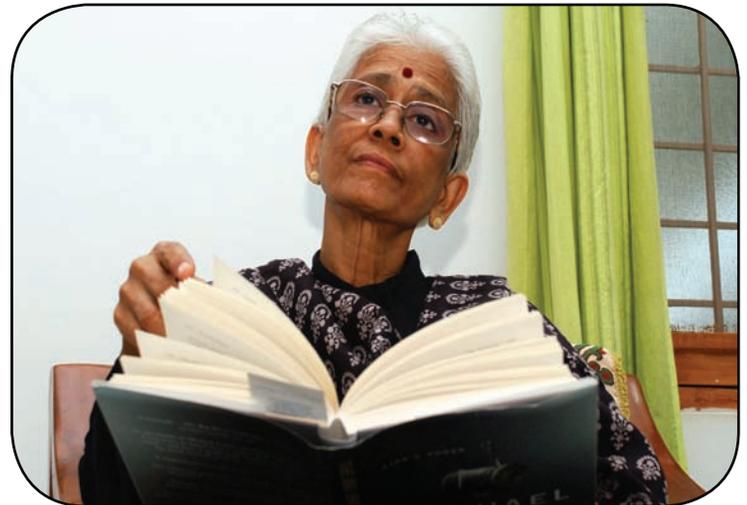




PRODUCER COMPANIES ACT IN TAMIL - REACHING OUT TO THE FARMERS : A GIFT FROM SHASHI RAJAGOPALAN

Shashi Rekha Rajagopalan (Shashi) was a great friend and support for People's Organisations and had contributed in a very significant way to the growth of the cooperatives movement. She was a member of the Central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and also a member of the Malegam Committee on Micro Finance Institutions. Throughout her life she was an advocate for better cooperative legislation and she also contributed to creating new institutional structures based on cooperative principles. At the Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (CIKS), we met her rather late in her life sometime around the year 2008. She developed a strong liking for our work and felt and expressed a great deal of affection for many of our team members. During the period 2008 - 2011, she was involved closely with our work and helped us mobilize resources for our sustainable agriculture efforts. In the summer of 2011 we received an invitation from her family to join a get together in Secunderabad to celebrate her 60th Birthday and we made a trip on 24th July 2011 for that occasion. Within a couple of weeks in early August we received the sad news that she was no more.

A few weeks later, we were informed by her sister that Shashi had left a Will in which she had remembered CIKS and bequeathed a share of her property as a donation to CIKS. We were moved and touched by this gesture and we felt quite honoured by this show of faith in our work. We decided that we would invest these funds and use the income for supporting farmers organisations - a cause that was very dear to her. She had great faith in the capacity of rural people and farmers to manage their own affairs (and she would also add with a mischievous gleam in her eyes that she also had great faith in the capacity of NGOs to mess up things for farmers organisations !). Though our interaction with her was rather brief, confined as it was to the last three years of her life, we were deeply influenced by her sincerity, transparency, honesty and admired the high standards she set for all work (for herself and for others) and her intolerance for any form of sloppiness, delays or lack of rigour in work.



During the year 2013, our Centre along with Vrutti, Bengaluru had supported the formation of two Producer Companies in Tamil Nadu i.e., Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited (MSAPCL) and Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited (VSAPCL) which are operating from the districts of Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam, respectively. The two Producer Companies are in need of a lot of support and help for education and capacity building of the farmers as shareholders as well as members of the Board of Directors. As part of this effort, we have now produced a Tamil translation of the Producer Company Act (which forms a section of the Companies Act, 2013).

The publication of this translation is being supported by the endowment fund received from the estate of Shashi Rajagopalan and we dedicate this publication to her memory. We are grateful to Ms. Sabitha Gopal and the other members of the family of Shashi Rajagopalan for their continued support and encouragement of our work.

Note : The full text of this publication can be downloaded from the CIKS website - [http://www.ciks.org/producer%20company%20book%20\(tamili\).pdf](http://www.ciks.org/producer%20company%20book%20(tamili).pdf)



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

Poverty Reduction in Tamil Nadu through Sustainable Agriculture

This DFID, UK and HIVOS, Netherlands supported project covers 9571 farmers in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. These farmers are grouped under 654 small groups at Village, Panchayat and Cluster levels. Village Agri Business Development Service Providers (VABDSPs) have been placed in each village panchayat to deliver the services to the beneficiaries. Sustainable agriculture packages like integrated kitchen gardening, conversion to complete organic farming, distribution of seeds and inputs, enhancing soil fertility, backyard poultry farming, biopesticide distribution and production of quality inputs are being implemented. Seed production of paddy varieties, groundnut, sunhemp and black gram were taken up. Experiences of farmers using biopesticides for pest control have been documented. A total of 21 community input production units, 12 community value addition units and a mushroom production unit are in place to meet the timely input need of farmers. The issue of labour scarcity and heavy cultivation costs in agriculture have been addressed through 14 Agriculture Machinery Facilitation Centres (AMFCs). The Marutham and Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Companies established in Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts are progressing well with a total of 4181 shareholders. Training programmes on various organic farming technologies were conducted for the beneficiaries. During the month of May, the organic certification fields in the project villages were inspected by Mr. Suhash from IMO, Bengaluru. The quarterly review meeting of the project was held in Chennai on 26th and 27th May.

Improving the Livelihood and Food Security of Small-Holder Tribal Communities through Wadi Model and Integrated Sustainable Agricultural Practices

This project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district covering a total of 305 beneficiary households and 150 acres in Kovilur panchayat. For the second year of project implementation, 133 beneficiaries covering 99.5 acres have been selected for the WADI component. Activities of this project are being implemented under two major components - WADI (small orchard) and other livelihood activities. Under the component on WADI, nearly 11,253 saplings of fruit crops and border crops have been planted in 150 acres. Seeds of little millet (*Samai*) varieties - *Chitten samai* and *CO4 samai* have been distributed to the beneficiaries for cultivation in the orchards as intercrop. Organic inputs, pitcher irrigation apparatus and plastic barrels have been distributed to all the 182 farmers. Fields are completely fenced and bunds have been raised to avoid the soil erosion and to enhance the water holding capacity of the soil. Additional irrigation facility has been created through setting up three motor pumps. Under the component on other livelihood activities, support has been provided to the beneficiaries to get involved in the microenterprises like rearing of cows, goats and pigs, tailoring unit, petti - shops, poultry incubation, fodder cultivation and bee keeping. Beneficiaries are efficiently utilizing the agricultural implements purchased and being maintained in the Seramarathur AMFC. The little millet processing unit in Seeramarathur village has been up gradated. A total of 24 participants groups (PGs) have been formed in the project villages.

Four training programmes have been conducted for the beneficiary farmers on maintenance of milch animals, legal awareness, vermicomposting and rearing of goats. Project activities were reviewed by Mr. Prabhakaran, AGM, NABARD Chennai and Mr. S. T. Sudharshan, AGM, NABARD, Thiruvannamalai on 28th and 29th May. We participated in the summer festival (*Kodai vizha*) held in Jawadhu hills on 28th and 29th June.

Women's Technology Park for Promoting Organic Agriculture

This project supported by DST is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam and Ramanathapuram districts. Twelve community vermicompost production units have been established in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. Production is in progress at the mushroom production unit established in Nagapattinam district. Construction of one more mushroom production unit is in progress in the Sukkankollai farm. Demonstrations of *azolla* production and fodder cultivation are in progress in the farm. *Azolla* production is in progress in the three units established in the Kancheepuram district. Three training programmes on 'Vermicompost production - harvest, storage and packing' were conducted for the women beneficiaries of Nagapattinam district. Under this project, Pondicherry Multipurpose Service Society (PMSS), an NGO in Pondicherry has been selected for capacity building and three training programmes on Vermicompost production and Biopesticide preparation were conducted for the women beneficiaries working with this NGO. As a follow up to this training programme, a vermicompost

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more

production unit has been established in Chinna nellikollai panchayat and being maintained by eight women.

Science and Technology for Sustainable Agriculture - DST Core project

This project supported by DST is in progress in Nagapattinam district. Sixteen bioassays have been conducted on *Spodoptera litura* and *Aphids*. Field experiments on "Management of sucking pest in broad beans using pongam oil soap and in black gram using mixed oil soap" have been conducted. An experiment on "Management of sucking pests using mixed oil soap in bhendi" is in progress. Efficacy studies have been conducted to fix the field dosage of Neem and Pongam oil soaps at the Department of Entomology, Annamalai University in Chidambaram. Production and sale is in progress in the neem soap production unit in Ilaiyamadhukoodam village. Two trainings were organized for the beneficiaries on Neem oil soap preparation and usage against mealy bugs. On 26th June, a group of 10 students from PAJANCOA & RI, Karaikal visited the CIKS Sirkazhi office and learnt the procedures and technologies followed in the insect rearing laboratory and mushroom lab.

Programme for Supporting Sustainable Organic Farming - Phase II

This project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district. A total of 15.4 tonnes of seeds of white ponni, ADT - 38 and CR1009 paddy varieties and 10 tonnes of white ponni grains have been procured from the farmers. Nearly 12.5 tonnes of organic rice, paddy and value added products have been sold. We organised two awareness programmes in Sirkazhi in the context of the local religious festival *Thirumulaipal* and at Rettiyarpalayam in Pondicherry in collaboration with the Best Foundation. Progress of the project activities were reviewed by Mr. Ragavan, AGM, NABARD, Chennai and Mr. D. Ganesh, AGM, NABARD, Nagapattinam. We participated in Traditional Paddy Conservation Festival in Athirangam village, Paddy festival in Manjakudi and Traditional summer festival in Jawadhu hills.

State Level Meeting at NABARD, Chennai

NABARD Chennai had organized a State level meeting of Producers Cooperatives / Farmer Producer Organizations / Farmer Producer Companies / Bankers at its office premises in Chennai on 9th May. Many officials from different banks and representatives from Farmer Producer Organizations participated in this meeting. Our staff K. Subramanian, V. Suresh, Subhashini Sridhar and R. Manikandan represented the Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company in Thiruvannamalai and Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company in Nagapattinam.

Farmer Producer Organization Network Meeting

On 12th May, BEDROC in Nagapattinam and SNEHA in Karaikal had jointly organized the Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) network meeting at the BEDROC Office in Nagapattinam. The objective of this meeting is to develop a common platform for FPOs. Following this, the first round of discussion meeting on the formation of Network for the FPOs in the Eastern Cluster was conducted on 17th June at Nagapattinam. A total of 14 representatives from various FPOs like VSAPCL, BEDROC (NAMCO & NAPROC), KKFF, SNEHA and SAMUDHARA, India PC, NDFS etc., participated in this meeting. These meetings were facilitated by CMS and Vrutti, Bengaluru.

Meeting on Support for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

On 22nd and 23rd May, Indian Foundation for Humanist Development (IFHD) had organised a consultative workshop on FPOs and launched a programme "ProCIF" to help FPOs. At the invitation of IFHD, A. V. Balasubramanian participated and made a presentation regarding CIKS efforts with FPOs, organisations already formed and future plans.

Quarterly Review Meeting of the Project on Poverty Reduction

The quarterly review meeting of the DFID, UK and HIVOS, Netherlands supported project was held on 26th and 27th May at Hotel Shelter in Mylapore, Chennai. Both CIKS and Vrutti team participated in the review meeting and reviewed the activities of the project in progress. There were presentations on the progress of the project and detailed discussions about the performance of VABDSPs, status of active beneficiaries, status of Producer Companies and future plan etc.

Participation in Paddy Festival

We participated in "Traditional Paddy Varieties Conservation Festival" organized by Swami Dayanandha Trust in Thiruvavur district on 22nd June. Nearly 400 farmers, School students, renowned Farmers and Scientists from several institutions participated in this programme. On behalf of CIKS, Subhashini Sridhar, R. Manikandan and S. Vijayakumar participated. Subhashini Sridhar gave a talk on "Role of women in agriculture and seed conservation".

Visit of Farmers from ISS, Karur

On 24th June, a group of 21 farmers and five staff members from Inba Seva Sangam (ISS), Sevapur in Karur district visited CIKS project area in Sirkazhi. They were taken to visit the community vermicompost unit in Aadhamangalam, integrated farm in Nemmeli, organic paddy farm in Agani and organic vegetable farm in Allivilagam. They learnt the technologies related to organic farming, input production, integrated farming etc.

Training on First - Aid

A training programme on first - aid procedures was conducted for the CIKS staff members at CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai on 25th June. A total of 25 staff members from various field areas participated. They were trained on various first - aid procedures. This training programme was coordinated by Mr. P. Chandran from St. John's Ambulance Services, Chennai.

**AGRICULTURE MACHINERY FACILITATION
CENTRES
A BOON FOR SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS**



Agriculture Machinery Facilitation Centres (AMFCs) have been established by CIKS in collaboration with Vrutti, Bengaluru under the DFID, UK and HIVOS Netherlands supported project. As a new approach to improve access to modern farm machineries 14 AMFCs, one in each Panchayat, have been established in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts and being maintained by the Panchayat Agriculture Development Committees (PADCs). These AMFCs have improved access to modern agriculture machineries by small and marginal farmers at a low hiring charge. They have contributed to reduced cost of cultivation, increased yields and also addressed the issue of labour scarcity in agriculture. Business plans, business links with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, credit linkages etc., are in place to make these AMFCs self-sustainable. This kind of service provision for smallholders through a Centre managed by farmers at a low cost improves access to services, timely delivery and accountability.

**VISITOR'S BOOK
Who's been dropping in at CIKS**

- On 1st April, Mr. S. Loganathan and Mr. M. K. Murugan, Assistant Agriculture Officers from Thiruporur visited the CIKS Organic Research Farm in Sukkankollai.
- On 17th April, Ms. Shireen, Manager, VIJAYA Bank, Ilanthoppu branch Sirkazhi visited CIKS Sirkazhi field station to get to know about the activities of women self help groups.
- On 1st May, Mr. Munusamy, IAS, Nagapattinam District Collector visited Sirkazhi Organic Farmers' Association in Sirkazhi and had discussion with the CIKS staff.
- On 12th May, Mr. Ragavan, NABARD, Chennai and Mr. D. Ganesh, AGM, NABARD Nagapattinam visited CIKS Sirkazhi field area to review the activities of the UPNRM project.
- On 14th May, Mr. S.T. Sudharshan, AGM, NABARD visited CIKS Thiruvannamalai field office in Desur in connection with the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company.
- On 19th May, Mr. Prabhakaran from Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department, Coimbatore visited CIKS Sirkazhi field office in connection with the discussion on organic certification procedures and future plan.
- On 28th and 29th May, Mr. Prabhakaran, AGM NABARD Chennai and Mr. S. T. Sudharshan, AGM NABARD, Thiruvannamalai visited the Jawadhu hills project area to review the activities of the Tribal Development Fund project.
- On 6th June, Mr. Puneet Jhajharia of Crop Connect, New Delhi visited CIKS for a discussion relating to a study on organic value chain.
- On 12th June, Ms. Sreela Koushik, Consultant visited CIKS in connection with a training programme to be organised for the CIKS team members.

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