



COMPAS INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

The COMPAS international workshop was held between September 17th and September 30th at Chennai. The meeting was attended by 46 participants including the COMPAS partners from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. The objective of the meeting was to review and exchange experiences of the work being done in the current phase of the COMPAS project (January 2001 to June 2002), make plans for the next phase of the COMPAS project (July 2002 to December 2006) as well as have interaction and discussions with other agencies and individuals involved in this line of work. Some of the highlights of the meeting are summed up below.

♣ The meeting commenced with four days of conference between September 17th and September 20th which was followed by six days of field trips between September 21st and September 26th and concluded with a conference session in

Madras again during the last four days between September 27th and September 30th.

♣ During the tour programme for six days, (September 21st to September 26th), the participants were divided into three different groups which independently toured Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to visit the work of COMPAS partners in those States as well as to interact with other organisations and individuals in those areas.

♣ The participants were drawn from – India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, The Netherlands, Ghana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Uganda, Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Guatemala.

♣ The delegation of six members from Latin America could converse only in Spanish and so the entire programme was bilingual. Arrangements were made for translation of every session from English to Spanish and Spanish to English.



Compas delegates during the International Workshop

♣ A panel discussion was organised on September 19th when we invited a cross section of scientists, academics and others from Madras to interact with the COMPAS delegates on the topic of – “The future of Sustainable Agricultural Technologies”.

♣ A special session was organised on September 28th and 29th for interaction of COMPAS partners with special invitees. This was attended by representatives from CAPART, Swiss Development Cooperation, Government of Netherlands, M.S.Swami-

nathan Research Foundation voluntary agencies and research institutions such as – A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre, Madras Christian College, Gandhigram Rural University, ANTHRA, Hyderabad, SAMPARK, Bangalore, etc.

♣ The meeting consisted of plenary sessions, small group discussions, field trips and local excursions to institutions such as M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation.

♣ The first issue of the newsletter of

(names CLARION) which is being published by CIKS was released during the conference.

♣ Cultural programmes were arranged

during the course of the meeting including - A lecture demonstration of Bharatanatayam by Ms. Jyotsna Narayanan and her team as well as a concert in two parts by

Kalaimamani Dr. Nandini and Kalaimamani Ms. Lalitha. The first part of the concert was classical carnatic music presentation and the second part was an experiment in -

“Trans-global fusion music” which included presentation of a piece that was composed by the team specifically for this occasion.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MELA ORGANISED BY TRIBAL LEADERS

In September 2001 a group of traditional tribal leaders in the Eastern Ghats, South India, organised an Indigenous Knowledge Mela. During this 4 day event hundreds of tribal people exhibited, discussed and exchanged their knowledge and experiences related to agriculture, health, traditional food preparation and spiritual practices. The Mela highlighted the level of organisation of the spiritual tribal leaders and outlined their ideas on ways to improve the lives of the tribal communities on basis of their own culture and priorities. The Eastern Ghats of India is the habitat of about 60 tribal groups and 7 million population with rich socio-agro-eco-cultural diversity. Each tribal group has a distinct style of life based on their eco-cultural practices and norms, intimately connected with nature and its related cosmovision beliefs.

Intervention of IDEA

IDEA (Integrated Development through Environmental Awakening) is trying to halt the degradation of the cultural identity of the tribal people and the natural resources

in the North Eastern Ghats since 1985. Currently IDEA is working in 300 villages covering about one hundred thousand tribal people in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. IDEA has started an environmental project by organising the tribal communities into Environmental Protection and Developmental Groups and Women Development Groups. The concept of ‘emotional integration and awakening’ has played a major role in bringing the peoples’ hearts and minds together.

In this process, for example, the traditional *Chaitra Parob* festival was transformed from a hunting ceremony into a community process to make an inventory of the natural resource in the area. The traditional leaders further discussed their experiences during a massive *Adivasi Darbar* - Eco-cultural meeting - in 1998. On this occasion it was concluded that the deforestation and rapid depletion of various floral and faunal species is due to the human interference, especially to the violation of traditional practices related to natural resource conservation. This was further attributed to the

breaking of relationships between the traditional leaders and the community. Apart from many resolutions to prevent further destruction of the local natural resources, the traditional leaders decided to organise themselves in a network: *Naik Gotna*.

Traditional leaders’ network

The *Naik Gotna* network, the tribal forum for sustainable endogenous development in North Eastern Ghats, was started in 1998. With the

help of IDEA, the traditional leaders set out to form a strong group, in order to take decisions for the own - endogenous - development of the tribal people. This resulted in increased communication between informal networks of different tribes and traditional leaders. These traditional leaders, which include both men and women, have been strengthened through several exchange meetings, training sessions, workshops and management programmes.



Participants during IK Mela

PURUSHOTHAMA RAO MEMORIAL DAY



Dr. Lakshmi Tatachar addressing the gathering

Krishi Prayoga Pariwara (KPP) celebrated the third Memorial Day of Sri Purushothama Rao their founder on 18th September, 2001. The celebration focussed its attention on two themes: (1) Ancient Indian vision at soil, water and air; (2) Appropriate rural equipment and machines. Dr. Lakshmi Tatachar, Director, Sanskrit

Research Academy, Melukote, Mandya District gave a lecture on how ancient Indians looked at soil, water and air. He quoted many examples from Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Vrukshayurveda, Brihat-samhita etc to explain in detail the ancient vision. He called for scientific understanding of some of the technologies men-

tioned in Vrukshayurveda. He explained the logic and hence the vision behind many actions of ancient Indians to conserve the natural resources.

Sri Ravikumar, Director, Centre for Appropriate Rural Technologies, National Institute of Engineering, Mysore explained the need and scope of using appropriate rural technologies in growing food, utilizing water and harvesting energy. He spoke about many single man operated small machines, some equipment to conserve and utilize the water optimally and many simple technologies for harvesting energy from different sources. CART pump, Tippy Tap, small hydro electricity projects, energy-tapping etc were exhibited. The programme was

presided by Dr. S. A. Patil, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad. He could explain many traditional technologies, which are still in practice by the farmers. He also mentioned a few modern technologies, which are developed in the light of traditional technologies. He said the University scientists would come to the doors of successful organic farmers to learn from them and also asked the farmers to come to the University to learn from the Institution.

This programme was attended by 250 farmers from the state. There were exhibits on organic inputs, organic products, related books and small machines. The programme was sponsored and jointly organised with Purushothama Rao Agricultural Research Foundation, Thirthahalli.

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SHARING DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL HEALTH TRADITIONS METHODOLOGY

Indigenous knowledge related to health and its documentation is of extreme importance to identify and avoid the shortcomings in the collection, protection and promotion of local health traditions. Twenty six senior researchers and research associates of All India Coordinated Research project in Home science extension network AICRP [HE] participated in the 4 days training programme held at Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation, Tiptur. The workshop trained the participants in the skills involved in systematic documentation of Local Health Traditions (LHTs) and steps involved in participatory assessment of selected health practices of an area. It covered aspects related to contem-

porary relevance of Indian medical heritage, importance of Documentation and Assessment of LHTs (DALHT) in revitalization of LHTs and methodology involved in DALHT process.

The need was felt to strengthen Local Resource Centers (LRCs) with the indigenous knowledge related to health so that LRCs would become local centers of excellence in the area of health traditions and disseminate this knowledge through education, awareness and promotion programmes for community's health. As a continuation of DALHT capacity building programs, the field collaborators set out to "building capacity of the field staff in database management "in order to develop the folk database

on local health traditions. In this connection a 3 days training workshop for field staff was conducted by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) wherein an introductory session on intellectual property rights and ethical issues related to utilization of community's knowledge was done.

This training programme will result in the establishment of model LRCs in selected field areas by end of March and the information documented will be used to bring out educational materials on specific highlights of the LHTs of a particular location.

Did you know?

Out of 9500 wild plants the tribes in India use 7500 plants for medicinal purpose, 3900 for edible use, 700 for cultural requirements, 525 for fiber and cordage, 400 for fodder, 300 for pesticides, piscicides, etc. 300 for gum, resin & dye and 100 for incense and perfumes.

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