

Inside

<i>Project Watch</i>	..page 2
<i>CIKS Talk</i>	..page 3
<i>Visitors Book</i>	..page 4

Workshops on Self-help through Ayurveda

Two workshops on Self-help through Ayurveda were conducted on 16th and 30th of June at our Kotturpuram office. These workshops were aimed at a city audience. The sessions included an overview of Indian systems of medicine, an introduction to prakruthi and diagnosis of individual prakruthi, home remedies for a variety of common ailments and scientific basis of Indian systems of medicine. The workshop was conducted by A.V. Balasubramanian and Vaidya K.M. Shyam Sundar.

News from our farmers' Network

To promote fruiting in Bottle gourd

Mrs. Lakshmi of Venpakkam village in Kancheepuram district has been cultivating snake gourd, pumpkin, beans, bottlegourd, ribbed gourd, bitter gourd etc. in her kitchen garden. CIKS supplies indigenous varieties of these vegetables to women farmers like her. During the last season, she found that there was no fruiting in bottlegourd. To promote fruiting, she fried 100 gms of asafoetida and powdered it. She mixed it with 1 kg of farm yard manure. This manure was applied around the plants at a depth of half a foot and watered well. This promoted flowering and fruiting ten days after application.

What's up at Sukkankollai

We have started work in full swing at our new experimental farm at Sukkankollai in Madurantakam. Detailed plans have been worked out for the upcoming cropping season. Green manure crops have been cultivated and ploughed in for increasing the soil fertility. We have also cultivated paddy in 3 acres of land. We have plans to set up a medicinal plant nursery, plant several trees, try different methods of composting and also conserve more than 100 varieties of paddy and vegetables.

Control of Fusarium Wilt

There was a widespread occurrence of wilt disease attacking the chilli crop in the Kanchipuram district for the past 3 – 4 years. Due to this, the yield was badly affected. Mr. Narayanaswamy of Thimmavaram village cultivates chilli in 3 cents of land. He observed the symptoms of wilt disease occurring in chilli soon after it started flowering. He pounded 100 gms of sweetflag (*Acorus calamus*) and soaked it in 1 litre of water. This extract was filtered. 500 ml of it was taken and mixed with 1 litre of cow's urine and 100 ml of khadi soap solution per tank and sprayed. This method not only controlled wilt but also enhanced flowering in chilli crop. Mr. Jegannathan of Thiruvanaikovil also used this treatment to effectively control this disease.



A view of our farm at Sukkankollai

PROJECT WATCH

A round-up of our activities this quarter

Meeting of seed conservators of Kattankalathur

CIKS has been working with hundreds of farmers of Kattankalathur block for the last five years. They have been involved in biodiversity conservation of paddy and vegetables. A meeting with a selected group of 100 farmers belonging to different villages of Kattankalathur block was organised on 18th April at the S.P. Kovil training centre. The purpose of this meeting was to share farmers' experiences. We also had a discussion with farmers as to how community seed bank activity can become self sustaining and how farmers communities could maintain it without the intervention of CIKS.

Visit to GTZ, New Delhi

A.V. Balasubramanian visited New Delhi on 23rd April and had a meeting with the technical team of German Technical Corporation (GTZ) who have funded one of the Centre's efforts for Capacity Building in Sustainable Agriculture under their Small Project Programme.

Discussion meeting for in-situ conservation

On 24th April a meeting with selected farmers from different blocks of Kanchipuram district was conducted at our S.P. Kovil training centre. There was a

long felt need to have an in-situ conservation centre set up in every block which will serve as demonstration plots and where seeds will be planted every year. During this meeting it was discussed as to how these in-situ centres can function. Farmers were also given an outline as to what support CIKS could provide them.

Workshops on Organic farming at Sirkazhi

On 27th and 28th of April a workshop on organic farming was conducted as a part of our CAPART project at our field centre in Sirkazhi. This was coordinated by Subhashini Sridhar. 55 farmers from Sirkazhi and Vedaranyam participated in this workshop. Arumugasamy, Subramaniam, Subhashini Sridhar and Mrs. Chitra (Agricultural Extension Department of Sirkazhi) were the resource persons for this workshop.

Evaluation of CAPART project

On 4th May we had a mid-term evaluation of our CAPART project on training and preparation of educational material on organic farming. Mr. Kannan from Sharada Ashram of Ulundurpet who was the evaluator visited our office and the field. He had a good interaction with farmers trained under this programme.

Training on organic farming for GMS

Under the CAPART programme a two day training was conducted for the participants from Grammiya Munnetra Sangam, a voluntary organisation from Tiruporur on the 9th and 10th of May. 24 participants were trained under this programme.

Visit to COMPAS partners

A.V. Balasubramanian travelled to Bangalore and Shimoga to visit and discuss the work of other COMPAS partners - FRLHT, Green Foundation, KPP between 20th and 24th May. He visited the farmers doing Vrکشayurveda experiments with KPP at Koppa.

Organic Farming Workshops

A series of four workshops on organic farming were conducted during June under the UNDP programme for conservation of indigenous genetic resources. A total of 125 farmers were covered during these workshops held at villages of Tirukazhukundram and Madurantakam blocks.

Capacity building for sustainable agriculture

As a part of the capacity building programme under the GTZ project, workshops were conducted on 22nd April, 4th May, 21st May, 8th June and 22nd June at our field training centre in S.P. Kovil. Our 25 trainee farmers participated in this

programme. On 22nd April there was a session on the identification and cultivation techniques of important medicinal plants. Trainees were given the know how of self help techniques for common ailments with the use of these medicinal plants. There was a detailed presentation on setting up an organic vegetable garden.

On 4th May the trainee farmers were taken on a field trip to the herbal farm at Thandarai and also to the forest department nursery at Pulleri. On 21st May they were taught about preparation of certain common ayurvedic medicines at home for common ailments.

On 8th June two reputed organic farmers from Puliyanugudi namely, Mr. Gomathinayagam and Mr. Anthonyswamy of Vivasaya Seva Sangam were the resource persons for our trainers training programme. They presented their experiences on organic farming which was followed by a lively interaction with our farmers. On 22nd June, Dr. Sultan Ismail, Deputy Director of Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre, spoke about ecology and management of soil fertility. He gave a good introduction to ecology in the context of agriculture and also highlighted several methods by which soil fertility could be maintained. He also explained in detail the different composting techniques. This was followed by a demonstration of laying a vermicompost pit.

CIKS TALK

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

Earth day celebrations

As a part of Earth day celebrations the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) had organised a seminar on organic farming on 22nd April. Vijayalakshmi participated in this seminar and gave a slide presentation on alternatives to chemical pesticides. This was received very well and followed by a highly interactive discussion. On the same evening a book on environmental law was released by the TNPCB. This book was released by the Minister for environment and forests Mr. Mohan. Balasubramaniam was invited for this meeting and he gave a felicitation message.

Training programme for forest department

The forest department had expressed keen interest in our activities and had requested us to conduct a training programme for the self help groups with which they are working. At their request a one day programme on organic farming was conducted on 6th May at our field office for 48 participants. 28 of them were from self help groups and 20 were forest officials. Mr. Gunasekaran, IFS and Mr. Chandrasekaran, IFS participated in this programme. The topics covered during this one day workshop were techniques to

increase soil fertility, construction of a vegetable garden, importance of herbs, preparation of compost and biopesticides. They were also shown a video programme on the problems of pesticides. They have requested us to conduct more training programmes.

Evaluation at IRWD, Gummidipoondi

Vijayalakshmi undertook a prefunding evaluation of a project on Vermicomposting proposed by Integrated Rural Women Development programme at Gummidipoondi. This evaluation was undertaken on 6th of May at the request of CAPART, Hyderabad.

Report writing workshop

On 7th May a workshop was conducted at our Chennai office on efficient report writing in Tamil. This workshop was attended by all our field and research staff. The workshop was conducted by Mr. S. Ramakrishnan of Cre-A publications. Mr. Ramakrishnan has been working on development of Tamil language for the last two decades.

Presentation on Cotton Textile Industry

Mr. L. Kannan, Program Secretary, Anna University

and PPST Centre for Traditional Sciences and Technologies made a presentation regarding the cotton textile industry to our Field staff on 30th May. He spoke about his work in relation to developing a decentralised micro scale spinning technology. He also discussed some aspects of interest to CIKS in relation to the cultivation of cotton and traditional varieties of cotton seeds. It was felt that CIKS could undertake some work in this area in future.

Meeting with Tamil Nadu State Council of Science and Technology

A.V. Balasubramanian and K.Vijayalakshmi had visited the Tamil Nadu State Council of Science and Technology on 18th June at the invitation of their Principal Scientific Officer, Dr. P. Dhanapal. He invited them to submit proposals in areas of mutual interest to be routed to the National Council of Science and Technology / Department of Science and Technology through the State Council. It was agreed that CIKS would present a few proposals in the near future.

CAPART Workshop at Kanyakumari

CAPART had organised a two day workshop at Kanyakumari on the 23rd and 24th of June. This workshop was organised by the Public Cooperation Division of CAPART. The aim of this

meeting was to give a clear picture to voluntary organisations on how to develop innovative and integrated projects on public cooperation. In this meeting representatives of voluntary organisations, CAPART project evaluators, CAPART officials from Hyderabad and Delhi took part. Voluntary organisations presented proposals and concept papers were discussed and modified. Vijayalakshmi participated in this workshop in her capacity as a monitor of CAPART projects. She helped to facilitate specific projects in the meeting. Besides this she also presented a concept paper on integrating organic farming technologies for improving livelihood security. She has been asked to develop this into a full fledged proposal and submit to CAPART for their consideration.

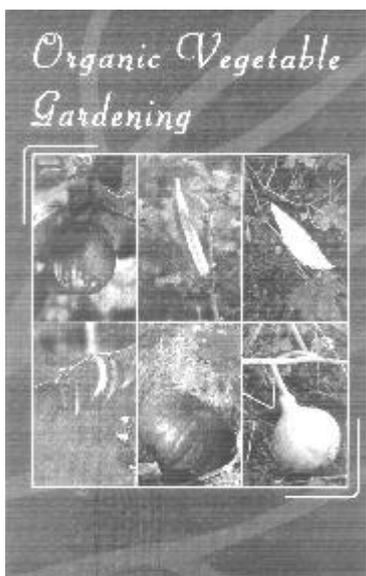
LSPSS Meeting at Coimbatore

A.V. Balasubramanian went to Coimbatore on 26th June to attend the meeting of the General Body and the Executive Committee of LSPSS. He also discussed regarding the CIKS work on Vrکشayurveda with Vaidya Vilas Nanal who showed a lot of interest and had some useful suggestions to offer.

Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems

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

Organic Vegetable Gardening : Revised and Enlarged edition



The revised and enlarged edition of this book on "Organic Vegetable Gardening" focuses on how to grow vegetables in your garden without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It gives information about the importance of composting and techniques for preparation of compost. A section on laying out a vegetable garden is also provided. Cultivation details of some important vegetables are given.

Description of pests and diseases attacking vegetables and their control methods are provided.

Price : Rs.35/- (English) Rs. 25/- (Tamil)

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.

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

VISITORS BOOK

A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS

□ On 11th April Mrs. Aruna Srinivasan a freelance writer of Economic Times visited us and interviewed Vijaya lakshmi on the CIKS activities.

□ On 16th April Mr. Srinivasan visited us in connection with the new organic food shop that he has opened at Mylapore. He had requested the help of CIKS for supply of products.

□ On 18th April Mr. R.K. Jayaseelan, Director, Environmental Training Institute of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board visited our centre.

□ Mr. K.P. Rao, consultant from Society for Elimination

of Rural Poverty, Hyderabad visited us on 22nd May. He visited us to explore the possibilities of CIKS conducting training programmes in their villages.

□ Mr. Michael Danino of IFIH (International Foundation for Indian Heritage) visited our Centre on 28th June. He has invited A.V. Bala subramanian to compile a volume on "Traditional Knowledge Systems" as a part of a project to bring out a multi volume series on Indian Heritage. It is being planned to write it at a level that is comprehensible to high school students for wider dissemination.

Team Day of CIKS

On 26th April we celebrated our team day. On this day our team members were exposed to the basics of First Aid. Mr. Chandran from St. John's Ambulance Association conducted a half a day workshop on the basics of First Aid. It was highly informative and all our team members were benefitted by it. We also plan to have follow up workshops on First Aid in the field.

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