

## **Murugappa chettiar research centres technologies**

Murugappa group of companies has explored a number of industries including sugars and cycles. To mention a few, DI cycles, Parry sugar Mill, Cholamandalam finance, etc., the most prominent hand in this group is Mr. A.M. Murugappan. It is an unknown fact that he is an expert in Agriculture today. He is of the opinion that agriculture should be researched from top to bottom. He conducts research agriculture, environment and village development to help the farming community. With this goal he established A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre (MCRC) in 1973 this is located in the Taramani, Chennai, where the famous Film Institute and Tidel Parks are located. This centre is conducting research on Mushroom production, sea algae production, low cost soil testing, soil free cultivation (hydroponics), biodynamic farming, etc. He provides technologies to the farmers. Mr. Murugappan, is still young at 73, and continues to work in this field of agriculture.

The Institute was a dream come true for Mr. Murugappan and C.V.Sheshadri, Professor, IIT, Kanpuri. The latter took full charge of this centre and involved in the research. Though he has passed away, his efforts are being continued till date.

In the beginning, Sheshadri ventured into the production of the protein rich Spirulina. He insisted the farmers of the area to grow this spirulina and now they are following it. The technologies developed here are low cost but yielding high profits. He keeps abreast of the happenings in agriculture throughout the country. He is also interested in organic farming and is of the opinion that this will sustain agriculture in future. He is practicing organic agriculture in his own farm at Manampathi village in between Thiruporur and Thirukalkundram. He is using the rice got from this farm for his food. The vegetable grown in his Chennai house is used for his kitchen.

Many people doubt about the future of organic farming as it is done without any fertilizers. Mr. Gomathinayakam and Mr. Anthonisamy of Puliyangudi, Tirunelveli district are farming without using any fertilizer and chemicals. Mr. Murugappan and his wife make a visit to this farm once in a year. They learn a number of new technologies, from their farm and in their research centre.

Mushroom is usually used for culinary purposes, here they have succeeded in a different type of research say Dr. K. Perumal, Assistant Director, MCRC. He also said that the dyeing units in Erode and Tiruppur are facing problems due to the effluent caused by chemicals. The centre has successfully extracted dye from coloured mushrooms. Some mushrooms have medicinal properties. These can be used to prepare biscuits and snacks to improve our immune system.

Dr. S. Sheshadri, Director, MCRC say that in future fuel which doesn't affect the environment will become a must. Hydrogen will be a foremost use. This centre is conducting research on this Biogas is talked about by everybody but its fully capacity is not utilized. Biogas and farm waste contain Methane gas. Research on its utilization is also being carried out. Farm leaf wastes give less heat when burnt as such but when they are converted into charcoal using charcoal

briquetting, it produced more heat energy. This enterprise can earn more profit to the farmers. He also listed a few of the technologies provided to the farmers. They are

1. Commercial production of Edible Mushrooms
2. Biodynamic farming- A step forward to organic farming.
3. Farm level soil testing
4. Low cost construction of buildings
5. Low cost boat construction
6. Aqua culture in sea coast

He says that the centre can provide technologies to farmers on any of those aspects.

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