

0302. 1st Progress Report on the Consortium Programme (Sep 1995)

Contains 4 sections, "A" through "D" on the 4 Extension Taluks of Chickballapur, Chintamani, Siddalaghatta and Bagepalli. Each section contains data on Membership & Coverage, Issues & Struggles, Government Benefits, Meetings & Training, CCFs, and Coolie women for the period April to September 1995.

The 5th section is on the DLDP and ends with reflections on moving towards sustainable land use practices.

1. THE ADATS CONSORTIUM

From 1 April 1994 ADATS and her 3 northern partners - ICCO, NOVIB and EZE - entered into a 10 year consortium agreement to build the Coolie Sangha in North Kolar district. It was decided that financial integrate of all the ongoing programmes (being separately funded for various lengths of time) would be done a year later, from 1st April 1995.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This present programme covers the 1st 3 years of the Consortium effort from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1998 and has the following objectives stated in the sanctioned application:

- To accompany 3,491 Coolie Families in 121 villages of the erstwhile EZE supported Chintamani Extension Area through 2 more years of Coolie Sangha Formation (the 1st phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Conducting adult literacy classes in a target oriented and systematic manner.
 - Supporting issues and struggles with analytical assistance as well as with liaison work, Legal Aid and Aid Distress.
 - Introducing the structures and discipline of the mass organisation at the village and Cluster levels and stabilise CSU membership.
 - Initiating activities like community health as sole prerogatives of Coolie women.
 - Starting petty credit funds run exclusively by Coolie women.
 - Starting village level and decentralised credit structures (the CCFs) which will be managed by the Coolies themselves.
 - Withdrawing the ADATS paid Community Workers at the end of 2 years and help the Coolies to elect their own Cluster Secretaries.
- To accompany 7,106 Coolie Families in 254 villages of the erstwhile NOVIB supported Extension Areas through a 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Formalisation (the 2nd phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Inducting the Coolies as full fledged members of their respective Taluk Coolie Sanghas with voting rights.
 - Cultural intervention through the development of values and positions through an articulation of their own world view and the introduction of internal rectification as an ever present, active and over riding agenda of the Coolie Sangha at every level.
 - Helping the Coolies to identify larger issues of gender, ethnicity and environment which can be tackled only with a more mature unity and wider understanding.
 - Decentralising the community health budget so that Coolie women may themselves prioritise, manage and run the activity on their own without any male interference.
 - Starting a child scholarship activity for the government schooling of Coolie children, which will also be run by Coolie women.

- Enhancing the capital of the village CCFs and introduce fiscal discipline into the CSUs as well as individual member families.
- Developing the concept and principles of self financing and introduce its practice in the every day lives of Member Coolie families.
- Withdrawing all the ADATS paid village Staff at the end of this 3 year period and hand over responsibilities to the elected CSU Representatives.
- To accompany 3,381 Coolie Families in 123 villages of the erstwhile ICCO supported Extension Areas through a 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation (the 3rd and final phase of Coolie Sangha building) activities, which include:
 - Further enhancing the capital of the village CCFs so that the Coolies may be able to enterprise in a more serious manner and make tangible economic achievements.
 - Implementing a Dry Land Development Project so that the Coolies may develop their patches of dry land through soil and water conservation (land stabilisation) measures and also achieve important socio-political objectives.
 - Intensifying the cultural intervention through honest reflection and discussions on the post NGO intervention phase of the independent Coolie Sangha and on self financing.
 - Withdrawing all ADATS Staff, including the Field Assistants and Area Field Workers at the end of this 3 year period and hand over all assets and responsibilities to the Taluk Coolie Sanghas and their elected functionaries.
- To undertake gap filling and maintenance (land restoration) works on the dry land holdings of 3,074 Coolie Families in 93 villages of Bagepalli Taluk where stabilisation works were carried out in the 1980's.

3. STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THIS REPORT

Earlier, ADATS submitted separate financial and narrative reports to each funding partner, on mutually agreed formats. These have all been compiled in the various *Documents of ADATS*. Now it has been decided that every alternate report will annually analyse events and happenings in order to assess the overall direction in which we are heading. The other 6 monthly reports will be more in the form of activity reports, recording events and happenings. While this will be our general endeavour, there will, of course, be some overlap.

Staff at each extension Taluk were requested to record the main activities that took place in the preceding 6 month period from April to September 1995. We at the central office have retained the wealth of information they provided as Sections "A" through "D" without too much editing. Nevertheless we have tried to place the information provided in a uniform format of headings, even if not sub-headings, for each Taluk so that the reader will be able to draw comparisons and pick up the general thread.

Section "E" reports on the Dry Land Development Project (DLDP) and covers a 13 month period from September 1994 to September 1995.

4. BRIEF RESUME

There are a total of 12,642 Coolie Families who stand as Normal on the rolls of 468 CSUs in the 4 extensions, covering 35% of the village population. They comprise of 7,967 families from the scheduled castes and tribes, 2,202 families from middle castes and 2,473 from upper castes. These figures reveal that though the Coolie Sangha is a genuine integration of the castes, 63% of them are from SC/ST, 17% from middle and 20% from upper caste backgrounds.

Not included in the above figures are 30 more villages which have been taken up in the northern most part of Siddalaghatta, bordering Bagepalli Taluk. These villages of the Sadali Area had been asking for CSUs for a very long time but ADATS had upto now been unable to respond to their request due to scarcity of funds (the tight budget of NOVIB Project No: Ida 014-92-003 budget for the last 2½ years).

Very many issues and struggles were taken up by individual CSUs these past 6 months. Most of the major ones came up in newer CSUs which are in the 2nd 3 year formalisation phase. This was because, as the Chickballapur Staff have pointed out, power equations between the Coolies and *Ryots* have not yet settled down in these villages. The relatively older CSUs which have just entered the 3rd 3 year consolidation phase have shown a remarkably high success rate in dealing with problems. ADATS Staff still have a role, but it is not the same intense one of nagging interference that it used to be in earlier years. Moreover there appears to have been a deliberate and conscious effort made by ADATS Field Staff towards Coolie capacitating.

An interesting point to note is that socio-political reverses suffered by the Coolies in December 1994 do not seem to have resulted in any serious setbacks to their day to day effectivity. But the CSUs in Chickballapur once more washed out during the Taluk Panchayat (TP) elections of March 1995 without being able to capture even a single seat. At Chintamani they panned out with a more or less even showing. The Siddalaghatta CSUs can claim a far better showing. But the most remarkable accomplishment was, of course, at Bagepalli where the Coolies and their allies captured 12 of the 15 TP seats, thoroughly dismantling the opposition which had fared so well only 3 months earlier.

Coolie women have done very well. It is not as though family problems like wife abuse, 2nd marriage, desertion and widowhood are being taken up by the Coolies for the very first time. But it is the deliberate consciousness with which women themselves identify these problems and then go about to find solutions that is refreshingly new. This has to be understood as very different from a liberal minded male dominated group attempting to introduce the morality of common decency into village society. The Siddalaghatta women's wanting to work with hypothetical in order to exercise their minds and develop new values is a good indication of this difference. Women are also conscious of their many deficiencies like lack of numerical skills, etc. but seem determined to overcome such shortcomings.

Another refreshing development is the support that VHWs get from their male colleagues during mixed Meetings of the village Staff. And the various Taluk Coolie Sanghas' determined stand to tackle the fuel wood problem. Both these indicate that women's problems are not "relegated" to hapless women alone in a dismissive manner.

The CCFs have fared very well in most of the older villages. Now with an added influx of Rs 7,500,000 CCF capital with European Union grants in the next months, the older CSUs can really make an appreciable dent in their income and assets position. Julapalya is the only exception to this with overdue problems plaguing 18 CSUs. While the newer CSUs of Chickballapur and Siddalaghatta seem to have learnt a lot from their older counterparts' experiences and steeled themselves for better performance, the same doesn't seem to be happening at Chintamani.

The withdrawal of VLWs after completing their 6 year terms has not proved to be as smooth as we had anticipated. Of the 126 VLWs withdrawn, only 82 (65%) have proved to be real assets for their respective CSUs and Clusters. Another 24 (19%) fare average. But 2 in Siddalaghatta are outright bad elements and another 18 in Julapalya are at best doubtful as to where their loyalties lie. While it is too early to predict how things will work out in these 20 CSUs, ADATS has certainly not fared as well as it boasted in terms of building a human infrastructure in the villages.

There is an administrative lacuna in our ability to further support the Mahila Meetings. While we were able to promote 2 Mahila Trainers to the more coveted post of Area Field Workers, we have been unable to fill a whole lot of senior vacancies with women Staff. As a result the gender ratio at the higher echelons of ADATS is presently very unbalanced.

There has been a slight change in our Monday Meetings. Instead of holding separate Monitoring Meetings for each extension Taluk, we now hold combined Meetings so that Staff from other Taluks can hear, contribute and learn. But as a result, the practice of holding separate Situation Meetings every Monday evening has been abandoned.

SECTION "A" CHICKBALLAPUR TALUK

A.1. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE

Total Villages			146		
1st 3 year Formation phase			88		
2nd 3 year Formalisation phase			5		
3rd 3 year Consolidation phase			38		
Dropped out Villages			15		
Normal Member Families			3,375		
Suspended Members			132		
Cancelled Members			1,150		
Women Memberships			730	(21%)	
Coverage of Village Population			38%		
Adults			7,168		
Minors			7,221		
<u>Caste Group Composition</u>					
	Member Families	Percent	Caste Group	Total Families	Ethnic Cover
	2,124	62%	Scheduled Castes/Tribes	4,291	49%
	420	12%	Middle Castes	1,128	37%
	831	24%	Forward Castes	3,205	25%
	3,375	100%		8,624	39%

A.2. ISSUES & STRUGGLES

A.2.1. LAND ISSUES

About 20 land issues came up during this 6 month reporting period. It is interesting to note that all 3 major land issues came up in the erstwhile NOVIB Area (CSUs in the formalisation phase). This is where the power equations between CSU members and the rest of the villagers has still not settled down. The remaining 17 minor land issues came up in both, the erstwhile ICCO Area (CSUs in the consolidation phase) as well as in the erstwhile NOVIB Area.

- A Taluk Panchayat (TP) member had his eye on 8 acres of land which was reserved as grazing lands in Kolimenahalli village. Using his newly gained position (TP elections were held in March 1995) he tried to get the documents regularised in his favour. CSU members came to know about this and raised a hue and cry. But the TP member managed to forcibly plant a crop. The CSU members got together and destroyed the young crop by ploughing it up. They moved the court of law where they obtained an injunction order against the illegal occupation and cultivation. The entire Cluster contributed and spent a lot of money on court expenses and lawyer fees besides meeting their own running around expenditures. There was a serious threat by the TP member against our Field Worker. The issue dragged on for more than 2 months and ultimately the CSU has the upper hand. We do not know whether the enraged TP member, who has a lot of clout with the local MLA, will now lie low or wait for another chance.
- The villagers of Gurukulanagenahalli were using a path which passes through a non-CSU member's land to take their cattle for grazing. All of a sudden, for no apparent reason, he blocked the path. Polite discussion did not yield any result. The CSU mem-

bers approached the Gram Panchayat Secretary and informed him. Still the problem remained unsolved. Later the CSU members approached the police and obtained a village survey report which clearly showed the existence of this traditional pathway. The police intervened and warned the non-CSU member not to obstruct the people any more.

- Ryots of Kadiseegenahalli were trying to grab 80 acres of Revenue department land. When the CSU members came to know about this all of them got together and approached the Assistant Commissioner who asked them to cultivate the lands. Though unable to give title deeds to the CSU members, the officer's position was that they had a greater right over government owned lands than did the rich Ryots. This Cluster is situated in a stronghold of the opposition. The Ryots had, on an earlier occasion, physically damaged the community hall we built for the Coolies in order to give us a message. In spite of these threats, CSU members have stuck it out with a lot of courage and continued their struggle. They knew that any letting up by them would have consequences for the entire Cluster.

Now some examples of minor land issues that were taken up in the older ICCO Area. There the CSUs and Clusters have definitely reached the strength and maturity needed to solve such problems by themselves. Just a few years back, even such silly problems had to be resolved by ADATS Staff or in police stations and Courts of law.

- A CSU member in Hanumanthapura was in possession of 2 acres land for the past 25 years. Someone from Bangalore all of a sudden started claiming that the land belonged to the village temple. Normal request did not solve the problem. Finally the CSU lodged a complaint with the police and got them to thoroughly verify the documents. The problem is now conclusively solved in favour of the CSU member.
- The VHW of Shettigere had a land dispute with her brother-in-law who is not in the CSU. The matter was discussed in the CSU Meeting which decided that it was her husband's share and that she was entitled to it as her surviving widow. After serious negotiations by all the other members, the brother-in-law was convinced that he would indeed face an uphill task if he continued to bully his dead brother's wife.
- In Nemiligurki 2 brothers, both in the CSU, had a dispute over 2 acres of land. The CSU Meeting was not able to solve it. The matter was placed in the Cluster Meet and a solution was quickly got.

Now for some examples of minor land issues from the younger CSUs of the erstwhile NOVIB Area.

- In Thimmanahalli a dispute regarding a small piece of revenue land adjacent to the village was in Court. The CSU approached the Judicial Magistrate and made a request that the land be granted to them as house sites as all of them were Harijans. The Judge actually got the warring parties together in his chambers and worked out a compromise. The Coolies actually succeeded!
- In Gundlurki a CSU member had lands close to a temple. Others started to make a claim that he should leave one-quarter of an acre for the temple. But the member was very poor and owned only 2 acres. Ultimately a village Meeting was organised. All the CSU Representatives of the Cluster were present. After a lot of negotiations it was decided that he would give up the requested land for the temple provided he would get the same extent on the other side of his fields where there was some uncultivated government owned Revenue land.

These issues were within the capacity of the individual CSUs and Clusters to handle. It is also interesting to note that neither did the issues take too much time to solve, nor was there much of a ganging up by *Ryots* against the CSUs.

A.2.2. COOLIE CAPACITATING IN DEALING WITH ISSUES & STRUGGLES

Many kinds of issues ranging from husband-wife quarrel to land dispute are getting solved at the CSU level in the older villages which are now in the consolidation phase. These are merely reported during the next Cluster Meet. Whereas villages which are only in the formalisation phase sometimes inform ADATS Staff well in advance before they take up an issue. Though there is hardly a single incident of the Staff alone solving a problem, this does show a certain kind of fear in the newer villages. A sort of grudging “Will we be able to, can we really....” kind of attitude.

But ADATS Staff are constantly requested to accompany CSU Representatives to the police stations. There is still some reluctance on the part of Coolies to face the police all by themselves. Another regular feature are phone calls. CSU members telephone the Taluk headquarter even to inform us on the slightest action they plan. Perhaps this is just for moral support. Perhaps it is a precautionary step just in case...

- A CSU member's daughter from Gowdanahalli was married to Kethenahalli where there is no CSU. Last week the girl's father got a message that she was missing from the village. Though not unduly worried, he immediately gathered some fellow CSU members and went to Kethenahalli. To his utter shock he found out that matters were so serious that his daughter may have been killed by her husband. The Gowdanahalli CSU members immediately telephoned ADATS Staff and we told them to lodge a police complaint. In the beginning the Sub Inspector did not show much interest in the case and tried to treat it as a routine matter. Then all the CSU Representatives and VLWs of the Cluster went to the police station and enquired whether he would act only after he got proof of a murder being committed. He relented and sent a police constables to the village. They found the girl's body hanging from a tree in a nearby shrubbery. The Coolies panicked and ADATS Staff had to immediately intervene and take a lead role from that moment on. The case is still going on.

Coolies can reach a level of capacitating only through constant Meetings to analyse experiences. Our Cluster Meets serve a vital function in this regard. ADATS Staff make sure that every subject is thoroughly discussed by the assembled Coolies, however painful or embarrassing it may be. And every day's experiences in the villages and Clusters is once more discussed at the Taluk headquarters with colleagues who can throw more critical light on events and how they were handled. This is the strategy we use for Coolie capacitating.

A.2.3. INFLUENCE OF THE OLDER AREA ON THE NEWER AREA

Coolies of both the Areas meet every month during the Taluk Coolie Sangha (CCS) Meetings. Happenings in their respective Clusters are reported to all the assembled CSU Representatives and village Staff.

- The CCF overdue of individual members and villages are discussed with elaboration on the reasons for non repayment. The newer Area CSU Representatives listen to all these different problems and later in their Cluster Meets discuss them once again. They wonder what respect defaulters have when they are grilled in such large gatherings where everyone abuses them. They realise that it is not just the member's reputation which is tarnished, but the general image of the CSU and Cluster which is blackened. They decide that they would never stoop to such levels and resolve, “We will make sure that this kind of situation never arises in our CSU!”. Maybe this is one of the main reasons why we do not

have any overdue problem in erstwhile NOVIB Area where the CCFs were started 1½ years back.

- When there was some mismanagement in the decentralised health budget in 2 Clusters the issue was discussed in the CCS Meeting which decided that the passing of the health budget be stopped for 3 months. This decision sent a clear message to the newer CSUs. It has made the Mahila Meetings of the erstwhile NOVIB Area very careful in decision making.

The CCS Meetings have taught everyone who to contact and where while handling issues pertaining to land. Because of the elaborate reports that are read out in the CCS Meetings, CSU Representatives have learnt a lot. Hearing a poor woman talking so boldly in front of about 600 people makes other women think.

- Varalaxmamma of Chalumenahalli always sits with rapt attention and open awe whenever Laxmamma of R. Chokkanahalli gets up to speak. Laxmamma has, after all, learnt to speak so well that she is now a Gram Panchayat member!

The Executive Committee Meeting is another forum which gives opportunity for Cluster Secretaries to develop their personality. Fresh Cluster Secretaries silently listen to the way their seniors argue a point and arrive at decisions. Sangha Fund is a good example of reverse peer learning. After seeing the performance of the younger CSUs, the older CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO Area have been shamed into improving their *Hundi* collections.

Caste feelings have vanished much faster than we thought possible. A Cluster Secretary recently remarked that this was because of the large numbers in CCS Meetings. Staying together and eating together for 2 days does something to people.

A.2.4. OTHER ISSUES

The CSUs are very active in day to day matters. So much so that life in the villages will be very different for the poor, if not for the existence of the Coolie Sangha. Some illustrative examples:

- In Kerenahalli a non-CSU member lodged a police complaint against a CSU member stating that he had stolen his pump set. The police arrested the CSU member. Later the entire Cluster got together and went to the police station. They explained that this false complaint had been lodged only because the local rich were against the CSU. They assured the officers on the CSU member's family history and character. On knowing the facts the police subsequently dropped the charges and released him.
- Ittappanahalli did not have any drinking water. Yet the next village had piped water from a mini water supply facility. The CSU got together and went to the Gram Panchayat office where they agitated till their village was also connected to the neighbouring facility with a long pipeline.
- The Tumakunta Milk Collection Society is functioning for the past 3 years. At the time of its formation itself the CSU members had unsuccessfully tried for a director's seat. This time during the elections they succeeded in capturing 4 (2 women and 2 men) of the 9 director seats.
- Thaligenahalli recently got a Milk Collection Society formed in the village. After a lot of arguments a CSU member from Dasarenahalli CSU became the Secretary, which is a very important executive post.
- When cholera broke out in Byraganahalli the local hospital refused to acknowledge the fact and take any action. CSU members went all the way to Kolar and met the District Health Officer who made immediate arrangements for a team to visit the village and start emergency treatment.

- Gurukulagenahalli CSU successfully got 29 house sites for Harijana members in spite of strong political opposition from the local TP member.
- A CSU Representative from Cheruvukindapalli was booked with a false theft case. All the CSU Representatives of the Cluster got together and went to the police station and agitated till they got him released.
- The VHW of Idrahalli was manhandled by a non-CSU person because her sheep wandered onto his fields. The CSU took it up very seriously and they made the police book a strong case. After attending Court a few times, the opposition are now begging for an out-of-Court settlement.
- Gaggilaralahalli got a new Milk Collection Society sanctioned. CSU members paid a majority of the shares and are determined to keep this village body totally under their control.

A.2.5. FAMILIES WHO GOT GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

	Icco Area	Novib Area
Houses under different schemes	16	0
House sites	21	50
Mini water supplies	7 villages	2 villages
IRDP Loans	11	14
Pitching works	1,000 meters in 10 villages	500 meter in 2 villages
Old Age pensions	0	3
Widow pensions	3	2
Street lights	30 in 10 villages	60 in 15 villages

A.3. MEETINGS AND TRAINING

A.3.1. STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

All the VLWs from villages in the erstwhile ICCO Area which have entered into the consolidation phase were withdrawn in March 1995. As a result we do not have ADATS paid workers in 43 CSUs. VLWs from the newer Area continue to attend Staff Meetings which are held once a month at the Taluk headquarters. All the 25 Cluster Secretaries too attend this Meeting, as do VHWs from both Areas.

The 25 Cluster Secretaries meet separately once a fortnight. The Taluk Secretary conducts these Executive Committee Meetings. They are responsible for implementing decisions taken in the CCS Meeting. Recently they discussed ways and means by which they could use their strength in numbers for non ADATS purposes.

During the last week of March a series of Review Meetings were held at the Cluster level. They discussed the withdrawal of VLWs and the new responsibilities of CSU Representatives. All the CSU Representatives of the Cluster, along with the outgoing VLWs, participated. Since the DLDP was being implemented, this was also discussed during these Review Meetings. Another 1 day training was held on the 2 Organisations Policy for Coolies from the consolidation phase CSUs.

VHWs from older villages were given a 1 day training on handling maternity kits bought with their decentralised health budgets. 5 women from each Mahila Meeting of the newer villages attended 3 days of residential training on decentralisation in batches of 30 women per session. 15 such sessions were held for a total of 450 Coolie women. A group of 20 women were taken to Siddalaghata for an exposure in silk twisting. 8 women attended a training on un-burnt brick making at Bangalore.

A.3.2. TALUK COOLIE SANGHA (CCS) MEETINGS

The CCS Meeting at Chickballapur is always held on the second Saturday and Sunday of every month. In the past 6 months, only 1 Meeting was held for just a day. The remaining 5 were held for 2 days with full quorum. Decisions taken in this Meeting are always implemented.

The 1995 Taluk Secretary election was held in the month of May. 3 candidates contested and the winner polled 320 votes, 121 more than his closest rival.

A.3.3. REGULARITY OF CLUSTER MEETS

In order to bring about a strict discipline in the villages, ADATS Field Staff followed the Meeting timings very seriously. They waited for about 15 minutes beyond the agreed upon time and then declared that there was no quorum for the Cluster Meet and recorded the same on the "red page" of the Minutes Book. Even if the CSU Representatives turned up immediately after an entry on the "red page" the Meeting still did not proceed and all village CSU decisions -health, CCF or whatever- was put off for the next week.

This was certainly a heartless and difficult way to improve time consciousness and discipline in a people who were not used to these management concepts. But we felt justified and the Taluk Coolie Sangha supported us. And we got very good results in this 6 month period. Prior cancellation of Cluster Meets was done by the attendees only during the busy cropping season and for some special occasion like a VIP's visit to the villages. Very few Meetings were cancelled because of village festivals or due to marriages.

Area	Clusters	Total Meetings	Regular	Irregular	Cancelled
Erstwhile ICCO	11	286	228 (79%)	36 (13%)	22 (8%)
Erstwhile NOVIB	14	364	282 (77%)	58 (16%)	24 (7%)

There was hardly any difference in the performance of the older and newer Cluster Meets in Chickballapur Taluk. Only 8% and 7% of the weekly working meets had to be cancelled for lack of quorum. This means that each Cluster missed less than 2 weekly Meetings during the past 6 months (26 weeks). An average of 78% Meetings were held properly, on time and with full quorum. An average of 14.5% were slightly irregular.

A.4. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFS)

A.4.1. STATUS OF THE CCFs AS ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

Grants given to 146 village level CCFs		33,07,105.00		
Add Interest earned		1,27,534.30		
Total CCF Capital in the Taluk		34,34,639.30	(100%)	
Total of Good loans in the Taluk		16,90,750.00	49%	
Total of Overdue in the Taluk		82,415.00	2%	
1 to 6 Months Late	54,600.00		1%	
7 to 12 Months Late	14,300.00		0%	
Over 1 Year Late	13,515.00		0%	
CCF Bank Balances in the Taluk		16,61,474.30	48%	
Cumulative loans given		Rs 34,18,150		
Number of loans		2,439		
Average borrowing		Rs 1,401		
Repayment Rate		97.59%		
Utilisation pattern	Amount borrowed		No of loans	
Crop Loan	8,70,825.00	25%	1,029	42%
Agriculture	4,43,600.00	12%	220	9%
Cattle	15,71,450.00	45%	701	28%
Trade & Entrepreneurship	4,08,725.00	11%	250	10%
Consumption & others	1,23,550.00	3%	239	9%
Total	34,18,150.00	100%	2,439	100%

A.4.2. CCF OVERDUE

Most of the CCF Overdue is from dropped out villages in the erstwhile ICCO Area of Chickballapur Taluk. But even in the running CSUs there are some peculiar problems that the CSUs have to contend with.

- Bayyanna from Adigal had taken Rs 3,000 for rearing pigs. But during the Gram Panchayat election, he went against the CSU and openly canvassed for the opposition. The CSU promptly cancelled his membership. He is not repaying his CCF dues because of this.
- Aruru Avula Kondappa from Nallappanahalli had also taken Rs 3,000 for rearing pigs. He repaid his 1st instalment of Rs 1,000 on time. Later he clandestinely sold his pigs without the CSU's consent and used the money to repair his house. Now when the 2nd instalment is due he throws up his hands and says, "I do not have any money; I spent it all on my house". The CSU is now paying the price for not being vigilant. The Cluster decided that no further CCF loans will be approved for this village till they somehow make Kondappa pay up.

A.4.3. FUTURE POTENTIAL

The CCFs are doing very well in Chickballapur Taluk. It is interesting to note that when the 1st round of CCFs was released for the very first time in the older CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO Area, there was a Rs 6,000 overdue and 6 villages dropped out. But in the newer erstwhile NOVIB Area we have already given 3 rounds of CCF loans and there is not a rupee of overdue to date. The Coolies are very careful in decision making and the Clusters take total responsibility when it comes to repayment. There is hardly a single case of misutilisation.

There is every indication that the CCFs are going to be used as an important socio-political as well as economic tool by the Coolies of this Taluk. Specially since a whole lot of opportunities are going to be opened up due to our proximity to Bangalore city.

A.5. COOLIE WOMEN

A.5.1. MAHILA MEETINGS AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mahila Meetings have shown a remarkable maturity.

- During DLDP works the Kamatanahalli Mahila Meeting found that things were not going properly. They discussed the pros and cons of reporting this to ADATS and decided that they just could not tolerate male adjustments and cheating. They placed their resolution in the Cluster Meet to the utter shock of their menfolk. We were placed in a very delicate situation where we had to take immediate and stringent action without at the same time appearing to "punish" the women for their honesty.
- Laxmidevi of Chinnanarenahalli had been married off at a very young age. But after 5-6 months she returned home. She told the Mahila Meeting, a forum that she had come to trust and accept for many years, that she would no longer stay with her husband as he was hurting her. The women were placed in a very delicate situation since the girl really was too young to understand her "wifely duties". After a long discussion the women decided not to send her back to husband's place. But then came the problem of legality. So they approached the police station and got the marriage annulled on grounds of age. The Mahila Meeting decided that the Laxmidevi could get properly (re)married after some more years. Her parents were given no say at all in the matter since they had erred in the first place.
- A widow re-marriage was conducted in Keshavara. We were surprised that women from such a new CSU could have the courage to take such a rare step on their own volition.
- Many simple marriages are held in the CCS Meeting. Coolies have learnt that wasteful expenditure on marriages are a burden on the poor and that marrying with a small sum of money in front of 600 witnesses at the CCS Meeting is as respectable as any wedding can get!

A.5.2. SKILL TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN

We have sent 25 young women from Chickballapur for garment training at the ADATS Skill Training Centre at Bagepalli. 2 of them dropped out. The rest of them completed and were placed in garment factories in Bangalore. 9 more returned home as they could not manage in the city. The remaining 14 are doing well, earning monthly salaries of Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000.

A.5.3. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

In the erstwhile ICCO Area we saw good decisions taken by Mahila Meetings this time. There were no complications that had to be settled by our Staff. Though they did not have enough budget, they were able to convince many mothers that their children did not need as much support as some others. The problem now is that most Mahila Meetings have very little monies left over to conduct other activities like buying play material, take children on tours and picnics, arranging tuition for older children just before the annual examinations, etc.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the Mahila Meetings had some problems in a few villages. These were because the women were not yet adept in procedural matters as well as due to their functional illiteracy. Even basic numerical was a problem in many Mahila Meetings.

- The Gundlugurki Mahila Meeting has passed only Rs 85 for an SSLC going boy (who actually needed more than Rs 500) simply because they did not know how to work with the support table.

There was quite a bit of grumbling when some children got less than others. Many mothers were not able to understand the logic behind differential support, suggesting that their presence in the Mahila Meetings which took the decisions was more perfunctory than participative. But nowhere was there even a single case of misutilisation or support given for a non-existent child or for someone who was not going to school.

A.5.4. DECENTRALISED HEALTH

Last year, in the erstwhile ICCO Area, the Mahila Meetings used to pass health bills without giving much thought to them. Then their moneys ran out much faster than they thought possible. This year they have been very careful to stagger expenses month wise. Mahila Meetings are more careful in deciding what first aid medicines their VHWs want replenished every month. It has become common to see a group of women (more than the mandatory required lot) come to the monthly CCS Meetings simply so that they can be around when first-aid medicines are bought! The Mahila Trainer helps them in checking quality and prices of medicines.

VHWs and women CSU Representatives in the erstwhile NOVIB Area started attending CCS Meetings well ahead of decentralisation in order to carefully observe everything and listen to all arguments. This has prepared them to take careful decisions regarding the spending of moneys.

- The Gowdanahalli Mahila Meeting passed a health bill. Other village women in the Cluster Meet rejected the decision on the grounds that the claimant had not produced proper bills to support her request.

A.6. SANGHA FUNDS

The DLDP helped increase Sangha Funds in the erstwhile ICCO Area since they contributed 20% of their wage earnings from DLDP. But only 5 CSUs continued their practice of *Hundi* collections even during the DLDP works. When they saw the other CSUs not bringing their *Hundis*, they too soon stopped.

Recently the CSU Representatives started getting their bus charges. *Hundi* collection immediately improved. Perhaps it is true that the Coolies must also start SPENDING a part of their collections in order to appreciate the full value of Sangha Funds. Spending the Sangha Funds has not really started. Though a few CSUs wanted to appoint Teachers to write minutes and help children with their studies, they have not taken any final decision in this regard.

Sangha Funds collections through *Hundis* is faring better in the erstwhile NOVIB Area. Perhaps because they understand the importance of financing the future. Or maybe because they are quicker learners and do not need all the persuasion that the older CSUs needed when the Coolie Sangha was totally new in this Taluk. Some of these newer CSUs have made *Hundi* contribution a criteria for continued membership. Those who are not serious about contributing to the Sangha Funds in spite of good earnings are weeded out.

A.7. VLW WITHDRAWAL PROBLEMS

7 persons are not showing any more interest in Coolie Sangha activities after VLW withdrawal in the erstwhile ICCO Area. They refuse to help out in writing the minutes though they have not actually turned against the CSUs in their villages. For them, the 6 year stint as ADATS paid VLWs was clearly a job and nothing more; a neutral attitude has now developed.

Among them, 2 ex-VLWs were working in neighbouring villages where we had been unable to find native educated youth to fill the posts. Once withdrawn they stopped going to these villages. CSU minutes are now being written by school children.

- R. Chokkanahalli ex-VLW bought 2 acres of land from his uncle, and had some problem in closing the deal. He claims that the CSU did not support him in the negotiations. This does not sound like a real excuse.
- Kamatanahalli ex-VLW created some problem during the DLDP. He was very liberal in giving attendance to absentees so that he could share in the spoils. The CSU members caught on and cancelled his membership.

Many of the remaining 36 ex-VLWs have become CSU Representatives and are showing the same interest they used to. They have a high degree of identity with the Coolie Sangha and say that it is impossible for them to stay at home when Cluster Meets or CCS Meeting are going on!

7 VLWs from erstwhile NOVIB Area were not serious in carrying out their duties. The rest of them fare well and are serious about their jobs. Another round of training to try and increase their capacity has to be given for the slow starters and non-serious VLWs before we take an administrative action. Even the good VLWs need training on fresh matters like strengthening women, entrepreneurship and the CCFs, etc.

SECTION "B" CHINTAMANI TALUK

B.1. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE

Total Villages	232		
1st 3 year Formation phase	149		
2nd 3 year Formalisation phase	34		
3rd 3 year Consolidation phase	25		
Dropped out Villages	24		
Normal Member Families	5,943		
Suspended Members	411		
Cancelled Members	926		
Women Memberships	1,211	(20%)	
Coverage of Village Population	32%		
Adults	13,002		
Minors	11,357		
<u>Caste Group Composition</u>			
Member Percent Families		Caste Group	Total Ethnic Families Cover
3,869 65%		Scheduled Castes/Tribes	8,607 44%
1,087 18%		Middle Castes	3,985 27%
987 16%		Forward Castes	5,549 17%
5,943 100%			18,141 32%

B.2. ISSUES & STRUGGLES

B.2.1. LAND ISSUES

The major land issues that came up were:

- In Appasanapalli, there was a land struggle between Chenarayappa who is a CSU member and the landlord of the village. Chenarayappa filed a case in Court with the support of the CSU and won. When the CSU members went to do DLDP works on this land the landlord created problems. The CSU overcame the problem with the help of the police and the DLDP works were successfully carried out. But it was a long and protracted struggle.
- In Jangampura, CSU members were cultivating 8 acres of government land for about 7 years. A jealous *Ryot* from Hirekateganahalli village got 1 acre of the same land sanctioned through the Deputy Commissioner's office at Kolar and tried to take over the entire 8 acres. The CSU immediately took up the issue in the Cluster Meet and with the help of the ADATS Field Worker, approached the Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner. Now they have got back 7 acres.
- In Gadigavaripalli the CSU started cultivating 800 acres of grazing land. The Tahsildar's office objected. CSU members got together with non-Sangha members, did a *dharna* in front of the Tahsildar's office and after a prolonged struggle finally got the Deputy Commissioner to grant nearly 370 acres of this land to 46 CSU members. Non-CSU families also got a portion granted in their favour.

Some examples of minor land issues that came up:

- In Papatthimannahalli a boundary dispute cropped up between Shameer Basha, a CSU member, and a *Ryot* from the neighbouring village during the implementation of DLDP works. The problem was solved by the CSU who re-marked the boundary to both parties' satisfaction.
- In M. Muddlahalli there was a land dispute among two CSU members. This was discussed in the CSU and the issue settled.
- At Kadirepalli Cross there was a land issue between Errappa, a CSU member, and Muniswamy, a non-Sangha member. When the CSU recommended that Legal Aid be given, ADATS appointed a lawyer to represent Errappa in the Assistant Commissioner's Court. The case is still in progress.

B.2.2. COOLIE CAPACITATING IN DEALING WITH ISSUES AND STRUGGLES

In the erstwhile ICCO Area minor individual problems of CSU members like getting land documents, liaison with different agencies, etc. are handled by the members themselves. Internal problems of CSUs were solved either in CSU Meetings or in the Mahila Meetings. When the problem relates to both Meetings, the matter is discussed in a specially called for mixed Meeting. If a solution is not found the Cluster intervenes. ADATS Staff accompany the functionaries when issues have to be dealt with higher officials.

A few cases in the erstwhile NOVIB Area needed the support of village level Staff and CCS functionaries. The Taluk Coolie Sangha (CCS) provided a forum for all the villages to share their problems and find solutions. The experience of ADATS Staff in solving different issues was also fully shared in these Meetings. Through this process of transferring knowledge and skills, further issues will increasingly be solved by the Coolies themselves.

B.2.3. INFLUENCE OF THE OLDER AREA ON THE NEWER AREA

The visible improvement of the older Area CSU members in terms of standard of living, and social and political status, has attracted the newer Area Coolies. But not understanding the struggles and pain behind these success stories sometimes led to frustration due to immodest expectations. This has led to an influx of members joining the CSUs and then getting cancelled as the days went by. Even some members who remained in the CSUs expect far too

much too soon. CCS functionaries are not blind to this. But they have to take prudent politics into consideration and cannot dishearten anyone who wants to join...

B.2.4. OTHER ISSUES

- Ramakrishna, a non-Sangha member from Nagendrahalli, on the pretext of marrying a CSU member's daughter, tried to send her off to Bombay for prostitution. When she caught on and protested, he murdered her. The CSU immediately reported the incident to the police and to the Central Bureau of Intelligence. Meanwhile the family of Ramakrishna was thrown out from the village by the entire Cluster.
- Redamma, an active CSU member from Muntakadirepalli, was returning from a Mahila Meeting in a neighbouring village. Non-Sangha members of the village ganged together and attacked her on the charge that she was spoiling the women folk of the village. Women CSU members, with the support of their menfolk, took immediate action and held a Panchayat. The non-Sangha members were forced to apologise.
- In Shettipalli village, a non-Sangha member kidnapped a CSU member's daughter and forced her to get married to him. The Mahila Meeting and CSU intervened and rescued the girl and the matter was settled. Later the Mahila Meeting took the responsibility for finding a suitable bridegroom for this girl and got her (re-)married in the Sub Registrar's office.
- In Guttapalaya village house sites were given to CSU members and houses allotted under the *Ashraya* scheme. Local leaders, with the help of others, tried to grab the sites. The Gram Panchayat (GP) Secretary also connived with them. The CSU, with the support of the GP *Adhyaksh*, got back 8 sites and the GP Secretary was suspended for his irregularities. Corruption charges have now been filed against him.

B.2.5. FAMILIES WHO GOT GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

	Icco Area	Novib Area	EZE Area
Houses under different schemes	11	13	79
House sites	6	12	28
<i>Bhagyajothi</i> electric connection	8	20	45
IRDP Loans	0	0	45
Pitching works	3	4	4
Borewells under SC/ST schemes	2	4	0
Free wells	3	6	0
Pensions	16	24	43
Hostel seats in high school	1	0	0

B.3. MEETINGS AND TRAINING

B.3.1. STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

VLWs and VHWs of the erstwhile NOVIB Area met once in a month at the Taluk headquarters. VLWs reported on the month's happening at their respective CSUs and explained how they tackled problems. The Field Staff reviewed and guided future course of action. During this 6 month period the village Staff were trained to themselves gauge progress in the Coolie Sangha through indicators that they were encouraged to identify. VLWs were encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring CCF utilisation and repayments. Just before the start of the DLDP, VLWs were trained to write the special minutes and supervise progress. Progress and problems faced by the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA going independent were thoroughly discussed in these Meetings so that they would know what to expect in their Taluk. VHWs were

encouraged to share their successes and failures so that setting up the Mahila Meetings did not become the concern of women alone.

The erstwhile EZE Area Staff Meetings were also held once a month. The Projects Assistant in charge of grassroots participation and democracy personally conducted these Meetings during this 6 months period. Reports of each village was taken up and guidance given on Coolie Sangha formation practices. The rationale behind systems and procedures that ADATS had developed to initially build CSUs in new villages were thoroughly discussed. Cluster Secretaries from both Areas meet every fortnight. The Taluk Secretary conducted these Executive Committee Meetings and ADATS Field Workers often participated. The following were some of the discussions and decisions that took place:

- Implementing decisions taken in the previous CCS Meetings and suggesting an agenda for the next one.
- Evaluating the progress of ADATS Staff and programmes and ensuring that they contributed to the building of the Coolie Sangha.
- Keeping a regular contact with GP members elected through the Coolie Sangha and influencing their budget making; getting up to date information regarding new schemes and programmes of the government.

Here is a list of training sessions held at Chintamani during this 6 month period:

- In April 1995 22 VLWs from the new villages of the erstwhile EZE Area were given training in conducting Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes.
- A second round of training was given in 3 batches to all the erstwhile EZE Area VLWs by the BCS President, Projects Assistant and ADATS Secretary. This intensive round the clock residential training, each for 3 days, was a refresher course on writing minutes and petitions, filling government prescribed forms for various purposes, the guiding principles and policies of the Coolie Sangha, etc.
- Women Member Coolies were given a 1 day training at their respective Cluster villages on manners of utilising the Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu as a political weapon to strengthen the position of women. VHWs and women CSU Representatives from each Mahila Meeting attended these sessions along with 3 more active women members.
- 22 VHWs from the erstwhile EZE Area CSUs were given training on basic health and first aid.
- A residential training on using the decentralised health and children's budgets was given to 5 woman from each Mahila Meeting of the erstwhile NOVIB Area.
- 8 women were trained at Bagepalli on building smokeless Chullas.

B.3.2. TALUK COOLIE SANGHA (CCS) MEETINGS

5 CCS Meetings were held during this reporting period. 1 Meeting got cancelled when curfew was declared in Chintamani town after a political murder. 2 of these Meetings were held for just 1 day due to heavy rains. Attendance of the erstwhile NOVIB Area was poor compared to that of the erstwhile ICCO Area CSU Representatives. The village Staff of the erstwhile EZE Area were encouraged to attend. The following were the main points discussed and decided upon:

- The Taluk Secretary was unanimously re-elected for another 1 year term due to some compelling reasons.
- CSU Representatives shared the socio-political impact created in their villages by the DLDP; also discussed was the DLDP's contribution to Sangha Funds.

- The CCS decided to form membership committees comprising of senior members and elders in each CSU in order to screen new entrants more strictly.
- The CCS decided that solving the fuel problem should not be the look out of Coolie women alone. Men should also actively participate to make the smokeless *Chullas* and *Seema jali* programmes a success.
- The consortium budget was thoroughly discussed and understood. Individual CSUs were encouraged to plan ahead and make the best use of this unprecedented opportunity.
- It was decided to pay the bus fares of CSU Representatives from the older CSUs.
- The CCS discussed that a safety net should be provided for CCF overdue incurred through genuine hardship and losses. It succeeded in convincing ADATS to provide relief for 2 members.
- Discussions were held on the conversion of voluntary Sangha Funds into a compulsory Sangha Tax at Bagepalli and reflections were held as to when this system could be introduced into Chintamani Taluk also.
- The role of CSU Representatives in the erstwhile ICCO Area from where VLWs had been withdrawn was discussed.
- The reasons why so many villages were dropping out and the consequences this would have on the CCS was deeply reflected upon.
- The Chintamani Taluk Coolie Sangha took out a huge procession against corruption in the Tahsildar's office.

B.3.3. REGULARITY OF CLUSTER MEETS

Only 76% of the weekly working meets of all the Representatives and village Staff from the CSUs of a Cluster were held on time and with quorum during the past 6 months (26 weeks). The oldest CSUs of the erstwhile ICCO Area fared particularly badly with 22% of their Cluster Meets cancelled. In fact, the erstwhile EZE Area with mock Cluster Meets (since ADATS paid Community Workers and VLWs are still present in the villages) fared exceptionally well with 80% good Meetings and 4% cancellations.

Area	Clusters	Total Meetings	Regular	Irregular	Cancelled
Erstwhile ICCO	4	104	73 (70%)	8 (8%)	23 (22%)
Erstwhile NOVIB	9	234	180 (77%)	38 (16%)	16 (7%)
Erstwhile EZE	19	440	350 (80%)	70 (16%)	20 (4%)

B.4. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFs)

B.4.1. STATUS OF THE CCFs AS ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

Grants given to 232 village level CCFs			Rs 37,43,608.00
Add: Interest earned			1,11,477.40
Less: Safety Net			3,100.00
Total CCF Capital in the Taluk			38,51,985.40 (100%)
Total of Good loans in the Taluk			6,19,850.00 16%
Total of Overdue in the Taluk	1,25,900.00	3%	
1 to 6 Months Late	38,245.00	0%	
7 to 12 Months Late	34,175.00	0%	
Over 1 Year Late	53,480.00	1%	

CCF Bank Balances in the Taluk	31,04,935.40	80%
Cumulative loans given	Rs 19,71,402.00	
Number of loans	1,457	
Average borrowing	Rs 1,353.06	
Repayment Rate	93.61%	
Utilisation pattern	Amount borrowed	No of loans
Crop Loan	8,62,170.00 43%	815 55%
Agriculture	68,100.00 3%	50 3%
Cattle	5,48,100.00 27%	280 19%
Trade & Entrepreneurship	4,83,342.00 24%	299 20%
Consumption & others	9,690.00	13 0%
Total	19,71,402.00 100%	1,457 100%

B.4.2. UTILISATION

Except in a few cases the utilisation of CCF was quite good. Overdue is mainly from the dropped out villages. Only 1 normally functioning CSU has an overdue problem. Lack of social control in that CSU is the reason for the non repayment.

- K.N. Venkatarayappa of Korlaparthi village was a drunkard and not taking any interest in his family. His wife was dejected and pleaded her situation in the Mahila Meeting. The Mahila Meeting forced the CSU to take necessary steps and solve the problem. The CSU decided to give a CCF loan to K.N. Venkatarayappa after several requests by him on condition of proper utilisation. He took a loan of Rs 3,000 and bought 6 sheep. Now he has got 15 sheep and has stopped drinking. The family scene is slowly returning to normal.
- Venkatarayappa of Doddakattigenahalli HC borrowed an amount of Rs 2,000 for petty business about 2½ years back. His business flourished and he repaid the entire amount. Now he is confident of taking another CCF loan for further improvement of his business.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the 2nd round of CCF loans were given out only in 23 CSUs. In the remaining villages, the Field Worker felt that their utilisation capacity was too low. It was decided that giving out fresh loans should be delayed for some more time till the CSUs reflect and decide how they want to go ahead. ADATS Field Staff attended all the CSU Meetings and succeeded in making them understand where the CSUs went wrong in the 1st round of releasing CCF loans. Necessary steps are being taken to rectify mistakes.

CCF bank accounts were opened and initial grants transferred to the respective accounts in the EZE Area. But CCF loans will not be released for quite some time in these new CSUs.

B.5. COOLIE WOMEN

B.5.1. MAHILA MEETINGS AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

In the erstwhile ICCO Area the Mahila Meetings are held fairly regularly even in the absence of supervision by ADATS Staff.

- Subbamma of Gajilavaripalli was deserted by her husband. She has been leading a single life for about 10 years. She told the Mahila Meeting that she was fed up and wanted to re-marry. The Mahila Meeting supported her and helped her find a suitable man. They then got them married at the Sub Registrar's office.
- In Agraharahalli, the VHW's son-in-law had an eye on her second daughter and was making plans to kidnap her. The girl explained her dilemma and the mental torture she

was facing with her brother-in-law. The Mahila Meeting summoned the man and warned him that they would take this issue up very seriously. Now the harassment has completely stopped.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area Mahila Meetings are conducted regularly except in 3 villages where there are VHW problems. ADATS Staff regularly visit the villages to follow up the children's programme and decentralised health decisions since these are very new responsibilities for these women. Recently the Mahila Meetings have begun to take strict measures against women who do not attend their Meetings.

Minor issues like domestic fights between husbands and wives are being solved by the Mahila Meetings. Only major problems like rape, kidnap and white slavery (all 3 heinous crimes are becoming increasingly common in Chintamani Taluk) are brought to the notice of CSU members. ADATS Staff also support such major issues by publicising them and mobilising across-the-Taluk support.

In the erstwhile EZE Area the Mahila Meetings are running regularly except in a few villages. But they need a long time to develop to the same level as the slightly older assemblies of women.

B.5.2. SKILL TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN

8 girls were given training in garment making at Bagepalli. But only 2 of them went to Bangalore to work in a garment factory. Some more girls are showing interest and registering their names for the next batch, but the overall response from this Taluk is poor.

B.5.3. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

The children's budget was discussed in the Mahila Meeting and they decided how much they could support each child with after scrutinising promotion lists obtained from the respective schools. Cash was distributed to the mothers as per their decision. One Mahila Meeting used a part of their money to release a boy from bondage and admit him to school.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the assistance of ADATS Staff was required during decision making. ADATS Staff had to visit nearly all the Mahila Meetings and explain the procedures. The main role of the Mahila Meetings in these newer CSUs is to monitor school attendance and tuition classes being conducted by the VLWs.

B.5.4. DECENTRALISED HEALTH

In the erstwhile ICCO Area, the Mahila Meetings followed strict rules and regulations to avoid any misutilisation of their health budget.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area, the Mahila Meetings are yet to get a hang of it. ADATS Staff is concentrating on these Meetings more to teach them the procedures involved and how they can strategize to strengthen their position using this budget.

B.6. SANGHA FUNDS

In the erstwhile ICCO Area there was a huge increase in the volume of Sangha Funds due to the good utilisation of DLDP. All the members contributed 20% of their DLDP wages to the Sangha Funds. But *Hundi* collections were adversely effected since everyone claimed that they had no other earning! So much so that *Hundi* collections came to a standstill for 4 whole months.

In the erstwhile ICCO Area the CSUs decided to spend the Sangha Funds very economically. All the CSUs decided to pay the bus fares for their Representatives to attend CCS Meetings. In 15 CSUs the members decided to appoint Teachers to write their minutes and conduct the children's classes.

Sangha Fund collections in the erstwhile NOVIB Area has not been very impressive.

B.7. VLW WITHDRAWAL PROBLEMS

All the VLWs were withdrawn from the erstwhile ICCO Area in March 1995. 18 of the withdrawn VLWs agreed to offer their services to their CSUs voluntarily. But in 10 of these villages the CSUs decided to pay a nominal amount for them.

In 5 villages the ex-VLWs refused to continue working for the CSUs. For the time being the Cluster Secretaries are themselves writing the minutes. In 2 more villages the ex-VLWs have turned against their CSUs and are trying to create disunity. Till now the CSUs have controlled the situation but it is too early to say how things will turn out.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the CSUs have no such problems with their VLWs but 11 of them are weak in technical aspects like writing minutes, etc. They are good politically and able to organise the Coolies, tackle issues, etc. ADATS Staff has to pay special attention in these CSUs.

In the erstwhile EZE Area about 15 VLWs were changed because they were not able to form the CSUs in a mature way.

SECTION "C" SIDDALAGHATTA TALUK

C.1. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE

Total Villages	79			
1st 3 year Formation phase	46			
2nd 3 year Formalisation phase	28			
Dropped out Villages	5			
Normal Member Families	1,954			
Suspended Members	164			
Cancelled Members	588			
Women Memberships	348	(17%)		
Coverage of Village Population	44%			
Adults	4,189			
Minors	4,168			
Caste Group Composition				
Member Percent Families Cover		Caste Group	Total	Ethnic Families
1,139 58%		Scheduled Castes/Tribes	2,083	54%
394 20%		Middle Castes	981	40%
421 21%		Forward Castes	1,351	31%
1,954 100%			4,415	44%

C.2. ISSUES & STRUGGLES

C.2.1. LAND ISSUES

About 11 land issues came up during this 6 month reporting period. In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the Coolies faced 6 minor land issues and in the erstwhile ICCO Area 4 more cropped up. 1 major land issue was tackled in the erstwhile NOVIB Area:

- In Varahunasenahalli village, nearly 56 acres of land has been allotted to landless Harijans and CSU members got title deeds in their favour. When they took the surveyor for actual allocation of the land according to their documents, they found that nearly 20 acres had already been ploughed by others. The very next day all of them went to the houses of the non-CSU members to enquire about the illegal ploughing of their land. They were surprised to see that even these people had documents in their favour. A hot argument started between the 2 groups and ended up with CSU members being badly beaten and 2 of their huts being set on fire.

All the CSU members went to District Commissioner's Office and pleaded for justice. He immediately put the government machinery into action to verify the facts. After investigation it was found that the non-Sangha members had obtained the documents illegally by bribing the concerned officials. A non-bailable case has been registered and the culprits are still under police custody. The victims got compensation for their burnt huts from the government and they also got physical possession of their newly allotted lands.

Minor land issues could be solved more easily. A typical example:

- In Ramalingapura village, a particular site had been allotted for the government primary school. But some people from a neighbouring village started occupying it illegally. The CSU members immediately took the issue to the concerned department and succeeded in preventing the encroachment.

C.2.2. COOLIE CAPACITATING IN DEALING WITH ISSUES AND STRUGGLES

Individual problems, like the getting of land documents and applying for government schemes, are handled by the respective members themselves in most cases. Almost all the internal problems of the CSUs, like land disputes between CSU members, husband and wife quarrels, etc. are solved by either the Mahila or CSU Meetings. Major issues are dealt with the support of the Cluster and Taluk functionaries of the Coolie Sangha. ADATS Staff support in giving legal and technical advice. ADATS Staff also accompany the functionaries whenever a matter needs to be dealt with higher officials like the Director of the SC/ST Cell, the Circle Inspector for complaining against police misbehaviour in the stations, the Bank Manager for availing loans without collateral, etc. In the Staff and Executive Committee Meetings, information on anti-poverty schemes of the government and other agencies is given by ADATS Staff. In summary we can say that while Coolie capacitating is definitely on the increase, there still is a vital role for ADATS Field Staff.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area far more attention is needed from ADATS Staff. Individual problems of CSU members require the help of either ADATS village Staff or of SCS functionaries. Even some internal disputes within the CSUs need ADATS Staff intervention at times.

C.2.3. OTHER ISSUES

- Members of Kumbarahalli succeeded in stopping the mismanagement of a Fair Price shop by taking it over into their hands.
- Members of Dodda Tekuhalli HC were struggling for drinking water and electricity connection. All the members agitated in front of the Gram Panchayat office and got things done.
- Narayanappa of Valasahalli went to a local police station to lodge the complaint against an outsider who attacked him in a land issue. The Police Sub Inspector, instead of hearing the complaint, brutally assaulted Narayanappa since he had already been bribed by the other party. The whole Cluster took the matter seriously and about 300 members of that Cluster staged a *dharna* in front of the police station. The Sub Inspector was forced to apologise and promised to act justly in future. The members warned the Sub Inspector not to repeat his follies and then dispersed.
- Venkatamma's husband in Dadamghatta married another woman and disappeared with her. Venkatamma was helpless since it was cultivation time and she was also ill. All the CSU members helped her by making necessary arrangements for the cultivation of her fields.
- Narayanamma of Eglatepalli was raped by a boy of same village. The CSU took up the issue and decided to get them married in spite of her protests. After 3 months the boy did not want to live with Naryanamma and started ill treating her. The CSU realised it's mistake in forcing her into the marriage. Now they have decided to send her for skill training at the ADATS Training Centre in order to try and make her financially independent.

C.2.4. FAMILIES WHO GOT GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

	ICCO Area	NOVIB Area
Houses under different schemes	46	33
<i>Bhagyajothi</i> electric connection	39	14
IRDP Loans	8	4
Pitching works	2	1
Borewells under SC/ST schemes	6	0
Hostel facilities	29	10
Selected for TRYSAM training	18	9
<i>Saguvadi Chitti</i> (free title deeds for land)	24	12

C.3. MEETINGS AND TRAINING

C.3.1. STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

VLWs from the erstwhile NOVIB Area (ICCO Area VLWs were withdrawn in March 1995 at the end of their 6 year contract) and VHWs continued to meet every fortnight at the Taluk headquarters. VLWs were trained in conducting tuition classes for children since this was a new activity in their villages. The VLWs were also trained in maintaining the Attendance Registers and recording minutes during DLDP works. They were motivated to take responsibility for the proper utilisation and prompt repayment of CCF loans. VHWs shared problems they encountered when conducting Mahila Meetings and over a period of time they have got the support and understanding of the entire village Staff.

A series of 3 days training was given to all the VHWs of the erstwhile NOVIB Area along with women CSU Representatives and 3 more women members from each Mahila Meetings on decentralised health budget and the children programme. A total of 5 batches were thus trained.

The newly elected Cluster Secretaries in the erstwhile NOVIB Area (who took over from the withdrawn Community Workers) were given intensive training for 3 days by the BCS President on the 2 Organisations Policy and roles and responsibilities of Cluster Secretaries in the Coolie Sangha.

5 new Clusters comprising about 30 CSUs were taken up in the Sadali belt of Siddalaghatta Taluk. The newly appointed Community Workers meet once a week. The Field Assistant reviewed and guided them in their daily activities as Community Worker settling into new villages.

The Executive Committee, comprising of elected Cluster Secretaries and Taluk Secretary which meets every fortnight, was invited by the Taluk Panchayat (the intermediary level of the Panchayat Raj system) for suggestions while allocating the budget for the entire Taluk.

C.3.2. TALUK COOLIE SANGHA MEETINGS

Every 4th weekend, all the CSU Representatives, Cluster Secretaries and village Staff of the both the Areas meet at the Taluk headquarters. Except on some important festival days and when they were busy with cultivation operations, these Meetings were held for 2 days. Attendance from the newer CSUs of the erstwhile NOVIB Area was comparatively lower. During this 6 month period 2 Meetings were held for just 1 day and 4 Meetings were held for 2 days. Excerpts from their agenda:

- The 1995-96 SCS Secretary Election was conducted and a youth who had worked as VLW in his native village got elected in a keenly fought triangular contest.

- Debate on converting Sangha Fund into a compulsory tax on lines similar to the decision taken at Bagepalli.
- CSU Representatives from the erstwhile ICCO Area will start receiving a stipend of Rs 25 per month from out of their respective Sangha Funds.
- The added responsibilities and new role of CSU Representatives after the VLW withdrawal in the erstwhile ICCO Area.
- Tackling the fuel problem of Coolie woman through the planting of *Seema jali* and building smokeless *Chullas* in every home.
- Debate on different ways by which the new found unity of thousands of Coolie Families can be used to economic advantage (i.e. not just for the obvious political advantage or for implementing ADATS programmes).

C.3.3. REGULARITY OF CLUSTER MEETS

The weekly working Meetings of all the CSU Representatives and village Staff at the central village is a good indicator of how active the Coolie Sangha has been. We have got the figures for a total of 183 Cluster Meets in the older ICCO Area and another 209 Cluster Meets in the newer NOVIB Area over the past 6 months (26 weeks).

Area	Clusters	Total Meetings	Regular	Irregular	Cancelled
Erstwhile ICCO	7	183	134 (73%)	27 (15%)	22 (12%)
Erstwhile NOVIB	8	209	121 (58%)	62 (30%)	26 (12%)

Only 12% of these weekly Meetings were cancelled for lack of quorum. While 73% of the Meetings were held on time and with proper quorum in the older Area, only 58% fared as well in the newer Area. Representatives and village Staff from erstwhile NOVIB Area have to buck up since 62 Meetings (30%) were held later than the prescribed time or were perfunctory in some other manner.

C.4. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFS)

C.4.1. STATUS OF THE CCFS AS ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1995

Grants given to 79 village level CCFS					Rs 22,32,349.00
Add: Interest earned					85,644.00
Total CCF Capital in the Taluk					23,17,993.00 (100%)
Total of Good loans in the Taluk					7,41,785.00 32%
Total of Overdue in the Taluk					1,03,260.00 4%
1 to 6 Months Late	25,500.00	1%			
7 to 12 Months Late	38,350.00	1%			
Over 1 Year Late	39,410.00	1%			
CCF Bank Balances in the Taluk					14,72,448.00 63%
Cumulative loans given					Rs 19,47,090.00
Number of loans					1,322
Average borrowing					Rs 1,472.84
Repayment Rate					94.70%
Utilisation pattern			Amount borrowed		No of loans
Crop Loan	6,92,100.00	35%		702	53%
Agriculture	1,12,650.00	5%		49	3%
Cattle	7,07,253.00	36%		296	22%
Trade & Entrepreneurship	4,22,837.00	21%		251	18%
Consumption & others	12,250.00			24	1%
Total	19,47,090.00	100%		1,322	100%

C.4.2. UTILISATION STORIES

The Executive Staff conducted a detailed study on CCF borrowers in order to get a deeper understanding of different aspects of the CCFS like (a) repayments versus utilisation, (b) gender versus utilisation, and (c) political strength of the CSUs versus the CCFS. The study covered 7 CSUs which had overdue problems as well as the remaining CSUs with acceptable repayment rates. The study tentatively concludes that lack of social control in the group and lack of fiscal discipline in individual borrowers are the main causes of CCF overdue. Except a very few cases utilisation was quite good even in villages which have overdue. Individual borrowers have succeeded in earning profits from their ventures.

- Byamma of Saddahalli village took an amount of Rs 5,000 for *chandrunki* (cocoon spinning trays) business. She earned a net profit of Rs 3,000 in 6 months. Again she bought some more *chandrunkis* and is still continuing her venture.
- Narasimhappa of Chintekkahalli CSU took an amount of Rs 5,200 to buy a cross bred cow. He earned a net profit of Rs 9,000 in 1 year. He again wants to buy another cow and expand his dairy.
- Narasimhappa of Alurki borrowed Rs 4,000 for petty business. Instead of utilising it for the said purpose he wasted the money during elections since he was an active member of a political party. Now he has not paid his instalment and his CSU is not brave enough to confront him.

C.4.3. FUTURE POTENTIAL

CSUs which are situated closer to Siddalaghatta town show much interest in off-farm ventures. Educated youth from these CSUs plan to undergo skill training and start ventures at their villages either collectively or individually. CSUs which are farther away from the town

show interest in farm related ventures since they have got good water and market infrastructure for crops like mulberry and silkworm rearing.

C.5. COOLIE WOMEN

C.5.1. MAHILA MEETINGS AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

In the erstwhile ICCO Area, Mahila Meetings are very regular except in 2 villages. Discussions in the Mahila Meetings are of a good quality. The conventional definition of a woman's place and role is debated and a lot of thought is given to redefine it in the present context. Attempts are made to get women to concentrate on self-care rather than always worry for the welfare of their family members. An active debate is taking place in most of the Mahila Meetings on women and religion, and how parents consider marrying off their daughters as a duty to be performed to attain *moksha* (salvation) rather than as a crucial step in the girls' lives.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* amount was increased by another Rs 4,000 per Mahila Meeting. These amounts have been deposited in nearby Post Office Accounts in the respective names of 3 women Cheque Signatories from each Mahila Meeting.

- Nagarathamma of Valasalahalli had a fight with an outside woman. The outsider complained to the CSU that Nagarathamma had snatched her gold chain. The CSU decided that Nagarathamma should return the chain in spite of her stout denial of any snatching. Nagarathamma asked the Mahila Meeting to support her. The Mahila Meeting rejected the CSU's decision and supported Nagarathamma. They then went about proving that the outside woman had not at all lost her chain in the first place.
- Aswathamma of Ammagarahalli was the victim of her mother-in-law's cruel treatment. The Mahila Members pursued the matter and succeeded in getting Aswathamma's husband to leave the joint family and live separately with his wife.
- Byamma of Ammarathimmanahalli is a unmarried woman who was having a relationship with a married man from the same village. She got pregnant and attempted to commit suicide. The Mahila Meeting rescued her and arranged for an abortion by discreetly using the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*.
- Sarojamma of Ammagarahalli village had an extra-marital affair but did not want to desert her husband. The Mahila Members advised both of them to either stop the relationship or to get properly divorced and re-married.

C.5.2. USING HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES TO PROVOKE COOLIE WOMEN TO THINK

We noticed that Coolie women were often handling situations in a bad way, only to later realise that they had blundered. The standard response was, "Oh, if only we had thought this through properly..." The problem was that the women were suddenly faced with special situations that they had to immediately act upon. The Mahila Trainer decided to train the women in an entirely different way.

During the CSU and Mahila Meetings that she attended 6 nights every week, different problems were debated by placing hypothetical examples. CSU members applied their minds to analyse these and find solutions in an unbiased way instead of blindly following stereotype and convention. For example, the conventional way of solving the problem of an unmarried girl who got raped was to force the culprit to marry the girl without even seeking her opinion on the matter. A detestable "You've spoilt the goods; now you take it!" attitude. ADATS Staff input is vital for this cultural training and there is a marked improvement in the Mahila Meetings. We believe that Mahila Trainers from the other Extension Taluks can profit by learning this "talk show" method of training, provided they are mature enough to handle complex emotional situations which arise even during these "pretence exercises".

C.5.3. SKILL TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN

30 young women were trained in tailoring at one of the Cluster villages. But we could not make them skilled enough to get jobs at Bangalore. We then sent them to the ADATS Skill Training Centre at Bagepalli for proper training in garment making. 26 of them underwent a fresh 3 month training and have already been placed at a good garment factory in Bangalore. This incident taught us that skill training has to be done in a very professional way. Another 11 young women have already registered their name for the next batch of training.

C.5.4. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

In the erstwhile ICCO Area, the 1995-96 children's decentralised budget was thoroughly discussed by the Mahila Meetings themselves. They then decided on who to support and with how much after scrutinising the promotion lists.

Whereas in the erstwhile NOVIB Area, ADATS Staff had to assist the Mahila Meetings in about 20 villages. They were just unable to themselves make the child lists and decide on levels of support.

C.5.5. DECENTRALISED HEALTH

There was a delay of about 2 months in giving out health grants to the Mahila Meetings. This caused a lot of hardships. But emergencies were dealt with by the women through their *Vok-kaku Sanchi Duddu* moneys.

- The Mahila Meetings of Devappanagudi Cluster arranged a 1 day general health check-up camp for their children and used a part of their health budget for follow up treatments.
- In Busetihalli the Mahila Meeting intervened when a Member Coolie was thinking of selling her land to meet medical expenses. Fortunately the remittance came, ADATS gave out health grants, and they gave the family Rs 1,500 from their Health Budget just in the nick of time.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area, the Mahila Meetings are yet to exercise their discretionary powers to strengthen their position. ADATS Staff have to put in a lot of training to teach these women strategic manoeuvring and procedural matters.

C.6. SANGHA FUNDS

There is a marked increase in the volume of Sangha Funds in the erstwhile ICCO Area. All the members contributed 20% of their DLDP wages to the respective Sangha Funds. There was not a single exception. But in 5 villages where the DLDP did not run properly due to CCF overdue problems, the volume of Sangha Fund did not increase.

In 15 CSUs the DLDP wage contributions to the Sangha Funds adversely affected *Hundi* collections for about 2 months. The Taluk Coolie Sangha took the matter seriously and succeeded in convincing these CSUs to continue the system of *Hundi* collections also.

The Coolies have decided to be very conservative and spend their Sangha Fund only in unavoidable situations. They will pay bus fares for CSU Representatives to attend the Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings since this is a necessary expense. About 10 CSUs decided to appoint and pay Teachers since the children's classes were suffering. They also felt that they needed a literate Staff to maintain their Minutes Books and other records. They plan to increase their Sangha Fund collections to meet the extra expenditures.

C.7. VLW WITHDRAWAL PROBLEMS

VLWs were withdrawn from the erstwhile ICCO Area in May 1995. In 15 villages the withdrawn VLWs continued to work voluntarily. They conducted tuition classes for children and

write the minutes of the weekly CSU Meetings. But in the remaining 14 villages the VLWs refused to work voluntarily and demanded the same stipend which they were getting from ADATS.

- In 10 CSUs the members succeeded in bringing down the demands to a reasonable level, claiming that there was a big difference in the paying capacity of ADATS and their CSUs!
- In 2 CSUs the VLWs were given an ultimatum. Either continue to work free of cost or quit primary membership in the Coolie Sangha. These 2 VLWs buckled down and opted for continued membership. They are now working voluntarily without any compensation whatsoever.
- In the remaining 2 villages the problem still continues since there is no alternative person and the Coolies refuse to meet the ex-VLWs' demands.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area, the VLWs are a very sincere and technically competent lot. They are good in conducting children's classes, writing minutes, filling out applications, etc. Most of them have completed their high school. But they are not quite so politically effective in building the Coolie Sangha. They somehow lack a street sense and zest and we have to make some very big training inputs to enhance their socio-political and organisational capacities.

SECTION "D" JULAPALYA & MITTEMARI

D.1. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE

Total Villages	73		
2nd 3 year Formalisation phase	42		
3rd 3 year Consolidation phase	13		
Dropped out Villages	18		
Normal Member Families	1,370		
Suspended Members	2		
Cancelled Members	890		
Women Memberships	246	(18%)	
Coverage of Village Population	41%		
Adults	2,469		
Minors	2,522		
Caste Group Composition			
Member Percent Families Cover		Caste Group	Total Ethnic Families
835 61%		Scheduled Castes/Tribes	1,159 72%
301 22%		Middle Castes	1,075 28%
234 17%		Forward Castes	1,114 21%
1,370 100%			3,348 41%

D.2. ISSUES & STRUGGLES

No major land issues came up during this 6 month reporting period. One reason for this could be that the CSUs are fairly well established. But a far more important reason was because of internal problems in the Area with very many CSUs dropped out due to CCF overdue and other problems. As a result of their poor socio-political showing, the Coolies just did not have the face to take up big and loud issues.

But the Coolies were busy solving a whole range of problems. Some examples:

- 55 CSU members from Vadigiri, Bandolapalli, Bandakindapalli and Bodikadirepalli had applied for title deeds for 150 acres of government lands. Narasimha Reddy, a self proclaimed leader from Vadigiri, tried to get everyone to pay Rs 500 each to get the job done quickly. The matter came up at the Cluster Meet where ADATS Field Staff advised them to approach the Tahsildar and enquire whether Narasimha Reddy was really his agent. The Tahsildar actually went to village, apologised and distributed title deeds to all the applicants.
- At Hohahudya, CSU members were facing severe problems to get kerosene oil from their Fair Price shop for the past 1 year. The reason was that they had not supported the local contractor cum trader when he stood for the Gram Panchayat elections in December 1993! The CSU made many representations to the officials but nothing happened. Finally they got the MLA to intervene and give the Fair Price shop license to CSU Member Ramappa.
- A much needed road work was sanctioned by the Taluk Panchayat from Polanayakanapalli to Bommasandra. But the Ryots knew that there would not be much profit for them in the works. So they managed to change the sanction to Kuntlapalli. Around 100 CSU

members from both the former villages went to Bagepalli and protested till they agreed to the original plan.

Examples from the relatively newer CSUs of the erstwhile NOVIB supported Mittermari Area:

- Nallamallepalli has no school in spite of 40 children regularly going to a neighbouring village. Repeated appeals to the Taluk authorities did not yield results. Finally, 300 CSU members from 2 Clusters came and staged a *dharna* at Bagepalli. Finally a building was sanctioned and teacher appointed to start classes at a temporary place till the construction was finished.
- CSU member Subbanna had pledged 9 acres of land to a Ryot from a neighbouring village 7 years back. Subbanna complained in the CSU Meeting of Nallamallepalli that he had repaid the amount he had borrowed. The entire CSU went to the Ryot and demanded that he give back the lands. But what followed was that the Ryot sent 15 professional thugs to harass Subbanna. The CSU Members went to the police station where the Circle Inspector settled the matter in favour of Subbanna.

D.3. MEETINGS AND TRAINING

D.3.1. STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

Since these villages are situated in Bagepalli Taluk, CSU Representatives and VHWs attend the monthly BCS Meetings. An advantage of this was that they are exposed to big ideas and lofty dreams. The disadvantage was that they did not understand that the older CSUs had gone through a lot of pain and struggle before they could raise slogans like “Become Rich in 3 Years!”, plan an endowment fund, etc.

All the CSU Representatives of Julapalya were given training in handling their own affairs when VLWs were withdrawn in March 1995. But these sessions have not had much effect in a majority of the villages. But in the villages that did stand, excellent DLDP works were conducted and there was not a single case of cheating or irregularity.

Village Staff from Mittermari meet every fortnight to discuss developments in their Area.

D.3.2. REGULARITY OF CLUSTER MEETS

Far too many Cluster Meets were irregular or cancelled at Julapalya & Mittermari during the past 6 months. The figures for regular Meetings are 69% and 40% respectively. At Julapalya this could be due to a general depression since of an exceptionally large number of CSUs had dropped out when VLWs were withdrawn. But at Mittermari the situation is inexcusable.

Area	Clusters	Total Meetings	Regular	Irregular	Cancelled
Icco Julapalya	4	104	72 (69%)	21 (20%)	11 (11%)
NOVIB Mittermari	5	130	52 (40%)	42 (32%)	36 (28%)

D.4. COOLIE WOMEN

D.4.1. MAHILA MEETINGS AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Mahila Meetings of Julapalya are being conducted quite regularly. A typical issue that they tackled.

- A woman from Kanumpalli complained to her Mahila Meetings that her dead husband's relatives at Aachaganapalli village were refusing to give her any share in his property. The Mahila Meeting took up the issue with the Aachaganapalli Mahila Meeting and made them part with 2 acres of land for the widow.

- Chinna Venkatamma of Kanagamakalapalli had 2 acres of land. A non-CSU person forcible took it over. Chinna Venkatamma, by herself, could do nothing about it. She put the issue in the Mahila Meetings and requested for Legal Aid. The women said that this was not a matter to be settled through lawyers in the Courts. They themselves went in a gang to re-possess it. They have actually forced the other person to file a case and bear all legal expenses while Chinna Venkatamma only has to defend herself -i.e. the burden of proof is no more on her.
- In Giripalli 8 houses were about to be sanctioned to CSU members but the local leader objected in the Gram Panchayat (GP) Meeting. CSU member Munivenkatamma, who is the Upa Adhyaksh of the GP disclosed the matter in the Cluster Meet and asked 150 CSU members to attend the next GP Meeting and demand an explanation. The GP Adhyaksh got wind of their plan and quickly over-ruled the local leader's objection saying that he had no locus standi in Gram Panchayat matters. All 8 houses have been sanctioned and work is soon going to start.

D.4.2. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

The ADATS Field Staff had to personally go and prepare child support lists in the Mahila Meetings. But the women are very conscientious about following up on children's school attendance, ensuring that the VLWs conduct night classes, etc.

D.4.3. DECENTRALISED HEALTH

At Mittemari Coolie women are a little more restrained. Perhaps this is because they are awed by what they see and hear at the monthly BCS Meeting that they attend. They have not, for example, spent any moneys at all on referring patients to hospitals simply because they are scared of misutilisation! 5 women from each Mahila Meeting in Mittemari were given training in how to use the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* moneys. Now they say that till they receive similar training in using the decentralised health budgets, they will only buy first-aid medicines and pay stipends to their VHWs!

D.5. VLW WITHDRAWAL PROBLEMS

In March 1995 31 VLWs were withdrawn at the end of their 6 year contract. None of them openly turned against their CSUs. But 18 villages soon dropped out. This is a very high number. Among other reasons, it is also because the ex-VLWs just do not care a damn to set the CSUs right. Now it has become the job of the remaining 13 ex-VLWs and all the Cluster Secretaries and CSU Representatives to set thing right. We are making a lot of small progress in this direction.

SECTION "E" DRY LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (DLDP)

This Activity Report on the DLDP should be read as a continuation of the earlier one written in August 1994 (2nd Progress Report on Coolie Sangha Formalisation - ICCO Project No: 923333) and covers a 1 year period till September 1995. Many points like the making of DLDP plans, etc. are therefore not repeated here.

E.1. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION WORKS

The 1995 soil and water conservation (S&WC) works were carried out from February to mid June. Works were implemented in a total of 210 villages in 4 Taluks (1st phase stabilisation works in 171 villages and 2nd phase restoration works in 39 villages). The 3,531 Member Coolie families who participated expended a total of 475,430 persondays of labour to construct 266,216 meters of rock bunds on Coolie owned land, clear pebbles on 1,853 acres and bringing 360 acres of virgin land under cultivation for the very first time. But 1995's DLDP achievements just cannot be quantified in this abstract manner. For reasons given in the previous Progress Report, these mid-term figures can be misleading and have only been mentioned to give an approximate indication of the works carried out.

5 pairs of Agriculturists and DLDP Field Workers continued to go out each and every single day to render advice, assist and supervise literally hundreds of Coolie work gangs labouring all over the countryside. Theirs was an unrelentingly heavy dawn to dusk schedule beaten only by the efforts and enthusiasm of the Member Coolie families themselves. We witnessed a growing frenzy with Coolies and DLDP Staff competing with each other as to who would start earlier and end later! It was a frenzy of sheer joy, optimism and brazen hope which stayed alive for most of the 4½ months, bar a few stray incidents at Chickballapur which were quickly set right.

ADATS supported this unprecedented upsurge in many a conventional as well as ingenious ways. Another Rs 292,989 worth of tools and implements were bought and distributed this year. Rs 7,131,454 was paid out as DLDP wages. When faced with a serious cash flow crunch, we encouraged the Coolies to take short term consumption loans from their respective CCFs. When CSU membership -and consequently the size of the work gang- was too small in some villages for them to undertake effective S&WC works, we agreed to 2 persons per member family working on the DLDP. When there were no stones to build contour bunds, we agreed that some of them could build earthen field bunds while the remaining members of the work gang got busy with the hiring of bullock carts and hauling of stones and boulders from wherever they were available. Once again the CSUs were helped to quickly select borrowers for CCF loans to buy and repair bullocks and carts.

As a result of this outburst of sheer physical activities, impressive S&WC works have been done in most villages. The stone bunds are of an extremely high and technically sound quality and the vast majority of them have been built on the contours of Coolie holdings. There has, however, been a little give and take in a few villages where the bunds were built on the boundaries of Coolie holdings instead of strictly following the contours. While not a single bund is less than 2 feet high and 1 foot wide, it is very common to see monstrous bunds of more than 3 feet height and 1½ feet width, resembling rubble masonry walls rather than bunds, stretching for miles and miles into the horizon, specially in Bagepalli and Chintamani Taluks. Even seasoned veterans like us were astonished at the quality and quantity of work done this year!

A separate mention must be made of the once-off maintenance S&WC works (2nd phase restoration) undertaken in 39 villages of Bagepalli Taluk where the DLDP was implemented from March 1987 to December 1989. These works were conducted without a single hitch or

hiccup. The Coolies were eager to take the advice of an Agriculturist and DLDP Field Worker who gave them specialised advice on how to restore bunds made in the '80s and deal with new contours that had been etched out in the meantime.

Compelling socio-political considerations made the Taluk Coolie Sanghas at Chintamani and Siddalaghatta request us to conduct DLDP works in the relatively newer CSUs of the erstwhile NOVIB Extension Areas which had just entered into the 2nd 3 year Coolie Sangha Formalisation phase. They said it was vital for them to visually demonstrate that the individual CSUs in their respective Taluks were single units with a uniform attention.

After a lot of persuasion and negotiations we agreed to conduct S&WC works for just 30 days from mid May to mid June 1995 in 29 CSUs of Chintamani and 22 of Siddalaghatta. We made it clear that there was absolutely no guarantee that the DLDP would continue in 1996. And we also placed the condition that they ONLY build stone bunds which would definitely last for at least 2-3 years till the DLDP could be properly taken up in the 1998-2001 phase of the consortium programme. Finally, we said that we were not in a position to supply tools and implements. To our surprise, all the Coolies from the erstwhile ICCO supported CSUs spontaneously went about lending them the odd crowbar and spade, and the Coolies from these 51 CSUs got ready their own bamboo baskets.

An impressive effort was made by 1,265 Member Coolie families in these 51 villages, wielding an odd assortment of tools and implements. The DLDP Staff assure us that there has been no compromise on technical soundness. The Coolies in these relatively newer CSUs have definitely made a case for advancing the start date of the DLDP in their villages. But it is almost impossible to make any conclusive statement as to whether this is such a good idea or not at this stage. We will therefore restrict ourselves to simply making a mention of the fact in this Activity Report.

E.2. UTILISATION OF THE DLDP PLANS

In the earlier para we spoke of the quality of works and the enthusiasm with which S&WC works were carried out by Member Coolie families. We will now examine the utilisation of DLDP Plans -i.e. the extent to which they were able to actualise on opportunities provided by ADATS.

100 days DLDP Plans were made for the 4 month period February to May 1995 based on the calculation that they would work for 25 days every month. As explained in the last DLDP Progress Report dated August 1994, these highly complicated work plans divided each CSU's membership strength into manageable work gangs, allotted persondays to individual Member Coolie families based on their land holding and also based on a point allocation system.

Each work gang implemented S&WC works on individual Member Coolie families' holdings in accordance to allocations made in these DLDP Plans in accordance to which attendance was scrutinised and wage payments made.

The overall utilisation in 1995 was 85.2% which, in our experience, is exceptionally high for any single year. 100% utilisation entails that (a) work must go on very regularly with no gang member ever absenting herself from work, and (b) there are absolutely no interruptions during the DLDP season -i.e. no one should excuse themselves for a festival or function and they should not attend to any other agricultural operation. Such a total utilisation is virtually impossible except (a) during severe drought, or (b) when the plans are made for a very short period of about 1 month or (c) when the Member Coolie families work for more days than what is allocated to them.

Taluk	Area	Utilisation
Bagepalli	1st phase works in newer CSUs	95.2%
	Maintenance works in older CSUs	98.5%
Chintamani	Erstwhile ICCO Area	93.8%
	Erstwhile NOVIB Area	111.5%
Chickballapur		41.2%
Siddalaghatta	Erstwhile ICCO Area	80.1%
	Erstwhile NOVIB Area	76.0%

But a more careful scrutiny of the figures reveals that the picture was not uniformly rosy.

- All the CSUs in Bagepalli Taluk (i.e. the newer ones where DLDP works were being implemented for the 2nd year in succession, as well as in the older villages where once-off maintenance works were being undertaken) did exceptionally well with hardly a Coolie absenting herself. The DLDP Plan utilisation figures stood at 95.2% and 98.5% for the newer and older CSUs, respectively.
- Chintamani followed close on the heels of Bagepalli Taluk with 93.8% utilisation. In the erstwhile NOVIB supported villages where works were conducted for only 1 month, utilisation crossed over to 111.5%.
- Chickballapur fared very poorly with only 41.2% utilisation. This was because of constant interruptions (in between 2 member's works) by the work gangs to attend to other pressing business. As a result, DLDP works could be implemented on only less than half the total membership's lands.
- The figures at Siddalaghatta were 80.1% and 76% for the older and newer villages, respectively. This is quite understandable, considering the relatively high level of agricultural activities in Siddalaghatta Taluk.

E.3. DLDP WAGES

As already mentioned, ADATS paid out a total of Rs 7,131,454 as wages at the rate of Rs 15 per day for 475,430 persondays of labour expended in S&WC works. For reasons pertaining to logistics and security, we decided to change the system of paying DLDP wages. Earlier DLDP wages had always been paid in cash, at the work site, by the DLDP Field Workers. Wages had been paid to each individual Member Coolie family in the presence of the entire work gang at each CSU. In 1995 we changed this traditional practice of cash payment to cheques made out in the name of the land owners.

The DLDP Field Workers verified the DLDP Minutes Books and Attendance Registers at the work sites and wrote out pay orders for completed works. Based on these pay orders cheques were issued by ADATS to the Member Coolie family on whose land works had just got over. Distributing wages at the rate of Rs 15 per day to the individual Member Coolie families who had worked on her land was the land owner's responsibility. The rare disputes and discrepancies that came up were settled in the CSU and Cluster Meets. Some were settled in strange ways.

- At Boodalapalli CSU in Bagepalli Taluk Member Coolie families devised a plan to make money. They marked themselves present for a period of 4 days and claimed wages for work not done. Subsequently the entire CSU came to Bagepalli, confessed and voluntarily returned the amount.

While this did cause some inconvenience to the land owners who had to come to the Taluk headquarters to receive and encash their cheques (not all the Member Coolies who worked on the lands, though!), ADATS and the Coolie Sangha felt that this was a safer system considering the changed socio-political situation and security climate in the region. As a result we had an incident free season of wage payments this year.

Another positive offshoot of the new system was that it freed the DLDP Field Workers of a whole lot of worrisome and sensitive money handling responsibilities. They could instead concentrate, along with the Agriculturists, on following through the technical aspects of dry land development and farming.

As already mentioned, ADATS went through 2 periods of intense cash flow crunch during the implementation of the DLDP. But this did not cause any disruption at all as far as S&WC works were concerned and there wasn't a single case of bickering. After putting it off for as long as they could, Member Coolie families in most CSUs borrowed from their respective CCFs and returned the consumption loans the moment we made wage payments.

- At Ammagarahalli CSU of Siddalaghatta Taluk, when told about our cash flow problems, the Coolies' immediate reaction was that it did not matter even if wages were never paid! Even if no funds were forthcoming, they reassured us, they had already made tremendous gains in improving their lands; this was payment enough, they claimed, in an attempt to cheer us up.
- At Muddalapalli Kotha Thanda and several other CSUs of Bagepalli Taluk CSU Representatives and other elders made arrangements with the local shop keepers for the provision of food grains on credit. In some villages of Chintamani Taluk the shop keepers themselves came forward and offered interest-free credit at the CSU Meetings.

E.4. DLDP STAFF

We continued to retain the complete team of 1994. But at Chickballapur the post of Agriculturist fell vacant twice, finally filling up with a woman candidate. The DLDP Field Worker also had to be changed at Chickballapur. Another woman Agriculturist at Bagepalli got married and left us in mid June 1995. She has not yet been replaced.

Early in 1995 we felt that the entire DLDP team had to be co-ordinated by a senior Staff member who could give conceptual guidance and policy direction if we were serious about introducing sustainable land use practices. After a lot of discussions we felt that it would be best if a non technical person could play this role and the ADATS Projects Assistant with thematic responsibility for enterprises and entrepreneurship was asked to co-ordinate the entire DLDP team. We realise that much more skill upgradation inputs have to be made to enhance the DLDP Staff from their present primary function of S&WC works managers.

E.5. SOCIO-POLITICAL RESULTS

It is much too early to make any conclusive statements as to what the DLDP has achieved in terms of positively effecting village society or even the position of Coolies as a whole. But the trends portend that a lot is being accomplished in terms of steeling the unity of the Coolies at a very local level and making them into a force to be contented with in village society. We had wondered, even at the project planning stage, if perhaps the design of the DLDP was more suited for tackling situations of low wages and patron abuse which no longer existed in the same form and intensity, except perhaps at Chintamani Taluk. But the truth is that these conditions do persist in spirit and intention. Helping the Coolies seek a sustainable subsistence through an improvement of their lands and cultivation is very much against the grain of

even a rapidly modernising agricultural economy. These are subtle matters that we would normally not have suspected the Coolies of easily grasping. But we were wrong.

- Wages, for example, are so high in parts of Chickballapur and Siddalaghatta Taluks, that Member Coolie families had to forgo significant losses to work on their own lands. Whenever a family got second thoughts, the matter was severely dealt with in the CSU and Mahila Meetings and the waverer told of the importance of developing their cultivation base. In this way, there was a continuous re-affirming of the socio-political objectives of the DLDP.
- At Palyakere MV CSU in Bagepalli Taluk Member Coolie families were approached by a government contractor who had to get a job done in a hurry. He promised them daily wages Rs 30 plus 3 meals a day for just a week. But the CSU refused, saying they had enough work of their own on their own lands. The Bagepalli Field Worker later heard this contractor grumbling in a tea shop as to what madness had come over the poor in the Taluk!

E.6. ALLIED ACTIVITIES

Towards the end of the S&WC works in May and June 1995 we began to discuss the non-works activities which needed to be taken up during the cropping season. In a departure from last year's decision to introduce dozens of allied activities and hoping that some of them would catch on in a few villages, we realised that it would be better to have an uncluttered agenda with just a few points than to try and do everything in a hopscotch manner. We decided to concentrate on green manuring, giving cropping advice, vermicompost, vertical composting, compost making, planting fuel trees, building fuel efficient wood stoves and following through with the nurseries.

E.6.1. HORSE GRAM AS A GREEN MANURE CROP

We identified the need to improve soil texture and soil nutrition by introducing biomass into the soil. Applying farm yard manure (FYM) was not a very practical solution for the Coolies since hardly any would be available with them. So we explored the possibility of growing a green manure crop and ploughing it into soil just before preparing the fields for sowing the regular crop. We knew that this was not really necessary from a nitrogen fixing point of view on fields which would be planted with groundnut. Yet we went ahead since the introduction of biomass would anyway have a beneficial effect on the soil. But on lands where they intended to grow rainfed *Horse gram* crops, a green manure crop would be most beneficial.

We deliberately chose *horse gram* because it was easily available and also in order to revive a traditional practice that had existed many years back, specially in the *Ragi* (golden millet) growing belt of Chickballapur Taluk. Elders who still remembered the practice told us that the only problem was that the fields would have to be guarded against cattle straying into them for an extra 4 to 6 weeks (in any case this had to be done the moment the regular crop was sown) and cited laziness in the younger generation as the sole reason for having abandoned the practice! We discussed the matter in the CSU Meetings and decided to take up the planting of *horse gram* and ploughing it into the soil at about 45 days stand (the total crop duration is 3-4 months).

10,590 kgs of *horse gram* was bought for seed purposes and distributed to all the CSUs at a cost of Rs 85,503. It was sown on 1,273 acres of Coolie land towards the end of June 1995.

Contrary to the elders' opinion, the actual problem we faced was not laziness or stray cattle, but erratic and unpredictable rainfall. In many villages the 1st rains were so late that it was already time to sow the main crops. In some other villages *horse gram* sowing had to be taken up so late that it had hardly grown to a respectable foliage before it was time to plough

it in and prepare the fields for regular sowing. Only in about half the villages did the green manure crop actually grow to the recommended stand of 45 days before it could be ploughed into the soil.

The effort was more successful in the *Ragi* growing belts of Chickballapur and Siddalaghatta because (a) *Ragi* is sown later than groundnut and therefore permitted a longer stand for the *horse gram* before it was ploughed into the soil, and (b) Coolies intuitively knew *Ragi* to be a nitrogen depleting millet crop and the results of growing a green manure crop which is ploughed into the soil before planting *Ragi* was evidently obvious. Coolies say that they are definitely going to continue the practice on their own from next year, without the seed subsidy from our side.

E.6.2. CROPPING ADVICE

We decided to give advice on non-cash inputs and low cost agronomic techniques like the sourcing of good seeds, seed treatment with fungicides and rhizobium, seed hardening, ploughing across the slope, plant spacing and inter-cropping. Some of this advice, like on ploughing across the slope, sourcing good seeds, etc. could be given when the Agriculturists and DLDP Field Workers visited the work spots to oversee the S&WC works. But a whole lot of it had to be done during the extremely short pre-sowing season of June and July.

We feel that we have missed some opportunities through our over reach and personal limitations. The unrelentingly heavy dawn to dusk schedule of the Agriculturists and DLDP Field Workers from February to June left them exhausted. So too were the Coolies who found even mundane tasks like hiring bullocks and ploughs to till their fields time consuming and quite exhausting. They really did not have the time or patience to hear rationale for new practices. By the time they recovered from a perfectly justified lethargy that followed, the extremely short pre-sowing season was all but over. Lands were ploughed and seeds sown by the end of July and it was too late to give any cropping advice. Maybe it was unrealistic to plan to do as much as we had hoped for, in terms of physical works as well as giving advice. Or maybe it is not possible to take up S&WC works and cropping advice at the same time.

Yet some modest achievements have been made in all the above listed areas of cropping practices. Not enough to make an impressive dent, maybe, but sufficient to portend a direction that we could move towards. We suspect that in 1996 there will not be the need for such intense village visits during the implementation of the S&WC works. That will give us enough time to better prepare ourselves to the task of giving good cropping advice.

E.6.3. VERMICOMPOST

Last year we experimented with a whole lot of low cost pits and tanks, and also with different breeds of earthworms. We made a practical assessment of problems like rain water seepage, lizards and rats attacking the worms, etc. Having finally decided on the type of construction most suited for the region, we are now in the process of selecting 1 person per Cluster to build the units. We hope to finish building the structures and introduce earthworms by the end of this year.

E.6.4. VERTICAL MULCHING

We are explaining the details and benefits of this practice in all the CSUs and requesting volunteers to come forward. They would have to dig shallow pits across the slopes of their fields in order to bury crop residues like castor and red gram stock in order to (a) act as underground dams and prevent sub-terrain seepage of rain water, (b) increase the biomass content of the soil, and (c) promote organic life forms in the soils.

We are confident of motivating a minimum of 1 person per village to make the effort and investment after the harvest season in December and January. We have frankly told them that

experimenting this new practice will entail losses in labour (for digging the contour pits) as well as in fuel (most crop residues are normally used in the kitchen stoves).

E.6.5. COMPOST MAKING

This is going to be an up-hill area since everyone will resist changes to the age old practice of throwing all the cattle dung and village waste to rot in waterlogged pits where the village waste water drains. When told that proper compost making needs air tight and water tight conditions, there is going to be a lot of scepticism. Our Agriculturists and DLDP Field Workers are still confident of being able to use their personal rapport to make some impact.

E.6.6. PLANTING *SEEMA JALI (PROSOPIS JULIFLORA)* AS A FUEL TREE

Last year's campaign to plant fuel trees did have some visible results. But we felt that it had to be continued this year also. Well ahead of time, in May 1995, each and every Staff member of ADATS (irrespective of whether they worked in the Executive, Field or Accounts Admn wings) adopted 3-4 villages where they would personally take up *Seema jali* planting on the boundaries of Coolie holdings, along roads and paths, and on patches of saline waste lands. In some villages, the Coolies along with our Staff members re-planted seeds on the same stretches for as many as 5 times in order to counter poor germination and low survival! By about July 1995 we could sit back and claim that well over 80% of our target had been achieved. ADATS had spent Rs 17,712 on 656 kgs of specially procured seed.

Next month, in August, the rats attacked. We just couldn't understand why they chose the young *Seema jali* saplings which were hardly 9 inches tall when there was so much tastier food like groundnut and *Ragi* all around them! In a desperate deviation from our normal policy we even used rat poison! But to no avail. More than half the saplings, specially those planted on the newly constructed rock bunds and on rocky waste lands, were destroyed. It is impossible to make an accurate assessment of survival rate since all the fields are lush and green. We will have to wait till the crops are all harvested in December and January before we can see what our final survival rate is.

But the bitterly disappointed Coolies decided to go ahead with contingency plans for a total disaster. Each CSU made an assessment of the number of plants they would need and decided to raise *Seema jali* in make shift nurseries and transplant them when they were about 3 feet high. They requested ADATS to only supply seeds, nursery grade plastic packets and technical knowledge. They would themselves contribute red earth, sand, irrigation and labour for about a year.

The silver lining is that planting fuel trees, ensuring their survival and alleviating the fire-wood problem of women is no longer just a "women's issue" or NGO concern. Men and women are equally committed to making the effort work. They openly grumble that even the rats are against women and the popular mood is that ADATS has done more than it's fair share to deal with the problem. Now they all want to pitch in and make the damn thing work.

E.6.7. SMOKELESS *CHULLAS*

In the 1st Quarter of 1995, a total of 2,516 Member Coolie families paid up Rs 50 each as their 25% contribution to the construction of smokeless *Chullas*. In the Extension Taluks, some solid persuasion had to be used by the ADATS Field Staff to make the Coolies pay up. But in Bagepalli, a single announcement in the BCS Meeting yielded 1,073 orders! These numbers would increase but for our recommendation that those living in thatched huts do not go in for the *Chullas* before they are fully tested out.

In the meantime, 19 Coolie women volunteered to be trained as masons in the construction of modified 2-pans *Astra Ole* fuel efficient wood stoves. After their 10 days training in April,

these women masons grouped themselves in pairs of 2 and went about building the stoves in the different villages from June 1995.

Taluk	Number of members who paid up	Number of <i>Chullas</i> built
Bagepalli	1,073	75
Chintamani	477	244
Chickballapur	515	443
Siddalaghatta	451	-
Total	2,516	762

This total contribution of Rs 125,800 has been kept in bank accounts in the names of the women masons. ADATS made bulk purchase of metal grills, chimney pipes and other material that are needed at the rate of Rs 90-125 per stove.

Every week or so the pairs of women masons make indents and take material from Bagepalli and head off to the villages where there are “orders” to be fulfilled. The benefiting families feed and shelter them in their homes. They also supply bricks, red earth and sand. Every week, when they come to take fresh material stocks from ADATS, they report on the number of stoves they have built and draw wages from their common bank account at the rate of Rs 40 per stove.

There is a growing demand for these smokeless *Chullas*. A whole lot of non-Coolie Sangha members have come forward with the full contribution of Rs 200 per stove but we have advised the women against taking further orders since only 762 of the 2,516 orders at hand (hardly 30%) have been executed. Of late, there is some demand for the *Swasthi* Model portable metal stove which is slightly costlier. 72 families have come forward and we expect this number to grow.

Each woman mason builds an average of 2 stoves per day and thereby earns a minimum of Rs 80 per day which is considerably higher than what they would in their villages. They have hardly any expenses at all in the villages, save bus fares. Moreover, this is an occupation that gives them tremendous mobility, personal freedom and prestige. Often they are not the ones who actually do the physical work. Instead they make the benefiting family members themselves build their own stoves, while they sit back claiming that they are trainers! Only 10 trained women do this as a full time occupation, hardly ever visiting their native villages. The other 9 work sporadically, in between domestic chores and agricultural activities.

We suspect that this band of women masons is going to increase in the days to come and that there will be a growing market demand for the smokeless *Chullas* even without ADATS’ subsidy. Moreover, the self organisational skills obtained by the women masons need not be restricted to building and maintaining wood stoves alone. Sceptics predicted that only destitute and single women would come forward to be trained as masons and that they would hardly be able to do an efficient job. But to their surprise women from the so-called “respectable” families, and even some young girls, have come forward and there is hardly a single complaint against them or their stoves.

E.6.8. NURSERIES

Of the 19 nurseries started last year, 16 have survived. Saplings from 3 nurseries which failed due to water shortage had to be shifted to other nurseries and salvaged. A small amount of Rs 57,320 has been spent this year on supporting these nurseries with plastic packets, seeds, red earth, manure, hose pipes and other incidental expenses that the women were not able to meet on their own.

It is still too early to predict if these nurseries are going to be viable businesses since it is only very recently that the women have started selling plants. The only indication we have upto

now is that the women have kept the ventures going in spite of receiving absolutely no wage subsidy. There was some initial confusion as to whether ADATS would make bulk purchases of plants for free distribution. But when we convinced that this was a very bad idea and we had no intention of doing so, they accepted our reasoning.

In the erstwhile NOVIB Area of Siddalaghatta it has become a city-like fashion for Member Coolie families to purchase saplings and plant them on their lands! They are now demanding that commercial nurseries run by Coolie women be started in their Clusters also.

E.7. CCF CROP LOANS AND THE RAINS

The monsoons have been very good upto now. As just mentioned when reporting on the green manure crop, we got a bad fright in June/July with erratic and spatial rainfall. As a result, most CSUs scaled down their CCF borrowing for crop loans. But since then, the rains have been very regular and evenly spread. Perhaps 1995 is one of the better rainfall years in recent memory and we expect very good crops in December-January.

A total of 1,618 borrowers have taken Rs 2,124,555 as crop loans. This works out to an exceptionally low average of Rs 1,313 per borrower or Rs 437 per acre. Part of the reason for this was the initial scare due to late monsoons. Another part of it is the CCF Overdue of Bagepalli Taluk which has been extensively described elsewhere. Crop loan borrowing is significantly higher in Chickballapur where the overdue problem was well under control.

Taluk	Loans	Amount	Average borrowing	Repayment Rate
Bagepalli	744	998,620	1,342	76.5%
Chintamani	308	339,500	1,102	93.5%
Chickballapur	258	417,100	1,616	97.5%
Siddalaghatta	308	369,335	1,199	94.7%
Total	1,618	2,124,555	1,313	81.5%

E.8. REFLECTIONS ON MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES

We realised that the introduction of appropriate cropping practices was the effort through which we could move towards more sustainable land use practices. That was why we decided to give advice on non-cash inputs and low cost agronomic techniques. Since we refused to view each of these as unrelated activities, we soon realised that success was not guaranteed through hard work and activity choice alone. Achievements were linked as much to broader policy choices as to Staff efforts; to making good judgements and close calls as to a whole lot of external factors that we do not have total control over.

Let us examine the financial implications. All the cropping advice we give the Coolies, like the choice and quality of seed, pre-treatment with fungicides and rhizobium, applying gypsum on the land, etc., have varying financial implications, some marginal and some substantial. Broadly speaking, the cost of these additional practices should be financed by the cultivating families themselves. It would not make sense to subsidise any of them because then we would be making only a temporary intervention. Unless they are sustained through the economics of farming, they are not going to last.

These expenses have therefore to be met through CCF crop loans which, in turn, can be given out provided (a) there is not much of an overdue problem, (b) when there is some indication that the rains will not fail, and (c) when there is borrower confidence that there would be appropriate returns in terms of better yields and prices.

But in actual reality, the CSUs have been reluctant to loan out more than an average of Rs 1,313 per member this year. In Bagepalli, this was because of the staggering overdue

problem. In the Extension Taluks it was because the monsoons played tricks with a late and erratic start. Whatever be the reason, this figure translates into a paltry sum of Rs 437 per acre. Hardly enough to complement other mopped up resources, family labour, left over seeds of a doubtful quality from last year's harvest, and meet the cash demands to hire bullocks and prepare the fields, and buy a 50 kgs bag of DAP fertiliser. Certainly not enough to pay for an additional recommended practice like the application of 200 kgs of gypsum which works out to another Rs 80 per acre.

Then there are those once-off expenses like the application of 60 cart loads of tank silt to improve soil texture which works out to between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,500 per acre. These just cannot be met by the cultivators themselves. Perhaps an argument for subsidies can be made in the same way as with S&WC (1st phase stabilisation and 2nd phase restoration) works. Perhaps these too should be considered as essential environmental investments.

Which leads us to yet another fundamental question. The justification for the timing, need, role and place of the 3 year DLDP intervention within ADATS' 9 year Coolie Sangha building strategy is irrefutable. Achievements made in terms of reshaping the lie of the land are impressive and as permanent as they come. Uncontrolled soil erosion and rain water run-off have definitely been checked to a large degree. But such a brief activity defined intervention alone may not be enough if we are serious about achieving something in terms of sustainable land use practices. Maybe that effort has to have a longer time frame, perhaps even beyond the "NGO intervention phase" of Coolie Sangha building.