

0122. 2nd Application to Novib for Coolie Sangha Consolidation (Mar 1994)

Application submitted to NOVIB for 15 months support

1. APPLICANT ORGANISATION

Agricultural Development & Training Society (ADATS)

Bagepalli 561 207,
Kolar district, Karnataka,
India.

2. LEGAL STATUS

Reg. No: 97/78-79 under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960.

Union Home Ministry Number: 094570001 under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, 1976.

3. BANKERS

Account Number: 3314 with Canara Bank, Bagepalli branch.

4. PROJECT TITLE

COOLIE SANGHA CONSOLIDATION IN BAGEPALLI TALUK

5. LONG TERM OBJECTIVE

- To permanently establish the BCS as a taluk level mass organisation of Coolies so that small and poor peasants struggling for their development can continually take stock of wider societal changes and make necessary adjustments to survive with dignity and security in a rapidly changing political economy.

6. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To assist the Coolies in this final year of Coolie Sangha Consolidation so that they can take over all and every responsibility by March 1995 when ADATS totally withdraws from Bagepalli taluk.
- To keep the ADATS central office going till April 1995 when these costs will be borne by the donor consortium being formed by NOVIB, ICCO and EZE.
- To continue the skill training programme for another year with 3 more sessions for a total of 90 Coolie youth and place them at well paying jobs in factories at Bangalore.

7. SITUATION IN WHICH THE PROJECT EXISTS

7.1. Background for this Application

On 22 January 1993 ADATS submitted a 2 year proposal for Coolie Sangha Consolidation in the Chelur Area of Bagepalli taluk. On 21 July 1993 NOVIB approved a 1 year phase of this project, as Ida 014-93-001, for the period January to December 1993. We are therefore preparing this application for the remaining year (stretched to 15 months to accommodate the Indian financial year ending 31st March) of Coolie Sangha Consolidation.

7.2. Stage of Intervention

ADATS has been working with small and poor peasant families to build village level Coolie Sangha Units (CSUs) in Bagepalli taluk since December 1977. NOVIB began to support ADATS in 1980. Over the past 16 years the ADATS/NOVIB partnership has developed an implementation technology with its own intervention strategy, using non-material and material means to build these village units and federate them into cluster, area and taluk level forums with some measure of success.

We are about to enter the last and final year of Coolie Sangha building (which we call the 3 year Consolidation phase) in Bagepalli taluk and NGO withdrawal is to take place in March 1995. For the past 2 years we have been in the process of thoroughly discussing what is meant by NGO withdrawal and the Coolies taking over of full responsibilities to run their own organisation. Now, in this final year, the new systems (without any role for ADATS staff) have to be put in place and certain formalities completed.

7.3. Coverage in Bagepalli taluk

125 functioning CSUs in Bagepalli taluk have a current membership of 3,935 Coolie families. 60% of this membership is from the scheduled castes and tribes, 25% from middle castes and only 15% from the forward castes. The ethnic coverage figures, as different from membership composition, show that while 34% of SC/ST and 28% of middle caste population are attracted to join the Coolie Sangha, only 14% of upper caste people want to belong. 19% of the membership is in the names of Coolie women -i.e. women who head their households themselves represent their families within the Coolie Sangha instead of abdicating this right to menfolk.

7.4. The Extension Programmes

ADATS works with a grand total of 15,334 Coolie families in 580 villages comprising 12 Areas in 4 taluks of northern Kolar district. Of these, the oldest are the Old, Chelur and Gulur Areas in Bagepalli taluk. The first 2 are supported by NOVIB for the past 13 years. And the third is supported by EZE for the past 8 years.

In 1989, the work of ADATS was *extended* to 4 more Areas comprising 131 villages (3,291 families) with ICCO support. Later in 1992 ADATS once again *extended* to 4 more Areas comprising over 224 villages (5,108 families) with NOVIB support. And in 1993 we yet again *extended* to 1 more Area comprising 100 villages (3,000 families).

All these are extensions of ADATS' Coolie Sangha building work towards a geopolitical coverage. In order to be relevant to the specific situation in each taluk, these extensions are managed in a decentralised manner. Their setting up is neither to establish separate and independent entities nor to merely horizontally expand and grow for bigness sake. The CSUs, clusters and taluk forums built in these taluks are a part of the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA and the people's organisation is not be split or fractured on artificial Area or taluk lines.

7.5. ADATS Central Office

In order to operationalise this cohesiveness, each Area/project/programme shares a common and central project direction team comprising the Project Director, Accounts Admn Assistant, Executive Assistant, Accounts Assistant and the BCS President.

The detailed job description of each of these 5 core team members is found in the "Extension Programmes in 3 taluks" application (Ida 014-92-003M/92). We are also enclosing an Or-

ganogram of ADATS and the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA, placing the central core team¹ in relationship to the total staff.

The central computer where the entire data bank of all the villages and member families is housed in the central office at Bagepalli. The extensions access this information at their respective taluk headquarters through modems. This central EDP is administered by the Accounts Admn Assistant.

While central running costs (telephone bills, stationery, electricity, computer software and hardware maintenance costs, etc.) went up due to the increased workload, the salary bill did not increase at all. This is because of ADATS' organisational culture and personnel policy where remuneration are need based and not on the basis of work done -i.e. the core team does not receive additional or separate salaries for their increased workload.

Since the efforts to extend belonged to the ADATS/NOVIB partnership (even if some of the extensions were financed by other funding partners), and also since the costs did not proportionately grow, the central team's salaries and the running cost of the central office at Bagepalli were traditionally borne by NOVIB. Each extension programme separately budgeted only for administrative costs borne at the taluk headquarters.

7.6. The Dual Identity of the BCS

Besides being the legal entity which gives corporate status to the entire Coolie Sangha in all 4 taluks, the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA has yet another identity and role. At another level, the BCS is also the taluk level apex co-ordinating body of 125 village level CSUs organised into 22 Clusters in Bagepalli taluk.

Having the same name causes some confusion and the Coolies have considered changing the name to "Kolar Zilla Coolie Sangha" or some other and then the nomenclature "BCS" can refer to only the Bagepalli taluk branch of the Coolie Sangha. In the meantime however, in order to avoid confusion, ADATS has of late been referring to the entire Coolie Sangha by the expanded name and the Bagepalli taluk branch by the abbreviations.

7.7. The BCS President

The BCS President is not the head of the Bagepalli taluk level Coolie Sangha alone. Each such taluk unit of the Coolie Sangha is headed by an elected taluk Secretary.

As just mentioned, the Chickballapur, Siddalaghatta and Chintamani taluk Coolie Sanghas are in spirit and legality a part and parcel of the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA which has just one common President. Since the sole work of ADATS is to build up the Coolie Sangha, and since all policy, programme and project choices are made by ADATS only on the positive advice of the Coolie Sangha, the BCS President is included in the core team. Moreover, its constitution bars the President and his family from receiving any direct or indirect benefits from the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA and so his salary has to be paid by ADATS.

7.8. ADATS Staff in Bagepalli taluk

Apart from the core team, the whole of Bagepalli taluk is managed by just 4 ADATS staff during this final 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation. 2 Field Workers work in the Old and Chelur Areas and another 2 take care of the EZE supported Guler Area.

The Coolie Sangha is not a sporadic "unity at times of need" type of organisation which goes from issue to issue. As a result there is always a lot of work to be done. Earlier it used to be

¹ Please note that this core team includes 2 Projects Assistants whose work pertains exclusively to the extensions. And so their salaries are paid from out of the extension budgets.

the implementation of ADATS' multifarious programmes, projects and activities. Now with the BCS taking on a much larger and composite agenda of attacking parochial ethnicity and promoting gender parity as preconditions to create a congenial milieu for Coolie entrepreneurship, the week just does not have enough days to get everything done.

Each of the Field Workers work around the clock on a 7 day week basis, leaving Bagepalli at 1 p.m. every afternoon to attend a Cluster Meet and then going on to a CSU or Mahila Meeting. They return at about 11 p.m. and report in detail to the core team who give further advice. The mornings are filled with updating the data bank, or in accompanying a Coolie to a government office or bank, or in helping someone solve a problem she has encountered in her business.

7.9. Elected BCS Functionaries

The 125 functioning CSUs in Bagepalli taluk are clubbed into 22 clusters. All the CSU Representatives of each cluster annually elect their respective Cluster Secretaries. All 375 elected CSU Representatives plus 22 Cluster Secretaries together elect the BCS Secretary for the entire taluk once a year.

Besides conducting the Cluster Meets on fixed days every week, the Cluster Secretaries attend each and every one of the 5-6 weekly CSU Meetings and Mahila Meetings in their jurisdiction. They then have to work very hard to follow up on decisions taken in these various fora. This includes extensive travel to solve problems and liaise with banks, government offices, higher Coolie Sangha functionaries and ADATS central office, meet with the police, lawyers and court officials, accompany members to specialised hospitals outside the taluk, help make purchases, etc. Often times they are the ones who record the minutes of these meetings in the respective Minutes Books if there is no literate member in the CSU. Though this is a full time job, the Coolies deliberately underpay their Cluster Secretaries in order to invite committed Coolies to work as "public servants" for limited periods of 1-2 years.

The BCS Secretary's mornings are spent in meeting with Coolies who come to Bagepalli and getting their problems sorted out. After that, just like any Field Worker, he too attends a Cluster Meet in the afternoon and then goes on to a CSU with a pressing problem. Apart from this, he has countless appointments to represent Coolie interests at government offices, banks, with politicians, etc.

These elected Secretaries, along with the BCS President, form the Executive Committee which meets once a fortnight, on every other Sunday, to review matters. The Field Workers sometimes sit in as observers. These meetings serve to check perspectives and directions, bring in current and relevant grassroots information and take back larger ideas to the villages.

7.10. Financing the BCS

A clear part of the intervention strategy was that the central overhead costs of running the people's organisation would be met by us for as long as NGO involvement was there. These include the stipends of the elected BCS Secretary and Cluster Secretaries, salaries of the BCS Desk Worker and Liaison Worker, and the costs involved in feeding about 500 CSU Representatives and VHWs who attend the monthly BCS Meetings on the first weekend of every month.

Savings accrued through Sangha Fund contributions, in response to a call to contribute 10% of their earnings for the posterity of their organisation, go to meet village level expenses. The rules of the BCS are that contributions made to a particular village Sangha Fund can be spent only by that particular CSU. The unspent balance at the end of every fiscal year has to be placed in a Fixed Deposit in the name of that particular CSU to build the village level corpus

fund. Under no event can contributions made to a particular CSU's Sangha Fund ever be transferred or appropriated by another CSU or Cluster or the taluk BCS.

Membership fees of Re 1 per month, on the other hand, are contributed to the taluk account. These collections are used to meet a part of the central costs of the BCS. But since ADATS has been meeting such central overhead costs all these years, most of these collections accrued as balances at the end of every fiscal year and got converted into taluk Fixed Deposits. Over Rs 3 million has accrued in the Sangha Funds as on today. Interest earnings from these village Fixed Deposits, further Sangha Fund collections every year, and the membership fee will have to meet the organisational expenses of the BCS from April 1995. But there are 2 problems.

- 92.4% of the Sangha Funds have accrued in the village accounts and consequently the bulk of interest earnings also accumulate at that level. These may be just enough to meet village level expenses like travel costs of CSU Representatives, stationery, maintenance, etc. which the CSUs are already meeting. But they will just not be enough to render vital services like first aid, referral health, children's education and provide a safety net for those whose businesses or crops falter and fail.
- Only 7.6% of the accrued Sangha Funds are in the taluk Fixed Deposits. Central BCS expenses (which we were meeting up to now) are common ones which have to be met from the taluk Sangha Fund. There just isn't any money to meet these expenses till assets like the BCS Farm and Poultry start paying.

7.11. The BCS Farm

To begin with, the 42 acres bought for the BCS was barren dry land. We were attracted to it by virtue of its location -in the state of AP where the law did not bar a Society from buying agricultural land, and bounded by the Bangalore-Hyderabad National Highway on the one side and a seasonal stream or rivulet on the other side. We realised that the former would ensure its high market value and the latter offered some scope for tapping ground water through borewells drilled in the bed of the rivulet.

The BCS officially agreed that though it belonged to them, ADATS would be in charge of actually developing and running the Farm for about 10 years till it generated assured profits. We decided to run the Farm, as much as possible, on organic lines with as little chemical intervention as possible without, at the same time, making a fetish of it. We also decided that we would not imitate the then prevalent peasant cultivation patterns and try to make the Farm a profit making venture from day 1 through an intense exploitation of the land and labour. Instead we would make long term investments and develop an orchard which would give the BCS an assured income after an initial gestation period. We realised that a particular type of management system will be required to develop the Farm on all these lines. If that system were not to work after we handed the property back to the BCS, they would be free to change it to more shrewd peasant farmer practices. And finally, we realised that the Farm should not be viewed only as an income generating enterprise. It should also be an asset creating venture that the Coolies could feel free to liquidate at any point in time.

But they continue to show a keen interest in its development and literally thousands of Coolies have spent some days at their Farm for some training session or the other. During these stays they walk around, offer opinions and pitch in with whatever needs to be done.

Using the then novel technology of drip irrigation we planted fruit trees like coconut, mango, sweet lime, sapota, pomegranate and a host of other varieties on 30 acres. The criss-crossing drip pipes precluded any inter cultivation between the pits which were, in any case, only 5

meters apart. Moreover, we took a decision in the interest of long term sustainability, that the poor and thin soils will get over depleted if we extensively inter cultivated any additional crops.

In spite of repeated attempts to cultivate normal crops on the remaining 12 acres, recurrent water shortage made us finally give up. We decided to instead use this land to develop much needed facilities to conduct residential training sessions for ADATS staff and Coolie functionaries, breed and rear sheep, and plant commercially exploitable trees like tamarind, teak, neem, bamboo and eucalyptus. Besides, we have encouraged natural regeneration on these lands and this has resulted in a rich bio-diversity of native trees, shrubs and grasses.

The total investment on this 42 acre BCS Farm, including what the Coolies paid to buy the land and ADATS invested over the years by way of fixed and working capital, is in the region of Rs 3 million. It's present market value is about Rs 7-8 million and a few select parties have shown an interest in purchasing it. Given a negotiating period of 6-12 months we should be able to dispose it off quite satisfactorily. But this would be the worst time to sell off the property because prices are bound to shoot up the moment all the trees begin to fruit in the next 2-4 years. Moreover, as has been confirmed by the recently presented Union Budget, the economy has not yet stabilised either in terms of inflation or Rupee value. Liquidating fixed assets under these circumstances would not be very wise.

It is impossible for us to forecast whether this property will forever remain with the BCS as an income generating venture or if the Coolies will decide to sell it off and place the proceeds in a Fixed Deposit. Market forces at the time, and the Coolies experiences with independently handling the venture, will determine that decision. But in the meantime, we have had experts who have opined that our long term strategy of not chasing after immediate profits (through inter cultivation) is financially as well as technically sound, provided we have the working capital to keep the place going. If all goes well, the fruit income alone should be in the region of Rs 50,000 a month calculated at today's prices. And then there are the sheep which can free graze on the entire land once the trees shoot up.

The only capital investment still needed on the Farm is permanent fencing, which is a costly affair. The present protective fencing serves well against stray cattle and the like but will not prevent theft and pilferage once the trees start fruiting.

7.12. The Economics of the Farm and Poultry

The 42 acre farm which we had bought for the BCS in January 1988 was paid for by the Coolies themselves from wage savings they made during the implementation of the DLDP 1st phase (land development) project in Bagepalli taluk. ADATS invested on this land to develop it into a fruit orchard run on organic lines. Any such venture needs at least 8-10 years to start generating surplus. In the meantime, it is still a drain on resources to the tune of about Rs 30,000 per month.

The Poultry is yet another asset created with NOVIB and EZE assistance, on an acre of land situated 4 kms away from the Farm. At first we reared Giriraja chicken as a social project to help women. Then we tried our hand at rearing broilers. But the market was far too shrewd for us and we went into a net loss. Finally, we decided to lease it out to a huge poultry conglomerate for Rs 20,000 per month. By March 1995, this rental income will allow us to recoup losses we made when rearing broilers. From April 1995, rental income from the Poultry will meet a substantial part of the 42 acre Farm's monthly maintenance bill.

Once the 42 acre Farm becomes productive by about 1996-98, the BCS should get a net profit of about Rs 50,000 every month from it, and another Rs 20,000 from the poultry, both calculated at today's prices. But we have always considered the Farm and Poultry as asset creation

ventures and not just as income generation ones. Investments on both these assets have already doubled over the past 6 years. The value is bound to continue rising.

But in the Coolies' immediate reckoning, the Poultry and Farm still represent a compulsory expenditure rather than income.

7.13. BCS Endowment Fund/Safety Net

Considering that Sangha Funds were not enough to finance the independent BCS and that moneys would be generated to meet central BCS running costs only from 1996-98, ADATS had suggested that NOVIB and our other northern partners please contribute to the creation of an Endowment Fund of Rs 25 million for the BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA. Since similar problems were bound to arise in the other 9 Areas of the Extension taluks and programmes as well, we had proposed that this amount should belong to the entire BAGEPALLI COOLIE SANGHA as a whole and not just to Bagepalli taluk and the withdrawing CSUs alone. In this way, a permanent mechanism for responsible NGO withdrawal after the 3 phases of intervention could be built into the wherewithal of the people's organisation.

After a lot of ideological and in-principle discussions, NOVIB has stated that, for financial reasons, they were unable to contribute to the creation of such an Endowment Fund.

ICCO recognises the need to create some sort of a financial wherewithal whereby the independent people's organisation is able to meet its overhead costs and continue to render certain vital services to its members. But they still have not taken a final decision on the matter.

EZE is sympathetic but they do not have a mandate to contribute to an Endowment Fund for the people's organisation. They however see the need to create a Safety Net whereby Coolies who embark on the path of positive entrepreneurship are cushioned with some limited security in the field of health and against business risk.

In the meantime, the creation of a financial wherewithal for the continuation of the independent people's organisation is still very unclear and the future, in this regard, looks rather murky.

7.14. Skill Training

In late 1992, when exploring ways and means by which Coolie families could enhance their income and adapt to the rapidly changing socio-economic situation, training youth² in industrial skills and placing them at well paying factory jobs in Bangalore was one of the options which came up. Accordingly, as part of the ongoing DLDP 2nd phase project (Ida 014-90-002), 37 girls and 98 boys started getting trained as apprentices under a local private entrepreneur to whom we offered factory space and other facilities at the then empty Poultry sheds³. Another 20 boys were placed as apprentices with welders, fabricators and motor rewinders in their own workshops -i.e. not at our Poultry sheds.

We wrote a Note on Skill Training⁴ where we spelt out our long term perspective, commitment and planning. We discussed the Problem, our Vision, the Plan, the Possibilities and the Prospect of CSUs starting their own production units.

We shared this Note and invited expert advice from persons well versed in the corporate world (including Dr Nath from FAIR, Anil Chaudhary from PRIA, the directors of Integra Micro Systems and a horde of others) who all visited the activity. They advised us that there

² In partnership with ActionAid, ADATS had run a child sponsorship programme for 11 years in Bagepalli taluk. As a result of this activity, more than 1,000 Member Coolie family children have studied up to or more than high school.

³ That was during the short interval when we had stopped running the Poultry due to our inability to cope with the market and just before renting it out once again to a reliable tenant.

⁴ To be found in "Documents of ADATS - Book 3".

was little point in training village youth in ventures with low organic compositions and low technology since they would later find it very difficult to compete in the job market with urban Bangalore youth who had comparable skills. Instead they suggested that we try to train Coolie youth in more sophisticated skills. They also agreed to "adopt" the entrepreneurs themselves and guide them with their skills and contacts⁵.

Almost true to their prediction, the local manufacturer could not realise his finished products and suddenly closed down. With great difficulty we were able to place hardly 25% of the 135 youth he had trained in and around Kolar district. But these were not very well paying jobs and most of these 30 youth soon quit and returned to their villages.

That was when we started inviting bigger entrepreneurs. But we found that no one was willing to come all the way to Bagepalli to set up ventures requiring more capital. So, in addition to the other incentives of factory space and the slave like obedience of our trainees, we offered to buy machines of their choice and offer them on a sort of lease-purchase scheme to any entrepreneur who would come forward with their own working capital.

In January 1993, a garment manufacturer from Bangalore was tempted and he set up a unit to manufacture more sophisticated garments using very modern machines that we purchased for him to use. 37 youth began to get trained under him.

We immediately applied to NOVIB for support to continually train a total of 400 Coolie youth and place them at well paying jobs in Bangalore, because funds available in the ongoing DLDP 2nd phase project was not enough to finance this activity. But this proposal was not approved by NOVIB. We were therefore forced to contain the activity to just the 37 youth who had already started (another 13 were to have joined them to make the batch size 50) and use exchange rate gains made in Ida 014-92-003M/92 to wind up the activity.

Then, perhaps because of the unclear future or maybe due to other reasons that we are not aware of, this entrepreneur closed down his venture and left rather suddenly in mid 1993. We were really worried. But when we took our half baked trainees for interviews at garment factories in Bangalore, all but one were immediately selected! But we were still stuck with the machines we had bought. We decided to shelve the activity for some time.

After licking our wounds for some time, we re-contacted our corporate friends who advised us to not pursue the policy of inviting outside entrepreneurs. Instead they suggested that we use the machinery which we had already bought to set up our own Skill Training Centre even if this meant some investment on purchasing raw material which may get wasted as the trainees learnt. They naturally suggested that we concentrate on skills needed in the garment industry because we had already bought machines and also because they predicted a big boom for that sector in Bangalore.

They also promised us to continue helping in the placement of trained Coolie youth at well paying jobs, helping these youth get adjusted to the city, etc. the moment we re-started. Even the Bangalore Rotary Club has come forward with offers of assistance on these lines.

That was when we tried to convince the CSUs to give loans to prospective trainees so that they could pay for their own skill training without any outside subsidy. But the CSUs were not too enthusiastic and not a single trainee came forward. This was perhaps because 37 youth being successfully placed was not enough to convince them on the feasibility of the entire exercise. We felt that we ought to continue the exercise for some more time before the Coolies realised the potential in it.

⁵ Prince Charles had just given a call to successful businesses at Bombay and the "Prince of Wales" scheme was very fresh and popular in everyone's mind at that time.

On the whole, our experience with skill training, though chequered, has been fairly positive. All the Coolie youth who learnt garment making skills have been successfully placed at Bangalore and are holding on to their jobs for almost a year now. We are confident of being able to place many more youth in well paying jobs.

But we have failed in inviting private entrepreneurs to come and invest in Bagepalli. Coolie youth learning under them as apprentices would have been the ideal situation. Because they would have, in addition to skills, also learnt to cope with the vagaries of the market and particular behaviour of the entrepreneurs also. But we cannot expect everything all at once.

7.15. Other Documents

We have, for the sake of brevity, only described pertinent matters directly related to this project application. Please refer to the following documents for a fuller elaboration of the situation in which the project now exists:

- 1st Progress Report on the DLDP 2nd Phase - Ida 014-90-002 (September 1992)
- 1st Progress Report on Coolie Sangha Consolidation (October 1992)
- CEP III Phase (Consolidation) Application (January 1993)
- Evaluation Report by Vanaja Ramprasad & D. Rajasekhar (July 1993)
- 2nd Progress Report on the DLDP 2nd Phase - Ida 014-90-002 (September 1993)
- 2nd Progress Report on Coolie Sangha Consolidation - Ida 014-90-001 (February 1993)

8. ARGUMENTATION FOR THE NEED OF THE PROJECT

8.1. Central Office Salaries & Running Costs

In 1993 the situation whereby NOVIB alone bore the entire central office salaries and running costs was reviewed. It was decided that all 3 funding partners should equally share central office expenses and salaries. But in the meantime, NOVIB, ICCO and EZE have decided to form a Consortium to jointly fund ADATS for the next 10 years. Though this Consortium will start from April 1994, financial integration will be effected only from April 1995.

Therefore, as a stop gap arrangement, we request NOVIB to please continue meeting central salaries, administrative running costs and the central computer for 15 more months from January 1994 to March 1995.

8.2. Central BCS Expenses

The ADATS/NOVIB partnership set about to create the BCS as an independent people's organisation within a definite time span. As part of this clearly spelt out intervention strategy, we have been meeting the central costs of the BCS for the past so many years. From April 1995, after our joint effort ends, these expenses will somehow have to be met by the Coolies themselves.

We therefore request that NOVIB please continues to meet these costs for the final year of our commitment. This will help the Coolies better prepare themselves to meet their future financial needs in 2 ways:

- Firstly, Sangha Funds will be substantially increased by 25% -from Rs 3 million to about Rs 4 million- since the 1994-95 *Hundi* collections can all be converted into village Fixed Deposits if not spent in the current year.

- Secondly, the Coolies will get some breathing time to find alternate sources of support to meet future central BCS costs and continue with vital services without which they will not be able to effectively run the CSUs.

8.3. BCS Farm

Ideally the 42 acre BCS Farm needs support to meet its running costs for another 2-4 years till 1996-98 when it will become either totally productive or sale worthy. But we expect that part of this recurring cost can be met by the Poultry from April 1995 onwards. We therefore request NOVIB to please grant the running costs for 15 months till that date in order to stave off an immediate crisis.

8.4. Skill Training

There is an undisputed value in helping Coolies decrease their dependence on an uncertain agriculture in semi-arid drought prone regions like Bagepalli taluk. At the same time, off-farm ventures without the base of agriculture to support unexpected vagaries have also proved to be risky affairs⁶. The skill training experiment, even if only partially successful, has shown that it is a possible way out of this dilemma. It will definitely prevent pauperised youth from landing in slums and on pavements through forced migration, decrease the pressure on agriculture, and at the same time help subsidise their families in their twin pursuits of cropping and off-farm ventures to increase real earnings. This can also be considered as the best insurance against drought.

ADATS has already built up the contacts, experience and most of the wherewithal like accommodation, infrastructure machinery, etc. to train Coolie youth, place them in well paying jobs and help them settle down as adjusted workers in the city.

Unless we conduct the skill training systematically for at least another 90 youth and demonstrate to the CSUs that this is a viable activity, they will not be inclined to pay for it through the CCFs. This disinclination also has its roots in an attitudinal block prevalent the world over -the dilemma of people simply refusing to pay for education. It is possible that all this can be countered with a small investment of about Rs 4,000 per trainee which is all that we will have to spend.

In the event of our not being able to convince individual Coolies to themselves pay for skill training, it is still possible that the BCS will be able to source other funds to continue the activity once they find it viable. But not cashing in on the enormous preparations that we have already made by way of contacts, et al would be a shame. The chances of once again attracting serious entrepreneurs to come and invest in Bagepalli and train Coolie youth as apprentices -as per the originally envisaged plan and vision- is far higher if we keep the activity going than just on the blocks.

9. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- ADATS Field Workers and BCS functionaries will continue attending all the normal meetings of the Coolie Sangha and discuss the details of NGO withdrawal in March 1995.
They will continue to help the Coolies implement the DLDP 2nd phase project which will get over by the end of 1994.
- The core team of ADATS will continue to assist the Coolies in negotiating with the funding partners for the creation of the Endowment Fund for the BCS and

⁶ Please see the Vanaja Ramprasad/D. Rajasekhar Evaluation Report of July 1993.

finding other ways by which their financial wherewithal can be guaranteed in order to be able to themselves run the people's organisation after April 1995. An exceptionally large number of special meetings and training sessions to discuss particular problems and requirements. These will be related to the running of the CCFs, Sangha Funds, etc. and the core team will help conduct such sessions throughout the 15 month period. The core team will also facilitate a large number of 3rd Opinions from concerned and knowledgeable experts on all these issues.

The core team will, in the meantime, also continue to provide project directional assistance to the decentralised extension programmes, articulate their experiences through the writing of progress reports, monitor day to day activities, supervise the realisation of the decentralised budgets, offer EDP services, etc.

- Central BCS costs will be met by ADATS for the last 15 months of our involvement with the CSUs of Bagepalli taluk and Sangha Funds will be monitored to grow by at least Rs 1 million in this period.
- Immediately on approval of this project, a Trainer and Assistant Tailor will be appointed and skill training sessions re-started for 3 batches of 30 Coolie youth each.

The only problem we anticipate in this regard is that the Poultry sheds will be occupied and we will have to organise some other accommodation for the skill training at the 42 acre Farm.

10. PROJECT BUDGET

1. Salaries for 15 months

1.1. Project Director @ Rs 4,000	60,000	
1.2. Accounts Admn Assistant @ Rs 4,000	60,000	
1.3. Executive Assistant @ Rs 4,000	60,000	
1.4. Accounts Assistant @ Rs 4,000	60,000	
1.5. BCS President @ Rs 1,500	22,500	
1.6. 2 CEP Field Workers @ Rs 1,500	45,000	
1.7. 2 Helpers @ Rs 500	15,000	
1.8. 10% Staff fund	32,250	354,750

2. Running Costs for 15 months

2.1. Central Administrative costs @ Rs 12,000	180,000	
2.2. Central Travel costs @ Rs 3,000	45,000	
2.3. Central meeting/training costs @ Rs 10,000	150,000	
2.4. Maintenance of 2 CEP motorcycle @ Rs 1,500	45,000	
2.5. AMC for central computer	75,000	
2.6. Computer Consultant @ Rs 4,000	60,000	555,000

3. Central BCS Expenses for 15 months

3.1. Salary of BCS Secretary @ Rs 1,500	22,500	
3.2. Stipends for 22 Cluster Secretaries @ Rs 500	165,000	
3.3. Salary of Desk Worker @ Rs 2,500	35,500	
3.4. Salary of Liaison Worker @ Rs 1,500	22,500	
3.5. Motorcycle maintenance @ Rs 1,500	22,500	
3.6. BCS Meeting costs @ Rs 10,000	150,000	
3.7. Farm Maintenance @ Rs 30,000	450,000	868,000

4. Skill Training

4.1. Food costs for training 3 batches of 30 youth (total 90 youth) for 4 months per batch @ Rs 15 per trainee per day	202,500	
4.2. Cost of waste cloth, thread, buttons, etc. @ Rs 25,000 per batch	75,000	
4.3. Cost of mats, bed sheets and personal effects for 90 trainees @ Rs 200	18,000	
4.4. Salary of 1 Trainer @ Rs 3,000	36,000	
4.5. Salary of 1 Assistant Tailor @ Rs 1,500	18,000	
4.6. Salary of 2 Helpers @ Rs 500	12,000	361,500

Total: **2,139,250**