

0203. 2nd Progress Report on the Extensions (Jun 1991)

For the period January to June 1991; ICCO Project No: 923333

Contains a Resume of the 3 Extension Programmes, and data on Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes, Training, weekly Meetings, Health and Economic Activities, separately, for Chickballapur, Chintamani and Siddalaghatta taluks.

1. RESUME OF THE 3 ADATS/DDS EXTENSION PROGRAMMES

The overall resume of the 3 Extension Programmes shows a maturing of the Coolie Sanghas. On the positive side, some doubtful villages have dropped out, serious CSU membership has registered an impressive increase, more women have been attracted to become members of their CSUs, and population coverage has increased. On the worrisome side, however, there is a sharp decrease in lower caste participation in the CSUs.

Total (last report)			Chickballapur	Chintamani	Siddalaghatta
Area details:					
30	(30)	Clusters	11	9	10
150	(160)	Villages covered	54	48	48
46%	(43%)	Population covered	43%	37%	59%
Membership details:					
3,521	(3,273)	Normal Members	1,246	907	1,368
303	(204)	Suspended Members	289	14	
247	(103)	Cancelled Members	86	156	5
59%	(62%)	Lower castes	65%	52%	58%
20%	(17%)	Middle castes	13%	28%	22%
21%	(21%)	Upper castes	22%	20%	20%
17%	(14%)	Women Membership	21%	16%	14%
Staff details:					
28	(25)	Community Workers	9	8	10
156	(161)	Village Level Workers	52	57	47
150	(156)	Village Health Workers	53	52	45
3	(3)	Field Assistants	2	1	
2		Extension Workers	1	1	
7	(6)	Field Workers	2	2	3
2	(1)	Desk Worker (Accts)	1	1	
4	(3)	Helpers	2	2	
2		Drivers	1	1	
55%	(54%)	Male Staff	68	65	62
45%	(46%)	Female Staff	53	61	45

The period under this report was a harrowing one for the country as a whole when we and the coolies together underwent some of the worst moments of our lives. But it has been an extremely busy time at all 3 Extension Programmes, with a flurry of activities and deeply touching moments.

The long drawn out general elections and air of violence and tension in the country preoccupied most CSU Meetings and Cluster Meets in this period. Every aspect of communalism was thoroughly discussed in all the meetings and the coolies found novel ways by which they could contribute to some sense of social sanity in their villages.

2. CHICKBALLAPUR EXTENSION PROGRAMME

2.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

793 learners attended ALP classes in this period. 2 ALP Tests were conducted. 48 villages successfully completed the 1st ALP Book and 43 of them went on to the 2nd Book with advanced lessons. 631 coolies are now functionally literate and 239 of them are women. Only 1 village had special classes exclusively for coolie women.

2.2. Training

The weekly Area Staff Meetings where we shared concerns at a deep and intimate level were the most vital participatory training forum in this period. The Project Director attended most of these meetings and covered an exhaustive syllabus on the personal ramifications of caste, religion and gender biases. A perspective for the Coolie Sanghas emerged from these sessions. The Cluster Meets and CSU Meetings reflected on what happened at these weekly Staff Meetings and a tremendous maturing of their socio-political and economic aspirations took place.

The BCS President and senior functionaries from the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA held a round of special sessions where the experiences of activities like the Coolie Credit Fund, Children's Programme, Mahila Meetings, etc. were shared with the coolies of Chickballapur. Mistakes made in Bagepalli were highlighted and discussions were held on how these could be avoided in this taluk.

Senior ADATS staff from Bagepalli held a special session with the VHWs to explain to them how community health related activities and the Mahila Meetings could be used to strengthen the overall position of coolie women.

Ad hoc training was organised for the new Village Level Workers on minute book writing, framing applications and complaints, etc. All the Village Health Workers met separately twice for 2 days each time to deepen their knowledge on community health and hygiene.

2.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings, Cluster Meets and monthly CCS Meetings

Except in 1 Cluster, all the other meetings were held well and regularly. Formal meetings were organised even in villages which wanted to dropped out in order to ascertain the wishes of all the member coolies. But in 3 villages where the VLWs left for other jobs, CSU Meetings ran into difficulties with no one to record the minutes, follow up on decisions, etc.

Though weekly Mahila Meetings were held in 41 villages, only half of them were really good with the women discussing all and every matter pertaining to them. In about 20 villages Mahila Meetings were just a formality they went through. In 13 villages there were no Mahila Meetings at all and the VHWs were kept under suspension by the Area Staff Meeting.

Taluk level CCS were not held in this period. But 4 "public meetings" were held with all the members from 2-3 Clusters getting together for a full day of sharing pertinent and contemporary experiences. All our senior staff attended these meetings.

2.4. Health

The supply of basic medicines every month continued in this period. Patients were brought to the taluk hospitals by the VHWs.

All the Village Health Workers were taken in batches of 14 on tours to government hospitals in Bangalore and introduced to the persons where they would have to refer patients to.

13 VHWs were placed under suspension by the Area Staff Meeting for failing to start Mahila Meetings in their villages. They were charged with having failed to use health activities to strengthen the position of coolie women.

2.5. Economic activities

In May 1991, additional grants were given for most of the CCFs to continue giving loans to their members. Repayment in this period was 98% and utilisation was fully controlled by the respective CSUs. Some member coolies from the 3 villages with VLW problems, however, did not repay their CCF loans on time.

The CSUs were initially very active in tapping government subsidised loans for wells for SC/ST families. They also tried to get self employment loans, co-operative loans, housing loans, etc. through struggle against Mandal Panchayat corruption and favouritism. But these petered out when bigger problems loomed large.

3. CHINTAMANI EXTENSION PROGRAMME

3.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

1,180 learners attended ALP classes. 125 learners completed the 1st ALP Book, but no ALP Tests were conducted in this period because the concentration was on bringing all the villages of Chintamani to a common level. As a result, the 2nd ALP Books were not used in any village. 10 villages had special ALP Classes exclusively for coolie women.

3.2. Training

All the training sessions were held in Bagepalli since we did not have an office or facilities in Chintamani town, the taluk headquarters. As a result, attendance at the training sessions suffered with people coming in late, leaving early to catch a bus, etc.

But in spite of these limitations many training sessions were held in this period. A 3 days training was given to the VLWs to improve their minute writing and situation analysis skills. They were also taught to sing songs and speak in public. A 2 days meeting at Bagepalli was organised for the VLWs and VHWs to make more honest self appraisals of their own performances.

A 2 days session was held for the VHWs to go deeper into the why's and how's of conducting Mahila Meetings. 23 VHWs were sent in small batches to CSI Hospital for practical exposure in conducting deliveries.

3.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets

Very good weekly meetings were held in 5 Clusters where the member coolies discussed all and every matter concerning their lives. In 2 more Clusters, meetings were just average. But in 2 Clusters CSU Meetings were not at all good because the coolies only discussed ADATS/DDS related matters. An extra effort was put in these villages to correct the coolies' understanding of their Sanghas.

Area Staff Meetings were held on a rotary basis in the different central villages. The Project Director attended many of these weekly meetings of all the VHWs, VLWs and CWs in order to give a general perspective of what the Coolie Sangha was. This helped the straggling villages.

But special training was not imparted since the entire Area had not yet settled into a self discipline with proper meetings and correct attitudes. Instead, the weekly Cluster reports were

shared, each CSU's particular problems were discussed and solutions extracted, and general discussions held on various matters that we felt the CSUs could take up.

3.4. Health

We continued to supply basic medicines every month. But unlike in Chickballapur, patients were not taken to the taluk hospitals by the VHWs. This was because we were not present at the taluk headquarters to help them.

Like at Chickballapur, all the VHWs were taken on tours. They profited from these exposures in a personal way, enhancing their courage and self confidence.

After the experience at Chickballapur where the staff themselves self evaluated their own work and decided to keep some VHWs under suspension, the same thing was tried at Chintamani also. But this did not work because the staff were not honest in appraising their own performance.

Therefore, as many as 25 VHWs had to be placed under suspension by the Project Director for failing to start Mahila Meetings in their villages, not using the health activities to strengthen coolie women, and various other failings.

3.5. Economic activities

In 18 villages where the CCFs were already started, they rotated their increased capitals for the second time. In 25 villages, the CCFs were started with fresh ADATS/DDS grants.

4 villages had repayment problems with the borrowers not taking the scheme seriously. In 1 village the Community Worker collected all the repayments and ran away. The member coolies made the borrowers repay for a second time since it was a very clear and strict CCF rule that all transactions had to be through the banks and no one should be trusted with the handling of cash.

Chintamani fared much better than Chickballapur in tapping government funds and benefits through struggle. 5 cattle tanks were sanctioned in 4 villages and the CSUs themselves took up the contracts. 120 member coolies got IRDP Loans from the government in 40 villages without any middle men or touts influencing the selection of beneficiaries. Similarly, 22 member coolies got SC/ST Corporation subsidised loans.

4. SIDDALAGHATTA EXTENSION PROGRAMME

4.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

ALP classes were conducted very regularly in 46 villages. The higher educational qualification of the village staff in half this Area made it possible for us to give them intensive in-field training. Women's attendance at the mixed ALP classes was markedly higher in this half of the Area.

39 villages were still using the 1st ALP Book. ALP Tests were conducted in 7 villages.

4.2. Training

In-field training was given to 46 VLWs on techniques to conduct ALP classes. This was done by a Field Worker spending 1-2 weeks at each Cluster, actually conducting the classes along with them and showing the special skills needed to teach adults.

All the VLWs were given a 3 day para legal training at Bagepalli on the Mandal Panchayat Act. The BCS President organised a special 3 days session on the proper procedures for conducting CSU Meetings, writing minutes, framing complaints and applications, etc. for all the

VLWs. 48 VHWs were sent in small batches to CSI Hospital for practical exposure to conducting deliveries and safe child birth techniques.

4.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets

Except in 4 CSUs where there was VLW problems, all the weekly CSU Meetings and Cluster Meets were properly conducted in the Area. But weekly Mahila Meetings were conducted only in the 26 older villages.

4.4. Health

The supply of basic medicines every month continued in this period. But patients were not referred to the taluk hospitals by the VHWs. This was because we did not have any presence in Siddalaghatta town, the taluk headquarters.

All the Village Health Workers were taken on tours to government hospitals in Bangalore.

4.5. Economic activities

In the older 26 CSUs, the CCFs performed very well with all the members taking full responsibility for utilisation and repayment. CCFs were started with grants of Rs 2,000 per village only in 9 more CSUs.