Cashew cultivation can alleviate woes of farmers: MP

MANGALURU: MP Nalin Kumar Kateel said farmers of Dakshina Kannada are hardworking, innovative and they have survived the adversities of water and labour shortage and marketing problems over the years.

After inaugurating an awareness programme on protection of plant varieties and Farmers’ Rights Act at Sweda Bindhu farm of Kadamalalu Subash Rai on Saturday, he said cashew can be an ideal solution in the present scenario with less water, inputs and in the backdrop of vagaries of nature.

He said cashew is the crop of the future and urged farmers to encourage its cultivation.

MLA Shakuntala Shetty said the cashew apple should also be utilised to increase the income of farmers similar to ‘Neera’ production from coconut.

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights Authority, India (PPV&FRI) chairman Dr R R Hanchinal said that India has abundant plant diversity.

“Our country has around 49,000 useful plants. But proper documentation is not being done and due to this, the other countries are trying to claim rights over our plant wealth,” he said.

Citing an example, he said Sri Lanka and Indonesia have claimed supremacy though black pepper belongs to India.

He urged farmers to get sensitised about plant diversity, their rights and document the same.

He said that PPV&FRI would provide free assistance to farmers to register their rights. A regional office of PPV&FRI would shortly come up at Shivamogga, he added.

Dr N K Krishna Kumar, South Asia head of Biodiversity International, said multiple cropping system should be followed for sustainable farm income.

He said that there is a need to conserve soil beneficial microorganisms, flora and fauna.

Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, regional station, Vittal, head Dr Anand provided information about varieties of arecanut, namely Madhura Mangala and Shatha Mangala. He said these varieties could be used for Chali and processing.

At the programme, ‘Sudharitha Geru Thaligalu’ and ‘Geru Maragala Punaschethana’ publications were released.

Around 300 farmers from Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Sagara, Sorab, Shivamogga, Gadag and Kasaragod participated in the programme.

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