

Fair deal: Campus market takes farmers straight to students

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Bengaluru: The air was bucolic on the campus of Kristu Jayanti College (KJC), Autonomous, Tuesday. Nearly 50 farmers had descended on the campus, lugging their produce, while students, faculty and other college stakeholders made a beeline to purchase them.

The live Campus Farmers Market, organised under Kristu Jayanti Sarva Vikas through One District One Product (ODOP), a central govt initiative, was the result of collaboration between Institution's Innovation Centre, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre, and the Farmer Producers Organisation (FPO) from Hoskote.

This initiative aims to support farmers by promoting them directly to customers, removing middlemen and commissions and getting them a fair price for their produce.

The students were soaking in the 'santhe' (fair) air and moving between half a dozen stalls. Nadia, a BCom student who was purchasing vegetables, said, "This is thrilling. I called my mum and asked her what vegetables she wanted, that I could get them for her. It's so nice to see farmers coming to our college and selling their produce."

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Many students were seen striking conversations with the farmers. "Talking to them, knowing their lifestyle and problems is very interesting. We're happy to buy fresh vegetables and contribute to getting a fair price for farmers. I want our college to have these live markets every week," Nadia said.

Students from the college's department of life sciences distributed bio-fertilizer samples and orga-



Chethan Shivakumar

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Dr Aloysius Edward J, dean and faculty member, commerce and management, told TOI that these live markets will be held every Friday on the campus except during exams. "Based on the response we receive, with the management's support, we will have permanent stalls where farmers sell their produce in the college," he added.

GOOD SALES: Tuesday's farmers' market was a huge hit among students and faculty

nic manure, besides providing guidance on their usage and benefits. The bio-fertilizer and organic ma-

nure were produced in the college's bio-fertilizer production centre on campus.

Dr Murugan, a faculty member and co-ordinator, Institute Innovation Council, who was buying vegetables along with his colleagues, said, "Faculty members too are thrilled as many of them are buying straight from farmers for the first time. We plan this particular event for the coming days also, like once a month, so that the benefit will go to the entire community."

The demand was so much that within an hour, 10 crates of tomato (15kg each), four boxes of cucumber (20kg each), 50kg of beans, 40kg of bottle gourd, four boxes of capsicum (20kg each), and 40kg of brinjal were sold. The stalls were emptied of produce in under two hours.

Basavaraju C, a farmer and vice-president of FPO, told TOI, "The first benefit for us with a live market in college is we needn't pay commission, and we have around 10,000 students alone who come and

purchase from our stalls. This is the major benefit compared to selling in markets. We get a fair market price, and our customers get fresh vegetables from the farm."

Uma Reddy, vice-president of Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who officially inaugurated the Campus Farmers Market, said enabling direct connections between farmers and consumers not only empowers the farmer but also enhances their market visibility.

Fr Dr Lijo P Thomas, vice-principal and CFO of Kristu Jayanti College, said: "At the core of this programme is a commitment to empowering farmers while preserving their traditional practices. It aligns perfectly with the ODOP goals, and by working closely with farmers, we're determined to address their challenges while contributing to the country's growth."