

0208. 3rd Clarification Letter to Icco (4 Jun 1992)

We give reasons why we cannot immediately apply for a DLDP without grassroots discussions, planning and preparation at the village CSU level.

Dear Berry:

This is our 3rd and final (short) letter in reply to your letter of 12 May 1992 where we will comment on the DLDP, consortium funding and FAIR. We do hope that you have already received the earlier 2 dated 28 May and 1 June 1992.

Dry Land Development Project

All the CSUs in the Extensions have been seriously discussing the DLDP. They have come up with some mature observations. The most important of these is that they now realise that the cart cannot be tied before the horse.

Earlier, even we at ADATS used to talk about an activity like the DLDP strengthening Coolie Sangha building, fostering unification across the caste lines, etc. Now the coolies freely accept that unless there already are strong CSUs and until there is more than just a fragile unity among the members, a wide scale and far reaching project like the DLDP just cannot be implemented.

Rather than attempt to develop transparency through the CSU level planning and implementation of a DLDP the coolies now would like to see a full and sincere participation even before embarking on such a project. The principal objective of the project therefore changes from Coolie Sangha building to dry land development.

In some ways, this is a reflection of the overall change which has taken place with a feeling that politics is for economics rather than the other way around. It also marks a departure from the leading role played by political ideologies to the developing of principles to guide action. I recall a discussion with Fons in Bangalore and do realise that this is fraught with a lot of questions regarding the universal applicability of these principles. But it does offer us an opportunity to speak about and intercede with concerns about women and environment in a way that was not as easily possible in the earlier atmosphere.

We also agree because such a labour intensive project will be very far flung and simultaneous in so many villages. Unless each and every CSU is alert and conscientious enough to monitor its implementation, it will be impossible for us to centrally police it's execution.

In the meantime, as already mentioned in our 1st reply, the setting up of the Accounts Admn wings at Chickballapur, Chintamani and Siddalaghatta is going on quite well. We have appointed qualified persons who are undergoing practical training at Bagepalli the past 2 months. We intend placing them at the Extensions by next month so that they may be involved with the implementation of the 2nd Phase from the very beginning, realising and monitoring the sanctioned budgets, maintaining the computerised data bank, etc. By September 1992, we too will be in a position to decide whether we have the confidence to handle the large volumes of moneys which the DLDP entails.

Discussions on the DLDP are also practical in nature. The coolies are going about assessing needs and planning labour intensive interventions in a very responsible manner. We believe that we will be able to summate all these grass root plans in the form of a project application by September 1992.

Consortium Funding

We have wavered between the pros and cons of consortium funding ever since you seriously broached the topic in February. We have done some serious thinking but feel it best to personally discuss these when you come down next.

FAIR

Basil D'Souza from FAIR was here for a day in March 1992 but neither of us were certain as to what they were expected to do for us. We told him that we presumed you had spoken to Dr. Nath regarding the market survey and asked if FAIR would be able to do something like this. We also had a whole lot of other questions which Basil said that only Dr. Nath would be able to answer. We will now get in touch with him and explore possibilities.

One last request

We will feel much better if you could kindly send us a telegram saying that you have received all 3 letters upon receipt of this one. The mail services have not been all that good of late and we will keep wondering if you got our replies in spite of having sent them by registered post.

With every best wishes to all at ICCO, I remain,
yours sincerely,

Ram Esteves