Malayala Manorama

Name of the Programme: KRISHIMUTTAM – School Farmyard

The School Harvest Project

Category of Entry: Public Service

Sponsoring Newspaper: Malayala Manorama

Complete Address: Malayala Manorama Company Ltd.,
Manorama Buildings, Kottayam - 686001
Kerala, India.

Project manager: Mathews Varghese, Associate Editor,
Phone - 09846061302, Email - mathewsvarghese@manorama.com

Circulation and frequency of the Newspaper: 2.39 million copies, Daily.
School harvest was a unique campaign where Manorama invited participating schools to venture into cultivation of vegetables in the school compound.

Why the project: Kerala is a state in India that largely depends on the neighboring states for vegetables. Even though it is a fertile land with favourable climatic conditions, Kerala's vegetable production has been insufficient to meet the requirements of the state as people have turned away from agriculture. The 'School Harvest' project was aimed at addressing this issue by creating awareness and interest for farming among the youngsters.

More on activities:
www.manoramaonline.com/nallapaadam

Videos: www.manoramanews.com
Development of the Project

Sowing the seeds

1500 schools registered for the 'School Harvest' project. With the support of the Government agency, the Vegetable and Fruits promotion council of Kerala (VFCK), Manorama arranged free distribution of seeds and saplings of various vegetables to be distributed to the participating schools. Manorama also gave directions and guidelines on farming through expert columns in Print and Online editions.

State minister for Agriculture Mr. K.P. Mohanan inaugurating the School Harvest project handing over seeds to students
Participating schools started cultivating various vegetables in their compounds during July-August. Groups of students were given responsibility of nurturing the vegetable farms. Manorama encouraged the students through positive news reports and photographs of their initiatives across multiple platforms which included Manorama Daily, Manorama News Channel and manoramaonline.com.

We arranged high profile visits by celebrities like film stars, ministers and officials to school farms in order to motivate the students. Manorama's team of journalists and other staff also visited the schools.

Pesticides and chemical fertilizers were not used for farming. It was 100% organic farming in all the schools.
By October - November the school farms were ready for harvest. Farming in about 1000 schools was successful. Students cultivated various vegetables including brinjal, tomato, lady's finger, cauliflower, gourd, spinach, beans, little gourd, winter melon, leafy vegetables, cucumber, mushroom, amaranth etc.

Harvest in the farms was organised in festive atmosphere in many schools. Some schools invited senior farmers of the locality as guests to inaugurate the harvest celebration.
The Yield

About 100,000 Kilograms of vegetables were produced by the students during the period. It was a successful 'junior green revolution' taken up by the kids of Kerala. At some schools the yield was put on sale for the local people and the proceeds of the sale went to charity. Some schools distributed the yield amongst the students. Some others donated to orphanages, foster homes and so on.
The main objective of the project was to channelize the collective energy of the large student community in Kerala to bring about a social change. The project was a huge success as it produced large amount of organic vegetables at one level and at the other, motivated youngsters to understand and enjoy farming getting a firsthand experience. It was a rare opportunity to learn lessons on farming, life skills, entrepreneurship, marketing and management at one go. It integrated students as key stakeholders of the society.

The program created awareness amongst the society at large and forced the authorities to promote vegetable farming. It marked the beginning of a paradigm shift in the state's policy as well; the Government has taken up the idea and started promoting Organic vegetable farming across the state, to convert Kerala from a consumer state into a producer of fresh and organic vegetables.
Malayala Manorama

How it benefited Manorama

Manorama is a 125 year old news paper organisation and has a brilliant record of CSR initiatives. The School Harvest Project was a new initiative with the youth and farming in the focus. It helped Manorama build goodwill and strong brand image among the youth.

By bringing the youth to the farm field, we could successfully connect with their parents and teachers. As the project taken up by the student community benefited the society, people appreciated Manorama's initiative. All this goodwill has directly reflected in the growth of our circulation. Manorama's circulation has increased during 2014 as per the audit bureau of circulation (ABC) statistics.

Circulation Figures

July – Dec 2013: 22,32,587 copies
Jan – June 2014: 22,39,528 copies
(ABC)