

Kerala Balakrishi Sastra Congress

(Kerala Children's Agriculture Science Congress)

- An initiative to inculcate Agrarian culture in student community -



Prof. (Dr.) C.K. Peethambaran
Director , Agriculture Division
Center for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA)
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

<http://cissa.co.in>



The Team

- Centre for Innovation in Science & Social Action (CISSA)
- Agri Friends(NGO)
- Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) (Acknowledged by United Nations University)
- Department of Agriculture & Dept. of Education, Govt. of Kerala



Project implementation sites



All the 14 districts of Kerala state, India

KERALA: A MODEL STATE

Indicators of social development, comparable to those of many developed countries- **The Kerala Model**

- Area (In sq.km.) 38,863
- State with almost 100 per cent literacy
- First state to achieve 100% primary education
- Girls outnumber boys in educational institutions
- Wealth and resource redistribution programmes
- High levels of political participation and activism among ordinary people- initiated decentralised governance
- Per capita income was 34 per cent more than the Indian average



CRITICAL ISSUES: Unemployment; decreasing agricultural productivity and increasing mono crops

Why this project?

Why do youth alienate from agriculture ?

- State with highest degree of urbanization
- High literacy, greater skill attainment, except agriculture
- Agriculture as a science is often ignored in the mainstream curriculum
- Consumerism at the highest in India
- A false belief that agriculture is a business at loss
- The linkage of agricultural heritage is not strong in curriculum
- Search for white collar jobs only

Why this project?

The state produces only

- 10% of the paddy requirement
- 25% of Vegetables
- 30% of milk
- 40% of egg
- 10% of meat

Hence the dire need for bringing agriculture back to the mainstream developmental activity to achieve self sufficiency in food production

The project is an effort to inculcate the culture of agriculture by considering the children as ambassadors of change





**TARGET
GROUP**

School children

Age group: 06-17 years

Ambassadors of second
green revolution in
INDIA



Reach of the project

Type of School	Number of Schools	Number of students
Higher secondary	1845	308,722
High School	2874	1,445,746
Upper Primary school	2986	1,357,285
Lower Primary school	6774	1,427,280
Total	14,479	4,539,033

Reach of the project

- Children – Most influential element in the family
- Total number of students : **4.5 million**
- Even if ten percent of the students take up the mission about **450,000 new farmers are created**
- Indirectly a desirable change for 200000 families making them self-sufficient in vegetables (Assuming two kids/family)
- Has a Multiplier Effect – year after year



Steps towards realization

Conceiving the focal theme:

Brainstorming with stakeholders including organizers, school teachers, target population and resource persons



Steps towards realization

Selection and training of master trainers

- Master trainers are teachers who volunteer to help the students
- Master trainers will propagate the quintessence of the event among schools/students/parents
- Master trainers will fine tune the field trials, and nuances of research methodologies



Steps towards realization

Publicity:

Potentials of print and electronic media including the online platforms are efficiently tapped for availing necessary publicity for the event

Roadshows are carried throughout the state

Information materials including brochure, registration forms and flyers are extensively distributed



Bala Krishi Congress invites papers

Thiruvananthapuram: The seventh Kerala Bala Krishi Sastra Congress, being organized by the Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA) in association with Agri Friends Kerala (Amalakkudi) next month, has invited all papers on agriculture from students.

The Bala Krishi Sastra Congress will be held on January 10 and 11, 2017, at Jubilee Bala Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram.

Participation in Kerala Bala Krishi Sastra Congress will be open to students from aided and unaided schools, CDSs, ICSE and also vocational schools. Students who wish to make paper presentations should send in a brief summary of the topic they wish to present along with the attention of the principals of the respective schools.

The application form, which can be downloaded from www.cissa.in, along with the brief summary of each paper should be uploaded to the website before December 20, and chairman of 7th Kerala Bala Krishi Sastra Congress, C. P. Pothan.

As more as 100 research papers prepared by children from various schools in the state will be selected for presentation at the Congress and around 1,000 delegates will attend.



Steps towards realization

- Training of the school students about the project by Master Trainers
- Short listing the schools - Based on the work done, in relation with the focal themes
- Fund raising
- Selection of guests, judges for competitions
- Conduct of the event
- Preparation of the report



Components of the Congress

The congress includes

- Research Paper Presentation
- Exhibition
- Cultural Events
- Documentary film festival



Research Paper Presentations

- A team of 2-5 students under the guidance of a project guide will present the results of the study on the theme are of each leg of the Congress
- The project will be evaluated by a team of experts
- Along with emotional bondage, children are encouraged to scientifically observe the nature and arrive at certain logical conclusions
- Children get a real life knowledge of the trials and tribulations of the farmer community
- The process creates a generation possessed with right insight about social aspects of agricultural science



Presentation- My Farm

- Young student farmers who have established admirable model farms of their own at their homes or nearby places, are invited to make impressive presentations about their experiences
- Majority of such initiatives are debut attempts that provide the young farmer an early experience in life about the socio-economic significance of agriculture including the cost benefit ratio



Presentation- School Farms

Farming activities in the schools are presented by way of photographs, Charts and models
Schools turn to be living examples of agricultural practices by virtue of setting up model farms and gardens
For majority of modern-day students, who dwells at futuristic apartments and residential areas, such school farms provide the essential hands on feel of what agriculture is all about



Theme based exhibition

- Exhibits are presented based on an Agricultural theme- either individually or as a team from school
- Traditional kitchen utensils, local crops and tubers, farm implements and innovative ideas meant for improving farmer life



Cultural Event

Regaining those values washed away for sheer neglect and upscale modernization

- **Folk Music, Dance**

Kerala is popular for its own local folk art traditions among which peasant songs and dances have got a cardinal place. Yet new generation students are painfully unaware of this rich tradition and their role in fostering the agrarian ethos.

Koythupattu (Harvest song)

Njattuvelapattu (Ushering in good climate)



Cultural Event

Regaining those values washed away for sheer neglect and upscale modernization

- **Drawing/Painting/Video documentaries and Essays**

As an aftermath of prolific expansion of cities and towns, children lack any imagination of the natural agrarian settings.

Hence the need for exciting their brain so as to explore their imaginative power and document the best representations of the agriculture life around them.



Cultural Event

Regaining those values washed away for sheer neglect and upscale modernization

- **Brief Skits/Elocutions**

In order to provide enough chance for venting out their creative thoughts about the value of agriculture and farmer community.

World over peasant communication and jargons remain unique to each locality and Kerala is no exception.

This slot provides an opportunity for children to seek and visualize such farmer community uniqueness.



Cultural Event

Regaining those values washed away for sheer neglect and upscale modernization

- **Cookery**

Culinary diversity is specific to regions

Age old truth: Region-specific food is one of the determining factors of the public health

Monopolistic branding has narrowed down the culinary diversity into certain packaged food items

A strong challenge for the biodiversity

Child participants are encouraged to interact with elderly personalities and tryout some of the timeless culinary heritage



Awards



Outcome of the Project

THE HINDU

Vegetable farming taken to schools

Thiruvananthapuram: Children in many city schools may proudly supply vegetables to their families for a sumptuous feast this Onam. Minister for Agriculture Mullakara Ratnakaran on Friday inaugurated a scheme

Learn ABC of farming... in schools

==THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The city Corporation has launched a school-level project to encourage students to take up vegetable cultivation and promote organic farming practices.

Kerala School to Introduce Sustainable Agriculture as Subject -

In a landmark move, a **school** in **Kerala** is all set to introduce sustainable **agriculture** courses into its Plus Two syllabus to help achieve Goal ...

Outcome of the Project

THE  NEW

INDIAN EXPRESS

- Attitudinal change among students- Prepared to take agriculture seriously
- Schools become self sufficient in vegetables for mid day meal programme
- Social change- More households start farming
- Self sufficiency in vegetables/poultry- More number of kitchen gardens
- Change towards organic farming

Outcome of the Project

- Willingness to work in group
- Inculcate scientific thinking among students
- Develop confidence in public presentation
- Village students get an opportunity to establish peer interaction with their urban counterparts
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Preservation of native seeds
- Popularization of good food movement

The Road Ahead

- Campaigning and exerting pressure upon policy makers for incorporating agriculture in school syllabi
- More grass root penetration through regional involvement from schools
- **Replanting the event to more cities**
- **Imparting the concept of Earn while you Learn among students**
- **Ensuring self sufficiency in fruits and vegetables through homestead gardens**
- Maintaining and documenting of biodiversity through student participation



A person wearing a white shirt and a dark cap is plowing a field with two oxen. The oxen are harnessed together and pulling a wooden plow. The field is green and appears to be a rural setting. The text is overlaid on the image.

Young buds bloom along sustainable arenas

Let us sow the noble thoughts and reap
sustainable solutions

Let the little hands hold together to save
Mother Earth

Thank you for your kind attention

