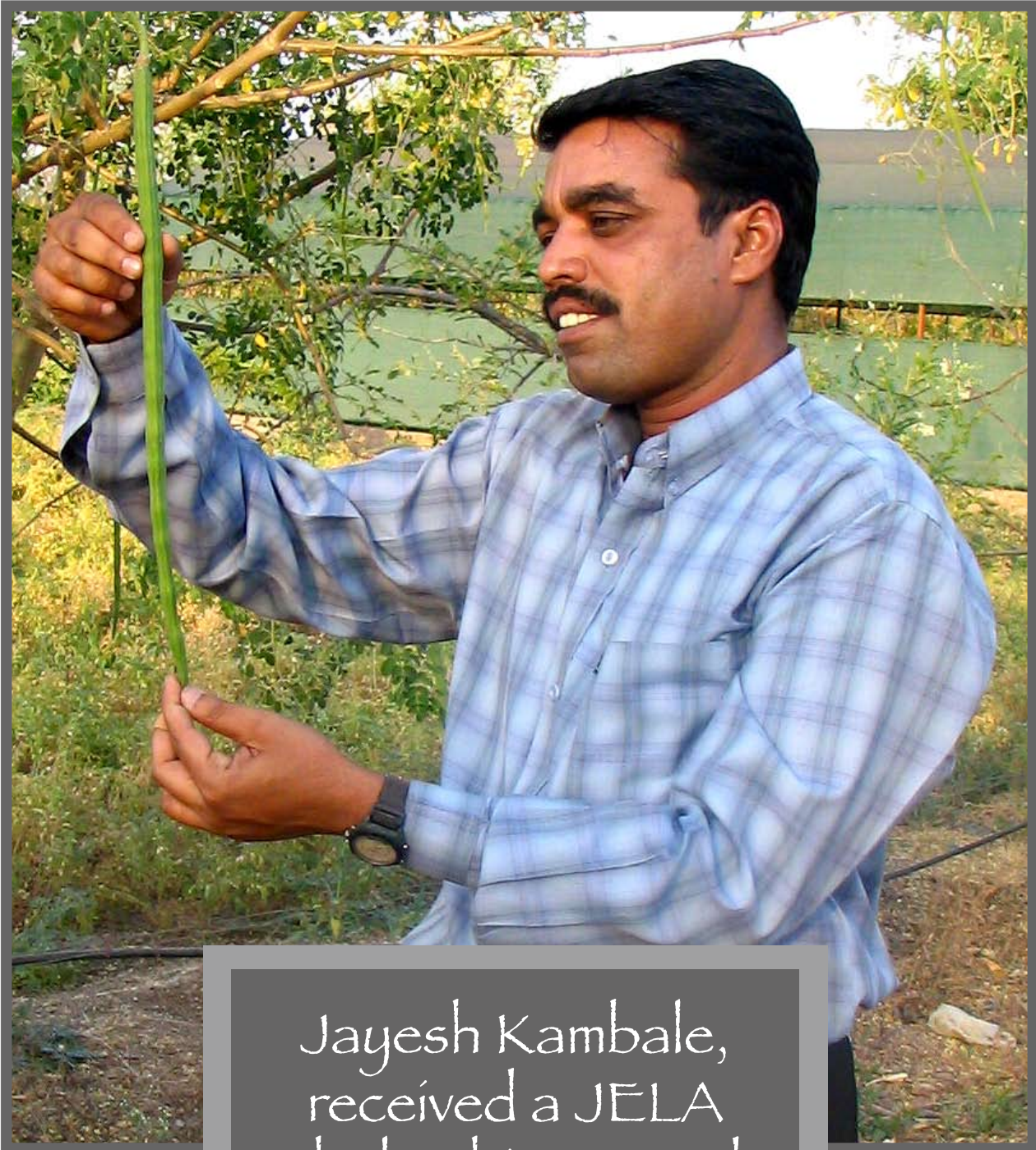


# Jayesh Kambale:

## Applying the Lessons of ARI



Jayesh Kambale,  
received a JELA  
scholarship to study  
at ARI in 2004.

The Asian Rural Institute in Tochigi Prefecture offers training programs for grass-roots rural leaders

from developing countries, mostly throughout Asia and Africa. The institute is affiliated with the United Church of Christ in Japan and each year welcomes 20 to 30 candidates for nine-months of study. Over the last few years, JELA has recommended and funded

several ARI students from countries such as Indonesia, Cambodia and India.

Jayesh Kambale, a social worker with the Comprehensive Rural Health Project in Jamkhed, India, received a JELA scholarship to study at ARI in 2004. The lessons he learned there are now helping farmers throughout the rural Jamkhed area.



CRHP has worked to alleviate poverty in greater Jamkhed for 38 years. From health service to family care to agricultural support and much more, CRHP takes a total approach to helping the community. One CRHP endeavor is a model farm where local farmers can learn efficient and environmentally-friendly means of increasing their production.

Jayesh Kimbale works on the CRHP farm and serves as a link to farmer's organizations in 16 area villages, listening to needs and helping to discover solutions. He sees himself as a facilitator, assisting groups to find their own ways of dealing with problems.

This teamwork approach, he says, was part of the lesson of ARI, where he was joined in partnership with many other students from developing countries. While he knew the value of teamwork and listening beforehand, the cross-cultural experience emphasized those values within him.

"It is not unlike the story of Christ washing the disciple's feet," he says. "When you read the story, the meaning is easy to see. Yet, to do such washing yourself brings the meaning alive. That is how my time was at ARI – one of learning practical matters firsthand."

This of course included hints with organic farming, with two examples being...

Vermiculture -- a program the CRHP farm had already started before Kimbale's study, but has now been able to develop more thanks to his time at

ARI. In vermiculture, earthworms are employed to promote the porosity of the soil and thus help plant growth. CRHP now provides vermiculture enriched soil to area farmers, as well as earthworms, and instructs farmers as to how to start their own vermiculture processes.

Natural Pesticides – especially through the use of neem. Neem is a fast-growing Indian fruit tree that is proving more valuable as an insecticide. Insects do not like the odor of neem leaves and after learning such, Kimbale has encouraged ample planting of neem trees across the CRHP farm and other farms.

The advent of vermiculture and neem usage may help wean local farmers from usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers often go deeply in debt in order to purchase such products and always risk property foreclosure when drought damages their harvests. Kimbale's ARI study is thus helping his community not only in the aspect of greater production through organic methods but also in better allocating financial resources to insure future stability.

"ARI training," Kimbale says, "Was a useful tool for me."

But he does not limit this evaluation to farming techniques. Living each day and talking with young leaders from other countries broadened his horizons. The nine-month period both softened and strengthened him as a person.

An example, he gives is in raising swine. Considering a dirty animal in his part of the world, Kimbale was loath to help with pigs at ARI. Yet, when he saw





others pitching in, even the leaders of the institute, he knew he could not hesitate. He applied himself and found his prejudice drop away.

This opening of his mind, he says, fortified him for a sad event upon his return to the CRHP farm, which employs several women suffering from HIV/AIDS. One such worker, named Sharda, became ill and returned to her home where she died. When Kimbale arrived at her house, he found even family members unwilling to touch the poor woman's body, afraid they would contract the fatal disease. He lifted Sharda, put her in his car and took her to the farm, where her co-workers could prepare her for her funeral. He says he does not know if he could have done such if not for his various experiences at ARI.

Kimbale enjoyed his time in Japan, where he feels JELA took good care of him.

"I never felt like I was without my family," he says. Yet, he does cite one incident of panic.

At a meal, he mistook a dish of wasabi – Japanese green horseradish – for similar-colored Indian chutney. He took an entire tablespoonful.

"Everything was like electricity! I could not speak! I felt I had an insect in my mouth!"

But now even this is a pleasant memory. He feels very grateful to ARI and JELA for his time in Japan and the training he received. He is also thankful for the many ways JELA is involved in assisting the work of CRHP.

"I think JELA has been selected by God to help people," he states.

Jayesh Kimbale, too, has always been helping the people of Jamkhed. But now he can do that better -- thanks to his JELA-funded ARI experience.



Jayesh Kambale and his family