



CIKS NEWS

The CIKS quarterly newsletter

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CIKS - THE FIRST DECADE

It's a big year for CIKS - we're now ten years old. Looking back, it's been a decade of great memories, considerable growth, challenging work and valuable lessons. An anniversary such as this is an opportunity to reflect, take stock and set fresh goals. It's a time for celebration, renewal, and expression of gratitude to all those who made it possible for us to be here today.

Since its inception in 1995, the centre has grown from a single office operation to an organisation with five offices (four field stations apart from the Chennai office) and 35 staff members. We now work in over 125 villages in five districts all over Tamil Nadu. Our programmes have reached out to over 10,000 farmers in the region. With traditional agriculture as our key focus area, we aim to provide complete, workable solutions to the farming community.

Here are some of the significant milestones we have reached over the years :

- *We have developed organic farming packages for rice and cotton that give yields on par with those of high yielding varieties. These packages have provided*



food and livelihood security, particularly for small and marginal farmers.

- *We have tested out a pilot programme for bringing organic food to the consumer at reasonable prices.*

(continued overleaf)

THANK YOU.

We could never have come this far without the support of countless friends and well-wishers who continue to help us in so many ways. We would like to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

(continued from page 1)

- *We have applied Vrکشayurveda successfully for pest control and crop protection, and have set up village based biopesticide units building on these practices.*

- *Our publications and solutions have been widely recognized as being user friendly and easy to understand. Currently we have 75 publications to our credit. We have also produced three educational films which are very popular with the farmers.*

- *Government agencies like DST and CAPART have increased their support for CIKS projects.*

- *We are the Asian coordinator for COMPAS - a worldwide project that links like-minded organisations in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America.*

- *Support from farmers and local people is extremely encouraging. Farmers have provided land for setting up biopesticide units, rural libraries and community storage structures.*

As we look forward to the future, there are encouraging signs. The overall awareness levels, both among farmers and lay people, about the hazards of chemical farming methods is at an unprecedented high. This makes the community at large receptive to indigenous organic agricultural methods and practices.

Among the plans we have for the immediate future are

- *Preliminary work in the area of evolution of certification procedures that have an Indian identity*

- *Evolving a consensus about the need for standards and accreditation in this area*

- *Setting up of a clearinghouse of information on sustainable agriculture*

- *Setting up a training college for imparting education on sustainable agriculture*

It's an exciting time ahead, and we hope that the coming years will be as fulfilling as the ones gone by.

The all-new ciks.org is here.

If you've visited our web site in the past few days, you would have noticed that much has changed. The new look web site has been designed to provide a better user experience overall - with updated information, new content and a completely revamped interface.

First, a little history. When we launched the CIKS web site five years ago, we hoped that it would be a useful tool for conveying information about the organization to a wider range of people. However, the growth of the site into an integral part of the organization was much faster than we expected - before we knew it we were receiving numerous queries from the web site regarding our activities, publications, etc. Many people from around the world began using the web site as a primary means of staying in touch with us. Today, the site continues to grow (as evidenced by our server traffic, which doubled in the past two years) into a comprehensive and reliable source of information about CIKS.

Now, users can download extracts from selected CIKS publications from the web site. We have included extracts from some of our recent and popular publications to begin with. In future, a greater number of book extracts will be available for download.

Another exciting feature is the video theatre, where users can view and download clips from CIKS audio-visual productions. As we are planning to produce a number of video films and multimedia titles, we have used the web site as a platform to give people a glimpse of these productions.

We hope that the new design will make the site more efficient, useful and user-friendly.

Tsunami Relief and CIKS

The Tsunami which hit the East Coast of India on 26th December has left in its wake a devastating trail of death, disruption and dislocation. Ever since that fateful weekend, at the centre we have been deluged by emails and phone calls from friends and well wishers in various parts of India and abroad with anxious enquiries for our safety and offers for help with money, material and volunteers. As an immediate measure CIKS decided to take up some short term relief work in the districts of Kancheepuram where we have our experimental farm and field office and Nagapattinam where we have a field office in the town of Sirkazhi.

Currently the activities that have been taken up by our Centre are of the following nature -

- *Collection of material that is required for immediate relief in the relief camps that have been set up such as food and clothing*

- *Certain immediate follow up measures to assist families who are now being rehabilitated either in temporary shelters or in their own villages by arranging for basic kitchenware and provisions to help them get started.*

- *Coordinating with individuals and groups from outside Tamilnadu who are offering help and directing them to suitable spots and agencies where help is required.*

- *In the Nagapattinam district we are coordinating with certain relief agencies to identify specific villages in areas where particular needs have been felt as well as carrying out surveys in the affected areas to identify the nature of the need and to assist in the preparation of proposals and request for relief.*



About a hundred shelters such as these have been built and allotted to families in Pudukuppam, near Sirkazhi.

It is seen that there is also likely to be some impact of a long term nature on coastal agricultural activities due to reasons such as incursion of salt water in some farming areas and we are currently engaged in a preliminary assessment of this situation. We have also been approached by the Science and Society Division of the Department of Science and Technology which is planning to launch integrated multi sector projects for areas that have been hit by the Tsunami, to participate in their effort.



The CIKS staff are involved in collecting data in affected areas to identify the needs of tsunami victims.



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

Training Programme for Seed Conservers

CIKS has been implementing a project for "Enhancing Livelihood and Food Security through Capacity Building for Organic Farming and Natural Resource Management" in the villages of Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur and Thiruvannamalai districts. Under this project, 30 farmers in each district would be trained for a period of two years.

As a part of this programme, trainers training programmes were conducted for all the three districts in the month of December. The importance of indigenous varieties and use of herbs were highlighted in these trainings. Farmers were trained to prepare botanicals and compost. There was also a session on production of vegetable seeds and a discussion on impact of modern agriculture. Two day short term training programmes were also conducted in various villages of the three districts in October, November and December. Medicinal plant saplings have been distributed to the farmers in Kancheepuram district. In-situ seed conservation centres have also been set up in selected farmers fields in Thiruvallur and Thiruvannamalai. In Kancheepuram district, the conservation centre has been established in the CIKS experimental farm.

Enhancing Livelihood Security of Small and Marginal Farmers

CIKS has been implementing a two year project for "Enhancing Livelihood Security of Small and Marginal Farmers" in three villages of Thirukazhukundram block with support from CAPART. This project is being implemented through the organic farmers sangams that has been set up in Anoor, Alavai and Venpakkam villages.

Under this project, 120 vermicompost tanks have been constructed for the beneficiaries of all the three villages. The sangam members of Alavai and Venpakkam have constructed a building for the rural library. The books and other infrastructure for the library were provided by CIKS.

DST Organic Cotton Programme

Under the DST supported project on "Organic Cotton Cultivation in three different agroclimatic zones of Tamilnadu", inputs for cultivating organic cotton have been distributed to the farmers in Dindigul district. A one day training programme on 'organic cotton cultivation' was held in Ammainayaganur village on 13th November. About 45 farmers from five different villages of Dindigul district participated in this meeting. This meeting was coordinated by John Peter.

Under the same programme, 11 farmers from the Nilakottai taluka in Dindigul district were provided with pheromone traps and lures. In Nagapattinam district, 30 farmers from 3 villages have been selected for training on organic cotton cultivation.

Work at Insect Rearing Laboratory

Under the Compas programme, an insect rearing lab has been set up in the field station at Sirkazhi. Bioassay tests using *Andrographis paniculata* have been completed. Dr. Arivudai Nambi of the Entomology Department, Annamalai University visited our insect rearing laboratory on 4th December and provided suggestions for larval rearing. On 15th December Dr. Padma Venkat from FRLHT, Bangalore visited the laboratory and gave detailed guidance regarding its maintenance and provided suggestions on scientific procedures. She also visited our biopesticide unit at Agani.

Compas Institutional Development

A.V. Balasubramanian had a meeting with Dr. Vijaya Padaki of P&P Group, who is the Institutional Consultant for the COMPAS Institutional Development on 24th December at Bangalore. They reviewed the reports that have been received from the Regional Consultant and the two other reports that have been commissioned and

agreed on the plan of work during the immediate future period.

Total Conversion to Organic Farming

Under the Compas programme, 3 farmers in Narapakkam village are being provided support for complete conversion to organic farming. The experiences of the farmers during the previous season were documented and nurseries were raised for the coming season.

Vrkshayurveda for Vegetable Cultivation

CIKS has launched a new DST project on "Use of Vrkshayurveda for vegetable cultivation" from December 2004. A baseline survey was conducted in the nearby villages for selection of beneficiaries. Subhashini Sridhar and P. Kiruthika from our Sirkazhi unit visited the Paloor Vegetable Research Station in Cuddalore district and collected information regarding the wild vegetable varieties and package of practices. Our staff also visited the Olericulture Department, Panjanco at Karaikkal.

Biopesticide Unit Constructed

Under the Hivos project, 10 organic farmers sangams were formed in Madurantakam taluka. Based on the assessment of the performance of these sangams, Vinayaganallur village was selected for setting up of a biopesticide unit. This unit has been constructed.

At Sukkankollai Farm

21 varieties of indigenous paddy cultivated in the experimental farm at Sukkankollai have been harvested. Nearly 4000 medicinal plant saplings have been raised for distribution to the beneficiaries.

NEW PROJECT MONITOR

- CIKS has been sanctioned a new project for "Production and Distribution of a set of three Audiovisuals (30 minutes each) on Organic Rice Cultivation" from the Royal Netherlands Embassy.
- CIKS has begun work on a new project from the Cotton Wood Foundation, USA for "Establishment of a Green Manure village in Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu". The main objective of the project is to help a group of 40 farmers to cultivate green manure crops on a sustainable basis by providing inputs and training. This would serve as input for organic farming and also generate income for the farmers.



Biopesticide units such as this one are being constructed in a number of villages. Under the HIVOS project, one unit was constructed recently at Vinayaganallur village in Madurantakam taluka.

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more.

Meeting at Kolkatta

A livelihood learning group meeting was conducted by Ford Foundation between 6th and 8th of October at Kolkatta. K. Vijayalakshmi participated in this meeting and had interaction with various groups involved in livelihood promotion programmes.

Kolam Group

On 11th October, Mr. Ranjit Henry of Kolam visited our office along with the members of the Fair Trade group, England. A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation to them on indigenous systems of health care.

At Madras Christian College

On 18th October A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation on "Indian systems of healthcare" to a group of undergraduate students from the USA who are spending a semester in India as part of the Davidson College - MCC programme.

Training on First Aid

A programme on first aid was conducted for the farmers and our field staff at Sirkazhi on 24th of October. Dr. V. Lakshmi Narasimhan was the resource person and he explained and demonstrated in detail various first aid measures.

At Tirunelveli

On 26th October at the request of CAPART, A.V. Balasubramanian carried out a prefunding assessment of a proposal submitted to CAPART Public Cooperation Programme at Tirunelveli. This proposal was

submitted by the Action Group for Rural Organisation (AGRO), an organisation based at Tirunelveli

IPM Programme at Bangalore

Subhashini Sridhar participated in a two day workshop on Integrated Pest Management conducted by Green Foundation at Bangalore. Subhashini Sridhar and C. Sathya demonstrated different techniques for non-chemical pest control. Thirty farmers from Karnataka participated in this workshop.

Talk on Vrکشayurveda

"Sruti Prakasika 2004", a national seminar on Ayurveda was organised by Sri Jayendra Saraswathi College of Ayurveda at Chennai. In this seminar, A.V. Balasubramanian gave a talk on - "Vrکشayurveda: Traditional Indian Plant Science" to the students and faculty of Ayurveda Colleges from various parts of the country.

At Bangalore

A.V. Balasubramanian was at Bangalore between 2nd and 4th November. He had meetings with Mr. Biswadeep Ghose of Hivos to discuss the possibility of a follow up project after completion of the current assignment with Hivos.

On 3rd November he visited the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research at Hesarghatta, Bangalore to explore the possibility of exchange visits and collaboration for the project on Vrکشayurveda package for vegetables. He also visited FRLHT and met Dr. Gangadharan and Dr. Unnikrishnan regarding the COMPAS programme. On 4th November he attended the Farmers' day (Krishi Mela) exhibition that

was held at the University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK campus, Bangalore.

Visit to PERT

At the request of CAPART, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the field office of PERT (Peoples Education and Rights Trusts) on 9th November. They had submitted a project for setting up vermicompost tanks in the area.

International Symposium at Dharwad

An International symposium on strategies for sustainable cotton cultivation was held at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka between 23rd and 25th November. Subhashini Sridhar and R. Maheshwari from the Sirkazhi unit participated in the symposium and made a poster presentation regarding organic cotton cultivation. CIKS publications were also displayed in the exhibition stall.

Visit to AME Foundation

On 29th November, A.V. Balasubramanian visited AME Foundation, Bangalore and had discussion with Mr. Prasad of the foundation to explore the possibilities of linkages and collaboration.

At Delhi

On 2nd and 3rd of December, K. Vijayalakshmi visited Delhi and had a meeting with Dr. Anuj Sinha of DST to discuss a project on use of IT for training farmers. She also visited CAPART, Agriculture Census Department and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

CAPART Brainstorming Session

On 4th December, the new Director General of CAPART, Mr. L. V. Saptharishi, I.A.S., had convened a meeting with a cross section of NGOs for a brainstorming session regarding the future development of CAPART. A.V. Balasubramanian attended the meeting and made a presentation with his suggestions.

Visit to Indian Grain Storage and Research Institute

K. Vijayalakshmi and S. Arumugasamy visited the Indian Grain Storage and Research Institute, Hyderabad on 15th December to explore the possibilities of constructing suitable community storage structures based on the models developed by the Grain Storage Institute. They also had detailed discussions with the Director and the Staff of the Institute.

Board of Trustees Meeting

The CIKS board of trustees meeting was held on 18th December at Chennai. A.V. Balasubramanian, K. Vijayalakshmi, S. Arumugasamy and Subhashini Sridhar made presentations regarding the current activities and gave an overview of the Institutional development for the last ten years. This was followed by a presentation regarding some aspects of evolving norms and policies for the Centre. A discussion on how the work of the centre should be upscaled in the near future was also taken up. The suggestions for possible activities to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the centre was also reviewed.

FRLHT - GC Meeting

On 22nd December A.V. Balasubramanian visited Bangalore to attend the meeting of the General Council of the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions. In this meeting the ongoing activities and the future work plan of the Foundation for the next ten years was reviewed.

Have you
visited the
new look
ciks.org ?

VISITOR'S BOOK

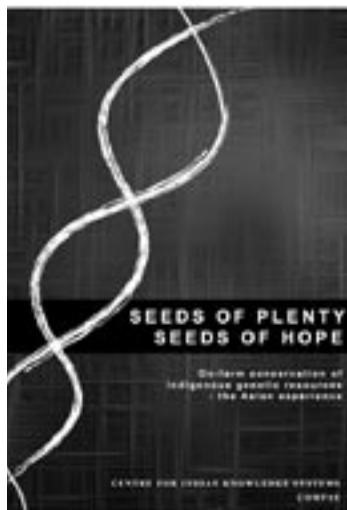
Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 20th October, Mr. Surya of Vivekananda Study Circle, IIT, Chennai visited us to invite for a meeting with the students and to address them about our work.
- On 18th November, Prof. T.T. Ranganathan, Dean, Gandhigram Rural University visited our Centre.
- On 3rd November, Dr. Bose and Dr. Thandapani of TNAU, Coimbatore visited our centre to get to know about our work.
- On 4th December Dr. Raju and Dr. Perumal of AMM Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre, visited us.
- On 6th & 7th of December, Mr. Paul ter Weel from the Royal Netherlands Embassy visited us.
- On 9th December, Mr. A. Annamalai, Director of Gandhi Study Centre visited us.
- On 21st December, Ms. Raji from Centre for World Solidarity, Hyderabad visited our field station at Sirkazhi.
- On 21st December, Mr. V.C. Natarajan from CCD, Madurai visited our field station at Kancheepuram. The next day he visited our Kotturpuram office and had a brain storming session with our staff on marketing organic products.

BOOKSTORE

New publications and audiovisuals

SEEDS OF PLENTY SEEDS OF HOPE



A large number of grass root efforts are in progress for the on-farm conservation of indigenous genetic resources. This book attempts to capture these efforts that have been in progress in Asia. The coverage of the groups involved in this effort is by no means exhaustive

and must only be considered as representative of this effort. It is hoped that the book will promote sharing and exchange of information as well as materials wherever desirable and feasible and also lead to the formation of networks and coalitions in this important area of work

Available in English only

ORGANIC PADDY CULTIVATION



This book provides detailed information on organic paddy cultivation. It provides information about seed selection techniques, seed treatment and use of organic manures to improve soil fertility. Pests and diseases affecting paddy are described in detail with their organic control measures. It also gives information on the pests attacking stored grains and their control. The latter portion of this book provides information about important indigenous paddy varieties with their special characteristics. Photographic illustrations of major pests and predators help in easy identification. Control measures are also illustrated in colour.

Available in English and Tamil

For copies of these and other publications, contact Padma at our centre or e-mail ciks@vsnl.com

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