

Echoes of Eco

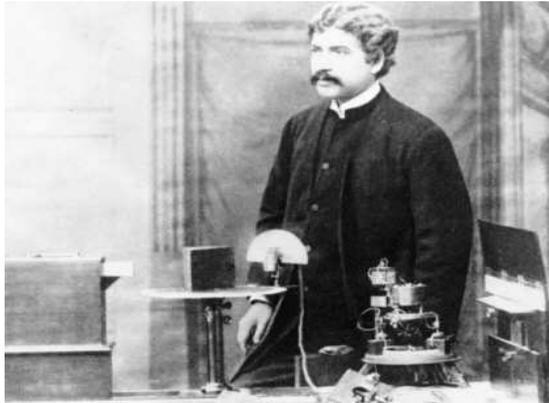


March, 2010

Vivekananda Kendra- **nardep** Newsletter

Vol:2 No:1

He was ahead of Science



One of the worst things that can befall on great minds is that they will not be understood for a long time. This is true of spirituality; this is true of art and surprisingly this is also true of science.

Jagadish Chandra Bose is one such brilliant mind in science for whom western scientific thinking was simply not prepared yet to understand. To do so the Cartesian mind steeped in Newtonian physics would have had to discard the binaries of spirit and matter.

Bose was a great synthesizer and visionary and his scientific vision simply neglected the arbitrary boundaries that separated the animate and inanimate. It was too revolutionary for his times and even now. Further he was a young scientist from a colonized nation who was breaking new ground in a colonial state.

In his Presidential Address to the Indian Science Congress of 1927 aptly titled Unity of Life, Bose spoke of reviving the tradition of ancient Taxila .

He spoke of the need for those essentially Eastern way of thinking -imaginative and metaphysical which he considered as "particularly suited to biological work." "In order to discover the life mechanism in the interior of the tree one has to become the tree and feel the throbbing of its beating heart..."

Tagore the poet who proclaimed the Upanishadic truth as "whatever that in this world vibrates with life, the life that is one in the infinite" watched eagerly the way the science of Bose was revealing this truth. He wrote that he "expected that the idea of the boundless community of life in the world was on the verge of a final sanction from the logic of scientific verification."

Bose was misinterpreted even by his admirers as vitalist and hence his pioneering understanding of the fundamentals of plant neuro-biology had to wait another half a century before today's science is re-affirming with toddler's steps what the seer of science predicted with his crude instruments almost more than half a decade ago.

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The Kindness of Trees



Five sorts of kindness are the daily sacrifice of the trees. To families they give fuel; to passers by they give shade and a resting place; to birds they give shelter; with their leaves, roots, and bark they give medicines.

- Varaha Purāna 162.41-42



All things are parts of one single system, which is called Nature; the individual life is good when it is in harmony with Nature. - Zeno



Building Grassroots level organizations for Sustainable Agriculture-I

Kozhikodupothai is a village of 150 households. The village is by the side of a roadway that connects it to the town Thovalai. Thovalai is the town that hosts the largest flower market in South India. The result has been that the paddy fields of Kozhikodupothai slowly started becoming rose fields. Rose cultivation brought with it excessive chemical farming which in turn scorched the soil and the huge initial profits slowly started plummeting and the farmers started getting loans from money lenders in nearby towns. They were immersing themselves into an ever downward spiraling vicious cycle. It was then that in 2004 Vivekananda Kendra – Natural Resources Development Project (VK-NARDEP) started its interventions in the village.

However low cost technological innovations alone do not work and hence VK-NARDEP started organizing fortnightly farmers' meetings. These meetings comprised of the farmers who were ready to take up low cost interventions in their fields and were ready to reduce external inputs like chemical fertilizers. Initially the farmers came in small numbers. Soon twenty farmers became active participants. VK-NARDEP provided them each with a small basket based vermicompost unit. If they found it useful then they could go for the construction of a larger vermicompost tank with the capacity of 1 ton, they were told.

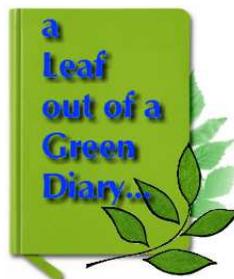
The fortnightly meetings soon became week-end meetings. The farmers compared notes and experiences. Soon we found that 13 farmers volunteered for the construction of vermicompost tank. This was followed by the formation of a farmers' club and a common resource centre.

The common resource centre consists of tools that the farmers need often in their work. Barrels were provided for community preparation of cattle-dung based liquid fertilizers and growth promoters like PanchaGavya. Those who used the services of this common resource centre have to pay a nominal service fees which was saved in the name of the farmers' association. The farmers association named 'Vivekananda farmers association' soon became very famous as its members started attracting the attention of neighborhood villages. People came here to purchase vermicompost and liquid bio-fertilizers.

Meanwhile the NABARD manager from Nagercoil came to know of the efforts being done by the farmers of Kozhikodupothai. So much impressed was he that he contacted VK-NARDEP and arranged for a meeting with the farmers. On his advice the farmers association got it registered with the NABARD and also formed some male SHG groups. They were also registered with the NABARD. This is the first such formation of purely farmers association to have a NABARD connection.

When VK-NARDEP first approached the farmers for biogas plants most of the farmers declined citing time and maintenance as the limiting factors in having the biogas plants. However the popularization of the biogas slurry based value added bio-inputs for agriculture among the farmers through weekly meets and action plans, we soon discovered that almost all the farmers have accepted backyard Azolla cultivation.

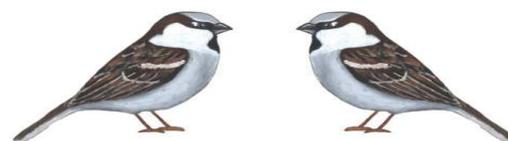
[To be continued]



This month...



- This month the Green Health Home at Vivekanandapuram functioned for 9 days and treated 237 patients



Transforming a village from the roots above:



Kozhikottupothai: From under-the tree meetings to common resource center – How the grassroots involvement gradually evolved to boost sustainable agriculture

The sun, with all those plants revolving around it and dependent upon it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do. – Galileo Galilee



Commissioning of Shakti Surabhi bio- methanation plant at Vivekananda Ashram, Vellimalai, Kanyakumari District.



Organic Farming Workshop at TRC



Officials of Tamilnadu Civil supplies Department doing Yogasanas as a part of the training.

This month... Water



- ❖ Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist – programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai

Sustainable Agriculture: Events this Month

- ❖ Workshop on “Azolla Cultivation” was held for 21 persons from ATMA, Parasalai (Kerala) at TRC, Kalluvilai on 8th March for which Smt.S.Premalatha was the resource person.
- ❖ An awareness camp was on “Livestock Management” (FTTF) (sponsored by NABARD, Chennai) was held at Kozhikottupottai, Kanyakumari Dist. on 8th this month for 8 livestock farmers and the Resource Person was Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai.
- ❖ A workshop on “Api Culture” (VDP) (sponsored by NABARD, Chennai) was held at Kozhikottupottai, Kanyakumari Dist. from 8th to 11th of this month for 20 farmers. It was coordinated by Sri.S.Rajamony.



Apiculture training for the farmers of Kozikottupothai under Village Development Programme of NABARD.

- ❖ The 29th Dist. Mission Committee Meeting of the Kanyakumari district Dept. of Horticulture, Govt. of Tamilnadu was held at Collector’s Chamber, Nagercoil on 19th of this month and was attended by Sis.V.Saraswathi.
- ❖ Workshop on “Organic Farming” was conducted on 22nd this month at TRC, Kalluvilai(organized by Indian Farm Forestry Devpt. Co-operative Ltd., Karaikudi, Sivagangai Dist.) It was attended by 20 persons. The Resource Persons were Shri.S.Rajamony and S.Premalatha
- ❖ The Workshop on “Azolla Cultivation” was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 25th and 5 persons attended it and the Resource Person was Smt.S.Premalatha



Green Health Home at work - Dr.Ganapathy with patients



Organic Farming workshop: women participants



Shakthi Surabhi Training

Holistic Health: Activities this Month.



- In the Awareness programme on “Medicinal Herbs” (conducted by Tamilnadu Traditional Healers Association, Vellore and Chinnam Organisation, Thiruvannamalai at the Field Office of Publicity Dept., Govt. of India) Dr.V.Ganapathy gave a lecture on “Miraculous healing effects of herbals and modern trends in traditional herbal medicines”. The event was held on second of this month. 350 participants benefited from the programme.
- A paper was presented by Dr.V.Ganapathy on “Traditional Wisdom - Bio-manure and Herbal Bio-manures” at the National workshop for farmers – “Modern Trends in the Production of Bio-manures”, held by Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India, at the venue of Periyar Maniammai University, Vallam, Thanjavore during 19th and 20th March. There were 300 participants.

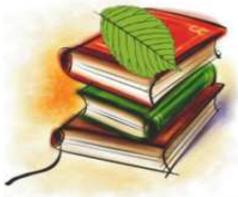
Networking and Media this month .



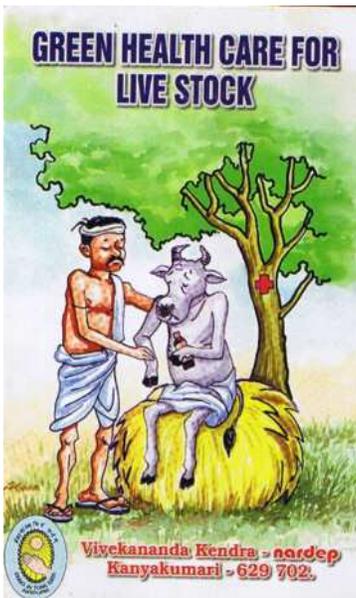
- ❖ On 2nd of this month 40 Students from Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil, visited our Gramodaya Park to study the Rural technologies.
- ❖ 26 participants (officials from Tamilnadu Civil Supply Dept., Chennai) underwent Training programme on “Public Distribution System and Human Relations” at TRC, Kalluvilai from 5th to 7th. Again another batch of 26 officials attended this programme from 12th to 14th.
- ❖ In the State Level Annual meeting of the Centre for World Solidarity, Tamilnadu Resource Center, Gandigram, held at Vivekanandapuram on 27th Shri.G.Vasudeo presented a paper on “Samagra Vikas”.



The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction. – Rachel Carson



From Our Publications



Green Health Care for Livestock is a well-researched, easily understandable richly illustrated hand book for marginal dairy farmers and also extension workers working with marginal dairy farmers.

The book covers cattle care, both preventive and curative. All the suggested medicines can be prepared from locally available materials. These medicines more suitable to livestock in Indian climate can be prepared based on locally available plants and they also leave no side effect.

Given the aggressive commercial approach of the corporate pharmaceuticals this book is a boon to the field of sustainable

livestock farmers and those interested in promoting sustainable agriculture.

The book is rich in content and the concepts are explained lucidly through highly creative and communicative cartoons.

The book is the result of the churning of highly authoritative traditional Siddha treatises on livestock healthcare like Pasu Vaidhya Chintamani, Agasthya Mattu Vakadam, Pasu Roga Nidhanam etc.

This book is a must for anyone who wants to take care of the health of the cattle in a cost effective manner and in a holistic way making use of local resources.

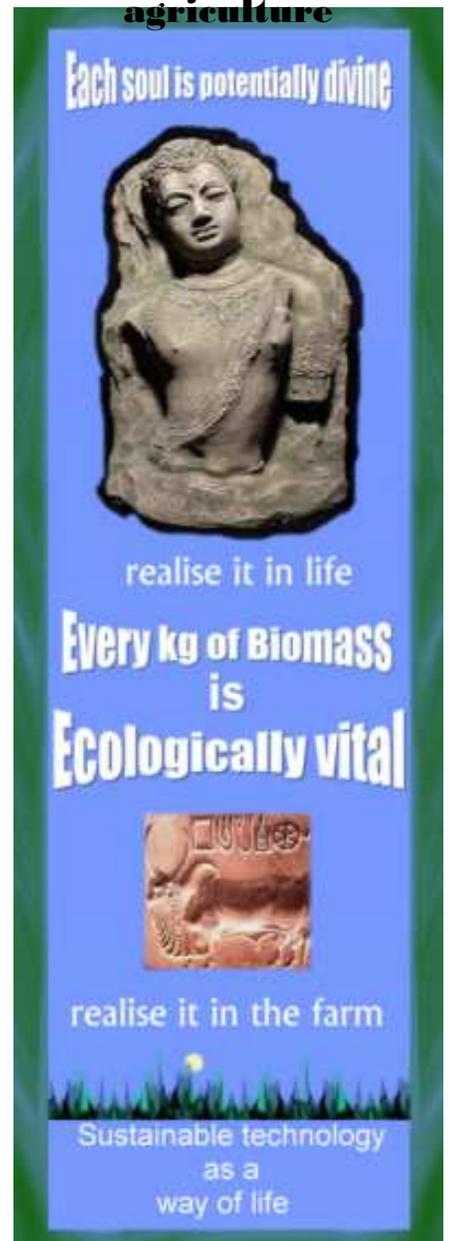
Sixteen common ailments of livestock and their treatment have been enlisted in this with a detailed description of required drugs which is usually locally available herbs, preparation method, dosage, secondary preparation if any as well as third preparation and the duration in which it has to be administered.

The book has good and humorous cartoons which makes its reading a pleasure for a common man. It also makes the book attractive for students who may be interested in the subject. There is a glossary of 62 herbs that can be commonly used for the livestock treatment. This book is authored by Dr.V.Ganapathi – an eminent Siddha doctor and researcher.

Author: Dr.V.Ganapathi
Pages: 40
Price rs.25/-



Biomass –spirit of agriculture



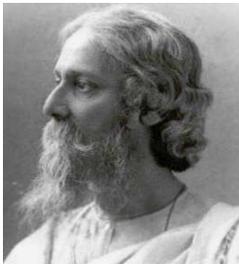
When we acknowledge that all of life is sacred and that each act is an act of choice and therefore sacred, then life is a sacred dance lived consciously each moment. When we live at this level, we participate in the creation of a better world. – Native American Elder



What is wrong with our education

...At half past ten, in the morning the factory opens with the ringing of a bell, and then as the teachers start talking, the machines start working. The teachers stop talking at four in the afternoon when the factory closes and the pupils then go home carrying with them a few pages of machine made learning...From Childhood to adolescence and again from adolescence to manhood, we are coolies of the goddess of learning, carrying loads of words on our folded backs...Ancestors in India cared little for social formalities and much for social duties but we do the opposite... Economic forces compel the teachers of today to look for pupils, but in the natural order of thing it is the pupil who should look for the teacher. The teacher is now a tradesman, a vendor of education in search of customers.

- *Tagore*
Poet

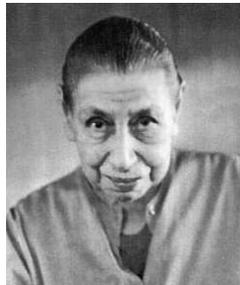


Real Education

To learn for the sake of knowledge, to study in order to know the secrets of Nature and life, to educate oneself in order to grow in consciousness, to discipline oneself in order to become master of oneself, to overcome one's weaknesses, incapacities and ignorance, to prepare oneself to advance in life towards a goal that is nobler and vaster, more generous and more true....

In a general way, education, culture, and refinement of the sense are the means of curing movements of crude instinct and desire and passion. To obliterate them is not curing them; instead they should be cultivated, intellectualized, refined. That is the surest way of curing them. To give them their maximum growth in view of the progress and development of consciousness, so that one may attain to a sense of harmony and exactitude of perception is a part of culture and education for the human being.

- *Mother*
Spiritualist



Studying Relationships

To understand ecosystems, then, we need to understand relationships. That's a key aspect of the new thinking. Also, always keep in the back of your minds that when I talk about ecosystems I'm talking about communities. The reason we're studying ecosystems here is, so that we can learn about building sustainable human communities.

So we need to understand relationships, and this is something that runs counter to the traditional scientific enterprise in Western culture. Traditionally in science, we have tried to measure and weigh things, but relationships cannot be measured and weighed. Relationships need to be mapped. You can draw a map of relationships that shows the connections between different elements or different members of the community. When you do that, you discover that certain configurations of relationships appear again and again.

- *Frijof Capra*
Physicist

