

Prof. Katagihallimath

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Development-1997

Prof. Katagihallimath who is 78 years old is a distinguished agricultural scientist, a dedicated teacher and a devoted extension worker. He started his career as a teacher in 1945 in the Pune Agricultural College in Dharwad where he set up an excellent museum which could boast of a rich collection of Zoological and Etymological specimens. He was a great teacher at graduate and post-graduate levels. He retired after a distinguished service in 1974. Since that date he continued voluntary work in spheres of Agricultural Development, Agricultural Education, Horticultural Development, Afforestation, Research, Education and Training in allied subjects etc.

The achievements of Prof. Katagihallimath may be summarized as follows :

He conducted over 1500 field trials extensive in several representative villages in different agro-climatic zones of the State on principal field crops such as Paddy, Jowar, Cotton, Chilli, Sugarcane, Tobacco, Groundnut, Wheat, Gram, Safflower, etc. he made a detailed study on the life history of major pest-insects of these crops and evolved effective schedules of calendar-wise pest management practices for these crops. These pest management schedules have been instrumental in reducing the pest menace and in a three-fold more crops yield.

Transfer of Technology (Arid Horticulture)

With robust common sense and practical wisdom he succeeded in initiating a fruit revolution in the form of arid horticulture in the drought prone Bijapur Dist. Seeing that the area in question was sandwiched by two mighty rivers, the Krishna on the north and the Ghataprabha on the south he sensed the presence of some water resource and persuaded some big farmers to dig borewells. They were able to strike a rich yield ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water per hour at a relatively greater depth of 200 to 250 feet. Not only did this solve the problems of drinking water but also paved the way for the establishment of a network of a large number of arid horticultural gardens in the belt as well as in other parts of the Bijapur Dist. The total economy in the entire district was thus changed and a seemingly incredibly yield of food crops annually on a sustainable basis could be realised. The cropping pattern recommended by him is being followed even to this day.

During the training camp in village Bagalkot Prof Katagihallimath used to survey the surroundings of dwelling households and identify some open spaces for planting vitamins-minerals rich economic trees such as Papaya, lime, Gooseberry, Guava, Custard apple, Drumstick and Coconut. He used to take the seedlings of these trees to the doorsteps of villagers. The kitchen gardening movement introduced by him has gathered momentum.

Similarly, village youth volunteered to come on their own to the Rural Development Centre, Bagalkot for undergoing training in Poultry farming, Sericulture, Dairying, Apiculture and other self-employment enterprises. Prof Katagihallimath was quite successful in motivating the rural youth and rural women to establish clubs and mahila mandals in their villages to take up community works on voluntary service basis.

Establishment of Horticultural and Plantation Gardens and Propagation and Dissemination of multi-storeyed Cropping Technology

After his retirement, he devoted himself to the establishment and development of fruit gardens and plantations as his hobby. He has by now established over 100 orchards in the Districts of Bijapur, Belgaum, Dharwad, Chitradurga, Bangalore rural and Bangalore urban. He has personally planted over 50,000 plants comprising about 15,000 coconuts, 1200 sapotas, 10,000 mangoes, 8000 pomegranates, 5000 guavas, 2000 jackfruits, 5000 citrus and fruit trees like custard apples, leechis, paneerlas, ber, bullock, heart fruit, gooseberry, Singapore cherries, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, cashew, almond, coffee, etc. It is interesting to note that there is not a single mortality among the plants planted by him. He has also developed a multi-storeyed cropping system technology and successfully practiced it. He has evolved a unique technique of spatial and temporal planting of Coconut, Arecanut, Cocoa, Coffee, Banana, Ginger and Turmeric. Besides, he has evolved a technology of raising costly wood plants like Teak, Silveroak, flame of forest, sandalwood, etc. He has also successfully established several floricultural gardens with Hibiscus, Parijata, Champak, Rose, Zerbera, Jasmine, etc. around Bangalore. A welcome feature of the multi-storeyed cropping system technology is “panchvati” planting technique of vedic times ie planting of Bilwa, Shami, Ashwath, Neem and Country-fig which, besides having high medicinal value, act as purifier of polluted atmosphere.

Multiple Cropping System : i.e. growing more than 3 crops in a year in the same land under irrigated conditions as advocated by him is being practiced by many farmers who have been highly benefited by way of enhanced yields. The department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka has published a book on this subject written by him.

Conversion of Waste Lands into Green Belts :

Hundreds of acres of wasteland patches have been transformed into greeneries under the technical advice and personal supervision of Prof. Katagihallimath in the form of six different types of plantations namely (a) fruit gardens (b) ornamental and Avenue trees groves (c) Lawn cum Perennial Flowering Ornamental Blocks (d) Farm Forestry (e) Social Forestry (f). Irrigated Fertigated High Density Forestry.

He is a great teacher, a very successful researcher and a dedicated social worker who has carried the fruits of science and technology to the villages. He has participated in several State level, National level and International level seminars, symposia, workshops and conferences and presented original research-based papers at these academic bodies. His method of delivery and contents of quality of quality of his research work have earned for him wide applause and appreciation in all scientific sessions on several occasions, he has published twenty Research Paper and over 100 popular Articles on Agricultural and Horticultural subjects in leading journals and periodicals..

His experience and achievement is unique in that he is one of the very few senior most Agricultural Scientists who have had an opportunity to do path-breaking work in all the 3 branches of agricultural sciences agricultural education, agricultural research and agricultural extension, He is also a unique and rare example of doing honorary service to the cause of agricultural development. Even today he conducts training programmes for farmers involving the scientists of Agricultural Universities and experts in the Dept of Agriculture. He is not merely an individual but an institution by himself.

Prof. Katagihallimath is a Life Member of many technical and social welfare institutions, a Life Member of the Institute of Agricultural Technologies of India among other important positions held by him.

In recognition of his services the Government of Karnataka awarded him the 'Rajyothsava' Award in 1993.

