

0407. 5th Progress Report on the SCNZ Programme (Sep 1999)

1. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

1.1. Coverage

During this 6-month period, the Gudibanda Programme continued to grow to cover 2,276 families in 66 villages. New CSUs have started functioning in 6 villages. A CSU was formed by the town Coolies in the last days of the previous reporting period.

1.2. Coverage as on 30 September 1999

	Last Report	This Report
Number of Villages	60	66
Normal Member Families	2,134	2,276
Temporarily Suspended	134	148
Cancelled Members	273	328
Women Membership	360 (15%)	342 (15%)
Coverage of Village Population	46%	39%

1.3. Ethnic Composition of the Normal Members

Member Families	Percent in CSUs	Caste Group	Total Families	Ethnic Coverage
1,479	65%	Scheduled Castes/Tribes	3,149	47%
319	14%	Middle Castes	873	37%
478	21%	Forward Castes	1,801	27%
2,276	100%		5,823	39%

1.4. Education Campaign & Conscientisation

At the request of the apex BCS, for more than 3 weeks in August 1999, half a dozen experienced Staff from Chickballapur and Chintamani camped at Gudibanda. Their mission was to give an impetus to community organisation, conscientisation and mass mobilisation. Along with the Gudibanda Field and Village Staff, they planned and implemented an effective village level campaign for democracy and gender justice. The Project Director addressed 2 huge gatherings at Benneparthi and Eereddipalli villages and met with almost all the Member Coolie families from Gudibanda taluk.

This campaign proved to be very effective. Most Member Coolie families are fairly clear as to why we have chosen a holistic approach to Coolie Sangha building, emphasising on the socio-political, cultural as well as economic empowerment.

Gudibanda has now gone beyond being a mere “new initiative supported by ADATS and SCNZ”. We can confidently state that the village CSUs of this taluk now have a place of pride and respect within the larger BCS movement. Quite honestly, this is more than we had expected to achieve in a short span of just 2½ years.

1.5. *Issues and struggles*

In spite of being denuded with routine work, the Community Workers and VLWs supported several issues and struggles during this reporting period. Through the dogged handling of problems, the CSUs have had an every day presence in the lives of hundreds of Member Coolie families. Common problems were solved and relief was provided to victims of oppression and cheating. But more importantly, struggle has contributed to building credibility and respect in the eyes of the neutral population.

- A Coolie boy from Somalapura was abducted by a *Ryot* from a neighbouring taluk and pressed into bonded labour for a month. His argument was that an old loan taken by the boy's family hadn't been repaid. This incident brought the CSU together. They felt that this was a moral crime. They stormed into the *Ryot*'s house, rescued the boy, and scoffed at his demand for money, saying that the boy had already repaid him with a month's free labour.
- A *Ryot* in Karganathammanahalli, who owned nearly 200 acres got greedy, usurped 2 acres of Gramthana land, and transferred it in his brother's name. Gramthana is reserved for village purposes and any returns are equally shared among village folk. When the CSU Members got wind of the matter, they staged a protest in front of the Taluk Office at Gudibanda. They met with the Assistant Commissioner and arranged for cancellation of the transfer order.
- In the same village, CSU Members settled a 9 year old dispute regarding 5 acres of land. Both parties now cultivate this land by turns, and share the produce equally.
- The allotment of nearly 300 acres of government land to poor farmers in Pasupallodu, Kondireddipalli and Kondavulapalli villages was withheld by local officials under the ruse that granite meant for export was available on that stretch. The Cluster got together and staged a demonstration in front of the Taluk Office. When this evoked no response, they invited the Tahsildar for a spot inspection. The government withdrew its granite claim. Even after this, Forest Department officials prevented people from taking possession, saying that the land came under their purview. The Coolies have filed a petition with the District Commissioner and Asst. Commissioner.
- Coolies from Kondireddipalli CSU directly approached district officials, secured land records and distributed house site titles to Members, much to the amazement of taluk officials at the Revenue Department.
- A Chowtathimmanahalli *Ryot* duped the Karganathammanahalli VHW of Rs 23,000. He got a bank loan sanctioned in her name, promising to pay off the monthly instalments. When, even after a year, there was no sign of repayment, the issue was brought to the Mahila Meeting's notice. The Mahila Meeting called for a combined meeting of the respective CSUs. They warned the *Ryot* to repay the entire loan amount within 2 months or face consequences. He paid up.
- Following a protest by CSU Members of Brahmanarahalli in front of the Agriculture Office, benefits are now being re-routed to the Harijana Colony. Earlier, benefits were only given to *Ryots* living in the main village where people with influence over local officials managed to hog it all.
- The Ullodu TC's father, a peon in the Taluk Office at Gudibanda, used his contacts to get 4 acres of Gramthana land transferred into his name before he retired. The TC deceitfully coaxed the CSU Members into signing a paper supposedly urging the Taluk Office that he be granted his father's job. Actually, the document read that the villagers

had no objection to the transfer of land. When the Members realised that they had been tricked, they threatened the TC and his family with expulsion if the land was not restored to community ownership and use.

The Gramthana land was retained and the TC was sacked.

- A 16 year old boy from Sadashivanahalli CSU molested a 14 year old girl belonging to another caste. The victim's family chose to seek the counsel of the Mahila Meeting rather than approach village elders. Both parties were called and an acceptable compromise was arrived at.
An issue which would otherwise have caused havoc in the community was thus resolved with a strong word of caution to the boy.
- An upper caste *Ryot* in Chenduru leased out 2 acres of government land being ploughed by him from nearly 10 years to a CSU Member from Korepalli. Neither party had any documents for the land.
Another person unwittingly secured government land records for the same 2 acres. When the Brahmin sold off the land to the CSU Member for Rs 25,000 this third person staked his claim.
Both the CSU's deliberated over the issue and decided that he pay Rs 25,000 to the Korepalli CSU Member and keep the land for himself.
- In Bathalapalli CSU, a Member refused to quit the Sangha even in the face of eviction by his house owner. He was thrown out of the house. As a reward for his steadfastness the CSU contributed to put up a temporary shelter. They are now in the process of building him a permanent house.
- In the same village, the Mahila Meeting submitted a petition to the Block Education Officer that only 1 teacher had been provided for the village government school though there was a provision for 2. An additional teacher has now been deputised by the BEO.
- The CSU Members here decided that they would work on each other's lands first, and only then go to other *Ryots* for coolie work. The ploughing/sowing season is extremely short, sometimes lasting only a few days, because of erratic rainfall. This decision of theirs has helped them complete their ploughing and sowing work in time. Earlier, lands would be left fallow and neglected for want of timely work.
- In Benneparthi village the CSU contributed among themselves to marry off a very poor widow's daughter. They also took a firm stand regarding the choice of the boy when the widow's step uncle demanded that this choice be left to him. A simple registered marriage was conducted in their presence.
- In Yellodu, the parents of 2 SCNZ linked children were badly burnt. Their mother set herself on fire when she discovered that her husband, a drunkard, was having an illicit affair with another woman. The father tried to save his wife and himself got scalded. Unfortunately, the mother died en route to hospital and the father is absconding.
The Members here have taken it upon themselves to provide the children with food, meet their daily needs, and send them to school.
- A CSU Member from Beechaganahalli lost his legs in a hit-and-run case on the National Highway when returning from work one night. The CSU has taken up his cause and provides him with Rs 250 as Aid Distress every month.
- CSU Members from Doddanancherla rallied in front of the BEO's office and managed to secure a stay for their government school teacher who had been transferred to another village. The women felt that their children are being taught quite nicely by this teacher, and transferring him was not just or fair.

- A woman CSU Member from Dhumakuntapalli complained to the government school headmaster at Chenduru that a particular teacher was irregular and negligent in his duty. When no action was taken after some time, the Mahila Meeting admonished the headmaster and got the teacher replaced.
- Women CSU Members of Jayanthi Grama have managed to secure a government primary school for their village. This village did not have a school from 2 decades and children were required to attend classes at Beechaganahalli, 2 kms away. Crossing the busy National Highway every day was not safe for their children.

1.6. The Town Sangha

Initially, there was a problem with the town CSU. Though children were regular to their every evening *Balakendra* classes, and the weekly Mahila Meetings were progressing quite well, a lot of fathers/husbands could not come for weekly CSU Meetings. When we delved deeper, we found that this was not due to any indifference. Rather, it was due to the nature of their work – they often had to travel to far off places to work as masons and construction workers, etc. and could not return home on time.

ADATS solved this problem by transferring memberships to the names of women. Mahila Meetings are now CSU Meetings in Gudibanda town, the first all-women CSU in the taluk.

1.7. Staff

As workload increased, the Desk Worker (Accounts/Admn) was shifted from Bagepalli to Gudibanda. Apart from dealing with day to day matters of finance, campus maintenance, logistical support, etc. he has also been supervising construction work at the campus.

The ADATS Health Worker, who previously worked in our ODA supported programme to upgrade VHW skills in Bagepalli taluk, took training responsibility at Gudibanda. Through a series of sessions, he has contributed tremendously to improve community and referral health work.

A new Mahila Trainer was selected and sent to other Extension taluks in order to gain conceptual clarity and work experience. For the past 1 month she is stationed at Gudibanda.

A Field Worker (CCF) was selected and sent to the Extensions in order to thoroughly familiarise himself with the working of the CCFs. For the past 3 months, he has been visiting the CSUs of Gudibanda, doing pre-project work.

Feeling of ownership and commitment that has seeped into the Village Staff (CWs, VLWs, VHWs and TCs) continued to grow. Unfortunately, one of the 2 Field Workers (Krishnappa, the former Taluk Secretary from Chickballapur) wasn't mature enough to provide leadership and support this conceptual development. He continued to attend Cluster Meets and sort out mundane problems but, largely due to his inability to interact and contribute at a deeper level, he stopped attending CSU and Mahila Meetings. Confused and frustrated, he began to lash out at his colleagues and indulge in petty politicking. Senior Staff from Chickballapur were quick to intervene. Krishnappa was warned and asked to develop a largesse or quit.

But ADATS does not view this as an isolated management problem. It is an organisational malaise that effects any new set up as it begins to grow. When it was all new at Gudibanda, there were thousands of mundane tasks that kept everyone busy. There also was an ideological purity with a common mission and shared goal. Shared dreams instilled a zeal that provided nervous energy to sustain spectacular achievements. As the contrasting pressures caused by the thrill of expansion (giving confidence to a new group of Coolies in a new village, assessing new power equations, et al) and the mundane routine of day to day work set

in, things began to change. A deeper, more sober, maturity was called for. To some extent, it we who have failed to instil these more lasting traits...

1.8. Meetings

All the weekly CSU, Mahila Meetings, and Cluster Meets were held quite regularly during this reporting period. Moreover, a whole lot of special meetings were held in September 1999 due to the month long education/conscientisation campaign that was undertaken in the taluk. During the 2nd half of this reporting period, it was decided to rotate the weekly Cluster Meets to all the villages instead of confining the venue to the central village alone. This helped all the Village Staff and functionaries gain an intimate knowledge of each village in their respective Cluster.

1.9. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) Classes

In spite of everyone realising the importance of the activity, ALP Classes could not be revived during this half year for a number of reasons.

1.10. Sangha Funds

The practice of collecting for the posterity of their CSUs continued through this reporting period. Though no impressive amounts were collected, the total Sangha Funds for the taluk reached Rs 263,794 as at 30 September 1999.

Fixed Deposits	Rs 219,000
Savings Bank Accounts	Rs 44,794
Total	Rs 263,794

2. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

2.1. Position as on 30 September 1999

A total of 3,027 children are being supported to go to school in the taluk. This includes 1,411 girls and 1,616 boys. 1,530 of them are linked to sponsors in New Zealand and 1,497 are extra.

	Linked Children		Extra Children		Total	
Boys	728	48%	888	59%	1,616	53%
Girls	802	52%	609	41%	1,411	47%
Total	1,530	52%	1,497	48%	3,027	100%

1,525 children (50%) are in primary classes, 1,107 (37%) in middle school, and 395 (13%) in high school.

2.2. Class-wise Break-up as on 31 March 1999

Village	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Total
Somalapuram	2	2	2	6	4	5	3	2	1	2	29
Chinnapalli	6	8	6	7	10	4	10	1	2	1	55
Ullodu	5	6	3	4	5	4	3	2	5	0	37
Ninchinabandapalli	4	4	3	5	3	5	8	4	6	0	42
Karaganathanahalli	10	6	3	9	5	6	5	3	3	2	52

Chowtathimannahalli	6	3	7	4	7	3	3	4	2	0	39
Bramhanarahalli	5	8	6	4	6	8	9	5	5	3	59
Bogenahalli	12	9	7	9	12	5	13	4	1	2	74
Minchanahalli	5	10	1	4	8	7	12	3	4	2	56
Dodda Kurabarahalli	9	11	8	8	3	3	0	0	2	0	44
Chikkathamannahalli	7	9	8	3	7	4	9	3	4	0	54
Koppukatenahalli	3	4	3	2	3	1	5	0	0	2	23
Sadashivanahalli	3	5	4	3	3	6	3	0	2	0	29
Eereddipalli	6	5	4	7	0	4	6	2	3	0	37
Giddapannahalli	8	3	0	5	0	7	4	3	2	0	32
Jayanthi Grama	7	4	1	10	3	2	9	3	0	0	39
Singanapalli	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	0	25
Yerralakkepalli	8	17	12	10	8	5	7	2	0	0	69
Chinnappalli	11	10	14	2	7	4	2	0	0	0	50
Ganganapalli	4	5	3	5	3	5	4	2	5	1	37
Jambigemaradahalli	8	4	5	7	7	9	9	6	9	2	66
Chintakayalapalli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doddanancherla	9	8	11	3	4	3	0	2	2	0	42
Kalvagaddapalli	7	4	5	7	9	11	9	7	5	1	65
Katenahalli	3	4	2	3	6	5	4	1	2	0	30
Thirumani	8	9	9	4	6	6	3	5	2	0	52
Korepalli	6	11	8	5	6	9	13	6	7	1	72
Chenduru	9	23	20	12	19	10	14	3	8	2	120
Dhoomakuntapalli	8	5	10	5	4	6	6	5	3	3	55
Gandhamanagenahalli	2	3	4	5	3	4	6	1	3	1	32
Thattapalli	5	7	1	3	4	6	5	7	1	1	40
Maravapalli	7	0	0	3	2	5	2	1	0	2	22
Obannagaripalli	1	2	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	13
Adinarayanahalli	4	0	3	3	3	4	2	2	0	2	23
Kadapalli	1	9	7	8	13	8	9	0	4	4	63
Pulсанavoddu	0	3	3	3	3	0	2	0	0	1	15
Gundlahalli	6	7	5	4	2	5	4	1	3	0	37
Yerrapalli	4	6	9	4	9	14	9	8	2	1	66
Gavikuntapalli	4	11	7	7	7	6	8	5	4	6	65
Kondavulapalli	4	8	9	4	6	8	6	3	2	0	50
Dapparrthy	9	13	10	11	14	7	6	4	2	2	78
Beechaganapalli	5	7	11	3	9	6	11	4	0	0	56
Chikka Kurabarahalli	2	4	6	13	7	3	3	2	0	0	40
Bathalapalli	2	5	3	1	9	5	3	3	0	0	31
Pasupallodu	4	5	4	1	8	3	0	2	1	0	28
Lakkepalli	6	13	5	9	7	14	14	3	5	1	77
Kondireddipalli	6	6	2	8	7	5	9	4	2	0	49
Benneparthy	8	7	3	2	8	7	5	5	2	2	49
Machapalli	5	6	4	3	0	8	4	4	3	0	37
Upparahalli	12	3	6	3	7	3	3	2	0	0	39

Yellodu	6	12	9	15	14	14	6	5	0	0	81
Ambapura	7	6	4	2	9	6	4	0	3	0	41
Kambalapalli	12	7	5	12	15	7	5	5	1	0	69
Bulsandra	4	9	8	3	6	4	3	3	0	2	42
Cholashettihalli	16	5	8	7	5	2	5	0	0	0	48
Yelagalahalli	6	8	3	5	12	4	6	1	9	1	55
Kasuvuguttahalli	7	3	6	4	4	5	3	3	5	4	44
Haleperesandra	8	6	6	4	5	3	6	5	3	2	48
Gaggilaralahalli	8	10	7	4	5	10	9	4	4	1	62
Korenahalli	12	11	4	8	9	6	5	1	2	0	58
Jeeganahalli	4	7	5	10	5	4	12	3	4	0	54
Kondireddipalli	13	8	5	7	3	2	8	0	0	0	46
Devareddipalli	9	4	9	2	4	4	9	4	0	3	48
Gantamvaripalli	3	8	7	4	4	5	3	3	0	0	37
Taluk Total:	393	430	359	343	389	348	370	179	154	62	3,027
				1,525			1,107			395	

2.3. Case Histories

We had agreed with SCNZ that from May 99 onward we would send 30 Case Histories every month – a cut down from the originally decided figure of 50 a month. We have sent only 123 cases from May to September – a shortfall of 57 Case Histories.

Date	Number of Case Histories sent
15 May 1999	33
20 June 1999	60
6 September 1999	30
Total	123

In April-May, linkages were hard to come by due to summer vacations. Our Case Workers returned empty handed from their field trips during most days not having found the children/families in respective villages. No case histories were sent in April and 33 were dispatched in May. 60 cases were dispatched at one go in June.

Adhering to the criteria stated in the 3rd and 4th Progress Reports, the Children's Programme was not started in newly begun CSUs. As a result, we had to search for linkages in the older villages itself.

After that, the Case Workers and Desk Workers had to concentrate on individual children's Annual Reports which were due in August 1999. 30 more case histories were sent in September.

2.4. Annual Reports for 1998-1999

A well conceived questionnaire was prepared, and all linked children were met with. Individual Annual Reports of 950 children linked up to December 1998 were sent by early September.

Nearly 250 Reports have been withheld due to various reasons like child/family having migrated to another place, problems with their family memberships etc. We hope to overcome these problems and send the remaining Annual Reports by October-November 1999.

2.5. Coaching Classes

In the 4th Progress Report we described how the in-house coaching classes had a very uncertain start. 116 VII Std. children (48 girls and 68 boys) and 25 X Std. children (4 girls and 21 boys) attended.

VII Std. children fared better this time when compared to last year with 87% passes. Had the coaching classes begun on time, we would have had better results. X Std. children, as explained in the previous Progress Report, could get the benefit of a full 2 months coaching. All 25 passed, and this is no mean achievement.

We sent a thank-you letter to the Deputy Director of Public Instruction, the officer in-charge of all schools in the district, and expressed our sincere gratitude for his timely intervention. We hope that government school teachers will no longer be cogs in the wheel next time around.

2.6. Parents-Teachers Meet

Besides the usual meetings that are conducted on various days of the week in different villages, a Parents-TC Meet was held at Ullodu in June on a trial basis. The Professors from the Municipal College, Chickballapur, assisted with counsel. They guided parents on the importance of education and allayed fears on matters of the girl child.

Surprisingly, the meet drew an overwhelming response. TCs from many other villages have expressed their desire for similar meets to be conducted in their villages. The Professors have agreed to help out.

2.7. Science Exhibition

A science exhibition was held at the Gudibanda campus on 11 May 1999. A total of 1,500 children from 41 villages participated. We went for these high numbers since the exhibition was aimed at fostering a scientific temper in individual children. 50 children from 16 villages put their items on show.

Children were encouraged to use scrap material like styrofoam and common household articles. ADATS contributed by lending a few models which we had purchased as teaching aids for the Training Centre.

Children from Korepalli won the 1st prize for their model of the solar and lunar eclipses. Jambigemaradahalli and Doddanancherla bagged the 2nd and 3rd place respectively.

The professors from Chickballapur, who conduct our monthly TC training sessions, helped tremendously. Not only did they motivate *Balakendra* Teachers, but they also helped gather material for the numerous models put on show.

2.8. Sports and Library Material

Additional cricket sets and 23 new sets of assorted books were issued to the older village *Balakendras*.

10 recently taken up villages were supplied with sports material and books. They have also been provided with cupboards and steel trunks.

2.9. Drop-out Children

A total of 273 drop-out children have been identified in all the villages coming under the programme. Of these 120 (61 girls and 59 boys) children are undergoing non-formal education (NFE) in the 1st of the 4 semester-based government prescribed guideline. Another 53 (24 girls and 29 boys) children have been promoted to the 2nd semester on the basis of exams conducted at the end of the 6 month duration of the 1st semester.

This informal exam includes loud reading (with letters printed in bold letters), identifying pictures, and simple mathematics using blocks and pictures. These children too are provided with books, uniforms, slates etc., along with the normal day school children.

The Case Workers and TCs have been trying to bring the remaining 120 drop-out children, not attending NFE classes, into the *Balakendras*. These children have abstained due to various problems arising from over-age. Many of them contribute a major chunk to their family incomes...

2.10. *Balakendra* Teachers Training

Monthly training for the *Balakendra* TCs is being carried out as usual with the assistance of professors from the Municipal College, Chickballapur. We decided to continue the 3-day training sessions for TCs from new villages so that they could acquire the same teaching skills as the older TCs. These newer TCs have shown a greater zeal and commitment than the older ones. We do hope that this is kept up.

The older TCs have stopped attending monthly sessions. They will undergo refresher training once every 3 months from now onward.

We had to face the problem of constant TC turnover in a few villages. Each time a TC left abruptly, the VLW took over until a replacement was found.

3. COOLIE WOMEN

3.1. Mahila Meetings

Mahila Meetings have become a regular feature in the older villages. The right of Coolie women to meet and decide separately is slowly getting established. These Mahila Meetings are gradually becoming platforms for debate on issues that go beyond the conventional gender-rote roles of women. They now embrace discussions on social, political and financial empowerment strategies.

The situation is not quite so ideal in newly taken up villages, but the older ones provide a power role model for them to follow.

Personal and family health matters are still the topic to which a lot of importance is given in most Mahila Meetings. Sanitary requirements of the growing girl child, avoiding unwanted pregnancies, mother and child care and other women's issues are looked into without any male interference. The Mahila Trainers attend meetings every night and keep pushing the women to cross frontiers...

3.2. Women's Training Sessions

Senior and experienced Mahila Trainers from Siddalaghatta helped their Gudibanda counterparts to conduct 2 batches of 3-day sessions in late March 1999. The VHW, woman CSU Representative and 3 potentially active women from each of 13 new villages attended. This has helped in the setting up of 13 new Mahila Meetings during this reporting period.

Since a whole lot of health training sessions were conducted during these past 6 months, separate sessions on gender and feminism were not held.

3.3. *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*

Fresh *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* grants were not given out during this reporting period. But preparations have been made, in Mahila Meeting discussions, to increase the capital from Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 per village, in November 1999.

The Mahila Trainers noticed that many women tend to be rather casual regarding the usage of *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* in the newly taken up villages. They even suspect that there may be male interference since the women view this as just another loan scheme. A lot of work still has to be done to make everyone understand that this is a powerful instrument to give strength and space to struggle against male domination.

4. HEALTH

4.1. Diagnosis

Between April-July 1999 the ADATS Health Worker conducted an extensive village-wise survey to diagnose patients with chronic ailments in 60 villages of Gudibanda taluk.

223 patients were detected to be suffering from the following ailments:

Ailment	Patients	Ailment	Patients
Kidney	1	Hearing disorders	9
Cancer	2	Abdomen problems	13
Diabetics	4	Visual defects	15
Heart problems	5	Polio	29
Mental disorders	6	TB	24
Epilepsy	83	Asthma	37
Skin infections	6		
		Total	223

4.2. Follow ups

VHWs accompanied patients with kidney, visual, sugar and heart problems to the Super Speciality Hospital (SSH) at Puttaparthi in Dharmavaram taluk of Andhra Pradesh, 60 kms from Bagepalli taluk. This hospital provides free of cost diagnosis and treatment in most cases.

Of the 7 cases with visual defects 3 were found to be incurable because of nerve damage, 3 were advised spectacles, and 1 patient is under medication. The kidney patient is also undergoing treatment. Of the 5 cases suffering from heart problems, 3 have been referred to SSH and are undergoing treatment. They have been asked by SSH to come again after 2 years for follow up. Of the 4 patients diagnosed to be suffering from diabetes, only 1 turned up for the trip to the SSH. He has taken up treatment at the Bowring Hospital, Bangalore.

Our Health Worker plans to refer the TB cases to the Sanatorium at Kolar, mental disorders and epilepsy cases to the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), cancer patients to Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore. He is also making efforts to invite a renowned ortho-technician to Gudibanda to look into the 29 polio cases. Regarding asthma, skin, hearing and abdominal complaints, the Health Worker has initiated discussions with private specialists.

4.3. VHW Training

Following up on the First Aid training conducted in February 1999, a refresher course was conducted in late September. 52 VHWs from the older villages were divided into 2 batches of 26 each. They were brought in for week long sessions in ante-natal, post-natal care, care of the new born, and family welfare.

10 newly appointed VHWs from the newly taken up villages have been scheduled to be trained in First Aid in October 1999. They will be taught to treat, besides other things, wounds and injuries, poisoning, snake and scorpion bite, dog bite and shock. The Health Worker will also instruct them on the usage of medicines dispensed on a monthly basis, dosages and contra-indications. Only then can we start disbursing the monthly medicine packages to these VHWs.

We have noticed that these training sessions do not only infuse health skills. When hitherto neglected and overlooked and double-burdened Coolie women obtain skills that make them useful in matters beyond the gender-rote roles they perform within their families, they gain enormous prestige and self-esteem. As they develop proficiency in their work, their standing increases in CSU and Mahila Meeting related matters. Finally, they obtain a serious say in societal (village) matters.

4.4. Future Plans

To complete the practical side of their training, VHWs will be sent, in small batches, Cluster wise, to the Government Hospital in Gudibanda. There they will get a first hand experience of midwifery and learn to identify ante-natal problems like high risk pregnancies and other delivery complications.

4.5. VHW Turnover

During this reporting period we observed serious problems caused by the frequent turnover of VHWs in some of the older villages. The selection and continuance of the VHW in a village depends on the women themselves. When a VHW is changed after a period of 2 months or so, the training imparted to her goes to waste. Fresh training has to be given to the new VHW. We are trying to make the Mahila Meetings understand the consequence of their (sometimes arbitrary) actions so that turnover can be reduced.

We are also trying to insist that the ADATS Health Worker should have a serious say in the selection of replacement VHWs.

5. CONSTRUCTION

5.1. Balakendras

9 sites were purchased in the names of the respective CSUs and material like stones, bricks, sand and cement have been procured for building 10 *Balakendra* buildings.

Balakendra buildings, built in 1998-99, were inaugurated at Ullodu, Somalapuram, Doddanancherla and Korepalli in May this year.

5.2. Gudibanda Campus

Plans were finalised and construction work went ahead full swing at the campus. After some time, we could no longer rely only on local masons and so a team was brought in from Bangalore. 4 double rooms to accommodate 8 Staff members, the office and common toilets/baths are all under progress. Only plastering, flooring, electrification and plumbing are pending.

But we have a problem. We had severely under-budgeted the building costs and all the allotted money is over. Moreover, there was a sudden 35% escalation of costs mid way during the construction when the government arbitrarily increased diesel costs. As a result, we are about Rs 250,000 short.

6. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFs)

A whole lot of preparatory work has been done during this reporting period to start the CCFs from October-November 1999. The specially appointed Field Worker (CCF) has himself gained experience in the Extension taluks. For the past 3 months, he has been visiting village CSUs to explain to the Members as to how they should use this decentralised interest-free credit programme.