

## 0211. 4<sup>th</sup> Progress Report on the Extensions (Mar 1993)

*For the period February 1992 to March 1993; Icco Project No: 923333*

*Contains a General Overview, comments on the Political Process, Membership & Coverage, Coolie Women, Decentralised Health & Children's Budgets, Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings, CCFs, Sangha Funds and Organisational matters.*

### 1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

In January 92 we deliberately understated our achievements and said that procedures introduced within a definite structure had provided a discipline which formed the Coolie Sangha. We refused to make a great deal of the unity which had been achieved in 148 villages and said that as many “*functioning CSUs*” had been built up.

This past year has given us a deep satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment. There are 9 less functioning CSUs in the 4 extension areas, but we can now state with confidence that 116 of them are *strong and viable CSUs*. Membership has dropped to 3,001 families<sup>1</sup>, but these are Coolies who are really serious about taking their lives into their own hands.

Coolie Sangha Formalisation efforts have proceeded surprisingly well these past months, mainly because it was in accordance to a plan derived bottom up thorough fairly protracted exercises involving all the village staff and elected Representatives. And also because of very systematic hard work on the part of the extension staff.

Decentralised and democratic structures are so much in place that the ADATS/DDS staff, who now seem to have stabilised as working teams with perfect co-ordination and understanding at each Extension Programme, are now able to give individual attention to member families and their problems.

### 2. THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Our first serious move in 1992 was to instil a political process in the 4 Extension Programmes. The withdrawal of ADATS/DDS paid Community Workers was not done in a superficial or perfunctory manner. The reasons were very clearly discussed in each and every CSU and Mahila Meeting and everyone together shared the conviction that democracy was a vital prerequisite for further Coolie development.

While many candidates were found on consensus for the post of Cluster Secretaries, bitter elections were fought in about half the clusters. A clear indicator of the democratic process was that 75% of the newly elected Cluster Secretaries were not the preferred choices of the ADATS/DDS Field staff! It did take some time and serious soul searching for new equations to settle between these elected functionaries and long-standing dedicated staff, but everything has finally worked for the better.

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<sup>1</sup> 3,314 if we include the temporarily suspended members

**Resume of the 4 ADATS/DDS Extension Programmes as on 8 March 1993**

Total(last report)		Chickballapur	Chintamani	Siddalaghatta	Julapalya
<b>Area details</b>					
30 (30)	Clusters	11	8	5	6
139 (148)	Villages covered	50	43	20	26
36% (45%)	Population covered	37%	29%	42%	50%
<b>Membership details</b>					
3,001 (3,486)	Normal Members	1,007	837	553	604
313 (267)	Suspended Members	128	164	18	3
1,696 (247)	Cancelled Members	636	486	311	263
61% (59%)	Lower castes	59%	61%	60%	66%
15% (20%)	Middle castes	11%	18%	17%	18%
22% (21%)	Upper castes	28%	21%	23%	16%
21% (16%)	Women Membership	24%	21%	16%	16%
<b>Staff details</b>					
(24)	Community Workers				
30 (3)	Cluster Secretaries	11	8	5	6
135 (141)	Village Level Workers	45	44	22	24
(138)	Village Health Workers				
4 (6)	Field Assistants	1	1	1	1
3 (2)	Extension Workers	1	1	1	
8 (9)	Field Workers	2	3	1	2
3 (2)	Desk Worker (Accts)	1	1	1	
6 (5)	Helpers	2	2	1	1
3 (2)	Drivers	1	1	1	
6 (0)	Mahila Trainers	1	2	2	1
94% (52%)	Male Staff	62	59	31	34
6% (48%)	Female Staff	3	4	2	2

**3. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE**

After climbing to a peak in mid 1991, there has been a steady decline in membership and population coverage figures over the past 2 years. There are some inferences which we can discern from these trends.

Date	Normal Member families	Villages	Coverage
December 1990	3,273	160	43%
June 1991	3,521	150	46%
December 1991	3,486	148	45%
November 1992	3,251	148	N.A.
March 1993	3,001	139	36%

As a general statement we will be right in saying that coverage figures will continually fluctuate. This is because the CSUs are so diverse in their village to village concerns and, at the same time, active on a day to day basis. New families will join, some will get suspended/cancelled, and yet others will become normal. All this will happen on an every day basis. So much so that we tend to look at CSUs without such fluctuations with some suspicion as to whether they are genuinely active.

Now to examine the initial increase in membership followed by a steady decline. The initial enthusiasm of both, Coolies as well as village staff, makes a whole lot of families join the CSUs in the beginning. The humdrum of ALP classes does make many of the non serious villages to drop out fairly quickly. But some villages stay on with unfounded expectations and inordinate curiosity. Membership in these villages increases sharply. This is not due to any success in Coolie Sangha building. It is rather due to stragglers' desire to not be left out of

village level happenings. This is why, in spite of a drop in the number of villages, membership figures still climb in the beginning.

But the internal discipline which is gradually introduced is too big a price for many to pay. Such an enforced discipline accompanies the introduction of economic programmes like the CCF and later the DLDP. Rather than increasing membership through expectations, serious preparations for economic programmes tend to weed out non serious families. But the total number of villages continues on a more or less even keel. This results in very low population coverage figures.

1992 saw such a busy period of membership fluctuation in the 4 Extension Programmes. A casual look at the number of members who joined, only to get suspended or cancelled once again (the high cancellation figure) is an indicator of what happened these past 14 months. Our experience at Bagepalli shows that it is actually a very few serious and committed Coolie families who actually build the CSUs. It is only much later that membership figures once again dramatically rise with dropped out villages and cancelled members flocking to come back. This has the unfortunate result of not everyone in the CSUs having gone through the 3 structured phases of Coolie Sangha building.

But maturity is not effected even though stragglers do tend to pull everyone back. This is because those few serious families would by then be firmly in the seat of control. It is to their credit that do not try to avoid the danger of dilution through either compromise on principles or closing of doors

As mentioned in the opening paragraph, 116 of the 139 villages already have very strong CSUs in the 4 Extension Programme areas. 6 more CSUs are expected to stabilise as authentically independent Coolie bodies in the next months. And we still have to keep trying in another 17 villages where the CSUs are still not up to the mark. Our learned guess is that membership figures will stabilise at about 3,500 families in 150 villages (with about 11 dropped out villages coming back) in the coming years, following the just described pattern.

## 4. COOLIE WOMEN

### 4.1. Mahila Meetings

The weekly meetings of 1 woman from every member household has been continuing with a fervent regularity throughout this past 1 year. The initial resistance from both, Coolie men as well as women, is now almost over. We still have some problems in 17 CSUs where their choice of VHWS has not been very good and the women CSU Representatives are not strong enough to set matters right.

Apart from handling the decentralised budgets, most Mahila Meetings have taken on additional powers like, for example, the veto right they have over CCF decisions.

### 4.2. Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu

Grants have been given out to all the Mahila Meetings to operate their petty credit schemes. These moneys are kept with the respective VHWS and women CSU Representatives. The Mahila Trainers concentrate on helping Coolie women use these moneys to combat sexual exploitation, and Area Field Workers issued very lightly veiled threats as to what will happen to the men if they dared dip into these moneys. But this activity has not been without its share of incidents, most often from errant women themselves.

In Chickballapur, incidents of misutilisation became so high with 7 cases of major misuse that we had to recall all the moneys into their respective CSU bank accounts till the Mahila Meetings reflected on the objectives and decided to restart the scheme. Though we did not

take such an extreme step in Chintamani, there were 5 cases of male interference. Siddalaghatta and Julapalya each had 2 minor incidents.

How we wish we were able to say that these incidents are a thing of the past. But what we can confidently assert is that these cases of misutilisation do nothing to take away the value of the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* in villages where women use it well. By removing the need to borrow from middle peasant youth during those every day urgencies like having to spend on a sick child, buy food rations, etc. the scheme has substantially reduced incidents of sexual abuse and harassment. Most Coolie men understand this and openly support the women.

### 4.3. Training

In addition to the informal parting of knowledge during their every evening village visits, the Mahila Trainers have held formal rounds of training for Coolie women. Many Situation Meetings focused exclusively on gender issues to enhance the knowledge base of ADATS/DDS staff.

In mid 1992, 1 day sessions were organised at each Cluster to share the procedure for handling the decentralised health and children's education budgets.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of 3 day sessions for 25 women from 5 villages were conducted from December 1992 to February 1993. This time they concentrated on what their special role would be during the forthcoming dry land development project, and on the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* experiences.

Leaving the taluk headquarters at 1 p.m. every afternoon to attend Cluster Meets and then go on to attend a Mahila Meeting every night at about 7 p.m., only to return by about midnight for 5 days a week, every week, leaves little time for the Mahila Trainers to do justice to their training responsibilities. They realised that they would soon run around like headless chicken in their chase to achieve targets. The other day, the complete 3 year task of Mahila Trainers was placed on a PERT chart to see how they could effectively organise their time and energies...

### 4.4. Women's struggles

Every single day has its share of subtle struggle and learning.

Most of the resistance has come from Coolie men who see a fundamental cultural intervention into the most private aspects of their daily lives; often it is women themselves who get worried as to where this gender equality is finally going to lead. The Field staff, who themselves are a product of identical social conditioning, operate on faith. Senior ADATS/DDS staff and BCS functionaries sense a *deja vu* repetition of scenes already enacted when the Coolies were organised to stand up to the Ryots, except perhaps that the contradictions this time are closer home and far more internalised.

The weekly Monitoring and Situation Meetings every Monday have helped bring vague and diffused issues into sharper focus, prompting all of us at ADATS and the BCS to declare with total conviction and understanding:

*“Male perceptions of women represent the ultimate mental alienation which prevent a community from moving forward. The individualism that comes from a change in this most deeply held perception is the ultimate mental liberation which stands apart in strength and possibilities from the other base greed which laissez faire promotes. Gender perspective, as different from but not excluding special activities for women, therefore becomes the pivot around which sustainable development rotates to gain relevance.”*

## 5. DECENTRALISING THE HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S BUDGETS

### 5.1. Children's Programme

In August 1992 we gave out grants totalling to Rs 540,007 to the 30 Clusters to run their own children's education programme. The object of this exercise was to enable Coolie women to subsidise the government schooling of 1 child per member household. And as indicated in the previous paragraph, a great deal of preparatory work was done before taking this step.

The Mahila Meetings had spent the previous 3 months in making lists of children and deciding on a support table where women from each Cluster independently decided as to how much a child must receive for books, fees, bus fares and clothes, for different classes.

This was no easy task for the women. They had to go out and meet with teachers, book shop owners, transport officials, tailors and the rest to determine how much, on an average, a child going to a particular class would need. To say the least, Coolie women who had never even dreamt of the possibility of schooling their children, suddenly became experts on the vagaries of the educational system!

As a matter of conscious policy, ADATS/DDS staff refused to help them except with procedures. Coolie men were sceptical from the start and were therefore content with sitting back to see where it would all lead. We give below a typical sample of where, to the utter astonishment of everyone, it did!

Cluster: C201 Korlaparthi					
Class	Books	Fees	Fares	Clothes	Others
1 <sup>st</sup>	20.00			84.00	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	28.00			86.00	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	46.00		50.00	104.00	
4 <sup>th</sup>	56.00	6.00	50.00	110.00	
5 <sup>th</sup>	80.00	14.00	50.00	130.00	
6 <sup>th</sup>	86.00	14.00	50.00	136.00	
7 <sup>th</sup>	110.00	18.00	50.00	146.00	
8 <sup>th</sup>	140.00	70.00	50.00	196.00	
9 <sup>th</sup>	148.00	70.00	50.00	212.00	
10 <sup>th</sup>	170.00	90.00	50.00	258.00	

But that was not the end of it. They went on to fill the case histories of each child they decided to support, as under!

Child Code	234
Name	Narasimhappa
Date of birth	20/06/77 16 years
Gender	Male
Parent's name	Gangamma
Class in school	7 <sup>th</sup>
CSU Code	731 Duginayakanapalli HC
Member Code	002 Yerrappa
Support this child with:	
Books (F/H/N)	Full support
Fees (F/H/N)	Full support
Bus Fares (F/H/N)	None
Clothes (F/H/N)	Half
Others (F/H/N)	None

Once again not an easy job to decide if a particular child should get full, half or no support for books, fees, bus fares, clothes and others! The Mahila Meetings had to contend with dissatisfied mothers who wanted to know why their child got less of something on the one hand. And the need to balance their budgets on the other! To top it all off, they also had to look into their self imposed condition of gender parity between the number of girls and boys supported!

We were so fascinated with the management skills of these neo-literate women that we immediately made a software programme to feed in all their information in the identical format that they had chosen. Using this, the Field Workers are able to give them instant suggestions to balance budgets, strike at gender parities in different CSUs and Clusters, keep an expenditure by expenditure track on the realising of their budgets, etc.

During the actual disbursement of moneys for books, fees, fares and clothes there was pure and undiluted joy in all the Extension Programme headquarters. All the mothers and children from the villages of a Cluster came on a particular day to receive their moneys. That day was one of feasting with special food prepared by us for everyone, children rushing around and playing... We could almost feel the shudder of certain forces when they saw such a visual treat of strengthening women!

Today, the Mahila Meetings support a total of 2,431 children from 129 CSUs to attend government schools in and around their respective villages.

Supported children:	2,431	
Dropped children:	35	
Villages:	129	
Primary school:	1,802	(74%)
Middle school:	426	(18%)
High school:	203	(8%)
Girls:	941	(39%)
Boys:	1,490	(61%)

## 5.2. Health

Another Rs 630,418 was given out in August 1992 for the Mahila Meetings to run their decentralised community and referral health activities. Once again many serious discussions preceded this in all the Mahila Meetings and Cluster Meets. The question was whether these moneys should be transferred to the Mahila bank accounts (as in the case of the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*) or placed in the Cluster bank accounts, as is the case in Bagepalli taluk. ADATS/DDS suggested that the moneys be transferred to the Mahila bank accounts.

After seriously considering both options, the women decided that they were not strong enough to handle the moneys by themselves. They felt that in many CSUs they could be “bullied” into parting with cash. Therefore the protection of the mixed Cluster Meets where VHWs and women CSU Representatives could draw strength from each other and also rely on the gender neutral character of ADATS/DDS staff was seen as something positive.

Subsequently this did lead to some cases of embarrassment with over zealous Cluster Meets going into the accounts of amounts approved by the Mahila Meetings. Just the other day, for example, the Cluster conscientiously found a totalling mistake of Rs 100 and objected to a woman’s bills till the VHW whispered into the Cluster Secretary’s ears that the amount had to be paid to the doctor to get an abortion performed without the husband’s knowing!

The actual transfer of the moneys became hugely politicised affairs in all 4 Extension Programme areas with women insisting on making a big show of it. The awe and new found respect they got at village cross roads and bus stops in a single week all over northern Kolar district had to be seen to be believed!

A lot of dexterity and ingenuity was shown by the VHWs and women CSU Representatives in negotiating with different druggists at the taluk headquarters and bargaining for the best prices and quality. Experienced ADATS/DDS staff who had been doing this job all these years helped them with insights and tricks of the trade. And each Mahila Meeting fixed the salary of their respective VHW.

Referral cases are decided by the Mahila Meetings themselves with ADATS/DDS only providing ambulance services, free of charge. Normally the sick have to treat themselves and then claim a portion of their bills from the decentralised health budget. If they do not have ready cash to treat themselves, they borrow from the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* for the purpose and then repay when the Mahila Meeting reimburses their expenses.

On the plus side we can claim that not a single rupee has been misutilised or wasted even though a lot of the credit has to be shared with vigilant and overworked Field and village staff. It is also evident that the overall strength and position of Coolie women has been greatly enhanced by the programme.

But on the minus side is the fact that their general knowledge on health is terribly low. Partly because the VHWs have been working overtime to set up the Mahila Meetings, *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* and the decentralised budgets, organise a massive awareness campaign on AIDS, etc. they have had no time to enhance their practical health skills and on acceptable lines of treatment. As earlier mentioned, 122 of them have done a fantastic job, though 17 may still have questionable motives.

We realised that we ought to do something to enhance the skills of the VHWs and contacted a public health specialist from Bangalore who is willing to look into the whole matter and advise us accordingly.

## 6. TALUK COOLIE SANGHA MEETINGS

Taluk Coolie Sangha meetings were started at Chickballapur and Chintamani in January 1993. We therefore have the experiences of only 3 monthly meetings to go by. The Coolies have not been able to even elect their respective (taluk)CS Secretaries and the BCS has been forced to appoint senior Field Workers as ex-officio Secretaries for the time being. And at Siddalaghatta, Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings are scheduled to start only by mid 1993.

A point which has already become obvious is with regard to coverage. At Chickballapur we have a fair coverage of almost 50 villages to make the idea of a taluk level apex co-ordinating body already meaningful. Now that we have expanded Coolie Sangha building to another 70 villages with NOVIB support, we can look forward to having active CSUs in just about every village with a sizeable Coolie population in Chickballapur taluk.

But Chintamani poses another problem. The taluk has 410 villages and we work in 43. Of these, 10 CSUs do not geographically lie within the taluk's boundaries – they are actually in Siddalaghatta taluk. It is meaningless for Representatives from 33 CSUs to meet every month and claim to talk about the taluk as a whole. We have started working in 70 more villages from mid 1992 with NOVIB support. But the numbers are still too small for a taluk of this size. This is the reason why we have approached EZE to support Coolie Sangha building in another 100 villages of Chintamani taluk from July 1993.

Siddalaghatta has 20 strong and viable CSUs. 10 good CSUs now attached to the Chintamani Extension Programme actually lie in this taluk and they will add to the Taluk Coolie Sangha's strength. We are building 50 more CSUs with NOVIB support from mid 1992. A total of 80 CSUs should just about cover the whole of northern Siddalaghatta taluk (the south is very rich).

This problem naturally does not arise with regard to Julapalya since the 26 CSUs there have simply joined the already powerful BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA. But there are other problems.

The Field Assistant of Julapalya does not have the same kind of role in the setting up of a Taluk Coolie Sangha as the other 3 Field Assistants. His discomfiture can easily be imagined when he has to answer to a Taluk Coolie Sangha (the BCS) which is vastly more mature than himself. And at the same time he has the responsibility of steering his 26 CSUs through a Coolie Sangha Formalisation phase! The solution, of course, is that he leaves it to his Field Worker (who was once a BCS Secretary) to handle questions relating to Julapalya's participation in the BCS Meetings.

## 7. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS (CCFs)

With substantial increases in CCF capitals through grants given out, the effort has finally turned the corner. There is a 4 fold increase in the volume of loans given out and the number of borrowers has almost doubled. Average borrowing has increased by Rs 500 and overdue has dropped from 11% to 3%.

Those who propagated opportunism are beginning to be rejected by the Coolies. Coolies now perceive the CCFs as practical and worthwhile structures capable of solving their credit needs. Problems of misutilisation and overdue are finally beginning to look like a thing of the past.

In August 1992 further grants totalling to Rs 1,778,498 were given out to 128 CSUs. The total CCF capital now stands at Rs 2,853,086 and the status as on 8 March 1993 is as under:

Good loans	Rs	944,260	(33%)
Overdue loans	Rs	84,345	( 3%)
Balances in Bank	Rs	1,824,481	(64%)

A total of 2,397 loans amounting to Rs 2,114,155 have been given out as on today taking the average borrowing up to Rs 882. This indicates that there has been a very busy activity in the CCFs and the bank balances will very likely be emptied once again in the coming weeks.

CCF borrowing have mainly been for cattle rearing though crop loans continue to be the most popular reason for borrowing. The utilisation pattern is as under:

Purpose	Loan amount		Number of borrowing	
1. Cattle	Rs 977,225	46%	498	21%
2. Crop Loans	Rs 571,240	27%	1,239	52%
3. Trade	Rs 225,350	11%	211	9%
4. Agriculture	Rs 191,050	9%	139	6%
5. Consumption	Rs 149,290	7%	310	13%

The repayment rate stands at 96%. Of the total overdue, Rs 52,190 is in serious default with the borrowing CSUs having dropped out. But we will not be writing off these loans as bad debts since, as earlier mentioned, there is a possibility of these CSUs coming back.

These figures are a marked improvement over the previous ones reported in January 1992. The turn about did not come easily. The strengthening of the Executive wing with a division of duties between the Field staff and Extension Workers helped. Improved communications with better desk support contributed.

## 8. SANGHA FUNDS

There was a big realisation of the need for organisational posterity and contributions to their village Sangha Funds increased substantially in the past 14 months. During this period they contributed Rs 240,687 into their village *Hundis* and another Rs 168,117 to the Taluk Sangha Fund accounts. This has taken the Sangha Fund savings in the 4 Extension Programme areas to an impressive total of Rs 573,533.

We expect Sangha Funds to get a major boost during the implementation of the DLDP.

## 9. ORGANISATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

We realised that Coolie Sangha Formalisation could easily turn into an exercise of intensified repetition of the earlier 3 years Formation efforts. The differences were far too subtle to be understood in plain activity terms. Certain organisational adjustments therefore became necessary, and senior ADATS staff decided to take a personal responsibility to steer the building process through.

### 9.1. Projects Assistants

2 senior ADATS staff were appointed as Projects Assistants with overall field and executive responsibilities (but excluding finance) for all the Extension Programmes. They focus on various thematic concerns of Coolie Sangha building like gender, participatory democracy, geopolitical coverage, decentralisation, withdrawal, communal harmony, etc.

The actual role of the Projects Assistants is, to say the least, very interesting. When speaking at a Cluster Meet in Chickballapur, the Projects Assistant made a chance remark that politics was a vital prerequisite to economic development. The Coolies responded by saying that the Bagepalli Coolies were "*born in politics*", whereas it was all so new for them. This led to a huge discussion from 2 p.m. till 7.15 p.m. on how the Coolies of Chickballapur had to first politicise programmes like the CCF and DLDP before they could afford the luxury of doing what the BCS had done these past 2 years – place politics in the back seat.

Projects Assistants have been visiting the Extension headquarters and villages on a very regular basis throughout the past year. We are still on the look out for 1 more Projects Assistant who can concentrate on income and employment generation, but are caught in 2 dilemmas. The type of person we need has to have a management background and will therefore demand a much higher salary than the income tax ceiling that we have set for ourselves. Secondly, ADATS has always found it useful to promote persons from within or, whenever possible, make new comers work their way up from a 3 month initiation to a 1 year period of basic duties to positions of serious responsibilities.

### 9.2. Monitoring Meetings

Every Monday, each Extension Programme staff meet separately with the Project Director and senior ADATS staff. The Area Field Workers' diaries are monitored and inferences drawn from the most minute of experiences. Later in the evening, these experiences are shared among each other in the weekly Situation Meetings.

Mondays are being used by ADATS/DDS staff to update information in the central computer, print reports which they need to use during the week, settle accounts, and to play inter-taluk cricket matches! Communications with and between the extensions has largely enhanced.

### 9.3. Women Field Workers

An achievement we are particularly proud of is that for the first time in ADATS/DDS' history, we have placed independent and effective women Field Workers in all 4 Extensions. Though

presently designated as Mahila Trainers, many of them are already able to take on independent responsibilities for Coolie Sangha building in sub Areas of 25-30 villages.

But at the same time there is a sharp upset in the staff gender ratio which now tilts 94% in favour of men. This is because 139 VHWS were suddenly taken off our roles in mid 1992 when their salaries started being paid by the Mahila Meetings with their decentralised budgets.

We do not think that this is just a question of juggling the figures. The hard fact is that the ADATS/DDS staff are tending to be predominantly male and something concrete has to be done to set this right.

The PERT chart study mentioned earlier in this report showed that it would be better for women staff to gradually take on more field responsibilities – trouble shooting and liaison with police stations and government offices in the morning, attending Cluster Meets in the afternoons and Mahila Meetings every night, and thereby becoming full fledged Field Workers emphasising on Coolie women.

New women who join ADATS/DDS (there finally is a trend of women wanting to work in Coolie Sangha building) could take on exclusive training responsibilities for the first few years.

The major problem which will need to be resolved, however, is children. How women workers are going to cope with the first few years of child rearing (even when husbands recognise and accept parenting responsibilities) with their field work. This has not proved to be too much of a problem for women with desk responsibilities since we live in campuses and also have ample space for children in our offices.

#### 9.4. Staff changes

In March 1992 the Gulur Field Assistant from Bagepalli was transferred to Chintamani. In May 1992 the outgoing BCS Secretary was requested to join him as an Area Field Worker. The previous Field Worker was transferred to Julapalya where we could have a constant contact and guide him.

The Siddalaghatta Field Assistant was thanked for his services and requested to leave. We felt that we could not use his services during the Formalisation phase when there could not be a divide between the personal and the political in senior ADATS/DDS staff. We felt that the Chintamani Field Assistant, who had not fared too well in the Formation phase, would fare better in performing an accompanying role during the Formalisation phase at Siddalaghatta. Our judgement in this regard has been more than vindicated.

A senior Field Worker who had been with the Chickballapur Extension Programme from its inception was elected BCS Secretary in May 1992. A senior Field Worker from Bagepalli was posted there in his place. The other Field Worker from Chickballapur who has also been there from the very beginning has been asked to return to Bagepalli in May 1993 when the present BCS Secretary goes back to Chickballapur with his rich experiences.

#### 9.5. Strengthening the Executive wing

In January 1992 we spoke of the need to strengthen the Accounts Admn and Executive wings of the extensions. While a tremendous lot has been achieved on both these fronts, we will comment on the latter in this paragraph.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Coolie Sangha Formalisation, we cannot pursue only the political objective of gaining a socio-political status of recognition and self respect for the poor. The CSUs have also to become serious instruments for economic development. The efficiency of the CSUs can no longer be measured merely by the regularity of meetings, depth of discussions

or the success rate of issues and struggles undertaken. Coolies have to put their money where their mouth is and prove that they are serious about tackling poverty. This demanded that we strengthen the Executive wing of the ADATS/DDS extension programmes and give a further seriousness to activities like the CCFs, tapping of government resources, etc.

The Field staff stopped concerning themselves with all and every aspect of the CCFs. Instead they concentrated only on broader policy matters concerning the alternate credit system. These included the type of persons who would be given loans, the purposes for which the CCFs would be used, the veto power of the Mahila Meetings, etc.

Extension Workers were appointed at each extension programme to exclusively look after all the details with regard to the releasing, utilisation, repayment and monitoring of the CCFs. They also dealt with a horde of related matters like insurance premiums and claims, getting government subsidies, obtaining the advice of subject matter specialists, etc.

With the commencement of the DLDP project, the Executive wing at the extensions will be further strengthened with the appointment of agriculturists and related staff. We are certain that a new facet of the Coolie Sangha will be introduced in all 3 taluks in the coming months – one of being efficient and effective implementers of physical goals and targets.

#### 9.6. Strengthening Accounts Admn wing

The Accounts Admn of ADATS/DDS has been strengthened with the appointment of a fully trained and reliable Desk Worker at each Extension Programme. We also have a Desk Worker twinned with the BCS Desk Worker at Bagepalli. Once the Taluk Coolie Sangha accounts start operating full swing at the Extensions, she will be shifting to one of them.

We are hopeful of finding 2 more Desk Workers for the other Taluk Coolie Sanghas and thoroughly training them at Bagepalli this year.

We have bought 3 pairs of modem/multiplex and will be leasing in our first dedicated line to Chickballapur in the next months. Once we satisfy ourselves that it works properly, we will order the other 2 lines to Siddalaghatta and Chintamani. But, in the meantime, with the introduction of Monitoring Meetings every Monday, communications have already improved to a very large extent.

The ultimate test for the new structures built up will be in our ability to run the forthcoming DLDP without any hitch or let up for the next 3 years. We are fairly confident of our ability in this regard, but are ready to make any further reorganisations as may be necessary in the Accounts Admn wing.