

CENTRE FOR INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

REPORT OF WORK DONE DURING THE PERIOD

APRIL 2014 TO MARCH 2015

1. POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN SOUTHERN INDIA

This project supported by DFID, UK, under the Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF) – Impact Window and co-funded by HIVOS, Netherlands is being implemented in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts covering 10,072 farmers from 79 panchayats of seven taluks. It is being done in partnership with Vrutti Livelihood Resource Centre (VLRC), Bengaluru. Village Agri Business Development Service Providers (VABDSPs) have been placed in all the panchayats to provide necessary services to the farmers. A total of 521 Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Groups (SASHGs), 74 Panchayat Agriculture Development Committees (PADCs) and five Cluster Agriculture Development Committees (CADCs) have been formed. Beneficiaries have been given support for seven tested successful packages like organic home gardens, seed production, complete organic farming, soil fertility improvement products, biopesticides, backyard poultry and value addition. Packages implemented by beneficiaries were reviewed and documented periodically. A total of 9148 farmers have adopted proven technology advice such as improved quality of seeds, application of biopesticides and soil fertility enhancement techniques, adoption of SRI technique and use of improved farm machinery which has been more than 65% of what was targeted. About 1070 farmers have received better returns for their produce through collective marketing, delayed marketing, market intelligence services and value addition processes. Community level enterprise units that have been established are reaching the sustainability levels. The membership in both the Agriculture Producer Companies (APCs) - Marutham and Valanadu has reached 6068. Ten revenue generation initiatives were taken up by these Companies. The APCs have established linkages with leading market players, credit institutions, microfinance institutions and banks. These two Producer Companies were the first ones in the country to receive support under the Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC) - Credit Guarantee Scheme. Good practices and experiences of project implementation have been captured through learning

workshops and interviews. Development of a compendium of good practices highlighting the learning and experiences of three years is in progress.

2. TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING AND UPSCALING OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN TAMIL NADU

This project supported by HIVOS is for a period of three years from September 2012. A major portion of this support is towards cofunding the DFID supported project on poverty reduction, which has been mentioned above. The main cofunding components are towards providing support for some of the packages like value addition, backyard poultry, technical training, full package of services for organic farmers, market information and linkages. Activities under these components were completed as per schedule. A programme for the development of human resources for sustainable organic farming was also initiated under this project. A group of 31 students from Sriram Community College were given practical training on sustainable agriculture. A total of 10 students underwent an internship programme for two months. Two students were given placement in a farm. A total of 49 were trained under this programme for various projects. In collaboration with NABARD and SFAC (Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium), support was raised for seven other Producer Companies with a membership of at least 1000 each, thereby reaching out to 7000 more beneficiaries. A total of 15 institutional capacity building trainings were conducted under this project.

3. NUTRITIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES OF INDIGENOUS PADDY VARIETIES (IPVs): PILOT PROJECT SUPPORTED BY HIVOS – OXFAM NOVIB PROGRAMME ON AGROBIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

As part of the ABC (Agro Biodiversity Conservation) programme supported by HIVOS and OXFAM – Novib, CIKS had undertaken a pilot project during the period 2013 – 2014. This pilot study consisted of several components – study of literature, field work and laboratory studies. The textual study included - documentation and analysis of modern technical literature, farmers knowledge as well as popular literature and folklore in Tamil, survey of information in the texts of Ayurveda and *Pakasasra* (Traditional science of cooking) (in collaboration with FRLHT - Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions, Bengaluru) and survey of information in the texts of *Siddha* medicine (in collaboration with Centre for Traditional Medicine and Research, Chennai). Laboratory studies on physico chemical properties and nutrient analysis and assessment

of taste and Glycemic Index was taken up, in collaboration with Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai. The study showed that there still exists a tremendous diversity of indigenous paddy varieties, which are suited to various soil types, resistant to many pests and diseases and can be used in a range of ecosystems. Eight indigenous paddy varieties were subject to nutritional analysis, acceptance from the point of view of taste and the Glycemic Index (GI) was also tested. *Mappillai samba* is a good source of carbohydrates and crude fibre. *Perungkar*, *Karungkuruvai* and *Kullakar* are rich in protein. *Karungkuruvai* is rich in iron. *Neelam samba* is rich in calcium - traditionally this is considered as very good for lactating mothers. The Glycemic Index of *Karungkuruvai*, *Kullakar*, *Kavuni*, *Mapillai samba*, *Neelam samba* and *Kudaivazhai* are low compared to market varieties such as White Ponni. The major findings of the study were discussed in a one day workshop that was held in Chennai in August 2014. The meeting was attended by all the project partners and the invitees which included nutrition specialists, representatives of farmers, NGOs and experts from the public health and medical community. Efforts are now in progress to build upon these findings and take the work further.

4. IMPACT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES ON THE CONDITIONS OF POOR RURAL FARMERS IN INDIA

CIKS has been in discussion with NTT Data Asia Pacific Limited in connection with their programmes for creating possible markets for sustainable agriculture products with specific focus in Tamil Nadu. As part of this effort they funded an initial study for a report on the impact of sustainable agriculture practices on the conditions of poor farmers in India. The study was taken up for a three month period from January to April 2014. The report documented the importance of sustainable agriculture in India, challenges faced in the adoption of such practices and the CIKS efforts to support the sustainable agriculture efforts. It also summarized the current status of CIKS efforts and future plans in addition to providing an overview of the training material pertaining to sustainable agriculture practices.

5. DEVELOPING AN INFORMATION BASE FOR IDEAS TOWARDS CONNECTING FARMERS TO THE MARKET FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCE

This study was a follow up to the previous engagement with NTT Data Asia Pacific Limited who supported this study for a period of two months from July – August 2014. The study provided an overview of organic products at the global and Indian level, a summary of the Indian and Tamil Nadu scenario and dealt with issues relating to authentication and certification. Finally, in the context of Tamil Nadu it provided an overview of the range of produce available for marketing through CIKS sources, estimates of additional income that may accrue to farmers and spelt out an outline of a business model and identifying the specific steps ahead.

6. ENHANCING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF FARMERS THROUGH THE FORMATION OF AGRICULTURE PRODUCER COMPANY IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

This project on Enhancing Livelihood Security of Farmers through the Formation of Agriculture Producer Company has been initiated in November 2014 in the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu with the support of PROCIF – Small Grants Fund, The Netherlands. This project is being implemented in three gram panchayats. A total of 414 beneficiaries, 10 VABDSPs (Village based Agri Business Development Service Providers) and 10 Directors for the board have been selected. Under the project, 30 Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Groups (SASHGs) and one Village Agriculture Development Committee (VADC) have been formed. Apart from orientation programmes, a series of trainings on sustainable agriculture practices, formation and strengthening of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) including Agriculture Producer Company, roles and responsibilities of VABDSPs and Board of Directors (BODs) were also conducted. A group of selected beneficiaries were taken to visit the CIKS Organic Experimental Farm in Sukkankollai village of Kancheepuram district and to the Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited in Desur village of Thiruvannamalai district. Efforts are in progress for the incorporation of the Producer Company by the name of “Kurinji Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited”. A total of 225 shareholders have been selected and the paid up share capital was collected from them. Monthly meetings of the VABDSPs and BODs were conducted regularly.

7. SUPPORT FOR VSAPCL FROM RABO BANK FOUNDATION

This project supported by the Rabo Bank Foundation in The Netherlands has been started this financial year in January 2015, for providing assistance and support for the Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited (VSAPCL), which was promoted by CIKS in 2013. Under this project, two staff – a Chief Executive Officer and a sales person have been appointed for the effective functioning of the Agriculture Producer Company (APC). An outlet cum godown for the APC has been set up. On 17th March 2015, an awareness programme on sensitization of women shareholders was organized in Sirkazhi area of Nagapattinam district. A total of 450 women from Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Karaikal districts participated in this programme. Officials from Agriculture Department, NABARD, academics and NGO representatives were the chief guests of the event. As part of the programme stalls were set up to display the different products produced by Women SHGs. SHGs excelling in different activities were given awards in the function. A training programme on ‘Equity guarantee scheme of SFAC and Kisan credit card scheme’ was conducted for the Board members of the VSAPCL. Efforts are on to create a website for the APC.

8. IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOOD AND FOOD SECURITY OF SMALL-HOLDER TRIBAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH WADI MODEL AND INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

This project funded by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is in progress in Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district from May 2013 onwards. The project activities are in progress in 34 hamlets covering 634 beneficiary households and 285.5 acres in Kovilur panchayat. Activities of this project are being implemented under two major components - WADI (small orchard) and other livelihood activities. Under the component on WADI, nearly 22,000 saplings of fruit crops and border crops have been planted in 285.5 acres and being maintained by 363 beneficiary households. These WADI fields have been fenced properly and soil bunds of 5000 running meters have also been formed to conserve the soil from erosion. Soil analysis was completed for the entire WADI fields. Production of certified seeds of foxtail millet and little millet was done using foundation seeds. Necessary organic inputs and seeds for intercropping in the WADI fields have been distributed. Under the component on other livelihood activities of the project, support has been provided to 191 beneficiaries to get involved in the microenterprises like rearing of cows, goats and pigs, tailoring unit, petti –

shops, poultry incubation and fodder cultivation. Livestock distributed were insured for a three year period. Beneficiaries of both WADI and other livelihood components have raised kitchen gardens using 5 - 10 types of vegetable seeds provided under the project and also conserved the seeds for the next season. Agricultural implements maintained in the Seeramarathur Agricultural Machineries Facilitation Centre are being used by the beneficiary farmers with minimum rental charges. A total of 24 Participants Groups (PGs), a Village Planning Committee and 18 Farmers' Clubs are in place. A total of six vermicompost production units have been established and the farmers maintaining the units are using the vermicompost for their own purpose. Various training programmes comprising of technical trainings, institutional building, health and enterprises related techniques were conducted for the beneficiaries. In collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry in Jawadhu hills block, an eight day long veterinary camp was organized for the control of Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) in Kovilur panchayat.

9. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE – DST CORE SUPPORT PROGRAMME – PHASE II (2013 - 2018)

CIKS has been recognized as an institution for Core Support by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India since 2002. During this phase, a biofertiliser laboratory has been set up in Sirkazhi. Two soap making units are functioning in Nagapattinam district. A total of 44 experiments were conducted to standardize the use of oil soaps. Seed multiplication of 103 traditional paddy varieties were taken up in the CIKS Research Farm in Sukkankollai and in Agani, Nagapattinam. A total of 53 tonnes of certified organic paddy seeds have been produced. Millet seed production was also taken up in 20 acres. Nine community vermicompost production units are functioning in Nagapattinam district and in Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district. A total of 21 training programmes on vermicomposting were conducted covering 415 farmers. Two Producer Companies covering 6068 shareholders have been promoted in Nagapattinam and Thiruvannamalai district. A total of 16 training programmes and exposure visits were conducted for the shareholders of the Producer Companies. Twenty four Farmers' Field School (FFS) sessions were conducted under ATMA programme in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture in Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Karaikal. A total of 78 training programmes covering 1448 farmers were conducted. Apart from this, training programmes on production of certified organic paddy seeds were

conducted in two districts. Fourteen discussion meetings on credit linkages were held with credit institutions. CIKS had also conducted two multi stakeholders meetings in Nagapattinam and Thiruvannamalai districts. Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) has empanelled CIKS as a Resource Agency for FPOs in Tamil Nadu. An MOU has been signed with Tamil Nadu SFAC, for providing support for four FPOs – formation of two new FPOs in Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts and strengthening of two existing FPOs in Cuddalore and Thanjavur districts. CIKS has also been selected as one of the Producer Organization Promoting Institutions under Farmer Producer Company Formation Programme of NABARD to promote six FPOs in the districts of Dindigul, Ramanathapuram, Thiruvannamalai and Kancheepuram. CIKS has also been selected as a member for National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture Programme being implemented in Nagapattinam district.

10. WOMEN'S TECHNOLOGY PARK FOR PROMOTING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

This project supported by the Department of Science and Technology is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Thiruvarur and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu from July 2013 onwards. The programme covers a total of 1400 women beneficiaries. Sustainable agriculture technologies like *azolla* cultivation, vermicompost production, mushroom production, fodder grass cultivation and vegetable seeds production were disseminated through the project. Sixteen community vermicompost production units have been established in Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Thiruvannamalai, Kancheepuram and Karaikal districts. Three mushroom production units have been established in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. Ten *azolla* cultivation units are in place in Nagapattinam and Kancheepuram districts. A total of 140 women are involved in the cultivation of fodder grass. A total of 113 training programmes on vermicomposting and mushroom production were organized for a total of 1127 beneficiaries. We have facilitated credit linkages with banks and District Industry Corporation (DIC) under the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) scheme and Credit Guaranty Fund Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprise (CGMSE).

11. PROGRAMME FOR SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC FARMING IN NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU (NABARD UPNRM–PHASE II)

The second phase of this project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district. Project components like, procurement and sale of organic paddy seeds, procurement and sale of organic paddy, milling and sale of organic rice and enhancement of livelihoods of women through bio gas units have been implemented. With technical support from CIKS and periodical monitoring of NABARD, project activities were completed successfully. Under the component on enhancement of livelihoods of women through biogas units, a total of 12 units have been installed in Allivilagam and Aadhamangalam villages. Officials from KVIC, Trichy visited the installed biogas units and provided a subsidy of Rs. 96,000/- to the beneficiaries. Each household is saving up to Rs. 780/- towards the expenses of fuel. Under the component on procurement and sale of organic paddy seeds, 61.3 tonnes of four different varieties of paddy seeds have been procured from 1450 farmers in 36 villages. Under the component on procurement and sale of organic paddy, milling and sale of organic rice, a total of 23.13 tonnes of organic rice (White ponni, CR-1009 and traditional paddy varieties) and 194.75 kg of value added products were sold to wholesalers and retailers throughout Tamil Nadu. Under this project, Sirkazhi Organic Farmers' Association (SOFA) participated in 14 exhibitions, three *melas* and six consumers' meets in Tamil Nadu. Under impact evaluation of UPNRM programme, this project has been short listed and a team from Catalyst Management Services, Bengaluru along with Mr. Akil Dev, Programme Officer from GIZ, Delhi visited Sirkazhi on 5th and 6th March 2015.

12. INTRODUCING ORGANIC FARMING IN ALANGADU VILLAGE – PHASE VI

This project commenced in 2009 and the sixth phase of the project implemented in this financial year concluded in August 2014. The Alangadu irrigation channel was cleaned and desilted. Two oil engines were purchased and are being utilized by the beneficiaries for irrigation purpose with minimum hiring charges. Beneficiaries were involved in organic cultivation of various crops and demonstration of various technologies. Crop loans were provided for 17 farmers covering 16 acres for organic cultivation. Community vermicompost unit is being maintained by Sivasakthi Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Group in Alangadu. Vermicompost produced in the community unit is being sold to the farmers of Alangadu. A total of 25 beneficiary households have raised organic kitchen

gardens at their backyards and reduced the cost spent towards vegetables. Members of Samba Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Groups are involved in the production and sale of biopesticides. Beneficiaries were trained on various organic farming and allied technologies. The evening tuition centre *Arivumaiyam* has over 61 students (1st to 10th Std) and three teaching staff. Apart from agricultural activity, women group members are involved in the activities like tailoring, production of paper bags and palm based handicraft products. As a follow up to the petition submitted to the Land Reforms Department in Chennai on land patta for the farmers' fields in Alangadu, Mr. Balamurugan, Deputy Thasildhar, Land sealing visited Alangadu on 30th November and had discussion with farmers about patta related issues. Following this a total area assessment and mapping was done.

13. INTRODUCING ORGANIC FARMING IN ALANGADU VILLAGE – PHASE VII

This seventh phase of the project is being implemented from September 2014 onwards. The Alangadu irrigation channel was desilted for 2 kms with the financial support of the Department of Public Works in Mayiladuthurai. To support the cultivation requirements a crop loan of Rs. 95,000/- has been arranged for 17 farmers covering 19 acres through Shriram chit funds in Thiruvarur during November 2014. Farmers used this amount for organic cultivation. In February 2015, quality seeds of pulses have been distributed to 28 farmers for cultivation. Oil engines being maintained in the Alangadu AMFC (Agricultural Machinery Facilitation Centre) are being used by the beneficiaries. Since the need of oil engines increases during cultivation period, a loan of Rs. 1,09,400/- has been arranged through Shriram chit fund to the Seethalakshmi men SHG in Alangadu to get two additional engines. Beneficiaries have raised organic kitchen gardens in their backyards. The vermicompost produced by the Siva Sakthi Sustainable Agriculture Womens' Group in Alangadu are being sold to the farmers. Six trainings on organic farming technologies were organized for the beneficiaries. During this phase, land survey has been completed in 84 farmers' fields and VAO (Village Administrative Officer) has provided certificate for the cultivation area. Efforts are on for getting *patta* for the lands. *Arivumaiyam* (evening tuition centre) has been functioning well and currently 65 students (1st to 10th Std) have been enrolled this year. Teachers of the tuition centre attended a training at Kaigal Trust in Kuppam village of Andhra Pradesh. Community enterprises are functioning well – Thendral women SHG involved in running a tailoring unit, Samba

women SHG involved in biopesticide production and palm products preparation. The products produced are being marketed through *Thughil*, an outlet in Chennai.

14. FARMERS' FIELD SCHOOLS UNDER THE ATMA PROGRAMME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

This programme was implemented with the support from the Government of Tamil Nadu under Farmers' Field School (FFS) of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) programme. This programme mainly provided the vital link between the achiever/ progressive farmers and others in a village. CIKS Sirkazhi was selected as a training agency by the Department of Agriculture. This programme was implemented in Keerapalayam block of Cuddalore district. Training sessions on good agriculture practices of crop management in paddy and black gram were conducted. A total of 25 farmers from three villages participated. Resource persons of these trainings were CIKS staff members, SOFA (Sirkazhi Organic Farmers Association) team members and experienced farmers working with CIKS. Topics covered were organic farming technologies for paddy and black gram, composting and vermicomposting, biopesticides - mode of action and practical demonstration, nutrient management, harvest indicators, post harvest measures etc. Exposure visits to the community vermicompost units and visits to the fields for the practical training on pest and disease identification were organized as part of the programme.

15. CREATION OF A CADRE OF VILLAGE BASED YOUTH FOR ORGANIC FARMING (VYOF)

Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, Chennai and Shriram Vocational Training Centre at Thiruneermalai are working together to develop a cadre of village based youth for organic farming. Activities of this project were continued during the course of this year as per the designed components and the major initiatives are as follows. As a follow up to a residential training programme which was held during September 2013 covering 31 students, class room sessions on various organic farming and related technologies were held on 18th and 19th April 2014. The topics like organic methods of food production, processing technologies, organic certification, organic food, organic home gardening etc., were covered. An Internship programme was organized for a group of 10 shortlisted candidates based on the feedback received from the previous sessions. This was for a period of two months between May - July 2014. The selected students were placed in

different field areas in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. Based on the continuous interaction and involvement of the students and also the feedback received from different field areas, two students were given placement in the sister organizations of CIKS from December 2014 onwards.

16. ENDOWMENT FROM THE ESTATE OF MS. SHASHIREKHA RAJAGOPALAN

Ms. Shashirekha Rajagopalan (Member, Central Board of Reserve Bank and NABARD) was an active supporter and well wisher of CIKS during her life time. After her passing away in July 2011 her family informed us that she had left a will with an endowment for CIKS and the interest from the investment may be used to support our activities. In May 2014, CIKS brought out a Tamil translation of the Producer Company Act. This has been widely distributed and used in training programmes for various farmers' groups who are shareholders, office bearers or promoters of Farmer Producer Companies. The material of this Act can also be downloaded from our website. The publication of this translation was funded by the return from the endowment.

17. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGIES (CAT) – SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGIES IN PADDY CULTIVATION

This programme supported by NABARD under its Capacity building for Adoption of Technologies scheme was implemented in Thiruvannamalai district between 11th – 13th June 2014. In Thiruvannamalai district, a total of 22 beneficiaries including eight women beneficiaries from 19 villages participated and got trained. The training programme was held at the CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai village of Kancheepuram district. Beneficiary farmers were trained on sustainable agriculture technologies related to paddy cultivation like System of Rice Intensification (SRI), transplanting through transplanter, direct sowing through drum seeder and normal method of paddy cultivation, seed selection, seed treatment, seed germination methods, organic manures in paddy cultivation and its preparation methods, non chemical methods of plant protection measures and storage techniques. These training programmes comprised of power point presentations, group discussions and demonstrations. Demonstration of biopesticide preparation and vermicompost production were also carried out. As a part of the training programme, beneficiaries were taken out for an exposure visit to Nangavalli village in Salem district to learn about the organic cultivation technologies, activities of farmers' groups and conservation techniques of soil and water.

18. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THE MEMBERS OF THIRUMARAİKADU ORGANIC FARMER'S FEDERATION IN VEDHARANYAM (NABARD FTTF)

This programme supported by NABARD under its Farmers' Technology Transfer Fund (FTTF) was implemented in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. The Thirumaraikadu Organic Farmers' Federation was established with the team efforts of CIKS Sirkazhi field office in Nagapattinam district by involving 14 NABARD Farmers' Clubs from 14 villages and registered under the Societies Act was selected for capacity building under this project. An eight day capacity building training programme was organized for the members on structure of federation, roles and responsibilities of the office bearers, leadership qualities, maintenance of records, organic groundnut and paddy cultivation technologies, seed production, input production, organic certification etc. Exposure visits were also organized to the seed processing unit in Mullaiyampattinam, Sirkazhi Organic Farmers' Association and value addition unit of Sittilinghi Organic Farmers' Federation in Dharmapuri. Resource persons of these training programmes were CIKS staff and Mr. Muralikrishnan, Retired Professor from Idhayam groups, Virudhunagar.

19. DISSEMINATION OF YIELD INCREASING TECHNIQUES IN GROUNDNUT CULTIVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES IN KANCHEEPURAM - SUPPORT UNDER FARMERS' TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FUND (FTTF)

This programme supported by NABARD under its Farmers' Technology Transfer Fund scheme was implemented in Kancheepuram district between October 2014 – February 2015. A total of 60 beneficiaries including 33 women from 11 villages of Kancheepuram district were selected and trained. Three training programmes on sustainable agriculture technologies related to increasing the yield in groundnut cultivation were conducted for the beneficiaries at CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai village of Kancheepuram district. A total of 60 demonstration fields were set up by the beneficiaries using the quality seeds of VRI 2 and TMV – 7 groundnut varieties provided under the project. Organic inputs like neem seed powder, biofertilizers and non chemical pest control materials have also been distributed. These training programmes are comprised of power point presentations, group discussions and demonstrations. Demonstration of

biopesticide preparation, vermicompost production and groundnut harvester operation were done as part of the training programme.

20. EMPOWERMENT OF FARMERS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT - SUPPORT UNDER FARMERS' TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FUND (FTTF)

This programme supported by NABARD under its Farmers' Technology Transfer Fund scheme was implemented in Dindigul district since October 2014. A total of ten two day training programmes on sustainable agriculture practices, integrated farming and formation and strengthening of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were conducted for the farmers in CIKS field office in Sendurai area of Dindigul district. These training programmes are the combination of class room sessions, on - farm practical sessions and exposure visits. A total of 332 farmers including 178 women farmers of Dindigul district participated in these training programmes. As part of this project, an exposure visit was organized for the selected beneficiaries to CIKS Organic Experimental Farm in Sukkankollai village of Kancheepuram district and to the Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited in Desur village of Thiruvannamalai district. They learnt about the sustainable agriculture practices and formation of CBOs including Agriculture Producer Company. As part of the project one Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Group (SASHG), eight Joint Liability Groups (JLG) and 10 Farmers' Clubs were formed.

21. PROMOTION OF FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN TAMIL NADU

This programme supported by NABARD under its Producer Organization Development Fund (PODF) scheme has been initiated in January 2015. Support has been provided for the formation of six Producer Companies to be located in the districts of Dindigul (2), Thiruvannamalai (2), Ramanathapuram (1) and Kancheepuram (1). Orientation trainings were conducted for the farmers in respective districts. Project Monitoring Committee Meeting was also held and discussion on the progress of the project activities took place.

22. SUPPORT FOR THE FORMATION OF THE PRODUCER COMPANIES FROM SFAC, TAMIL NADU (SFAC I & II)

The Tamil Nadu office of SFAC (Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium) has provided support for the formation of four Farmers' Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Cuddalore, Thiruvannamalai, Thanjavur and Nagapattinam districts of Tamil Nadu. This project is for

a period of three years. Two Producer Companies - Mangalore Millets Farmer Producer Company Limited in Cuddalore district and Rajaraja Chozhan Farmers' Producer Company Limited in Thanjavur district were already incorporated by the respective District Agriculture Departments. CIKS is closely working with the District Agriculture Department (Agri-Marketing), the Board Members of the Producer Companies, stakeholders and the community for taking forward the project as per the SFAC guidelines. CIKS is now in the process of streamlining the activities and completing the formalities of meeting the statutory requirements of the incorporated companies, creating awareness and mobilizing farmers for joining the company as shareholders. Eighteen such programmes have been conducted where 540 farmers (including 186 women) participated. Ten capacity building programmes on management, company laws, accounting and statutory requirements were conducted for the Directors.

23. WOMENS' FESTIVAL – MAGALIR MELA ORGANIZED IN NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT

A Magalir Mela on the theme of “Make it happen” was organized by CIKS Sirkazhi field office with financial support of NABARD in Nagapattinam district on 17th March 2015. The prime objective of this event is to create awareness among women groups about the enterprise activities and scaling up of current women led activities. Members of 83 women Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 63 men farmers from Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts participated in the event. Officials from Agriculture Department, NABARD, academics and NGO representatives were the chief guests of the event. SHGs excelling in different activities were given awards in the function.