

0204. 3rd Progress Report on the Extensions (Dec 1991)

For the period July to December 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, Coolie Credit Funds (CCFs) and construction of Community Halls, separately, for Chickballapur, Chintamani and Siddalaghatta taluks.

1. RESUME OF THE 3 ADATS/DDS EXTENSION PROGRAMMES

Total(last report)			Chickballapur	Chintamani	Siddalaghatta
Area details					
30	(30)	Clusters	11	9	10
148	(150)	Villages covered	48	48	50
45%	(46%)	Population covered	38%	39%	59%
Membership details					
3,486	(3,521)	Normal Members	1,115	960	1,411
267	(303)	Suspended Members	251	16	
247	(247)	Cancelled Members	261	156	5
59%	(59%)	Lower castes	66%	52%	60%
20%	(20%)	Middle castes	12%	28%	20%
21%	(21%)	Upper castes	22%	20%	20%
16%	(17%)	Women Membership	20%	14%	14%
Staff details					
24	(28)	Community Workers	7	0	9
3		Cluster Secretaries	3		
141	(156)	Village Level Workers	48	45	48
138	(150)	Village Health Workers	47	45	48
6	(3)	Field Assistants	1	2	3
2	(2)	Extension Workers	1	1	
9	(7)	Field Workers	3	3	3
2	(2)	Desk Worker (Accts)	1	1	
5	(4)	Helpers	2	2	1
2	(2)	Drivers	1	1	
52%	(55%)	Male Staff	61	55	62
48%	(45%)	Female Staff	53	53	50

2. CHICKBALLAPUR EXTENSION PROGRAMME

2.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

The 1st ALP Book has been successfully completed in all the 56 villages (including 10 which have been suspended) in Chickballapur. This means that more than 1 adult per member coolie household has become functionally literate. Advanced lessons are going on in 46 villages, using the 2nd ALP Book. The literacy skills that the coolies are presently getting is far more than elementary.

2.2. Training

The weekly Area Staff Meetings continued to be the most vital participatory training forum in this period. Apart from this, 2 training sessions were conducted for the VLWs and 1 for the VHWs.

2.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets

Regular weekly Mahila Meetings were held in all the villages, and only 3 are still weak. The 13 villages where there were no Mahila Meetings and the VHWs had to be kept under suspension are now okay.

5 coolie women from each of 22 villages went in batches of 25 for intense discussion/training at Bagepalli. In these 5 sessions of 3 days each, they went in great depth into the question of marriage. In 14 of these 22 villages we have started the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* scheme for women to meet their petty credit needs.

6 more “public meetings” were held with all the members from 2-3 Clusters getting together for a full day of sharing experiences were conducted in this reporting period.

2.4. Health

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

2.5. Coolie Credit Fund

59 village level CCFs were given a total capital of Rs 3,56,601 by ADATS/DDS. But only a total of Rs 2,30,125 was given out as CCF loans to 575 borrowers for various purposes ranging from crop loans, cattle rearing, house repairs, to consumption.

Following the established ADATS practice of slowly “*building up*” the CCFs in an Area, each CSU gave out only a total of Rs 2,000 to member borrowers in the first instance. When these initial borrowings were repaid, another Rs 2,000 was released. Through this system, the coolies gained experiential learning on how to run their alternate credit system. In January 1992, once all the outstanding amounts are returned to their respective CCFs, the entire capital will be given out to member borrowers.

At the time of writing this report, good loans total to Rs 22,025 and an amount of Rs 64,910 is overdue. Serious discussions were held in the Cluster Meets to find the reason for such a high rate of default¹. The coolies found 3 main reasons for overdue

- Poor monitoring of repayment dates by ADATS/DDS staff who failed to inform them of approaching repayment dates in time².
- Member borrowers, in their over enthusiasm to take CCF loans, have been unrealistic in planning their repayment schedules.
- 11 CSUs have got suspended in the Area. Of them, 8 were given grants to start their CCFs. These loans are as good as lost unless these villages decide to return.

¹ In the CSUs of Bagepalli taluk, at a similar stage of CCF build up, the default rate hardly ever crossed 2% of the total capital.

² This point is discussed in more detail in the accompanying Progress Report

2.6. Community Halls

The building of Community Halls started before ICCO's official sanction of the project. In 8 central villages, they had already bought plots and cleared them up to put up the buildings. In 2 villages, however, they ran into problems with regard to the title to these plots.

The coolies had also worked out all details like bargaining terms with masons, suppliers of material, etc. When the official ICCO sanction came and funds arrived, they were able to immediately start work in 8 villages. All these 8 buildings have been roofed and finishing work like plastering, flooring and electrification will start from January 1992.

3. CHINTAMANI EXTENSION PROGRAMME

3.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

In a serious staff review meet held in the beginning of this period, it was suggested that since the ALP classes were not being conducted seriously, it would be better to stop them forthwith. But the VLWs requested that 6 months be given before such a drastic step was taken. They confessed that it would not be fair to say that the coolies of Chintamani were not interested in adult literacy since they (the staff) themselves had not been as serious in this activity as they should have.

A special Field Worker was appointed to assist the VLWs with training and support, and the ALP classes got a new push in this 6 month period.

As a result, the number of learners who attended ALP classes marginally increased to 1,242. And the 20 ALP Tests that have thus far been conducted in this period shows that 380 adults have completed the 1st ALP Book to some appreciable level. ALP Tests are being conducted in the remaining 27 villages and a definite decision on whether to continue the night classes with the 2nd ALP Book in 1992 will be taken in early January 1992.

A negative fallout of this otherwise welcome development of interest in adult literacy is that in their zeal to suddenly make everyone literate, the special emphasis on coolie women seems to have been given a goodbye. The number of special ALP classes for coolie women dropped from 10 to 3 in this reporting period.

3.2. Training

Formal training could not be held in this reporting period as much due to the lack of infrastructure facilities as because of the cropping season when everyone was busily engaged in agricultural work.

A couple of special 1 day review/training meets were however held for the VHWs on the conducting of Mahila Meetings. A 1 day review meet of VLWs was also held.

3.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets

In the first 3 months of this reporting period, all the weekly village level meetings were held very regularly. The main thrust as well as improvement was in the quality of Mahila Meetings.

Regularity of meetings suffered in the next 2 months due to the rains and onset of the cropping season. Meetings were brisk and business like, more in order to oversee the construction of Community Halls in their central villages.

Yet they tried to meet as regularly as possible in order to plan the next 3 year Coolie Sangha Formalisation phase when they felt that emphasis should be given for the economic development of member coolies. The Field Assistants and Field Workers attended most of these CSU and Mahila Meetings in order to help the coolies dare to think and plan for their development.

3.4. Health

ADATS/DDS continued to supply basic medicines every month. In this reporting period, more patients were taken to the taluk hospitals by the VHWs. Except for 2, the 25 VHWs who had been placed under suspension by the Project Director for failing to start Mahila Meetings in their villages, were taken back. Their performance is now much better.

Health is being recognised to be a major problem, as opposed to an earlier fatalistic attitude that coolies would take towards illness and even death. Discussions on health problems looms large in the Mahila Meetings.

3.5. Economic Activities

57 village level CCFs were given a total capital of Rs 2,64,375 by ADATS/DDS. But only a total of Rs 1,50,660 was given out as CCF loans to 301 borrowers, mainly as crop loans. Good loans total to Rs 85,100 and Rs 28,360 is overdue. More than half this overdue amount is pending with borrowers from the 9 suspended CSUs in the Area with little chance of being repaid unless the villages come back.

3 CSUs were successful in getting village road works from the Mandal Panchayats bypassing the normal practice of contractors and middle persons. Apart from providing decent employment and a fair profit, this has also enhanced their self confidence. More CSUs are discussing the possibility of using their CCFs for working capital to undertake such government works.

18 member coolies got subsidised loans from the SC/ST Corporation as a result of their struggle. In some Clusters, social pensions for widows, handicapped, etc are reaching the people without corruption. The push and initiative of CWs and VLWs is more the reason for this than CSU struggle. Those who are able to appeal to a particularly honest and fair district official who personally takes interest in pro-poor schemes, are able to achieve more than others who merely throw empty curses and condemnation. In this sense, good liaison has served better than blind struggle.

3.6. Community Halls

Even before ICCO's official sanction, the CSUs had worked out the last and final details of how they would go about building their Community Halls. In 9 villages, they had already bought encumbrance free plots of lands with clear title.

When the official ICCO sanction and funds arrived, they were able to proceed with a smooth efficiency. Of the 9 Community Halls being built, roofing is completed in 5. Another 3 will be roofed in January. Internal problems have temporarily held up work in 1 village.

The building of these Community Halls by the coolies themselves has, in their own esteem as well as in the eyes of others, reiterated that coolies are quite capable of utilising expert services and undertaking contract works, bypassing middle men.

At Chintamani town, we have been successful in purchasing an already built facility to house the office, staff and meeting facilities. We are simultaneously proceeding with the construction of a training facility on half an acre of land which ADATS already owned. A bore well has been successfully drilled and the site has been fenced. Licenses and other municipal formalities are holding up the commencement of construction.

4. SIDDALAGHATTA EXTENSION PROGRAMME

4.1. Adult Literacy Programme (ALP) classes

ALP classes were not conducted very regularly in these 50 villages for the 1st 4 months. In November, the Field Assistants gave very serious notice to the VLWs of the 24 newer vil-

lages of Dibburahalli and started enforcing proper classes. Though the initial response to ALP classes was very promising, we cannot honestly claim that there is a serious literacy drive in this area.

No ALP Tests were conducted in this period.

4.2. Training

No training sessions were held in the first 5 months of this reporting period. In December, however, special 3 day training sessions were started for 5 coolie women from each of 28 villages in Julapalya.

4.3. Weekly CSU Meetings, Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets

Very good meetings were held for 4 months. Mahila Meetings were started in the remaining 24 villages also. Meetings were disrupted due to rains for nearly 2 months. But there was a marked improvement in the quality of discussions held in the meetings that were conducted.

In the early part of this reporting period, the meetings were more or less mundane with routine matters being discussed. But from September the coolies used every opportunity to plan the next 3 year phase.

In the 28 CSUs of Julapalya, they felt ready to go into the next phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation with ADATS Community Workers withdrawn by March or April 1992. But in the 22 villages of Dibburahalli where our efforts are only one and a half years old, the coolies felt that a strong and continuing staff presence was necessary for some more years.

All the 50 CSUs felt that they had not availed as much from the ALP classes as they should have, but agreed that it was pointless to endlessly continue. They felt that the absence of a continuous every day activity like ALP classes was going to adversely effect future CSU development.

In October and November heavy and unprecedented rains disrupted regular and weekly meetings for the entire 2 months.

4.4. Health

The supply of basic medicines every month continued in this period. 22 Village Health Workers were sent in batches of 2 for training and exposure at CSI Hospital, Chickballapur.

4.5. Economic activities

In the older villages of Julapalya where the 29 CSUs are nearly 3 years old, ADATS/DDS has given out a total of Rs 1,95,913 as CCF grants. 317 member coolies have borrowed a total of Rs 84,190 for various purposes and overdue rate is very low.

In the newer villages Dibburahalli where the 24 CSUs are hardly 1 year old, CCFs have only just been introduced. Though a total CCF capital of Rs 2,05,581 has already been given to them, each CSU has loaned out only Rs 2,000 to member borrowers. A total of Rs 35,700 has been borrowed by 110 coolies as crop loans.

The coolies of Siddalaghatta have been very busy and fairly successful in tapping government funds for various other purposes.

4.6. Community Halls

In this area also, as at Chickballapur and Chintamani, discussions were held on how the coolies would go about building their Community Halls, even before ICCO's official sanction. While in the older half of the area this resulted in the CSUs working out the details of their construction plans, in the newer 5 Clusters it was just a formality they went through.

Sites with proper titles were bought in all 10 central villages and there have been no problems anywhere. But speed and cost efficiency have been effected in 5 constructions. Walls have been raised in 8 villages and the remaining 2 will be ready in January. But we have not roofed a single building yet.

Partly because the CSUs are relatively new in half the area, and also as an indicator of absolutely no previous coolie participation in civic matters, the management skills and efficiency of the coolies is very low in this area. As a result, costs are going up, progress is being delayed, and ADATS/DDS is paying a relatively higher cost (though within the sanctioned budget) for both, building the halls as well as enhancing the management efficiency of the coolies.