

## The Traditional Food Festival.....

Sattvik, the traditional food festival was started eleven years ago to bring the lesser known recipes, having less often cultivated plants as one of the ingredients if possible, to the palate of urban populace which would benefit both the farmers and the consumers. The aim was to promote conservation of agro-biodiversity and incentivise organic farmers. With more than 45,000 footfalls during the three days, farmers did have a heavy pocket to carry back home and with more than 400 healthy dishes to rejoice, the visitors had nothing to complain. The recipe competition was held on 20<sup>th</sup> December, a day prior to the inauguration of the food festival. Jankiben Dharmendrabhai Pandya, Leenaben Neelambhai Doshi, Prachiben Talreja, Anjaliben Jagdishbhai Thakkar and Shrutiben Hirenkumar Kansara won prizes for their outstanding innovative healthy recipes like *findlana paan na shak* (dish made from cactus leaves), *karela ni chhal na stuffed dumpling* (dumpling with bitter gourd stuffing), *kodi ni bhaji ni shak*, *bila no soup* (stone apple soup) and many others. Siberian potter Andrey taught his art and NIF displayed some of the grassroots innovations. Many Volunteers joined the Honey Bee Network. But have you missed much? Not really, you can still join us..



“The closer the distance between the producers and consumers, the higher are the chances of peace and non-violence. We should commit to purchasing our needs from our neighbourhood producers to procure food to avoid exploitation of environment and people,” said Elaben Bhatt, Founder of SEWA while inaugurating the 11<sup>th</sup> Traditional Food Festival. Joravar Singh, Founder, Lok Kala Foundation engaged in conserving rare folk cultural and art forms of Gujarat, appreciated the way different departments/organisations/

individuals collaborate and co-operate during the three day festival bringing health and happiness to the community.

Besides 100 odd food stalls, there was the *khedut haat* dedicated for farmers to sell their organic products. There were crafts, textile, pottery, folk songs (by Vinay and Charu), dance of school kids, puppetry, competitions for children. The IIM-A new campus bustled with vibrance and liveliness. It bonded visitors in a strange way, no one asked the stall





solar distilled water tray. P a t h m e d a g a u s h a l a ( S a n c h o r , R a j a s t h a n ) brought products made of cow milk and cow urine like m e d i c i n e s , sweets and cosmetics.

health. Some stall owners like Sunny Chavda, made contemporary dishes with locally available ingredients. Ananth Doshi offered different products based on a desert cactus. "This desert cactus is good for blood purification and also reduces diabetes," said Ananth. He and his family collect the cactus and prepare these products. "Having it in the form of fresh juice, soup and vegetable curry is more effective," he added. They also offered it in the form of jam, jelly, syrup and capsule.

owners their caste, creed, religion; it was just the "food". Aadhar, stall by HIV affected people was serving food, or was it making a statement? Sharing food thus is safe. There was a wide variety for the people to savour from *litti chokha* of Bihar and *ghooghni* of Bengal to *pahadi rajma* brought by a group of people from Kedarnath and dish experiments by the Manipuri Students association from MS University to multigrain upma from the south. Besides, there was pineapple-apple jalebi, desi nachos, cabbage halwa, drumstick soup, soya biryani, fennel sorbet, spinach, dhokla, and much more.

Ashram's Organic from Hamirpur brought organic products like dalia, flours, organic whole grain cereals, pulses, oils, etc. They use crop rotation to build soil fertility. All their products are prepared from unpolished grains. "We grow, store and process organic products in a chemical free environment. Thus, food items are free of any hazardous chemical substances that are normally found in conventionally grown foods," they said.

This Sattvik saw participation from Chaudhary's Solar Equipments (Ahmedabad) with products like solar water heater, solar dryer and

Yuvan Long Life, a herbal tea brand promoting various healthy blends developed by pooling various grassroots practices, was launched at Sattvik by the National Innovation Foundation and EnSigns Life Sciences, Pune. It offers six different blends of tea for different ailments/lifestyles and disorders like diabetes, obesity, hypertension and also a flavour with anti-ageing components.

Mamita Parekh's stall had "instant food"-ready to eat food items which were without any preservative, essence and colour; and could be kept for one and half year. She said, "When my children went to hostel for their studies, they would eat instant ready-made food. I was worried about their health and then I started experimenting with healthy and natural instant food using traditional ingredients." Similarly, having experimented with different products of amla, Arti Joshi came up with eatables like amla chocolate, amla based cookies, amla juice and cosmetic products- for hair and skin. For Major Prabhakar, an ex-serviceman, it was a platform to showcase his passion for cooking. His stall had oil free *dhaniya aloo*, *hari haldi ki sabji*, *malai laddoo*, *aradiapaak* combining tradition and

The visitors liked the variety of products that were on sale. Andrey Saltan's pottery won many admirers but some were a little unhappy as the pots were only for display. Some felt that the prices of product offered at the food festival were a little on the higher side. We would take this opportunity to clarify that SRISTI does not have a say on the pricing, the stall owners decide on their own. But this is an issue on which we will deliberate and try to bring some more rationality next time.

The direct connection between consumer and producer is fundamental for any society to assimilate authenticity in public discourse. More consumers ought to vote in the marketplace to conserve diversity of crop varieties, cuisine, culture and creativity. Another idea Elaben seeded in our minds while giving awards to winners of the recipe competition, was to help these winners become entrepreneurs. This is an idea which SRISTI, NIF and GIAN will take forward with the support of social investors. We look forward to receive more creative volunteers who would like to convert Sattvik vichar [noble idea] into Sattvik vyavahar [practice] so that it becomes our samajik sanskaar [social value].

