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S. No	CONTENTS	Page No
	<i>Editorial</i>	
1	Scope of Complementary Alternative Medicine on the Control of Swine flu – A review Prabhu. N.M, Esakkirajan.M, Vaseeharan.B and Manikandan. R	334-337
2	A Case Study of the Karaivetti Birds Sanctuary Wetland with Special Reference to Physico-Chemical Properties of Water and its Environs Udhayakumar S, Sivasubramanian C , Sirajuddin. M. Horaginamani and Ravichandran M	338-348
3	Comparative Study on the Removal of Congo Red by Adsorption on Various Low Cost Adsorbents Pagutharivalan R and Kannan N	349-364
4	Post Monsoon Quality Assessment of Drinking Water Sources in Bidar City,India B.S.Patil , Anita.Patil , Abdulsamad Kamdod , Sirajuddin.M.Horaginamani and M.Ravichandran	365-374
5	Survey of Ferns and Fern Allies from Kolli Hills, Eastern Ghats, Tamil Nadu, India Gowrisankar K , Nandakumar N and Chandrasekaran R	375-380
6	Groundwater Quality Assessment in Selected Locations of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India Rajesh B, Dhanakumar.S and Mohanraj . R	381-386
7	Bio diesel Production from Algae Nithya Devi .M and Velayutham .P	387-397
8	Instruction to Author	398-402
9	Scheme for Young Scientists	403-407

Editorial

Dear Readers...

Most recently, attention has been focused on the problem of food security, which has become one of the main issues on the global agenda. Concerns over food security have been prompted by the impact of climate change, sharp rises in food prices in many countries, and energy policies, in particular the issue of biofuels. In this report, the term 'food security' refers to the availability of adequate food supplies and access to it. The impact of climate change on food security has drawn great attention. Extreme weather events can have an immediate, adverse impact on food availability, while shifts in weather patterns can increase crop vulnerability to infection, pest infestations, and choking weeds. The increased use of agricultural lands to produce biofuels instead of food, global population growth, loss of agricultural land to residential and industrial development and growing consumer demand in developing countries have also been cited as reasons for rising prices and shortages.

The magnitude of the problem of hunger and food security is alarming. Every six seconds, a child dies from hunger and related diseases. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, estimates that more than 860 million people in the world today suffer from hunger. Of those, about 830 million live in developing countries, the very countries expected to be most affected by climate change.

The reduction of extreme poverty and hunger is the first of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Increased access to and use of ICTs can be beneficial to farmers and the agricultural industry. Nonetheless, efforts to date to employ these tools have not been uniform or sufficiently widespread. There are many factors (policy, legal framework, technology, knowledge, markets, research, etc.) to be considered when addressing food security, but in all of them information and communication technologies (ICTs) can act as catalysts.

Naturally yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vijikumar. S.', written on a light-colored background.

Vijikumar. S

Chief Editor