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Trainers' Training Programme on Organic Farming

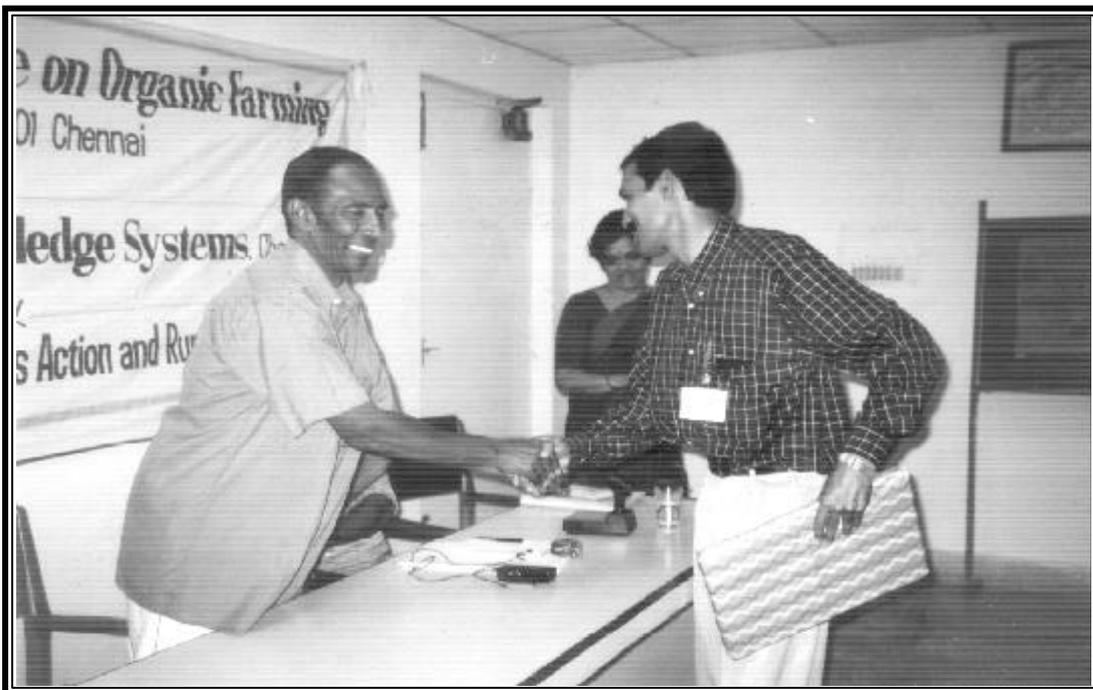
A ten days trainers' training programme on organic farming was conducted between 15th – 24th December by CIKS with financial assistance from CAPART. The programme was conducted at IMAGE in Chennai. The idea of this Training of Trainers (TOT) was to train representatives from NGOs working in the area of organic farming so that they would be in a position to conduct future trainings in

their respective areas. The participants were drawn from the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. We had a total of 32 participants. The participants were exposed to different aspects of organic farming technologies. Topics such as indigenous seed conservation, soil ecology and management, pests of different crops, their identification and management, vrkshayurveda and its

importance in organic farming, role of cattle in organic farming were discussed in detail. Besides this there were theory and practical sessions on composting and preparation of botanical extracts. The participants were also taken on a field visit to Auroville where they visited three groups namely, Annapoorna (working on seed conservation), Auroannam (working on effective micro organisms)

and Pitchandikulam (working on conservation of medicinal plants and trees). They also visited the CIKS farm at Anjur and got an exposure to the seed conservation activity. Besides this they also met farmers working with CIKS and had a lively discussion. Participants were also taken for an exposure visit to M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation where they visited the seed bank.

The participants were given an opportunity to present their work. They put up an excellent cultural programme which depicted some of the lessons they learnt from the workshop. On the final day a very lively quizz was conducted which covered all topics taught in the workshop. Participants also came up with good suggestions for an active follow up. They divided themselves into two groups geographically. These two groups plan to have two meetings in the course of next year to exchange information and experiences. A follow up meeting of the entire group will be facilitated by CIKS towards the second half of 2002.



Mr. P. Gomathinayagam of Vivasaya Seva Sangam, Puliyangudi, Tamilnadu, distributing participation certificate to a participant

PROJECT WATCH

A round-up of our activities this quarter

UNDP Training Workshops

CIKS is currently working on a project on community seed banks for conservation of indigenous genetic resources supported by UNDP Global Environment Fund. Under this programme we have a mandate to train farmers on different aspects of organic farming technologies. During the months of November and December fifteen training programmes were conducted. A total of 643 farmers which included 379 men and 264 women were covered under this programme. During these training programmes an introduction to the need and importance of conserving indigenous varieties was given. Farmers were taught different techniques of increasing soil fertility using organic methods and also control of paddy and vegetable pests without the use of pesticides. There has been an excellent response to these workshops. There would be a follow up to these workshops after three months.

DST group monitoring workshop at Pune

From time to time the Department of Science and Technology (DST) conducts group monitoring workshops to evaluate the ongoing projects. Our project on "Natural products as

biopesticides at the village level" was taken up for evaluation during the recent DST group monitoring workshop held at Pune between 5th to 7th at the National chemical laboratory. The committee members expressed appreciation and satisfaction regarding the progress of this project. Some valuable suggestions and inputs were also given which will be implemented in the coming year.

Capacity building for sustainable agriculture

CIKS has undertaken a project to train 25 farmers from different villages of Kanchipuram district for a period of 18 months. During these 18 months it is proposed to have 22 sessions. Besides this our field workers would also be visiting their villages and providing on farm help and training. The idea behind this programme is to train these 25 farmers in such a fashion so that they could be our future trainers on organic farming in villages. This programme is being supported by German Technical Cooperation.

The first workshop under this programme began on 21st November at our field training centre at S.P. Koil. The programme started with a mutual introduction of the participants. K. Vijaya-

lakshmi welcomed the participants and gave an overview of the entire programme. She talked about the work of CIKS and also the role of CIKS in biodiversity conservation. The importance of conserving indigenous varieties was highlighted. After this a detailed session on the importance of conserving and maintaining soil fertility was handled by Arumugasamy. This was followed by a field trip to our Anjur farm where the farmers got to see our various activities. We also had a demonstration session on the use of biofertilisers.

The programme for the month of December was on the preparation and importance of different composting technologies. Arumugasamy coordinated this month's programme. The participants were also shown a video on the harmful effect of pesticides. In the afternoon practical sessions on compost preparation took place in our Anjur experimental farm. The next meeting has been scheduled for 21st January.

Training programme on organic farming and preparation of educational material-CAPART Programme

With support from CAPART, CIKS is doing a project to train farmers on organic farming and also preparation of educational material. As a part of this programme we conducted a two day workshop at the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) at Maraimalai Nagar on the 26th

and 27th of November. A total of 55 farmers representing different villages of Kattankalathur block participated in this programme. A two day workshop was also conducted on the 27th and 28th of December at Sirkazhi. A total of 45 farmers representing different villages of Sirkazhi participated in this programme.

During these workshops farmers were taught about the importance of indigenous varieties, soil fertility, composting and identification of pests and diseases that attack the paddy and vegetables and methods of control without pesticides. Farmers were also given theory and practical sessions on the use and preparation of botanicals for pest control. During these workshops practical sessions were also conducted on compost preparation. Field trips were organised to CIKS experimental farms. Video shows and poster exhibitions formed part of the programme.

We propose to have two follow up workshops each involving the same farmers. During these follow up sessions we plan to exchange experiences and also teach them more techniques. Our field workers would be visiting them in the in between period to provide technical help.

Under this project we also prepared a one page calendar which provides information on Seven Ways to Go Organic. This has been produced in English, Tamil and Hindi and widely distributed across the country.

CIKS TALK

*Seminars, Discussions, Presentations,
Workshops, Fairs...*

Workshop at Kanyakumari, Vivekananda Kendra

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture of the Government of India has invited Vivekananda Kendra at Kanyakumari to set up a – “Gramodaya Park” which can be a showcase of the culture, Science and Technology of the area. Five such parks are to be set up in various parts of the country by various organisations. A.V. Balasubramanian attended a meeting on October 28th which was conducted to discuss and finalise the content to be displayed in the park as well as make a plan of action for the work to be undertaken.

Workshop on Ethnoveterinary Medicine at Madurai

The Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) had organised a three day workshop in Madurai between 29th October and 1st November for veterinary practitioners working with the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Federation. The objective of the workshop was to sensitize the practitioners to the existence of rich traditions of Ethnoveterinary medicine in Tamil Nadu and draw up a plan for building on the strengths of this tradition in their work. A.V. Balasubramanian attend-

ed the workshop on 29th October and made a presentation regarding the relationship between ethnoveterinary practices and the classical systems of medicine.

CIKS Team Visits Anjur

On 9th October the entire CIKS team made a trip to our Singaperumal Koil field office for our monthly field review meeting. In this meeting the experiences of the Compas International Workshop was shared between all of us. In the afternoon we visited the experimental farm at Anjur and the entire team got an opportunity to learn about the field activities of CIKS. We had a sumptuous meal prepared at the field.

CIKS Team Days

It was felt by all of us that we should spend one day of the month on some common activity which will help build team spirit and understanding. We have decided that every third Saturday of the month will be devoted to this. We made this operational from this month onwards. On 20th of October we had an introduction to Yoga by A.V. Balasubramanian. Several staff members have expressed keen interest to learn yoga. We are making arrangements for the same. A yoga teacher has already started classes for our field staff. After the yoga session

we had an interactive games session. We all had lunch together and visited the Ayurveda Exhibition at the Sanskrit College.

On 17th November the CIKS staff visited the CIKS farm and during the morning presentations were made by various senior staff of CIKS regarding the origin and history of CIKS and the various stages of development of CIKS as an institution and as an idea. This was followed by discussions and presentations on funding and proposals. Later in the evening we visited Mahabalipuram.

On 29th December our staff visited IMPCOPS at Thiruvanniyur. After lunch we had a session with Dr. Shyam Sundar on simple home remedies for minor ailments.

Training workshop at MCAS, Bangalore

Our research associate Saraswathy attended a two day workshop in Bangalore on 1st & 2nd November on writing appeal letters, fund requests etc. conducted by MCAS, Bangalore. At the end of two day workshop they were asked to prepare a kit for fund raising and Saraswathy's kit was awarded a special prize. We hope to use her expertise in fund raising.

Visit to Auroville

A.V. Balasubramanian visited Auroville on 20th November to carry out a pre-funding appraisal of a

project submitted by Auroville to CAPART for the setting up of a Community Seed Bank for medicinal plants.

Training at Harvest, Auroville

On 28th November, Mrs. Subhashini Sridhar conducted a training programme for a group of farmers at the request of Harvest, Auroville. These farmers were mainly paddy cultivating farmers. They were given training on identification of important pests of paddy and natural enemies in the field. Farmers were also trained on the preparation of different botanicals for pest control.

Mooligai Utsavam at Madurai

CIKS took part in a three day festival of Indian Medical Heritage (Mooligai Utsavam) at Madurai between 27th and 29th December which was organised by FRLHT and also cosponsored by us. A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation in a session devoted to discussion on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. He also made a presentation regarding the importance and relevance of Mrgayurveda (Traditional Indian Veterinary Science) for strengthening ethnoveterinary traditions.

Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems

Educational and Training Material on Indigenous Health and Agriculture : Books - Posters - Stickers - Directories - Video Films

Indigenous Vegetable Varieties an eight page tamil calendar for 2002



This calendar provides information on six vegetable varieties such as Ladies finger, Brinjal, Bottlegourd, Pumpkin, Beans and Bittergourd. Cultivation details, manure management, pest and disease management, list of some important indigenous varieties are provided for each of these vegetables.

One page is devoted to

each vegetable and covers two months. Beautiful colour photographs sharing the range of varieties are found in each page. An introductory page gives information about the vegetable conservation programme of CIKS and the last page gives description of pest and disease and their management.

Price : Rs.50/- (Postage & packing Rs.20/-)

How to Order?

To obtain copies 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.

VISITORS BOOK

A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS

☉ On 22nd October we received a group of twelve visitors from England who were in India as part of a programme organised by – "Kolam tours" to give an exposure to various aspects of Indian culture and tradition. A.V.Balasubramanian made a presentation to them regarding the work of our centre, particularly, in the area of traditional medicine.

☉ On 30th October Mr. S.Varadachary (Retired Senior Civil Servant) visited our centre along with Dr. Raja Mohan Rao, Managing Director of United Telecom Limited, Bangalore. They wanted the involvement of our centre in Rural Development undertaken by United Telecom Limited.

☉ On 30th October Dr. Michael Best of the Media Laboratory MIT, Boston visited us along with Mr. Joseph Thomas of IIT,

Chennai. Currently, Dr. Best is in the Asia office of Media Labs located in Mumbai and is working in collaboration with the project of Dr. Ashok Jhunjhunwala to take internet to rural areas. They discussed with us the possibilities of involvement of our centre in their work.

☉ On 15th November, Mr. A.Shivakumar, General Manager (Technology) of the Murugappa Group visited our centre. He wanted to acquaint himself with the work of our centre.

☉ Mr. Thiyagarajan (Former Chairman, Bank of Madura) visited our centre on 18th December with one of his colleagues Mr. Narayanan. They have recently started a foundation for rural development through micro-credit financing and they were seeking the involvement of CIKS in their programmes.

Editorial Team : Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi & H. Saraswathy

Typesetting : S. Ramesh

Book-Post



30 (Old No. 47C) Ganchi Mandapam Road, Kotturpuram, Chennai - 600 085, INDIA.
Phone : 91-044-4471067 / 4475862 Fax : 4471114
e-mail : info@ciks.org http://www.ciks.org