow to rural areas was far from satisfactory .51 per cent of the people in rural areas was do not get any credit from the organized sector of which 85 per cent of the farmers are small holders, which makes it even more difficult for the system to reach them credit.

The organized credit system can reach only 23 per cent of the farmers, which was not something that could be termed ‘healthy’ Dr. Thorat stated.

Infused credit

Starting that the NABARD and the government has infused credit into the system of small holdings in Maharastra where most of the farmers suicides were taking place, he said the ‘medicine’ takes some time to achieve its full ‘effect’ and the people should have patience and faith in the new credit system for rural development.

Though it was a challenge for the NABARD to reach credit to 51 per cent of the farmers in the country, Nabard had the resources, willingness and machinery to deliver it.

The three tier ‘effect’ should start from the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) which have well carved out ‘command areas’ and functions, the second credit system already is in

place in the co-operative sector and at the top end was the commercial banks which can play a big role in stabilizing credit flow.

After the formalization of the Vaidyanathan committee report the rural credit system will come into full fruition Dr. Thorat said.

He said the task appears to be daunting but 'to extend' 'formal credit' to 51 per cent of the rural areas, NABARD will now aim at synergising the flow through various levels of the banking industry. To arrive at a full credit flow to rural areas the industry should take a 'dis-aggregated' look at the need for credit in rural areas he added.

Meaningful planning

He said the NABARD was looking at 'meaningful district level planning in agriculture, on-farm activity and development of infrastructure in the rural areas.

Stating that the NABARD has studied the model of rural development and farming development by Andhra Pradesh Dr.Thorat said he had traveled in the naxal infested areas of that state particularly Mehbubnagar and found out that the model works in perfect synergy with the community, NGOs and the government agencies.

Basic facilities in place

The level of involvement of people had brought in many basic facilities such as drinking water, electrification, roads and many other facets of life, which were absent in the past.

He said the NABARD would like to empower the people in the interior areas with their participation.

Report: conserve prime farmland

Gargi Parsai

**The Hindu, Delhi
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The National commission on Farmers chaired by M.S.Swaminathan has said that prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture and should not be diverted for non-agriculture purpose and for programmes such as the Special Economic Zones.

It has also suggested that the Constitution be amended to bring agriculture on the Concurrent List for better coherence between macro policies of trade, finance and investment.

In its final report presented to the Government on Wednesday, the Commission has suggested the formulation of a National Policy on Farmers and suggested that the recently constituted Sixth Pay Commission go into the "take-home income" of farmers and their families.

It says the compensation provision of the existing Land Acquisition Act was “anti-farmer” and must be reviewed.

Chairman of the Commission M.S Swaminathan presented the three-part report to Union Food and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar here on Wednesday. “The time has come when we should focus more on the economic well-being of the women and men feeding the nation, than just on production”, says the report.

Land-mapping needed

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr.Swaminathan said SEZs should be on a case-to-case basis and on low biological potential land. There should be mapping of the land unsuitable for agriculture and earmarked for SEZs.However, the growth of agriculture and industry should be harmonized so that people could move from on-farm to non-farm activities. But the unfinished agenda on land reform must be expedited.

He said the large-scale import of wheat this year was a “wake-up call”.

TN panchayet drop farce

G.C.Shekhar, Chennai.

**Hindustan Times, New Delhi
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If the village of Papapati, Keeripatti and Natramangalam in Madurai were known outside their boundaries, it was for a notorious reason. For over a decade in the three panchayats reserved for scheduled castes, no Dalit was allowed to be president for more than a week.

But on Wednesday, when the villagers cheered their new Dalit panchayat presidents, the celebrations were for real. The Thevars, members of a backward community that outnumber Dalits five to one and who have been regularly unseating the presidents, had finally come around. Democracy seemed to have finally trumped caste politics and electoral officials heaved a sigh of relief.

For long, elections here were reduced to a farce. Caste Hindus opposed a lower-caste man leading the panchayats but since the post of panchayat presidents was reserved for scheduled castes, the Thevars handpicked a Dalit as their candidate and elected him unopposed. But just for a few days.then, he would be asked to resign and the village would again be without a head. The state Election Commission regularly conducted by-polls but to no avail. This time, however, the state government warned the Thevers they would be jailed under the Goondas Act if they tried to unseat the presidents. The threat worked. The rebel caste Hindus participated in the polls and elected Dalits as presidents and ward members.

District collector T.Udhayachandran said: “The warm reception by the people indicates a change of heart. It is a victory for the grassroots democracy.” He added that Pappapati, Keeripatti and Natramangalam would be made model panchayats.