

*Sattvik 2005, the third Traditional Food Festival opened the eyes of the urban consumer to the nutritive value of traditional and organically grown grains, while simultaneously providing a platform for the rural producers to directly sell their produce in the urban market. The purpose was also to test the consumer response to different varieties of minor and major crops so that market based incentives could be generated for conservation of agro-biodiversity.*

**A**round 22,000 visitors thronged the campus of the Indian Institute of Management, on 10 and 11 December 2005, when the third Traditional Food Festival Sattvik was organized by SRISTI, NIF, GIAN and IIM. The venue was an enchanting spectacle, with a wide spread of culinary delicacies on either side, even as the center space was devoted to grassroots innovations. The festival posed certain fundamental questions about the kind of foods



Visitors at the traditional food festival

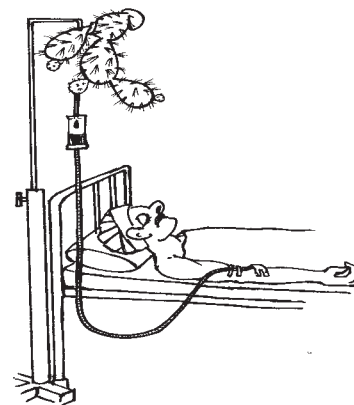
we consume and how we could make it more healthy and nutritious. In the process, could we also ensure that the poor farmers who cultivate such healthy food grains get a fair share of the profits? The food festival aims to generate market based incentives for such lesser known, organically grown crops and their varieties. After

all, unless the urban consumers start demanding these grains, the income will never flow from our pockets to the small and experimenting farmers. In most cases, the grains grown by these farmers are not only more nutritious, but are also ‘compulsively’ organic, because many of the farmers cannot afford to use any chemical growth promoters or pesticides.

Over 60 farmers, including many women, as well as entrepreneurs, Civil Society Organizations like Gantar, Paryavaran Shikshan Kendra and Gujarat Gram Vidyapith, and others utilized this opportunity to display and sell their ideas and produce. The farmers mostly came from the dry regions of Gujarat, like Kutch, Banaskantha, Panchmahal, and Surendranagar. Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh were the other states represented.

The festival also provided an opportunity to spread the message about healthy food. The tribal people from Panchmahal district gave the urban consumers a rare treat of *kumbh aur shuri ki bhaji*. At the

Gujarat Vidyapith stall eatables like dry fruits laddoo, *bavte ka laddoo* and *Khajur ka sharbat* were sold and the advantages of such types of food were also explained. The Paryavaran Shikshan Kendra did brisk business



with the *muthiya* of *Moringa oleifera* and a novel preparation - *sharbat* made from cactus (*Euphorbia caducitolia*). It definitely opened our eyes to the nutritious potential of what is otherwise considered an inhospitable plant. In Saurashtra, the plant is believed to have medicinal value, specially for increasing haemoglobin in the blood. The delicacy was lapped up by the



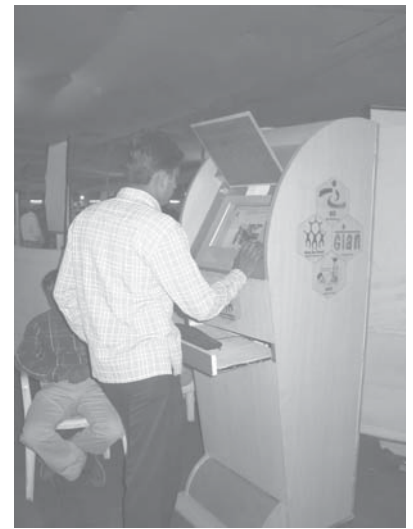
crowds and the sales of this beverage generated around Rs. 10,000 over the two days.



Farmers selling their produce to the urban consumers

At the Kishor Vataliya stall, the *Farali Khichu* and soup of *kalathi (Dolichos biflorus)*, was doing brisk business. The Arya Sanskriti stall came up with an interesting idea of selling rain water, and drew many visitors. At the Akhand Jyot Foundation Stall, the attractions were *methi (Trigonella foenum-graecum)* *thepla*, Vegetable pancake and *Bhaidaku* of *Echinochloa colonum*. At the Swagat stall, different delicacies made of maize were available, including soup, samosa and halva.

The stall set up under Canadian International Development Agency, Guelph, implemented by IFPRI and



Multimedia Innovation Kiosk

### Recipe Contests : Rewarding Culinary Creativity

The recipe contest was organized on Dec 9, 2005 at the IIM A campus. The recipes were supposed to encourage the use of the lesser known and consumed food grains and minor millets such as *kui (Carvia callosa)*, *kodri (Paspalum scrobiculatum)*, *banti*, *bavto (Eleusine coracana)* and *kang (Setaria italica)*. The purpose was to help the revival of traditional, diverse food and create awareness about the nutritional benefits of minor millets and uncultivated plants. We believe that the housewives who use these recipes have played a major role in the conservation of the grains and vegetables involved in the recipes, and need to be recognized and rewarded.



The entries were judged by Ms. Ambarben Trivedi (HoD of Health and Nutrition, NC Bodiwala College), Mr. B.B.S. Chauhan (Chief Chef, Hotel Inder Residency), Ms. Smithaben Dave (Lecturer, SLU Women's College) and Ms. Kavtaben Phatak (winner of the recipe contest for the last two years). The recipes were judged based on the taste, nutritional value, method of cooking, knowledge about medicinal use and presentation.

One hundred and eighty two people submitted 334 entries by post. Of these, 65 people were present at the venue on the allotted day and between them prepared 140 traditional dishes. A leading Gujarati daily helped us mobilize participants for the contest.

Through the competition, we were able to document the use of 59 crops of which 18 were grains and 41 were vegetables. The most commonly used grains were *makkai (Zea mays)* (69), *jowar (Sorghum vulgare)* (67) and *kodri (Paspalum scrobiculatum)* (63). The least common grains were *Kali (Oryza sativa)*, *Jov (Hordeum vulgare)* and *Moth (Vigna aconitifolia)*, each of which were used once. Among the vegetables, the most commonly used were tamarind flower (*Tamarindus indica*) used ten times, followed by *Methi (Trigonella foenum-graecum)* used seven times, and *sargavo (Moringa oleifera)* and *palak (Spinacea oleracea)* used five times each. The least common vegetables were *padma (Nelumbo nucifera)*, *Apple (Pyrus malus)*, *Gulab na ful (Rosa damascus)*, *Punrnava na pan (Boerhaavia diffusa)*, used once each.

The first prize was bagged by Hema Mehta from Ahmedabad, who prepared a nutritious pancake using *kodri*. The recipe was aesthetically presented and involved the use of very little oil. The second prize went to Ekta Parikh, also from Ahmedabad who prepared a special *katli* using 35 medicinal plants and the third prize went to Sheetal Shah, from Baroda, who made *kodri ki tikiya*. Ms. Sheetal Shah remarked that when she had first read about the contest in the paper, she thought there must have been a misprint, because she could not believe that the minor millets and uncultivated grains could be used in the recipes. She then consulted her mother and learnt about the uses of these grains and the recipe which won her the prize.

### Exhibiting Grassroots Creativity

The Innovation Exhibition set up by GIAN and NIF was a major attraction at the festival. This was an opportunity to display many grassroots innovations. Interestingly, when we had organized an exhibition of only the grassroots innovations, it drew far fewer visitors. The blend of culinary and technological creativity seems to have worked.

Vinod Gajjar, who has developed innovative tongs to hold hot vessels was able to sell about 220 pieces. Mr. M M Ahuja, the entrepreneur who has licensed the water cooler developed



Exhibition of Green Grassroots Innovation

by Arvindbhai Patel, has received 50 enquiries from people who were interested in ordering the product. He expects that at least 10 per cent will materialize into orders. Mr. Mansukhbhai Prajapati has received orders worth Rs. 20,000 for the earthen container for keeping vegetables fresh and orders worth Rs. 10,000 for the Teflon coated earthen pan, an interesting use of modern technology for traditional objects. Mr. Panchal was able to sell 50 pieces of the motorized phirkee, which can be used to wind strings while flying kites. He considers this to be a good sale, specially since the kite festival was still more than a month away, during the food festival. He has also received enquiries from around 100 people. Mr. Sakarbhai Prajapati's health care chair, which helps people exercise, was another popular attraction, and he ended up selling not only the two chairs he had brought for demonstration, but 10 more pieces to people who contacted him after having seen his chair at the exhibition.



Women's groups doing brisk business at the stalls

IIMA attempted to create awareness about the nutritional value of traditional varieties of grains like minor millets and maize from Dahod (Gujarat) rice varieties from Faizabad (UP) and *bajra* (*Pennisetum typhoides*) from Sikar (Rajasthan). The rice varieties on display included *Kalanamak*, *Lalmati*, *Dhaniya*,

*Kanakjir*, *Bengal Juhi*, *Baghari*, *Dehula*, *Erri* and *Muthmuri*. A detailed nutritional analysis of each of the grains was made and this information was provided to the consumers. Minor millets included *bavto* (*Eleusine coracana*), *kodi* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), and *kang*

(*Setaria italica*). There were many enquiries about availability of these different varieties and many consumers expressed an interest in buying them.

**“The festival has provided an opportunity for me to understand the market for organic produce. I have used this knowledge and set up a shop for organic produce in the village”, says Khimjibhai.**

The festival not only provided an opportunity for the farmers to directly sell their produce and eliminate the middlemen, but also gave them an exposure to urban markets, the demands of urban consumers and the market potential for organic products. According to Arvind Paramar of Kuchh Sajiv Kheti Manch, who had brought 18 farmers to the festival, “All the grains were sold and we also got a lot of contacts



The stall set up by IIMA and IFPRI under a CIDA Project

## Inviting Ideas

Another interesting feature of the food festival was the idea contest, conducted by GIAN and NIF for all the visitors. The contest encouraged all the visitors to come up with innovative ideas and solutions for day-to-day problems and share it with us. Through the contest we have been able to generate some interesting ideas. One idea, given by Ashish Gajjar, was for the installation of mini-speakers in helmets, to make driving more pleasurable. Tusharbindu Tapuldhar suggested that tooth-brushes be made of small length which can be fixed to the fingers. This not only helps us get a better grip while brushing, but also saves on the usage of plastic, which would otherwise be used to make a longer grip. Narendra Vansjatra suggests that copper coils can be attached to the bottom of cooking pans, so that water can be heated, even as the cooking is in progress.



Another idea for institutional improvement was the creation of a sarpanch network among villages, to promote organic farming and the cultivation of traditional varieties. The idea was suggested by Hemchandre Barat. Shashikant Gupta suggested that a directory of all organic farmers be prepared, so that people have easier access to them.

about people who are interested in buying our produce. So that is a definite benefit we got. Moreover, it was the first time farmers from a dryland area were going into the city to market their products. It has given them a sense of



The SRISTI stall displaying publications

confidence about themselves and their produce.” According to Jivrajbhai from Sarjan Bodeli, “We were able to get many farmers, including women farmers from the tribal areas. They got to know a lot about organic farming, on how to market organic products etc. It was a learning experience.”

Alabhai, a farmer from Kutch, who had put up five stalls at the festival is also extremely happy with his business. “We got to see for ourselves the demand for organic products in urban areas. All our products are organic, but when we sell them through outlets in the city, we don’t make such profits. Through this festival, we got to see how much profit we can actually make. There needs to be more transparency in the outlets which sell organic produce in the urban areas. The farmers, urban outlets and consumers should come together on a common platform and we must try to ensure that farmers get a fair share of the profits.” According to Mukesh Ravel from YUVA, who brought four farmers to the festival, “Such opportunities are definitely needed for farmers to get to know how to sell their products without any middlemen. If the festival was organized over a longer period of time, the farmers can also bear some of the cost of the

festival. Khimjibhai, a farmer, adds, “The festival has provided an opportunity for me to understand the market for organic produce. I have used this knowledge and set up a shop for organic produce in the village. Not only do I sell my produce, but I also procure from other farmers and sell it if the demand is high. The festival has helped me become an entrepreneur.”

Many non-governmental organizations had bought farmers and women’s groups to sell their products. The festival proved to be an income generating opportunity for them. According to Tanuben, from Gudala, who is part of a self-help group which has been selling pudina sharbet during the festival, “We have been able to get a lot of money. Some of it will cover our costs in coming here, the remaining, we will deposit in the bank and use for our childrens’ education or for some health emergencies.”

The festival also provided a platform for Gantar, an NGO working in Gujarat, to display some of their innovative teaching material, which aims to teach children without using books. The innovative toys include spelling games, umbrellas to teach astronomy and mathematics and math games.

The festival not only promotes the consumption of organic food, but also provides ways of growing organic food. Many herbal growth promoters with pesticidal properties, developed by the Sadbhav SRISTI Sanshodhan Labaratory were displayed and sold. The purpose was to promote organic cultivation not only in farms, but also in kitchen gardens. The SRISTI stall also sold literature on indigenous knowledge and practices, organic farming etc.

The festival also had its share of attractive practices for the children. Quiz competitions and antakshari ensured that children not only enjoyed the occassion but also went home with attractive prizes.

