

MSDS 2025 AGRIPRENEUR AWARDS

Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani (MSDS) hosted its 25th Annual Awards Ceremony on March 1, 2025, at St. Ann's School, Tindivanam. The event honored agripreneurs and farmers engaged in natural farming and Vetiver cultivation, recognizing their contributions to sustainable agriculture.

Seven awardees across five categories were felicitated with a silver plaque, citation, and shawl. The awards were instituted in memory of Late Karmayogi P.N. Devarajan, Founder of MSDS Trust, and Late Swami Nityanandagiri of Thapovanam, the Chief Patron of the Trust. Additionally, three outstanding farmers practicing organic and natural farming were awarded the Sadguru Gnanananda Fellowships.

Each fellow will receive Rs. 7,500 per month for a year, with the fellowship extending up to three years, subject to annual reviews. They will also receive mentorship from experts to scale their operations and train fellow farmers. Each fellow was honored with a silver plaque, citation, and shawl in recognition of their dedication.

The event was graced by Shri L. Narayana Moorthi, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Polur, Tiruvannamalai District, as the Chief Guest. Mr. P. N. Subramaniam, Managing Trustee of MSDS, delivered an inspiring address to the 300+ attendees, which included farmers and their families. Swamini Prabhavananda Saraswathi of Gnanananda Niketan, Thapovanam, the Chief Patron of the Trust, sent an audio message blessing the occasion.

A key highlight of the event was the launch of the book "Unsung Beacons - Vol. 15," which chronicles the inspiring stories of social change agents and farmers. The foreword was written by Smt. Santha Sheela Nair, former IAS officer, who attended as a special guest.

MSDS also introduced a soil testing initiative, enabling farmers to assess soil fertility at a nominal cost of Rs.

100, helping them make informed decisions about land management.

The event also shed light on emerging opportunities in organic farming and agribusiness. Aviral Pathak, a dedicated organic farmer, has been making strides in the production of essential oils, particularly Vetiver oil, which is gaining popularity due to its diverse applications and growing market potential.

Similarly, the cashew fruit remains an underutilized resource, despite estimates suggesting availability between 100 to 1,000+ tons. Shiva Pvt. Ltd. is exploring ways to unlock its economic potential, as last year's harvest was fully sold, indicating a significant market opportunity.

Govindarajan, a traditional food expert, emphasized the importance of consuming wholesome, natural foods for better health. He reinforced the philosophy that "Food is medicine, and medicine is food." He stated, "We are what we eat. Every disease stems from our diet, and hunger itself is the first ailment."

Shivarani, a leader in a Farmer Producer Organization (FPO), highlighted the importance of community recognition and the power of collective farming efforts. The discussion further stressed the economic advantages of working as a community, with financial sustainability being a key focus.

Arun Kumar, a former Fellow, shared how the fellowship program played a pivotal role in his growth. "Without this fellowship, I wouldn't have reached where I am today," he reflected. His contributions to organic food and sustainable agriculture have made a lasting impact on the farming community.

The ceremony was a heartfelt tribute to the relentless efforts of farmers and agripreneurs, reaffirming MSDS's commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development.

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