

REFLECTIONS ON THE CIKS JOURNEY

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

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Achievements/ What we are
(reasonably!) happy about

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Failures and Shortfalls

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04

Future Challenges and
Opportunities



01

**Achievements/ What
we are (reasonably!)
happy about**



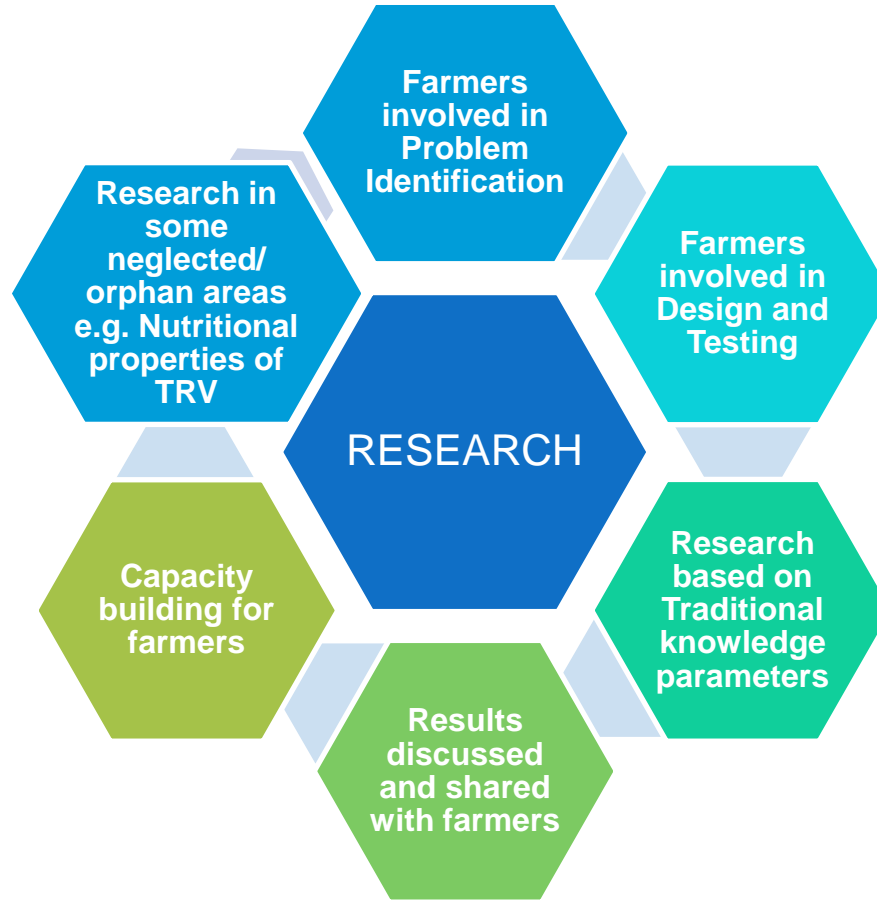
Achievements / What we are (reasonably!) happy about

1. As an organization - active since 1995 with a clear focus on the domain of work.
2. Wide range of support with no critical dependence on a single source.
3. Comprehensive approach to work on sustainable agriculture from seeds to marketplace.
Evolved from documentation and research and progressed to scaling up of activities and market linkages.
4. A large range of educational and training materials in Tamil, English and various other languages which serve as a comprehensive and excellent resource for many farmers and groups.
5. Good track record with respect to compliance - legal and regulatory matters, income tax, FCRA, etc.

Inputs for Sustainable Agriculture



Research



02

Failures and Shortfalls



Failures and Shortfalls

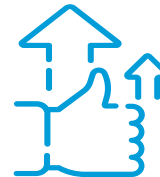
1. No long term or effective linkages with universities and research institutions - failed attempt to - "Mainstream" courses on sustainable agriculture, poor record of - "Collaboration in research"...However, we have friends and goodwill which has been of some help.
2. No effective or powerful linkages with government programs or schemes - linkages in - "Fits and Starts", lack of continuity due to various reasons.
3. Unable to continue effective funding relationships with central or state government agencies - had linkages for over 25 years and then decided to tone down to minimum interaction.
4. Dependence on foreign funding sources continues to be important - while this has not been our major source of funding overall and through the years.

Scaling up our activities - changing strategy (changing goal post?)

1. Our initial thinking was that we will - "Demonstrate sustainable agriculture based on traditional knowledge" as a pilot effort in a limited area with donations/grants and this may be used to make a case for scaling up such efforts through the initiation of a dialogue/ discussion with larger administration of agriculture in the country at large.
2. This thinking has now been abandoned or definitely not - "At the forefront" of our efforts.
3. Currently, our efforts are more towards trying to go to scale through links with the marketplace.

03

Efforts in Progress



Efforts in progress: Promotion of multiple forms of institutions

1. We have recognized that for achieving various of our objectives we may require not only a - "Nonprofit organization" such as CIKS but also profit-making entities (such as company)
2. About 10 years back we supported the formation of a private limited company with the idea that it could be a - "Social enterprise"
3. Around the same time, the government also launched efforts to promote - "Producer companies" which are in the nature of a hybrid - while their institutional form is that of a company, by definition they have both business and social objectives. CIKS is continuing to work with a limited number of such PCs.

Is it possible to work out a suitable partnership/synergy between these three organizational forms - Not-for-profit trust, social enterprise and producer companies? As of now, this is an effort which is - "*Still in progress*" - there are challenges, but it shows promise

Efforts in progress: Networks and partnerships

1. Initial efforts were short term and limited in scope.
2. Recent efforts at networking with various other farmers groups and FPCs to scale up our work within Tamil Nadu state - **ongoing and promising.**
3. Partnerships with other organizations with whom we see possible synergy in various aspects of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management - **initiated and promising.**

04

Future Challenges and Opportunities



Challenges

1. Challenges faced by the agriculture sector are at multiple levels -
 - Severe erosion of the resource base - soil fertility, water, biodiversity...
 - Overall low value is assigned to agriculture in comparison with urban/industrial sectors.
 - Emerging serious threats such as - Human-animal conflict with implications for agriculture.
2. Reworking relationships with corporates in the light of new and changing regulatory requirements. Funds are available but there is a push towards - "Measurement and quantification" of results and output. This leads to some challenges such as - lack of support for long term programs and/or building of human resources.
3. There is also a trend towards prioritizing activities that are amenable to measurement and quantification. This has also resulted in a new set of - "Intermediaries of the CSR world" who have the technology and language for proposal writing, measurement and quantification, reporting, etc.

Challenges and Opportunities

4. Nurturing varied skills required by the organization - field work, communication, reporting and raising resources.
5. Balancing the spirit and enthusiasm of volunteer effort and public work with technical and professional skills required for quality work in agriculture.
6. Exploring institutional models for generating resources based on our own activities within the framework of the law.
7. Concerns about problems of climate change and the emerging - "Ecological crisis" have created an opportunity that is favourable for sustainable agriculture approaches.

A Few Things We Want to Achieve

1. Scale up cultivation of TRVs through partnerships and linkages.
2. Work on post harvest processing and get at least 50 more traditional rice varieties to the consumer.
3. Evolve robust business models for input units such as neem seed powder, neem soap, vermicompost.
4. Improvements on post harvest processing.
5. Small scale machinery for agriculture.
6. Extensive studies on nutritional and therapeutic properties of rices.
7. A facility in every district for region specific seed supply.
8. A museum/interpretation centre on rice.

Last Word

In recent years, we have seen much greater openness and readiness to support and fund CIKS efforts...!!

The reasons could be many, but it is a welcome development!

