

BEST KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA AWARD 2009

MYRADA bags best Krishi Vigyan Kendra award



P. Alagesan

ERODE: MYRADA, an NGO, which manages the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) or farm science centre in the district, has done the district and the State proud by bagging the best KVK award.

The award, given by the Union Ministry of Agriculture, comes to the State after over 10 years. The last time a KVK won the award was when the UPASI-managed KVK in Udhagamandalam won the award.

The Project Officer, MYRADA-KVK, Erode, P. Alagesan, says the ministry's Indian Council for Agriculture Research, which manages the 600-odd KVKs in the country, gave the award based on performance. The award is for five years.

The council asked MYRADA to run the KVK in Erode after it worked on agriculture and allied activities for over 25 years in the district. "Since its establishment in Erode, MYRADA has been working in agriculture, livestock development and community building," says Mr. Alagesan.

"MYRADA developed cooperative farming, helped farmers get cross-breed animals, set up milk procurement facilities and finally establish a 5,000-litre chilling unit in the hills." These facilities have since been handed over to Aavin.

MYRADA, which stands for Mysore Rural Development Agency, then took up self-help group formation, much before the term and the concept became fashionable. It was part of the organisations efforts to build local communities.

Based on a decade-long work, Mr. Alagesan says ICAR granted Erode KVK to MYRADA in 1992.

Since then KVK has worked to introduce new technology to farmers, arrange funds for small and marginal farmers, impart best agriculture practices and also help in post-harvest management.

“Our approach was based on the plough to plate concept,” he says and adds that the KVK focussed more on the Thalavady hills, Sathyamangalam and neighbouring areas because farmers there were more vulnerable. The approach also saw the farm science centre introduce new varieties of crops, help farmers diversify crops and assist in marketing as well.

“The KVK devised a strategy wherein it decided to assist well-off farmers with technology inputs and small and marginal farmers with not only technology inputs but also in getting financial assistance from banks.”

MYRADA-KVK also helped farmers take up rosemary, citronella cultivation and also vegetables. It also helped the local communities build grain storage facilities at both houses and village.

Mr. Alagesan says though the award does not entail any financial assistance, it has given the organisation more responsibility in the betterment of the local community.