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## DST GROUP MONITORING WORKSHOP



Project Presentation by Dr. Tara Kate

The Annual Group Monitoring Workshop of Department of Science and Technology (DST) funded projects under the scheme "Science and Technology for Women" hosted by CIKS was held between 5th - 7th November 2003 at CReNIEO, Muttukadu, Chennai. Dr. Vinita Sharma, Director of Science and Society Division and Mrs. Shobana Bhaskaran, Scientific Officer, DST along with a panel of experts attended the meeting. The expert committee members included Dr. Sarala Gopalan and Dr. P.V. Dehadrai from New Delhi, Dr. Sabitha Doraiswamy and Dr. Usha Chandrasekhar from Coimbatore and Dr. Anil Joshi from Dehradun. Dr. Anuj Sinha, Advisor and Head, RVPSP and Science & Society Division was present as the Chief Guest on 5th November. About 48 participants from various corners of India attended the meeting and presented the results of their projects before the panel of experts.

On 6th November, a field visit to the CIKS experimental farm at Sukkankollai was organised for the team. In the farm, the participants had an opportunity to know about the various dimensions of the work of CIKS. The team also visited the Bird Sanctuary at Vedanthangal in the evening. The next day, an orientation meeting on Women Scientists Fellowship awarded by DST was conducted by Dr. Vinita Sharma. Nearly 12 women scientists attended the meeting.

## COMPAS INDIAN PARTNERS MEETING

A meeting of the Indian Partners of the COMPAS project was hosted by CIKS between 10th - 12th December 2003 in Chennai. Mr. Wim Hiemstra from the International co-ordination joined this meeting along with representatives from FRLHT, Green Foundation, KPP, IDEA and CIKS. During the meeting, every group presented the progress of the work and a detailed review of the work done during the last six months was undertaken. A.V. Balasubramanian made a detailed presentation about the co-ordination activities undertaken by him in the Asian region. During the field visit on 11th, the partners visited the biopesticide unit of CIKS at the Venpakkam village, the experimental farm at Sukkankollai and the Bird Sanctuary at Vedanthangal. On 12th December, the institutionalisation of COMPAS was discussed which was followed by a detailed presentation on the possibilities of achieving the same by our Chartered Accountant Mr. M. Kandasami who has a wide experience with several NGOs across the world.



COMPAS partners visiting the CIKS experimental farm

## **PROJECT WATCH**

*A round-up of our activities this quarter*

### **Review meeting at FRLHT**

On 22nd October 2003, our Programme Co-ordinator Subhashini Sridhar was at Bangalore to attend a review meeting of the “*ex-situ* conservation programmes” organised by FRLHT. She also made a presentation about the development of user’s package on biopesticides and nutrition that is being done in collaboration with PAF, Pudukkottai and SRD, Dharmapuri.

### **Workshops on Organic Home Gardening**

Three workshops on organic home gardening were conducted at Thirukazhukundram, Narapakkam and Venpakkam village on 14th, 16th and 21st October 2003 respectively. The workshops focussed at educating farmers on the importance of organic methods in home gardening, selection of space, planning, preparation, cultivation techniques, special technologies and pest control. The farmers actively participated in the workshop and had a good interaction with the resource persons.

### **TTP for Development of User’s Package**

As a part of FRLHT’s development of user’s package, CIKS has conducted four trainers training programmes each at SRD, Dharmapuri and PAF,

Pudukkottai. S. Arumugasamy, K. Subramanian and R. Rethinaraj conducted training programmes for SRD. Subhashini Sridhar, M. Jayashankar, R. Rethinaraj and C. Sathya served as resource persons for the training programmes held at PAF, Pudukkottai between October - December 2003. The programme focussed mainly on training farmers in organic methods of pest management and organic vegetable gardening.

### **Enhancing livelihood security through organic farming**

Our centre has been implementing a project to increase the livelihood security of small and marginal farmers through training programmes on organic farming technologies in three villages of Thirukazhukundram block with support from CAPART, Hyderabad. As a part of the training, members of organic farmers sangams of Alavai, Venpakkam and Anoor villages were taken on a field visit to our experimental farm at Sukkankollai where they had a thorough orientation to organic farming. They were also taken to Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary and Malaivaiyavoor temple. The farmers actively participated in the quiz contest conducted by our field staff based on the training programmes conducted and had a good interaction with each other.

### **Orientation Meeting on Organic Farming**

An orientation meeting on Organic Farming was conducted on 4th November at our S.P. Kovil training centre for those farmers who had expressed their interest to convert to organic farming during our course of work in Kancheepuram. During the meeting, the needs of the farmers were ascertained and blocks for converting to organic farming were identified. Follow up meetings are being planned to proceed further in this regard.

### **OXFAM Project Launched**

In connection with a new project undertaken with support from OXFAM, Hyderabad, Subhashini Sridhar undertook a trip to Warrangal between 19th - 25th December to visit the NGOs working on organic cotton. She visited four NGOs working on cotton in the Warrangal district and had detailed discussions with them. She was accompanied by Saravanakumar who helped in documenting the practices.

### **Trainings at Sirkazhi**

A one day workshop for forty five farmers wanting to shift to indigenous rice varieties was conducted on 15th November 2003 at Agani high school by CIKS. The farmers were trained on technologies related to organic farming.

On 20th November, a training programme was conducted to the women farmers on preparation of biopesticides by Subhashini Sridhar. On 22nd

and 23rd November, Subhashini conducted training programmes on organic farming at Siddharkadu and Kuthalam in Mayiladuthurai.

### **Review Meeting at Sirkazhi**

On 4th and 5th of December 2003, A. V. Balasubramanian, K. Vijayalakshmi and Arumugasamy visited Sirkazhi field station. This centre has completed three years successfully. During the visit, a detailed review of the work was undertaken. This was followed by field visits and meeting with the farmers. The team also had a meeting with Prof. Arivudainambi of the Entomology Dept. of Annamalai University.

### **Review Meeting at Hyderabad**

On 8th December, K. Vijayalakshmi was at Andhra Pradesh Council for Science and Technology in Hyderabad to attend the Group Monitoring Workshop and present the progress of the project entitled “Action research and demonstration of organic cotton cultivation techniques in different agroclimatic zones of Tamilnadu” before the experts of DST.

### **Experimental work on Vrکشayurveda**

Our efforts on testing and validating the practices of vrکشayurveda in the field has been intensified. Detailed experiments are being conducted both in Sukkankollai and Sirkazhi. Experiments on pest, disease and weed control and growth promoters are being conducted.

# CIKS TALK

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

## *Exchange visit to IDEA*

As a part of the exchange visit programme, Subhashini Sridhar and H. Saraswathi of our Centre visited IDEA, one of the Indian Compas Partners between 14th - 17th of October. They visited the field site of IDEA at Arakku valley and had detailed discussions with the tribals regarding their indigenous agriculture and medical practices. They also visited the demonstration farm of IDEA which had different varieties of medicinal plants, water harvesting techniques, soil management techniques and biopesticide demonstrations.

## *Visit to CWS and Anthra*

On 18th October, Subhashini visited Centre for World Solidarity (CWS), a NGO based at Secunderabad working on non-chemical pest management in cotton. She met Dr. M.S. Chari, the Scientist incharge and had detailed discussions on non-chemical pest management in cotton. She also visited NPM cotton demonstration field at Jalgaon in Warrangal district and discussed with the farmers practicing non-chemical pest management methods.

On 19th October, she visited Anthra and had a discussion with Dr. Sangari Ramadass on Ethnoveterinary practices.

## *Annual Review of Core Support Organisations*

On 19th & 20th November, A.V. Balasubramanian was at Delhi to attend the Group Monitoring Workshop of groups receiving core support from the Department of Science and Technology. He made a presentation about the CIKS work in the meeting and it was very well received.

## *Protecting IPR*

A meeting on new technologies, social knowledge and intellectual property law was conducted by HIVOS, Bangalore; Sarai, New Delhi and Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore on 20th and 21st of November at New Delhi in CSDS. K. Vijayalakshmi participated in this meeting as a panelist and shared the experiences of CIKS on conserving biodiversity in the field.

## *Meeting with Sri Lankan Partners*

Between 17th to 20th December 2003, A.V. Balasubramanian was at Sri Lanka along with Mr. Wim Hiemstra in connection with the COMPAS Asian Co-ordination work. He made a field visit to two of the Sri Lankan partners namely - Friends of Lanka at Kegaley and ECO at Nawalapitiya. He also attended a meeting of all the Sri Lankan COMPAS partners. During the visit, he

had discussions with the agricultural faculty of Perediniya University at Kandy.

## *At UAS, Bangalore*

On 24th December 2003, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the University of Agricultural Sciences at Bangalore and met Dr. Kumar of the Entomology Department, Dr. Umashankar of the Physiology Department and Prof. Ganeshiah of the Genetics Department. Prof. Kumar has agreed to provide training on the methods of insect rearing to CIKS staff.

## *Meeting on Medicinal Plant Cultivation*

On 28th December 2003, Arumugasamy attended a one day workshop on Medicinal plant cultivation conducted by Naveena Velanmai at Hotel Peninsula in Chennai. The workshop focussed on various aspects of medicinal plant cultivation. Possibilities and prospects for export and subsidies and support available from the Government was discussed.

## *Friends of Lanka Visit CIKS*

CIKS had two groups of visitors from Sri Lanka on 11th November and 29th December respectively. Each group consisted of 17 members from different environmental NGOs along with two representatives from the Government Department. They were here to study the

functioning of environmental NGOs in India. The groups were appraised of our activities and were shown the film "The Seed Keepers". They also visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai and had discussions with our staff.

## *Nagai Collector's Visit to Biopesticide Unit*

The Collector of Nagapattinam, Mr. Veerashanmugamani, IAS visited our biopesticide unit in Agani on 17th December and had a discussion with our staff. He also visited the CIKS demonstration field at Agani and had a discussion with a farmer Mr. Manikandan about the research activities undertaken in his farm.

## *Indigenous Agriculture News*

Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems has been presenting a novel and innovative alternative to pesticides in the form of the newsletter "Indigenous Agriculture News". This newsletter provides information on organic farming, indigenous methods of agriculture, books and materials related to organic farming. The annual subscription for individuals is Rs. 35/- and for institutions, it is Rs.70/- for this newsletter. All payments for this newsletter should be made in favour of "Pesticide Post", payable at Chennai, only as a Demand Draft or Money Order.



## NEW PROJECTS AT CIKS

- ✦ The Cottonwood Foundation based in Minneosata, USA has provided funds for construction of the biopesticide unit in our Sukkankollai farm. Cottonwood Foundation has also recognised CIKS as one of its partners for the next two years.
- ✦ CIKS has been sanctioned a project by OXFAM, Hyderabad towards preparation of educational material on organic cotton for farmers of Andhra Pradesh.
- ✦ HIVOS, Bangalore has granted a one year project entitled - "Strengthening seed, nutritional and health security through kitchen gardens" to CIKS. The main focus of the project is setting up of integrated herbal and vegetable gardens for 200 beneficiaries in ten villages, formation of organic farmers sangam in each of these villages, establishment of the biopesticide unit and developing educational material.
- ✦ CIKS with the support of CAPART, Hyderabad will be conducting a Trainer's Training Programme on sustainable agriculture for the representatives of Tamilnadu based NGOs between January 28th - February 3rd 2004 at Singaperumal Kovil.

## VISITORS BOOK

*A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS*

‡ On 13th October, a group of visitors from Fair Trade Network of England visited us for an orientation lecture on Indian Knowledge Systems.

‡ On 16th October, Prof. Maya Burgher and Ms. Sevenne Despond from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland visited us for help regarding their study on History of Yoga.

‡ On 1st November, Dr. D. Narasimhan, Lecturer, Department of Botany, Madras Christian College, visited our Sukkankollai farm to help us with the identification of plants.

‡ On 4th November, Dr. Lakshmi Rahamathullah, Nutrition and Community Health Expert from Madurai visited us.

‡ On 10th November, Mr. Pandurang Hegde of APPIKO, Karnataka visited our office.

‡ On 24th November, Dr. Vijay from Ecosmart, Mumbai visited us.

‡ On 28th November, Mr. Praveen and Mr. Joseph of Coakers visited us to discuss the possibilities of organic products marketing.

‡ On 18th December, Mr. Anthonysamy, an organic farmer from Puliyanakudi village visited us at our office.

‡ On 29th December, Dr. Ganesan Balachander, the Head of the Ford Foundation in India visited our centre. He was appraised of the different components of the work of CIKS in the field. He also visited our experimental farm in Sukkankollai.

**Editorial Team :** Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi & T.D. Nirmala Devi

**Typesetting :** S. Ramesh

**Book-Post**

**To**



30, Gandhi Mandapam Road, Kotturpuram, Chennai - 600 085. INDIA  
Phone : 91-044-24471087 / 24475862 Fax : 91-044-24471114  
E-mail : ciks@vsnl.com <http://www.ciks.org>