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CIKS celebrates fifth anniversary

The fifth anniversary of our Centre (which was formally registered as a Trust in 1995) was celebrated in a gathering that took place on 23rd January 2000. The meeting was attended by about twenty selected invitees who have been acquainted with and involved with the work of our Centre over the last several years. The objective of the exercise was to get a cross section of opinion about the nature and quality of the work that CIKS has been doing for the past few

years, obtain suggestions about the direction in which our work can progress over the next five to ten years and the expectations from our Centre. A large number of extremely thought provoking points came up for discussion and several valuable suggestions were made. CIKS should have programmes targeted at children, extension of field based work to other districts, revival of omnibus courses on Indian heritage by CIKS.... were some of the suggestions.

(See page 3 for picture)

Chennai Book Fair sees launch of two new publications.

Our Centre participated in the 23rd Chennai Book Fair that took place from January 7th to 16th this year. On the occasion of the Book Fair two new publications had been brought out namely a Book on 'Organic Vegetable Gardening' and a poster on 'Pests of the Paddy Crop'. In addition a calendar was produced for use of farmers.

(See page 4 for details about our new publications)

Welcome to CIKS News

CIKS NEWS will be a Quarterly News Letter - to keep our readers informed about the various efforts of our centre. Please write to us if you want to be on our mailing list or receive this newsletter through E-mail. The Newsletter can also be accessed at our website : www.ciks.org.

CRYSTAL BALL

A sneak preview of what's coming up.

- *A Festival of Organic Food on 5th June 2000 - to coincide with the World Environment Day.*

- *Three participatory workshops to be held in May in our field area... on the conservation of traditional seed varieties and the identification of trainers to undergo long term training.*

- *A set of illustrated Info-cards on the pests of the Paddy crop and their management through non-chemical methods is under preparation.*

CIKS now on the web

The centre is now online - yes, CIKS now has its own website at www.ciks.org. The site contains information on the centre and its activities. Visitors to the site can also order our publications through e-mail, sign up for 'Arogyam', subscribe to newsletters, and even read articles of general interest.

Designed and developed by Vistaas, a Chennai based design firm, the web site is the first step in our new focus on establishing a web presence. In the future, we will continue to use this powerful medium in a number of ways. Plans include online courses, discussion groups and forums and chat-based seminars. We hope that the web will help us take our message to a wider audience than before.

Arogyam : A scheme for linking the farmers with the market

CIKS has been pioneering the efforts in promoting the preservation of traditional varieties of rice and organic farming in Tamil Nadu for over five years. CIKS has conceived AROGYAM - a scheme for linking up producers and consumers of organically produced food.

Currently we are only enrolling members in and around Chennai city. Consumers can become an AROGYAM member by remitting a one time registration fee of Rs.1000/- The features of this scheme are:

- * *The members will be given first preference to purchase the organic produce. They will be intimated in advance, the arrival of organic food.*
- * *CIKS would ensure the authenticity of the non-chemical method of farming.*
- * *As the produce comes from the farmers directly, the food products will be made available at reasonable prices. (the market prices for organic foods are 50% - 100% higher than their "chemical" counterparts today).*
- * *Periodic updates of information on organic food and farming.*
- * *Invitations to consumer programmes.*
- * *5% discount for books on organic food and books on organic farming brought out by CIKS.*

Now more than fifty consumers have enrolled in the Arogyam scheme. They are being supplied organic foods regularly. Currently members are being supplied with various traditional rice varieties (raw and boiled), groundnut, groundnut oil, sesame oil, jaggery, cashew, vegetables etc. Recently we have also made a beginning with some processed foods such as Vadam, Instant sevai etc.

PROJECT WATCH

A round-up of our activities this quarter

Organic Cultivation of Cotton

Our Centre has taken up a study on non-chemical pest management in cotton. The cotton crop alone consumes more than 50% of all the pesticides used in the country today. The main purpose of this study is to catalogue available non-chemical methods of pest control in the cotton crop from literature, to catalogue non-chemical methods from farmers practices based on surveys and to carry out a pilot study to test out selected practices experimentally. The second season of experimentation is on, in the villages of Ullavoor and Konganacheri in the Kancheepuram district.

Preparation of Booklet on Non-chemical Methods of Storage Pest Control

We are in the process of preparing a manual on non-chemical methods of storage pest control. This book will focus on causes and prevention of damage in storage godowns, facts about storage insects and rodents, use of a variety of plant products for storage pest control etc. This effort is being sponsored by TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited, New Delhi).

Farmers' Community Seed Bank in

Kattankalathur Block

CIKS has organised a network of farmers for the exchange of seeds and information in the Kattankalathur Block. This effort concentrates mainly on the conservation of indigenous rice varieties. As a result of our efforts for the last three years currently more than one hundred farmers are conserving indigenous paddy varieties and they are also growing them organically. They are linked to the consumers by our Arogyam programme. Today seventy two paddy varieties are conserved in the community seed bank at Kattankalathur.

Women's Seed Bank for Conservation of Indigenous Vegetable Varieties in Kanchipuram District

Apart from traditional rice varieties, indigenous vegetable varieties are also rapidly diminishing due to the selective promotion of hybrid varieties. Hence CIKS has started its work on conservation of these traditional vegetable varieties. Currently fifty women farmers are involved in this conservation programme.

They are conserving varieties of brinjal, ribbed gourd, tomato, chilli etc. in their home gardens.

Awareness Programme on Biodiversity for Schools of Kattankalathur Block

As a part of our Biodiversity conservation programme we had announced an essay competition and oratorical competition for the schools of Kattankalathur block. Nearly a hundred students participated from fifteen different schools. The essay competition focussed on indigenous varieties and their properties. The students had made a serious effort to collect information regarding farmers who grow these varieties, characteristics of the same and also the importance of growing them organically. The oratorical contest focussed on sustainable agriculture and chemical free farming. One was really overwhelmed to see the efforts put in by the students. As an outcome of this programme several schools have requested us to help them with setting up an organic garden in their schools. We have already started this effort in the Singaperumal Koil school.

Experiments On Vrکشayurveda

The Centre has been conducting a series of experiments on Vrکشayurveda - Traditional Indian Plant Science. During this crop season experiments have been conducted on the paddy crop wherein we have tested recipes from the classical literature of Vrکشayurveda for improvement of germination of seeds, improving the resistance of crops to pests and diseases and the use of a Plant Growth Regulator. The use of Plant Growth Regulator as well as methods to improve resistance to diseases have both shown a lot of promise and are being pursued both in experimental plots and as collaborative efforts with farmers in their fields.

Our New Address And Telephone Numbers

Our address and telephone numbers have been changed. This is the updated version :

Centre For Indian Knowledge Systems

*30, (Old No.47-C)
Gandhi Mandapam Road,
Kotturpuram,
Chennai - 600 085.
Phone : 4471087 / 4475862
Fax : 4471114*

ODDS AND ENDS

Assorted bits of news and information.

WHATS COOKING...

Here are examples of a few traditional rice varieties.

1. *Kitchili Samba* - A fine variety of rice, much preferred for the table. Quite drought resistant and pest resistant.

2. *Thuyamalli* - As the Tamil name indicates it means pure white like Jasmine. A fine variety preferred for table.

3. *Seeraga samba* - A fine variety which is extremely aromatic. It is highly preferred for making Pulav or Biriyani. It is thin like the Jeera (cumin) and hence the name.

4. *Kullakar* - A short duration indigenous drought resistant variety which can be grown in a wide range of soils.

The rice is slightly brown in colour. Can make excellent kanji (porridge), idlis and vadams.

5. *Pisini* - Another drought resistant variety. Excellent for making dosais.

6. *Samba mosanam* - A long duration indigenous variety. Reddish in colour. Excellent for hand pounded aval (flattened rice).

7. *Vaigunda* - A long duration indigenous variety. Extremely drought resistantly can be used to prepare excellent Pori (puffed rice).

8. *Neelan samba* - Has excellent medicinal properties. Good for lactating mothers.



CIKS Fifth Anniversary Celebrations

- Sri T.K.V. Desikachar speaks

CIKS TALK

Seminars, Discussions, Presentations

* On 8th February A.V. Balasubramanian attended the meeting of the CAPART National Standing Committee on Rural Technology at New Delhi.

* On 26th February A.V. Balasubramanian was invited to give a talk on indigenous health care systems as part of celebrations of the National Science Day, organised for school teachers at Sai Balaji Institute in Thiruvottriyur.

* Vena Kapoor, Research Associate of our centre gave an illustrated talk on Spiders at Aurobrindavan in Auroville on 3rd March.

* K. Vijayalakshmi was invited by the Lions Club of Rajapalayam to give a special lecture on Organic Farming in a seminar that was organised by them on 27th March.

* At the invitation of Dr. Latha Sathish of the Psychology Department of Madras University. A.V. Balasubramanian gave two talks on 22nd March and 30th March on Traditional Health Care to a group of non-teaching staff at the Madras University.

* Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi of our Centre was interviewed by the SUN TV in its highly popular breakfast programme called "Vanakkam Tamizhagam" on January 13th on the eve of the farmers festival Pongal.

* At the request of Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health and Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore, A.V. Balasubramanian has reviewed the work of four organisations situated in Kerala and Tamil Nadu that have undertaken Medicinal Plant Conservation Programmes with assistance from FRLHT during the last seven years.

VISITORS BOOK

A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS

• On 2nd February Farida Vahedi of Bahai International Institute, New Delhi visited us.

• On 4th February Dr. Nasira Habib from KHOJ Research Centre, Pakistan visited us. She is one of the participants of the women and sustainable agriculture programme in which CIKS is involved. She was accompanied by Dr. Sudha Murali of UNICEF, Hyderabad. They visited our field office at Singa Perumal Kovil and after that they also visited a couple of villages where our programme is on.

• On 12th February Mr. Pradeep Dikshit of Azadi Bachao Andolan from Sevagram, Wardha visited us.

• On 23rd February Dr. Paul Harris an agricultural economist, who is a visiting professor from the London School of Economics at the Madras Institute of Development studies visited us.

visit us at www.ciks.org

Centre For Indian Knowledge Systems

Educational And Training Material On Indigenous Health And Agriculture

Books - Posters - Stickers - Directories - Video Films

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Organic Vegetable Gardening

K. Vijayalakshmi & Subhashini Sridhar

This book focuses on how to grow vegetables in your garden without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It also gives information about how compost and botanical pesticides can be prepared. A section on laying out a vegetable garden is also provided.

Price : Rs.25/- (English)

Pests of Paddy

A bilingual (English and Tamil) four coloured poster with pictures on important pests of paddy and their symptoms.

Price : Rs.40/-

RICE : Non-chemical Pest Control

K. Vijayalakshmi, Subhashini Sridhar & E. Damodharan

This publication provides practical information about the non-chemical pest control practices in the rice crop. It also provides details for identification of pests and predators and briefly describes some of the important diseases of the rice crop and their management. Most of the pest control practices have been tried out by farmers across the country.

Price : Rs.35/- (English) Rs.35/- (Tamil) Rs.35/- (Hindi)

For a full list of our publications, write to us or visit www.ciks.org

How to Order?

Please specify clearly the titles required, the languages and the number of copies. The cost includes postage. However if you wish to obtain the copies by Registered Post, please add Rs.15/- to the cost. Please send a Money Order or Demand Draft favouring "Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems" payable at Chennai. Cheques are NOT acceptable. We also do not send books by VPP.

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Phone : 91-044-4471087 / 4475862 Fax : 4471114

e-mail : info@ciks.org <http://www.ciks.org>