



## Back to Life

### An Overview of our Project on Restoration of Tsunami Affected Lands

Our Centre implemented a project for the restoration of Tsunami affected agricultural lands in the Nagapattinam district with support from The Wetlands International South Asia. As a part of this project, CIKS was involved in the relief work and agricultural land reclamation activities in the Sirkazhi taluk. Some of the achievements of this project are as follows:



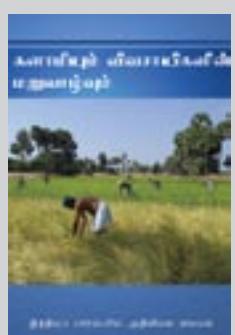
*A woman waters the vermicompost bed in her backyard. The vermicompost produced is a good source of organic manure.*

- Nearly 413 farmers from 26 villages of Nagapattinam and Pondicherry were trained on organic cultivation techniques. Twenty six members from 14 NGOs were also trained through this project.

- Support was provided for organic paddy cultivation in 45 acres at Sitthivinayagapuram village.
- Organic groundnut cultivation was practiced in 10 acres in Koozhaiyar village.
- Kitchen gardens were raised by 40 women farmers in Sitthivinayagapuram village.
- Soil and water samples were tested.
- Nine farm ponds were desilted in three villages.
- A community biopesticide unit was set up in Sitthivinayagapuram village.
- Fifteen vermicompost tanks were constructed.
- An organic farmers group named "Udhayanila" was formed.
- Cashewnut saplings were planted in 10 acres.
- A paddy demonstration plot was also laid in Sitthivinayagapuram village.

### New Book about Restoration Work

This book (in Tamil only) titled "Tsunamium Vivasayigalin Maruvazhvum" gives complete information about the various organizations involved in restoration work in the project area, experiments conducted by CIKS, paddy varieties that can be cultivated in saline soil and their special characteristics. It also discusses about the importance of conserving the natural flora along the coast.



## Friends from the North East

A group of eight members from FERTILE GROUNDS, led by Ms. Peggy Carswell from Assam visited CIKS between 26th February and 2nd March. They visited some of our project villages, the experimental farm at Sukkankollai, Bio-control lab at Chenglepet and ITWWS at Thandarai village. They were given an overview of the various activities taken up in our

experimental farm like vermicompost and biopesticide production, medicinal demo garden and kitchen garden. They also visited the organic fields at Kaliyapettai, Kolathancherry and Valathodu villages. A video film on "Composting techniques" was also screened for them. On 2nd March, the team visited our Chennai office and had a discussion with our Research Director and the technical team to explore the possible areas of collaboration.



## PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

### Enhancing Livelihood and Food Security Through Capacity Building for Organic Farming and Natural Resource Management - Phase II

CIKS is implementing the second phase of the above-mentioned project with support from the Ford Foundation. A total of 323.56 acres of land have been selected from 19 villages of Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. Nearly 199.36 acres are under organic cultivation. Crop loan has been distributed to the farmers of 12 villages in four districts. Various inputs have been distributed to the beneficiaries. On 6th January, Dr. Vasanth Saberwal, Programme officer from Ford Foundation visited our project villages and farm. On 7th, he had a discussion with all the staff involved with the project at the CIKS Chennai office. Beneficiaries of Thiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai and Kancheepuram districts were taken for exposure visits on 12th, 14th and 20th February respectively. They visited the organic fields at Kolathancherry, Kaliyapettai, Chithravadi and Esoor villages and our experimental farm at Sukkankollai. Revolving fund has been provided to the Sirkazhi organic farmer's sangam to establish an outlet for the organic products. Internal evaluation of farmers fields were done in all districts. On 14th March, beneficiaries of this project and the members of Sirkazhi organic farmers sangam were taken for an exposure visit to our experimental farm at Sukkankollai and the organic fields at Chithravadi village. Chengalpet organic farmers producers society was registered on 2nd April 2007.

#### Capacity Building on Organic Farming

This project, supported by CAPART, New Delhi is being implemented in 10 villages in the Kancheepuram district. Sangam meetings took place in all the 10 villages. During these monthly meetings,

topics such as importance and supply of medicinal plants, procuring paddy for Arogyam, activities of biopesticide unit, first aid training, outlet for organic products and implementation of organic farming technologies, contribution to seed bank and vegetable seeds production were taken up for discussion. Inputs like paddy seeds, vegetable seeds, saplings of medicinal plants and organic inputs have been distributed to the beneficiaries. Over 16 tonnes of traditional paddy varieties have been procured from the farmers. Paddy and groundnut have been cultivated in 50 acres and 56 acres respectively. A total of thirteen farmers from Edaiyur, Valathodu, Narapakkam and Sithalamangalam are involved in the production of paddy and vegetable seeds. Three farmers are involved in the conservation of 18 different traditional paddy varieties in Edaiyur and Valathodu villages.

#### Paddy Organic Chain - Seed to Harvest

CIKS is implementing a pilot project on "Paddy organic chain - Seed to harvest" in Tamil Nadu with support from HIVOS, Bangalore. Monthly meetings were conducted in Chithravadi, Kolathancherry and Kaliyapettai villages. Nearly 43 farmers have taken up organic cultivation in 81.10 acres in Chithravadi, Kolathancherry, Kaliyapettai and Esoor villages. Inputs like seeds of cotton, castor, maize, neem cake, groundnut cake, delta traps, pheromone traps and biofertilizers like *Azospirillum*, *Rhizobium* and *Phosphobacteria* have been distributed to the beneficiaries. Nearly 2030 kgs of paddy has been procured from the farmers of Kaliyapettai and Kolathancherry villages. On 11th January, Mr. Bishwadeep Ghose, Programme officer from HIVOS visited our Sukkankollai farm and project villages. On 18th January, a one-day training on organic vegetable cultivation was conducted for the beneficiaries of

Kaliyapettai village at Sukkankollai farm. On 24th, 25th and 26th January, farmers of Chithravadi, Kolathancherry, Kaliyapettai and Esoor villages were taken for an exposure visit to the organic farm in Puliankudi village. On 17th and 24th February, two trainings were conducted for the farmers of Kolathancherry and Kaliyapettai villages respectively. Participants were trained on topics such as, biological methods of pest control, internal organic standards, soil conservation and biopesticide preparation. Seed banks constructed at Kaliyapettai and Chithravadi villages were inaugurated on 17th and 24th January respectively. Construction of seed bank in Kolathancherry village is nearing completion.

#### Vrkshayurveda for Vegetables

This project is being implemented with support from DST. As a part of this project, in Agani experiments are being conducted to control sucking pests in bhendi. In Agani, PKM-1 tomato seedlings are raised in pots under shade house conditions. Fumigation experiments are being conducted in brinjal seeds using *Vasambu* powder. On 27th February, training for data collection on pest and disease infestation was conducted for our Sirkazhi field staff by Prof. Selvamuthukumaran of Entomology Department, Annamalai University. On 28th February and 2nd March, two trainings were conducted on organic vegetable cultivation for the beneficiaries of Adhamangalam, Kandamangalam, Agani and Pagasalai villages respectively. In Agani, Adhamangalam, Allankadu, Allivilagam and Nallavinayagapuram villages. Nearly 15 farmers have taken up organic vegetable cultivation in 195 cents. An organic farmers sangam was established in Pagasalai village. To this sangam, a hand sprayer and vegetable seeds were given.

## DST Project on Storage Forms of Biopesticides

A DST supported project on storage forms of biopesticides is being implemented in Sirkazhi from September 2005. Aphids and armyworms that are being reared are now in the 76th and 4th lab generation respectively. Bioassays are being conducted in armyworms using extracts of castor, kandankathari, chilli and *Sida* kashayam. A report on effect of biopesticides based on our experiments has been completed. *Epilachna* beetles are being reared in brinjal seedlings. In Allivilagam village, cotton has been cultivated in 33 cents for the experimental purpose. On 7th March, P. Shobana went to Murugappa Chettiar Research Center in Chennai to get information regarding growing fungus under lab conditions.

## Technology Resource Centre Activities

The Technology Resource Centre activities of CIKS commenced from October 2005. As a part of this programme, organic farming technologies have been implemented in Thiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai and Kancheepuram districts. Under this project, nearly 20 beneficiaries are involved in the production of compost, vermicompost, preparation of plant extracts, cultivation of Azolla, sun hemp, fodder crops, organic cultivation of vegetables and traditional paddy varieties, poultry farming and maintenance of demo herbal and kitchen gardens. Construction of a training center has been completed.

## Work in Progress at Sukkankollai

In our experimental farm at Sukkankollai, VRI-2 groundnut variety has been cultivated in one acre. Nine different traditional paddy varieties have been cultivated in the field. Leaf spot disease in these traditional paddy varieties has been controlled by cow's urine and buttermilk solution and panchagavya. Cabbage and cauliflower have been planted in one cent under the shade house conditions. Diamond back moth and Tobacco cutworm infestation in cabbage and cauliflower have been controlled by *Andrographis* extract and Panchathiktha kashayam respectively. Tomato has been cultivated in 50 cents to test the effect of biopesticides on fruit borer. Fumigation experiments have been conducted in tomato using sweet flag and *Vaividanga*.

# NEWSROOM

**Happenings and more.**

### DST Meeting at Trichy

The Department of Science and Technology has funded a coordinated programme on sustainable utilization of medicinal plants to a group of thirteen organizations in seven different states. A group-monitoring workshop to review the progress of this project was held in Trichy, on 10th and 11th January hosted by the organization - LEAD in Trichy. At the invitation of the DST, A. V. Balasubramanian participated in the workshop.

### Virtual Conference on Medicinal Plants

At the invitation of M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, on 18th January, A. V. Balasubramanian participated in a virtual conference on medicinal plants. The conference was a discussion between members of three teams of scientists from - MSSRF, Chennai, Arya Vaidya Sala, Kotakkal, Kerala and ISRO, Bangalore on the theme of medicinal plants.

### Visit of Scientists from NCIPM

On 23rd January, Dr. Amerika Singh, Director and Dr. O. P. Sharma, Scientist from the National Centre for Integrated Pest Management, ICAR New Delhi visited our Centre. There was a discussion meeting with the technical staff and we made a presentation regarding the work being done by our centre particularly with respect to crop protection. Following this, Prof. Amerika Singh made a presentation regarding the various programmes of NCIPM. Subsequently, on 24th January the two scientists visited our experimental farm in Kancheepuram district. Currently we are exploring specific ways in which CIKS can work together with NCIPM in areas of mutual interest.

### Review Meeting at MCRC

On 8th February, A. V. Balasubramanian visited A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre (MCRC) at the invitation of their Chairman, Mr. M. V. Murugappan. The Centre has formulated a perspective plan of the work to be undertaken by them during the next

few years and they had hosted a half day meeting to obtain some inputs from some well wishers for their work, as part of which A. V. Balasubramanian was also invited for the meeting. Mr. Muthu of CCD, Madurai, Mr. Antonysamy of Vivasaya Seva Sangam, Puliangudi and Mr. Ramakrishna of Madras Naturalist Society were also present for the meeting.

### Compas Partners Meeting in Sri Lanka

A. V. Balasubramanian attended the COMPAS Asian partners meeting at Tholangamuwa at Sri Lanka between 12th and 16th February. The objective of the meeting was to review the performance of the existing partners during the project period that has just concluded in December 2006 and also make plans for the new COMPAS programme that is commencing in 2007. The meeting was attended by the existing COMPAS partners from India and Sri Lanka as well as prospective new partners who have been identified in Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Japan. Mr. Wim Hiemstra, International Coordinator, Mr. Claire Boonzaaijer, COMPAS Netherlands and Mr. Mark Lemmerink from Portugal also attended the meeting.

### Lead Team from Trichy

On 23rd February, Ms. Radha, Chairperson, LEAD, Trichy visited our Centre along with a team of about ten persons who are involved in various programmes of the organization. They had a discussion with the CIKS team at Chennai, following which they went for a field visit. On 24th February, there was a follow up meeting where the Chairperson Ms. Radha had a discussion with us about the possible ways in which they could collaborate in our programmes.

### TALK TO US

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# BOOKSTORE

*New publications and audiovisuals*

## Organic Cultivation Techniques Tomato, Bhendi, Groundnut (in Tamil)



These booklets provide information on the organic cultivation techniques of the three main crops namely tomato, bhendi and groundnut. They also give complete information from land selection to harvest. Steps to be followed in organic pest and disease management and preparation and use of biopesticides have also been dealt in detail.

**Price : Rs. 25/- (each)**

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

- On 8th January, Dr. Kerry Cochrane, Course Coordinator of the Bachelors Programme on Ecological Agriculture, Charles Stuart University, Orange, Australia visited us.
- On 18th January, Dr. V. Annamalai from NIRD, Hyderabad visited our farm and project villages to evaluate the project activities.
- On 23rd January, Dr. T. T. Ranganathan, Professor, Faculty of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul, Tamilnadu visited us.
- On 25th January, Mr. A. S. Balanathan, IFC, Chairman, TAFCORD - Forest Plantation Corporation of Tamilnadu visited us.
- On 31st January, Prof. M. Ravindran, RuTAG (Rural Development Action Group), IIT Chennai visited us.
- On 15th February, Ms. Shalini Bhutani from GRAIN India visited us.
- On 20th February, Mr. Ebrahim Mohamed, Advisor, Muslim aid, UK visited us.
- On 16th March, our trustee Mr. Darshan Shanker visited us.
- On 17th March, Mrs. Menaka Desikachar visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai.
- On 17th March, a group of 17 members from the State Department of Agriculture visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai.
- On 24th March, a group of 90 students from CSI Ewarts Women's Christian College, Melrosapuram visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai.
- On 27th March, Ms. Preetha Srinivasan of e-page maker visited us to discuss regarding a database on organic farmers.

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