

0413. 11th Progress Report on the SCNZ Programme (Sep 2002)

1. MEMBERSHIP & COVERAGE

1.1. Membership

It is now 5½ years since the ADATS/SCNZ programme began. After working for 4 years in Gudibanda taluk alone we expanded to cover Mittermari *Hobli* in the southern part of Bagepalli taluk, 1½ years back. The programme now covers a total of 134 villages (*up from 121 six months back*) with 3,343 Member Coolie families (*down from 3,411 six months back*) participating. 31% of the population of these villages actively benefit from the day to day functioning of the Coolie Sangha.

The worrying figure is still the 1,851 families who stand as Cancelled in functioning village CSUs. Some are families whom the CSUs have deliberately kept out in order to weed out initial entrants who neither understood nor subscribed to goals and objectives. But others could very well be disaffected families with genuine grievances.

	Last Report (Gudibanda)	Last Report (Mittermari)	This Report
Number of village CSUs	72	49	134
Normal Member families	2,156	1,255	3,343
Cancelled Members	656	865	1,851
Women Memberships	637 (30%)	421 (32%)	1,141 (34%)
Coverage of village population	29%	36%	31%

1.2. Coverage at different stages of Coolie Sangha building

Contrary to our experience in other taluks of north Kolar District, population coverage has increased with every stage of Coolie Sangha building. While only one-quarter the village population are in the new village Coolie Sangha Units (CSUs), the figure soon reaches one-third and has climbed to 36% of the villages population of the 51 Independent CSUs of Mittermari *Hobli*.

While in Gudibanda this steady climb in coverage could be attributed to the high level of quality service that the Children's Programme provides, in Mittermari *Hobli* it definitely indicates a revival after a bad spell, with Member Coolies families determined not to give up their functional unity.

Stage of Coolie Sangha Building	Village CSUs	Normal Member families	Coverage
1st 3 year Formation phase	19	567	24%
2 nd 3 year Formalisation phase	58	1,538	31%
3rd 3 year Consolidation phase	6	138	34%
Independent CSUs	51	1,100	36%
Total	134	3,343	31%

1.3. Women Memberships

1,141 memberships are in the names of Coolie women. On the face of it, this constitutes a very healthy 34% of the Normal Member families in functioning village CSUs. Yet we had questions as to whether these women really were the managers of their families.

A rule in the Coolie Sangha says that family memberships of (women) functionaries should be in their own names and not in their father's or husband's. This rule was implemented in Gudibanda taluk in the beginning of this year. As a result, the membership of many families with Village Health Workers, Cheque Signatories and *Balakendra* Teachers had to be changed, almost overnight, to the names of these women. There was no time to make a thorough check to see if these women really were the managers of their respective families.

ADATS Staff have to work extra hard to help these women capitalise on the this propitious opportunity.

1.4. Ethnic Coverage

The Coolie Sangha is still most popular with Harijans and Tribals. They constitute 58% of CSU membership, and 39% of their population are in the Coolie Sangha. Ironically, it is the Upper Castes who come second (yet another difference from other taluks), far outranking the Middle Castes.

Caste Group Composition

Member Families	Percent in CSUs	Caste Group	Village Population	Ethnic Cover
1,952	58%	Scheduled Castes/Tribes	4,962	39%
501	15%	Middle Castes	2,308	22%
885	27%	Upper Castes	3,443	26%
3,343			10,713	31%

2. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

2.1. Learning from the 1st Baseline

1 year back, in the 9th ADATS/SCNZ Progress Report (*as also in the 13th Consortium Progress Report which was written at the same time*), we described how Member Coolie families began listing their problems in an exercise which we termed as "Baseline Making". Cluster functionaries were trained to make Problem Trees, Objective Trees and evolve Action Plans to tackle each line item in these Baseline surveys. Results were monitored in weekly Cluster Meets. That exercise lasted 9 months, from April to December 2001. Since then 2 more Baseline making/implementing exercises have been undertaken.

January and February 2002 were spent in gleaning lessons from the 1st Baseline. In spite of making some spectacular achievements, we realised that the exercise had inherent defects:

- Being the very first time that Member Coolie families had answered the loaded question: "What is the most pressing problem of yours that you want to see solved, using the functional unity obtained in the Coolie Sangha?" they had got a little awed. While answers were specific, measurable, (more or less) realistic, and time-bound, they were not necessarily "Agreed Upon" in the true spirit of the term.
- To some extent, Baseline making were vain exercises carried out by over-zealous Cluster functionaries, in silent connivance with their Area Field Workers.
- In some other Clusters they were more in the form of standard responses to Check Lists read out by Area Field Workers.

- The 1 year period for which the Baseline was made was much too long:
 - Member Coolie families did not anticipate all their needs/desires.
 - It became difficult for ADATS Staff and Coolie Sangha functionaries to sustain interest.
- Choosing Cluster Meets as units for monitoring implementation was good for us, but collating problems and Results into each ADATS Field Worker's area made the Baseline a little unwieldy for individual Member families to identify themselves with. The sharing of Results in the Taluk Coolie Sangha Meeting became a new form of rhetoric boast, defeating the very purpose behind the exercise.
- We had deliberately omitted standard programmes like the DLDP, CCFs, Women's Fund, etc. from the Baseline making exercise. Many Member families found this a little artificial, some openly asking, "*What else are you guys there for?*".

Even at the time, we were aware of shortfalls. Nevertheless we decided to plough ahead since we saw the making, implementing and monitoring of the Baseline as an excellent tool to bring in a results oriented management culture into both, ADATS as well as the Coolie Sangha.

2.2. The Summer Agenda

In the next round we decided to correct these deficiencies. We asked each village CSU to cull out a Summer Agenda for the months March to June 2002 from their more general Baseline. We suggested that they need not stick to the earlier Baseline *verbatim*, and that they could add or delete line items.

Yet-to-be-implemented line items of the Baseline of each Area Field Worker were broken down, village-wise, in each CSU and Mahila Meeting. Member Coolies added, deleted, and "*Agreed Upon*" their respective Agendas to make them truly SMART.

Predictably, the Summer Agenda became programme orientated with the main emphasis on the Children's Programme, Health, CCF, etc.

Good results were obtained, but once again the real value was in fresh organisational learning that took place in ADATS and the Coolie Sangha.

2.2.1. RHETORIC VERSUS MANAGEMENT

The Coolie Sangha realised that while Rhetoric did produce overall results that positively impacted on a caste-class of people, there was no guarantee that every individual family would benefit. Results for individuals was left to chance, following the laws of hit and miss.

Consequently the energy needed to sustain struggles based on Rhetoric sagged after an initial euphoria died – i.e. after a period of general improvement, a sort of plateau effect set in. After some more time, even these overall returns slackened, threatening to be temporary gains.

Rhetoric depended on personalities and a cadre. This had the unpleasant consequence of creating coteries and stragglers, always to the detriment of grassroots processes. Systematically managing for Results, on the other hand, produced more guaranteed and sustainable consequences.

2.2.2. RE-DEFINING DAY-TO-DAY LIFE ACTIVITIES AS DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Member Coolies realised that Baseline making (or *Agenda* to use the new term that they coined) ought to be a conversion of day-to-day Life Activities into Development Processes. A rational use of their functional unity would result in ordinary, every day issues getting addressed in a more sensible manner than through atomised efforts of resource-poor individuals.

ADATS Staff were trained to give conceptual guidance, and many weeks were spent in the village meetings, helping them re-define everyday activities as development processes.

LIFE ACTIVITY	DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (defined as a Beginning state & an End state)
Cultivation	Poor Crops & Barren Lands to Good Crops & Food Security
Child Rearing	Neglected Childhood & Perfunctory Schooling to Cared for Childhood
Civic Benefits	Civic Benefits through influence, middlemen and bribes to Rights Based Civic Benefits
Justice	Blatant discrimination to Citizen Rights
Women In Families	Lack of Identity, Dignity & Status to Decision Making Authority within the Family ¹
Old Age	Neglected & Discarded to Respect & Care
Business Opportunities	Precarious single income sources (like daily labour) to Diversified Incomes from many activities
Youth	
Religion & Festivals	
Political Power	

CSU and Mahila Meetings are still grappling with the remaining 3 life activities – political power, problems faced by youth, and religion/festivals.

2.2.3. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Member Coolie families then recognised that since each box in their Agenda represented a Life Activity, it would immediately be apparent as to how much and how many of these they were willing to define as Development Processes and to entrust to the collective efforts of the Coolie Sangha. Village CSUs with more boxes filled in had more faith in the Coolie Sangha than those with fewer boxes.

It was all very well to continually reiterate that the Coolie Sangha was their lives and *vice-versa*, but here was a concrete way by which the veracity of the slogan could be tested. Moreover, the strength of individual village CSUs, derived through functional unity, could be gauged when implementing their respective Agendas – those who got more tick marks in the boxes were stronger than those with a lesser rate of success.

Willy-nilly, a rough and tumble indicator to gauge the maturity of individual village CSUs began to emerge.

2.3. The ADATS/Coolie Sangha Process Map²

ADATS as an organisation had to respond very quickly. We had to take a fresh look at all our programmes, projects and activities, and reengineer them. We knew that even mighty business corporations did not have more than 5-7 main processes. Could everyday living in these regions have more than a dozen? In which case, we as an organisation committed to the comprehensive development of the rural poor, surely could not have more than half a dozen main processes³.

¹ The Mahila Meetings clearly recognise that while their Men have a high standing within the Family, less so in the village community, and hardly any at all in wider society, the position of Women is quite the reverse. Coolie women enjoy some pretence of respect in wider society, less so in their villages, and none at all in their respective homes.

² For more details please read our 14th Consortium Progress Report dated April 2002

³ A common mistake is to confuse *Processes* with *Departments*; it must always be borne in mind that a Process Map is not the same as an Organisational Chart

Processes are those sets of activities that produce Outputs⁴ which have value for Member Coolie families. These Outputs, in turn, need to help the village CSUs tackle various development processes that they glean from their day-to-day life activities.

After much introspection, 6 Major Processes were identified:

- Income Declaration to Tax Paid Membership & Functional Unity
- Baseline Making to Problem Solving
- Land Holding Surveys to DLDP Works & Good Crops
- CCF Loan Requests to Utilisation & Rotation
- Identification of Single Women to Utilisation & Rotation
- School Enrolment to Retention & Performance

Another 3 Support Processes were also identified:

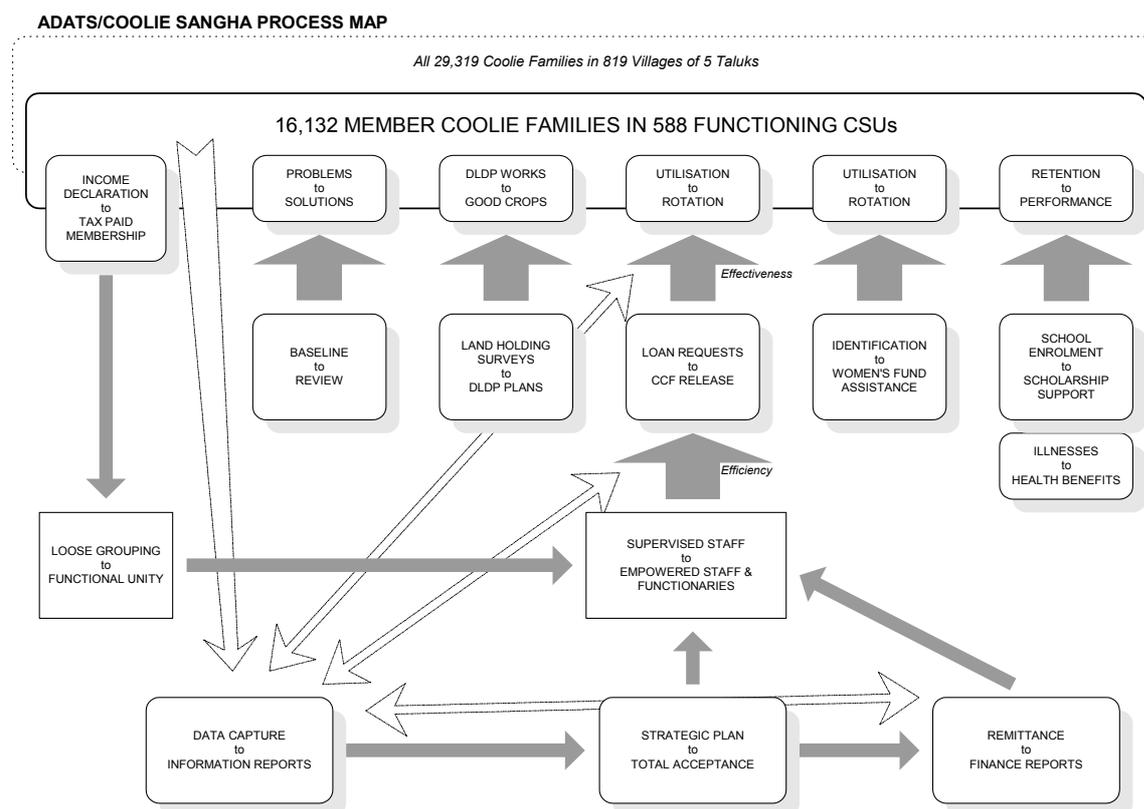
- Strategic Plan to Total Acceptance
- Data Capture to Informative Reports
- Remittance to Financial Reports

Placing the boxes onto a Process Map took time and needed much re-wording and shuffling. It was decided to split the Major Processes into 2 levels, and embed the superior (sub) Processes within the Customers/Primary Stakeholders:

- Relatively simple and straightforward efforts made by ADATS Staff resulted in *Efficiency*, and
- Far more complex efforts undertaken by the village CSUs, resulted in *Effectiveness*.

Our Primary Stakeholders were themselves embedded within the larger group of potential Customers – i.e. Normal Member families from functioning CSUs were embedded within the total of all Normal and Cancelled Coolie families from functioning as well as dropped out village CSUs.

⁴ Though we use the terms *Output* and *Product* interchangeably, it may be better for development NGOs to employ the generic term since it implies both, Products as well as Services



2.4. The Monsoon Agenda

The 3rd Baseline making/implementation exercise, undertaken from July 2002, was a much more mature, grass-rooted and serious affair. Its objective was as much problem solving as to turn ADATS and the Coolie Sangha around, firmly placing both organisations on a path of assured relevance and sustainability.

While not all CSUs and Mahila Meetings have reached a standard and uniform high, we can state that it is they themselves who re-defined 9 life activities as development processes and identified concrete action points:

LIFE ACTIVITY	ACTION POINTS
Cultivation	Implementing DLDP; crop loans, crop insurance, planting trees, organic farming, joint marketing
Child Rearing	Schooling, health care, after school, skills and jobs
Civic Benefits	Houses, electricity, road, drains, pensions, own efforts
Justice	Taking cases out of Courts and Police Stations
Women In Families	Property rights, marriages, divorce, domestic violence, reproductive health
Old Age	Pensions, property rights, health care
Business Opportunities	Re-starting businesses, cattle rearing, skills, credit
Power & Position	Civic elections
Safety Net	Feeding the hungry, ambulance services, insurance

A total of 2,201 problems were identified in the 134 SCNZ supported villages. At the time of writing this Progress Report (in October 2002) 1,366 action items have already been solved, giv-

ing an overall success rate of 62%. 551 action items are in progress, which could raise overall Results to a maximum of 87% in the coming weeks.

Results have been low in some items like agriculture due to a severe drought that has hit the region for the 3rd consecutive year. Some others like the 130 men wanting to transfer their properties into the joint names of themselves and their wives may fail due to technical obstacles placed by male bureaucrats.

No action has been taken on 66 items, and 10 more have been rejected by the same CSUs that included them in the first place, indicating that problems relating to the *Agreed Upon* aspect of SMART have not fully been sorted out! 16 items have been rejected by the government, indicating poor planning.

Action Points relating to	Success Rate
Agriculture	60%
Child Care	80%
Business Opportunities	62%
Justice	54%
Old Age	55%
Women in families	52%
Civic Benefits	64%
Safety Net	67%

2.5. Monitoring the Monsoon Agenda

Monitoring is often confused with a mere measurement of progress. While no management effort can be carried out without the latter (indeed, management itself can be seen as a measurement science), this is not monitoring.

In order to get a correct understanding of Monitoring, Processes have to first be understood. Processes, in this context, are Black Boxes whose contents are shrouded in a degree of privacy. They are sets of activities carried out by each Actor (Process Owner) in her own individual style, using her own strengths, weaknesses and particular abilities. Staff Empowerment then assumes a new meaning – to give each Staff member the skills, responsibilities and independence needed to convert Inputs into agreed upon Outputs.

Monitoring then becomes the mutual sharing of process details – i.e. how each Actor went about achieving particular outputs. Monitoring is a joint reflection on various individual approaches. The end product of monitoring then becomes community learning and the creation of an organisational knowledge base.

The Monsoon Agenda, which is still in progress, therefore cannot be monitored in the strict sense of the word. But some monitoring observations can be made even at this stage:

- The definition of Results is still vague and confused in the newer CSUs of Gudibanda taluk. Some Area Field Workers see the mere sanctioning of government houses as a Result while others wait till the houses are built and occupied. So too with Old Aged Pensions, Ration Cards and other applications submitted to the government.
- Over zealous Cluster functionaries showed previously achieved Results as new problems in order to claim Results.

A detailed listing of Action Items, Progress and Success Rate is as follows:

ACTION ITEM	PROGRESS	SUCCESS
Agriculture (678)		
16 Arrange farming training (adults); 39 Change crop (not horticulture); 45 Collect and give seeds; 25 Develop kitchen garden; 17 Get Darkasth/Saguvali Chitti; 1 Get proper land title; 1 Get subsidies from govt; 30 Give crop loans; 46 Insure cattle; 326 Insure crops; 68 Plant tamarinds/mangoes; 74 Plough and cultivate	12 No Action; 48 In Progress; 3 Rejected by CSUs; 11 Rejected by Government; 203 Failed	411 60%
Child Care (272)		
1 Admit in college/diploma; 1 Admit in Private School; 2 Appoint government teacher; 4 Arrange computer training for kids; 3 Arrange for jobs; 4 Arrange Health Camp for children; 8 Arrange skill training for kids; 7 Arrange special tuition; 11 Buy land for <i>Balakendra</i> ; 2 Care for blind children; 41 Collect food grains; 6 Contest Betterment Committee; 13 Get bus passes; 12 Get disability pensions (kids); 16 Get hostel seats; 99 LIC Kids Saving Scheme; 18 Re-admit drop-outs; 5 Repair/Electrify <i>Balakendra</i> building; 17 Send to specialised Hospital (kids); 2 Start <i>Balakendra</i> with Sangha Funds	3 No Action; 48 In Progress; 4 Rejected by CSU	217 80%
Business Opportunities (286)		
21 Arrange skill training (adults); 57 Clear CCF Overdue; 8 Expand cattle rearing with CCF; 11 Expand cattle trade with CCF; 12 Expand petty shop with CCF; 16 Expand Petty trade with CCF; 4 Start chandrakis trade (own funds); 26 Start petty shop (own funds); 46 Start petty trade (own funds); 1 Start Poultry (own Funds); 6 Start rearing cattle (own funds); 78 Start trading in cattle (own funds)	14 No Action; 92 In Progress; 2 Failed	178 62%
Justice (100)		
2 Appoint lawyer for civil case; 3 Give legal aid; 9 Release Mortgaged Land; 4 Solve boundary dispute; 4 Solve case outside police station; 4 Solve house dispute within family; 9 Solve house site problem; 57 Solve land dispute with others; 8 Solve land dispute within family	4 No Action; 42 In Progress	54 54%
Old Age (146)		
26 Follow up on OAP application; 88 Get OAP; 4 Get Senior Citizen bus pass; 1 Give share in land to parents; 11 Keep property in elder's name; 5 Make children take care of parents; 10 Send for eye operation; 1 Solve OAP irregularity/cheating	12 No Action; 45 In Progress; 3 Rejected by CSU; 3 Rejected by Govt.; 2 Failed	81 55%
Women & Family (351)		
65 Build bathrooms; 5 Build smokeless chullas; 8 Follow up Widow Pension application; 6 FP operation for woman; 11 Get Widow Pension; 2 Help a girl to marry; 7 Help single woman to raise a crop; 21 Improve monthly medicine kits; 10 Send for Cancer check-up; 47 Send to specialised hospital (women only); 5 Solve family problem; 2 Solve husband-wife problem; 12 Stop domestic violence; 130 Transfer as joint property; 6 Transfer property to wife's name; 14 <i>Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu</i> problems	4 No Action; 161 In Progress; 2 Failed	184 52%
Civic Benefits (365)		
5 Build gobar gas plant; 8 Clean drains, wells, etc. (own efforts); 2 Contest Milk Society elections; 1 Follow up Anganwadi application; 5 Follow up house application; 32 Follow up on electrification application; 5 Follow up on water facility application; 21 Follow up Ration Card application; 3 Get Anganwadi; 3 Get disability pensions (adults); 59 Get free electrification; 104 Get government house; 1 Get house electrified (own funds); 4 Get house site; 44 Get Ration Card; 23 Get roads/drains; 28 Get special govt scheme; 10 Get street lights; 4 Get water facilities; 2 Implement special govt scheme; 8 Repair a hut/house (own efforts); 1 Solve Anganwadi functioning problems	17 No Action; 114 In Progress; 1 Rejected by Government; 2 Failed	239 64%

Safety Net (3)		
3 Give CCF Safety Net	1 In Progress	2 67%

3. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

3.1. The Numbers

4,452 children are supported by the ADATS/SCNZ programme. 78% of School Age Children (i.e. 5-17 age group) from Member Coolie families in functioning CSUs are in School.

Gender Analysis of Children in School

	Children		Boys	Girls	SC/ST	Middle	Upper
Lower Primary (1 to 5)	2,299	52%	51%	49%	58%	18%	24%
Upper Primary (6 to 7)	955	21%	51%	49%	55%	16%	29%
High School (8 to 10)	1,039	23%	59%	41%	55%	14%	31%
PUC	119	3%	70%	30%	45%	8%	48%
Degree	8	0%	88%	12%	12%	12%	75%
Diploma/Other	6	0%	83%	17%	33%	17%	50%
NFE	26	1%	50%	50%	58%	15%	27%
Total	4,452	100%	53%	47%	56%	16%	27%

Scholarship benefits were given out during May and June 2002. Orders were placed for civil clothes, instead of uniforms, with a reputed children's garment factory at a very competitive rate. These were distributed along with note books, geometry boxes, text books and guides for 7th Std and 10th Std. students.

3.2. Children in Private Schools in Gudibanda

Children studying in private English schools in Gudibanda Taluk have proved that given a chance to study in English, they too can be as good as their urban counterparts. Teachers were impressed with their performance in the final exam and they gave some useful tips to our Case Workers and the Teacher Trainer. Regular follow up was made during the reporting period and there has been neither dropout nor failure among these children.

Children studying in private schools in Mitemari *Hobli*, on the other hand, are all in Kannada medium schools. The Case Worker and Teacher Trainer, along with the concerned *Balakendra* Teachers, visited these schools and were of the view that the schools were of not of a good standard and Teachers were not qualified. The fee structure though, was on par with English medium schools. Parents were advised to re-enrol their children in either English medium schools or put them back in government schools for the next academic year.

	Children		Boys	Girls	SC/ST	Middle	Upper
Lower Primary (1 to 5)	98	3%	55%	45%	58%	23%	0%
Upper Primary (6 to 7)	61	2%	48%	52%	52%	25%	22%
High School (8 to 10)	26	0%	25%	75%	100%	0%	0%

3.3. Failed Children

Figures below show that the Balakendras have been an effective tool in preparing children for their examinations in their respective classes. 7th Coaching Classes has been a value addition for the high school children. Children who have failed in the lower classes have either been due to their age factor or who had rejoined after a gap of year or two. In high school, particularly in Hampasandra, Julpaya and Somenahalli villages, there were no teachers for Math, Hindi and English. Though Balakendra teachers helped the children to a certain extent, children in high school had problems coping with these subjects. But the overall performance of each Balakendra has been incredible in the field of education.

Class	Gudibanda Taluk		Mitterhari Hobli	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
5 th Std.	1	2	3	2
6 th Std.	2	4	2	2
7 th Std.	-	2	1	1
8 th Std.	7	4	5	7
9 th Std.	7	6	6	3
10 th Std.	3	4	7	2
Total	20	22	24	17

3.4. Children in Pre University Course (PUC)

With an overwhelming result of 91% in the 10th Std., children who passed with better grades went in for PUC instead of vocational courses. 84 Boys and 35 girls are now in 1st and 2nd year PUC and are supported with college fees and note books. Though colleges are situated in the Bagepalli and Gudibanda towns, they do not have adequate library and laboratory facilities. Consequently, children who could not afford text books were without study/reference books. They came up with the idea that since they come to towns to attend colleges, we decided to set up a library at the ADATS campuses.

3.5. Computer Skills for Coolie Children

During this reporting period, we undertook a pilot effort to impart computer skills for 9 children (5 girls and 4 boys) from Vanaganpalli and Buttavarapalli villages. All 9 were in their mid teens, studying in the 9th Std., 10th Std. and PUC. They were very enthusiastic about being the experimental group! Keeping in mind the time constraints, classes were held only on weekends. The course was for 15 weeks and focus was on computer literacy. They learnt basic, user-friendly software packages like MS Word and MS Excel.

It all started when children approached us for support to join mainstream computer classes. We did not know whether to encourage them or not. Encouraging would have entailed high tuition costs and other expenses. Not doing so would have been backward. At the same time, though we were a digitized organisation, we did not have teaching skills or the infrastructure to ourselves start computer classes. We discussed this with the children and they quipped “like any city children, even we have dreams of competing within the existing system. We just want a chance!”

We said, “What the heck!” and went ahead. To start with, we needed computers. So we approached our software friends in Bangalore and arm twisted them to spare as many old PCs as they could. Next, we approached a small time computer training institute in Bagepalli and offered the bait of these 15 PCs. After much haggling, the fee structure was finalised.

Then came the most difficult part. The institute went on and on about what they would teach the children. We kept asking what our children would learn. The poles would just not meet. They said, “But how can we guarantee that your children will learn?” We said that we were just not interested in how and what they “taught”. They could even use a magic wand or hypnotise our children for all we cared. We were only going to measure what our children learnt, before parting with any fees. Finally, we got a reluctant and glaring consent with a lot of grumbling as to how powerful NGOs exploit doddering businesses...

2 villages from Mittermari, close to Bagepalli town, were chosen. It was great to have the 9 guinea pigs with us every weekend, for 9 weeks. They slogged from morning to night and spent Saturday nights at our campus. After their training, we wanted to know what the children had learnt. There was nail biting anxiety as the kids proudly demonstrate their skills. Their familiarity with the key board and mouse was excellent. They were quick with short-cut keys and menus (a little girl insisted that we were wrong to use Alt-F and S to save a file when Ctrl-S would do the job quicker). But had they really learnt? That was the question... Finally we exclaimed (yes, we were making a habit of it) “What the heck!” and decided to pay up. It was fascinating to see children converse in Kannada and Telugu, and yet use appropriate computer ‘lingo’. When we asked them what they thought of these past 15 weekends, out came the predictable answers:

“It was interesting”

“We were scared to touch the computer in the beginning”

“We would like to learn more”

“It was boring during theory classes”

“We need more practice”

“We love to play games on the computer!”

Here is a novel one:

“We were afraid of being electrocuted”

And the most ambitious of them all:

“We need a certificate so we can apply for an advanced course”

But ADATS as an organisation is nowhere closer to discovering a proper strategy to impart computer literacy classes for 58 children in Gudibanda and 39 in Mittermari.

3.6. Coolie Children's Participation in Taluk and District Level competitions.

Balakendras encourage children to participate in various extra curricular activities. With the Coolie Sangha backing these activities, children were more confident in taking part in sports, drawing and painting, quizzing and cultural activities.

During this reporting period, 180 children took part in Taluk level sports and 26 of them went on to participate at the District level. As many as 752 children participated at school level. 38%-43% girls participated at all these levels. Lack of training instructors at school and other facilities in sports has become an obstacle for children wanting to go ahead.

- In Yellodu village, children who had won at the Taluk level sports were not going to be taken to participate in the District level by their school due lack of funds. The CSU immediately made a collection and contributed. They made sure that their children participated at the District level.

Gudibanda and Mittermari	School	Taluk	District	State	Total
Boys	426	102	16	0	544
Girls	326	78	10	0	414
Total	752	180	26	0	958

3.7. Balakendra Teacher Training

3.7.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

Relating to quality of instruction and learning to match with the elementary education at school, innovative methods have been introduced to improve the quality of *Balakendra* learning. Rote learning is gradually being replaced by activity learning. Team work among children for discussion, decision and opinions were encouraged. Easy methods like a table with empty boxes to be filled with meaningful words/sentences and make up a story at the end of the session are given to children. This activity encourages children to learn related words/sentences which increase their thinking and writing abilities and in voicing their views and opinions. Teachers were trained in similar creative activities on seasons and climates, factual description and making of geometrical models. General knowledge and quizzing was encouraged to make extensive use of the libraries set up in the villages.

3.7.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

In Mittemari Hobli, emphasis was given on interactive training and the effective linking of theory with practice. Keeping in mind children's development needs, study and play materials were distributed and teachers were given Teacher's Guides in English, math and science. Importance was given to:

- Community-children interactions
- Teacher motivation
- Significance of play in early childhood
- Activity based curriculum
- Using appropriate teaching-learning materials
- Monitoring Balakendra activities.

3.8. A fresh approach to Coaching Classes

Following up on Taluk Coolie Sangha meeting suggestions to conduct coaching classes during weekends instead of at the end of academic year, we decided to give it a go.⁵ Our Temporary Teachers were very enthusiastic since 10th Std. children kept saying that they need to clarify doubts faster and go along with the classroom flow at school. Children normally that they find math, science, social science and English tough to cope with. This fresh approach to coaching may help out.

Classes began in mid August and are being held simultaneously at both, Gudibanda and Bagepalli. Gudibanda and Mittemari villages together have 256 children in the 10th Std. (151 boys and 105 girls). Of them, 188 children have started attending these weekend. 21 children from non-SCNZ villages asked to attend the coaching classes and they have been welcomed.

The remaining 68 are either playing truant or their parents are not really interested in sending them. In some cases the villages may really be too far with inadequate transport facilities.

Whatever the reason, village functionaries are trying to ensure that this problem is speedily resolved. 8 Temporary Teachers (4 in Gudibanda and 4 in Bagepalli) conduct these weekend coaching classes.

⁵ Please see our 10th ADATS/SCNZ Progress Report

3.9. Non Formal Education (NFE) Classes

3.9.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

As the dropout rate has been curtailed in Gudibanda, the taluk has had fresh NFE enrolments only from new Member Coolie families from 2 new villages that were taken up during this reporting period. Older children in their 3rd semester are intent on finishing the course. These children too were provided with benefits like clothes and NFE workbooks. They also received health coverage.

Children in NFE feel happy to be part of children's programme. They said they could participate neither in the CSU nor Mahila Meetings as they are quite young, and not attend *Balakendra* as they are too old. But when they get a special space to study, play and be a part of the programme, they feel great!

	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	3 rd Semester
Boys	5	1	5
Girls	2	1	10
Total	7	2	15

3.9.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

The Mittermari NFE programme which did not do too well in the first year has now picked up with 30 children enrolling. Only 14 children continued from last year and have taken up their 2nd semester this year. As already reported, they were given an informal test in March 2002 along with other children who attended regular classes. This gave them a sense of belonging. As usual, the girls fared better than the boys.

	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	3 rd Semester
Boys	12	5	-
Girls	18	9	-
Total	30	14	-

3.10. Spread Effect of the *Balakendras*

Emulating the *Balakendras* of Gudibanda and Mittermari, 57 villages from Chickballapur and 28 from Bagepalli have started *Balakendras* of their own. *Balakendra* teachers (all women) have been selected and a meagre stipend is being paid from their own Sangha Funds.

They requested us to train them in simple teaching methods and the professors from Chickballapur were more than willing to do so. 1,710 children in Chickballapur and 980 children in Bagepalli benefit these self-run *Balakendras*. Scholarship benefits too were given out using their own Sangha Funds.

4. COOLIE WOMEN

4.1. VHW Training

4.1.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

Numerous need based follow up sessions were held in Gudibanda to reinforce learning that had taken place at CSI Hospital. Reviews were conducted to assess the technical performance of VHWs and the extent to which they met family health needs. They were made to under-

stand the importance of keeping records. As a result, most VHWs are now quite capable of pin pointing cases that need to be referred to specialised hospitals.

VHWs were also trained in simple and effective methods to treat malaria and paratyphoid, which have become silent killers in the villages. Supported by the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*, members are able to go to a diagnostic laboratory, test their blood and urine, and take proper treatment. This has proved to be an extremely cost effective life saver.

4.1.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

During this reporting period, all the Mitemari *Hobli* VHWs and women CSU Representatives were sent in batches to CSI Hospital, Chickballapur. They too were trained in first aid, hygiene, pre and ante-natal care for 2 days per batch. They too were given maternity kits and taught how to use them. They were also trained in checking symptoms for TB, malaria and paratyphoid.

Through these training sessions and follow-up, we hope to make the same impact as at Gudibanda. Prominence was given to reproductive health.

4.2. Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu

4.2.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

1 day review sessions on the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* was held for VHWs, woman CSU Representatives, and interested women Members from all the villages. They were briefed on utilisation and maintenance of *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* accounts.

We have not come across a single instance of male interference in the usage of these petty credit funds. Only 2 villages had to be reimbursed their lost *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*.

- The Singanapalli Mahila Meeting had lost Rs 1,600 which was borrowed by VHW Gangamma for cancer treatment, but unfortunately she died.
- The Chikkathammanahalli Mahila Meeting lost Rs 800 which they used to treat Members who were hurt during a struggle regarding the *Balakendra*.
- Rs1,000 grant was given to Yerralakkepalli and Gadacharlapalli.

After reimbursement and new grants, the status of *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* in the Gudibanda villages is as follows: 48 Mahila Meetings have Rs 4,000 each; 7 have Rs 3,000 each; 2 have Rs 2,000 each and 1 has just Rs 1,000 to use for their petty credit. 4 Mahila Meetings are still to start the *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu*.

4.3.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

A result oriented management culture is apparent in most Mahila Meetings at Mitemari *Hobli*. *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* is being properly rotated to meet petty credit needs of Coolie women. Much credit has to be given to the Mahila Trainers.

The capital of 17 *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* were enhanced in Mitemari *Hobli* since we had not done so for many years. Another 9 Mahila Meetings will get their additional grants at the time of writing this Progress Report, in October 2002.

4.4. Stories from the Field

- In Merupalli village, Gangi Reddy and Subamma, husband and wife, were not able to get along. Things took a turn for the worse and the situation began to get out of hand. So the CSU intervened and tried to bring about a compromise. After talking it over within the Mahila Meeting, the couple has decided to live separately for the time being. CSU Members have advised them to consider and explore options of living together after some time.

- In Cheruvumundarapalli village Narsamma was facing physical domestic violence from her husband on an everyday basis. The CSU tried their best to counsel the husband but finally took the decision to send him away from the village. Narsamma now feels that even though she has to support a family single handed, living a life of dignity and peace is far better than what she had been accustomed to earlier.
- Ashwathamma of Giripalli village was monetarily assisted to re-thatch the roof of her house which had collapsed in a freak rain storm. CSU Members immediately included her name in their Baseline survey and have applied for a free house from the Gram Panchayat quota.
- 5 single women from Mitemari were assisted to buy crossbred cows and sheep under the Women's Fund.

5. HEALTH

5.1. Decentralised Health Budget

5.1.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

Decentralised health grants are used to (a) buy monthly medicine packages, (b) pay VHW stipends, and (c) to subsidise a part of hospital expenses incurred by Member families.

- Though the first item is fairly straightforward, VHWs still rely heavily on their Mahila Trainers to make shopping lists, check expiry dates, quantities, rates, and finalise their monthly indents to medicine shops.
- The second item is very clear-cut since ADATS Accounts staff write out cheques for VHW stipends.
- 2 problems arose with regard to the third, discretionary item.
 - Lack of adequate fiscal skills did result in an odd health claim not being properly processed. In spite of anticipating such problems while decentralising the health budget to the village level in Gudibanda taluk, we had still decided to go ahead. When they themselves realised their deficiencies, women Representatives and VHWs started taking the help of (literate, women) *Balakendra* Teachers to re-check bills for authenticity and arithmetic Total.
 - The other problem was petty rivalry and viewing the arrangement as a dole scheme. Coolie women dug out old hospital bills and vied with each other to grab as much as possible. So much so that many Mahila Meetings were told not to discuss health subsidies unless and until their Mahila Trainers were present.

VHWs have started recording the health status of pregnant women to keep track of their monthly check-ups and the taking of necessary injections and iron supplements. When a woman needs additional medication, VHWs reflect this in their monthly indents. It would be an exaggeration to call this a proper ante-natal programme, but a beginning has been made.

5.1.1. MITTEMARI HOBLI

These past 6 months have been an extremely difficult period for villagers. A combination of factors led to viral fever, flu, diarrhoea, malaria, jaundice and typhoid. VHWs have been advising Member families on prevention measures and following up the serious cases. The health budget has been utilized by the Mahila Meeting wherever necessary. Aside from general hygiene and cleanliness, special emphasis has been placed on menstrual hygiene and pre and ante-natal care.

2 Cancer Detection Camps were held during this reporting period. One in Julpalaya itself where over 150 women suffering from white discharge were tested by a team of specialists

from St. John's hospital, Bangalore. 7 women were referred to Kidwai and their treatment is being followed up by the Mahila meetings with monetary assistance being provided by ADATS wherever needed.

- In Merupalli village, Narayanswamy's wife Subamma was diagnosed with cancer at the Cancer Detection Camp in January this year. Unfortunately, even in spite of subsequent check ups, she passed away leaving 2 little children. The CSU has taken the family under their wings and has also assisted them through the decentralized health budget. The children are being supported via the *Balakendra* and Narayanswamy is now working with the rest of his villagers in the DLDP programme.

We are also starting on a series of training programmes to build on ADATS staff's knowledge relating to Cancer, AIDS etc. As part of this, specialists from St. John's hospital, Bangalore conducted their first training on the subject of cancer.

5.2. Annual Health Check-up for Children

5.2.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

This year's health check in Gudibanda has not yet begun. But the follow-up treatment of children who were earlier referred to major hospitals is continuing.

5.2.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

Children have undergone their Annual Health check-up in 44 villages. *Balakendra* teachers have made it compulsory for parents to send their children clean and tidy. This has contributed to keep children healthy. Children who need long term treatment for epilepsy are getting it on time. Parents who had discontinued treatment for their children were dealt with severely. 19 fresh cases of epilepsy, 31 ENT, 75 dental problems, 5 scabies and 8 cases of eye problem have been identified during this year's annual check-up.

5.3. Cancer Detection Camps

Our recent emphasis has been on reproductive health, focusing on contraception, childbirth, irregular periods, white discharge, suspected cervical cancer and HIV/AIDS. Mahila Trainers were told not to wait for procedural sanctions in these regard. Immediate and effective action was taken whenever a problem was reported.

Our friends from Kidwai Institute of Oncology had all shifted to St. John's Hospital in Bangalore. We drummed up a similar arrangement with St. John's and continued with regular Cancer Detection Camps. VHWs screened women according to guidelines they had been taught at Kidwai and brought women with extreme white discharge, uterus infections and related problems to these camps. 3 doctors and 5 assistants made a total of 5 visits to Gudibanda and Mittermari *Hobli* bearing their own costs.

- A total of 387 women from Gudibanda and Mittermari were tested. Those who could be treated immediately were given basic medication. Dosages were given for their husbands and sexual partners.
- 38 women were found to be suffering from various ailments that needed further investigation. They were taken by jeeps, in groups of 6, to various hospitals, including St. John's.
 - 11 had prolapsed uterus
 - 2 had enlargement of spleen due to endemic Malaria and/or Cancer
 - 16 had various degrees of white & red discharge
 - 9 were diagnosed to be 2nd stage uterus cancer patients

5.3.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

After the first Cancer Detection Camp, the doctors opined that general health and hygiene was good. There were stray cases of anaemia and malnutrition among pregnant and new mothers.

10 of the 11 reported cases of prolapsed uterus are from Gudibanda. This has made us wonder as to the causes. All these women have borne more than 3 children and have had their deliveries at home. According to one of the specialists, one of the causes for prolapsed uterus could be the forceful pushing/pulling out of the baby as well as after-birth. Another could be multiple childbirth. Family planning needs to be stressed in the Mahila Meetings

5.3.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

Only 1 case of prolapsed uterus was found in Mittermari *Hobli*, but 6 cases of cancer at different stages was diagnosed. These women have been taken to Kidwai for treatment. They were registered under the lowest income group and hence get the benefit of low cost treatment.

- Amaravathi, suffering from enlarged spleen, has been completely cured with an expense of only Rs 1,250.
- But 35 year old Sudhamma, with 2 young children, has to take medication for 6 months. Each capsule costs her Rs 21. Unless we get her medicines at wholesale price from sympathetic pharmaceutical companies, she just cannot afford to cure herself.

6. COOLIE CREDIT FUNDS

6.1. Status of the CCFs

Perhaps because of their preoccupation with the Cluster level Baseline reviews and the making/implementation of their Summer & Monsoon Agendas, there has not been much movement in the CCFs during the past 6 months.

Total CCF Capital		2,824,669	100%
Total of Good Loans		548,473	19%
Total of Overdue		106,450	4%
1 to 6 Months Late	67,000		63%
7 to 12 Months Late	31,500		29%
Over 1 Year Late	8,350		8%
Bank Balances		2,176,219	77%

7.2. CCF Utilisation

When compared to the previous 6 months, there was only a slight increase in the number of loans given. 72 CCF loans worth Rs 160,800 were given out during this reporting period.

Purpose	Amount Borrowed		No of Loans	
Crop Loans	129,500	9%	92	14%
Agriculture	28,300	2%	10	1%
Cattle	433,250	29%	167	25%
Trade & Entrepreneurship	912,250	61%	407	60%
Consumption & others	1,100		1	
Total	1,504,400	100%	677	100%

7.3. CCF Performance

Putting the CCFs on hold has helped. The bulk of CCF Overdue which was over 1 year old has now been repaid. Repayment Rate has risen (*up from 90.78% six months back*) and Capital at Risk has marginally dropped (*down from 4.27% six months back*).

CCF Capital	Rs 2,824,669
Cumulative loans given	Rs 1,504,400
Number of Loans	677
Average Borrowing	Rs 2,222
Repayment Rate $100 - (\text{Overdue} + \text{Bad Debts} / \text{Cumulative Loans} \times 100)$	92.92%
Capital at Risk $\text{Overdue} / \text{Capital}$	4%

The entire CCF process has been digitized. This ensures total transparency as well as a devolution of power to the village CSUs. As per the current CCF Rules:

- Only village CSUs with less than Rs 10,000 Overdue will be selected.
- Members with any CCF Overdue will not be selected.
- New Members can borrow only Rs 2,000 if they are less than 3 years, Rs 4,000 if they are 3-4 years in the Coolie Sangha, and Rs 6,000 if they are 4-5 years old.
- The total outstanding loan cannot be more than Rs 200 per Member in a 1 year old CSU... ..and never more than Rs 4,000 per member in a 8 year old CSU.
- The maximum allowed will be 2 times the annual income of the Member.
- Borrowers who have repaid their previous loans late will not be selected till they finish a Cooling Period of 45 days (but a delay of 60 days from their Agreed Repayment Date will be condoned).
- Older Members can borrow a maximum of Rs 25,000.
- However, the Eligibility List will only suggest the maximum that a Member can borrow – the approval of the CSU and Mahila Meetings is compulsory!

8. SANGHA FUNDS

8.1. GUDIBANDA TALUK

Sangha Fund in Gudibanda Taluk stand at Rs 979,176 (*11.4% increase from 6 months back*).

	31 March 2002		This Report	
Taluk Fixed Deposits	450,000		450,000	
Village Savings Bank Accounts	229,820		362,200	
Taluk Main Savings Bank Account	139,447	858,708	166,976	979,176

8.2. MITTEMARI HOBLI

There has been no drop in Sangha Funds in Mitemari. The figures show a decrease because of an organisational re-shuffle by which some non-SCNZ Clusters have been excluded from reporting.

	31 March 2002		This Report	
Village Savings Bank Accounts	899,629		745,201	
Village Fixed Deposits	2,220,500	3,120,129	1327000	2,072,201

9. STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Rhetoric relies upon anecdotal proof. It is enough to convincingly share a single startling Result obtained in some particular village or family. Rhetoric suggests that if it can be done once, somewhere, anywhere, it can be achieved everywhere. When delivered effectively, rhetoric fills the audience with a hope, yearning and belief that borders on faith. Results are taken for granted. It is enough to prove one single instance and leave the rest to wild imagination. A mindset, an attitude, a structure, a discipline, and a style of functioning are offered as strategies.

A problem we constantly face when writing Progress Reports is with regard to examples. Examples have to be illustrative, but not anecdotal. While a human interest has definitely to be maintained, the citing of examples cannot be a substitute to reporting on Results which include failure, under-achievement and delays, along with successes.

Just before writing this 11th Progress Report, we asked the Gudibanda Staff:

“Has our emphasis of the past 2 years on introducing a results oriented management culture made any difference?”

They responded with stories that were indicators. Not long winded narrative anecdotes that cover up real failures and non accomplishments, but stories that speak volumes and communicate in a more personal way.

9.1. Individual Attention

The 2 year old emphasis on managing for results has meant that ADATS and the Coolie Sangha have averred to become more customer focussed. After having worked for the general empowerment of a caste-class for 23 long years, it was decided to tone down on the rhetoric and use functional unity in order to concentrate on individual families.

- Bagepalli missed the monsoon this year and so the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha decided to empty its coffers. Rice and *Ragi* were distributed free of cost to deserving Member families.
This was done on the basis of lists drawn out by each village CSU. On an average 8-10 families were assisted in each village.
- Subamma of Polnayakanpalli village was deserted by her husband and had no family support. She has to look after her young son and did not even have a house to call her

own. CSU Members pitched in and helped her buy land and construct a house with some monetary assistance from ADATS.

But this could well be a double edged thing in Gudibanda. Because we did not use a socio-political strategy to make our entry. Instead we depended upon a scheme of sorts, the child sponsorship programme. Schemes are notorious for ignoring the larger reality and concentrating only on narrow objectives.

- A drunken Member from Lakkepalli used to continually disturb CSU and Mahila Meetings. Thoroughly disgusted, the CSU considered cancelling him. But instead they drummed out an extremely complicated solution by which membership would be transferred to his wife's name, his 7th Std. son would continue receiving sponsorship benefits, and the man himself would be kept out.

In the older, more mature CSUs of Bagepalli taluk, on the other hand, they are able to maintain a fine balance between the individual and community.

- In Hosahudya village, the *Anganwadi* (Under-5 *Crèche* run by the government) teacher was stopped from conducting classes after she was caught pilfering foodstuff and other items meant for the children red handed. She had been warned earlier but continued stealing. The remedial action was spearheaded by CSU Members. Though a minority in the village, their drive and enthusiasm is so infectious that new families want to join the CSU! Together with non CSU families, the CSU then got together and stopped an illegal pitching work undertaken by a corrupt Gram Panchayat member, in front of his house.
- In Gubbolpalli village a non CSU person's 13 year old daughter was raped by a high school student. The CSU immediately acted and made sure that the culprit was put under bars.

9.2. A Sense of Ownership

A sense of ownership is definitely developing in the Coolie Sangha:

- The bulk sanction of health benefits with 3-4 persons from a village digging out their old hospital bills has all but stopped after the decentralised health budgets started getting transferred to their respective village bank accounts.
"Our health budget is like an insurance. Just because we have insurance cover does not mean that we wish on ourselves illnesses and snake bites..."
- Nanjamma, an elderly woman from Kadapalli village received an Aid Distress of Rs 150 per month from ADATS for 8 months. When Baseline making was undertaken in April 2001, one of their first decisions of the Kadapalli CSU was to stop this. When asked why they replied:
"At that time, we looked at it as an ADATS scheme and didn't want to grudge Nanjamma a benefit she may get... now we realise that it is actually our money. Nanjamma actually has 3 sons who are quite capable of looking after her. But there may be others who really need a helping hand in their old age."

9.3. Gendered approach toward the Aged

This does not mean that the Coolie Sangha is not insensitive towards the elderly:

- Salakka from Doomakuntahalli had 6 tamarind trees which provided her a steady annual income in her old age. Her grown up sons, who are not living with her, went to cut these trees and sell them under the pretext of clearing the land to set up a poultry unit. Salakka rushed to the *Balakendra* in total panic. Member Coolies held an emergency

CSU Meeting, summoned her sons and warned them not to touch the trees or their produce for as long as Salakka lived.

9.4. Settling Disputes

Ever since the Coolie Sangha started, there are far less intra-Coolie problems that go to police stations, let alone a court of law.

- Kadirappa of Kadapalli got into a property dispute with his brothers. CSU Members intervened when his elder brother lodged a police complaint. They said that if he did not take back his complaint, he would be socially boycotted. The matter has since been settled amicably in the village.
- In Giripalli village 6 CSU Members had left their land barren because of a family dispute. Things were taken to court but with the help of the CSU, an out of court settlement was made. After all these years, all 6 have finally been able to plough their lands.

But this is something that we have spoken of in all previous Progress Reports. What has changed after the much publicised Baseline making/implementing exercise is that many *Ryots* now prefer to approach the CSUs in order to settle village issues. Not due to an obvious socio-political presence in the taluk, but because of the transparent objectivity with which problems are now tackled.

- During a recent festival at Eereddipalli, there was a huge fight. The entire village had decided to slaughter a boar and share its meat. One of our Coolie Sangha Members went late and got only the left over pieces. He was furious and caused a rumpus which led to a serious fisticuff. Instead of going to the Police Station at Gudibanda town, the *Ryots* decided to speak to our Field Worker. Our Member was found to be in the wrong and matter was immediately settled.

But it was not easy for Field Worker Gangappa. In the heat of the battle, as it were, Members tell lies, blaming it all squarely on the *Ryots*. Moreover, it is difficult not to be partial towards our own people when, for all these years, we have blindly been supporting a caste-class in order for them to obtain an overall strength and presence in village society.

9.5. Casteless CSUs?

A constant refrain in CSU Meetings is that the Coolie Sangha is a broader unification of the poor across parochial caste lines. Is this really true? Gudibanda Staff tried to find an answer using Dr. Ambedkar's axiom as to whether the eating and marrying habits of people had changed.

- There are numerous instances of joint CSU and Mahila Meetings preventing parents from marrying off their under-age daughters. Even forced marriages have all but stopped – very many girls have been supported to not marry young men who they actively disliked.

But this has not led to any increase in choice marriages.

- Gudibanda taluk has the same number of young people who belong to different castes and fall in love, as any other part of the world. But they are afraid to take the next step and enter into wedlock because of fears of losing property, family support, etc. The past 5½ years has not seen a single inter-caste choice marriage.

The blame for this has to squarely be placed on the shoulders of adults who constantly claim that the Coolie Sangha is caste-free, but refuse to let their young people really believe in the boast. What has really changed in villages with CSUs is a geographic definition of parochialism.

- Earlier when there was trouble in the Harijana quarters, for example, Coolies and *Ryots* from the caste village would turn a deaf ear. And *vice-versa*. This has changed. Whenever there is any commotion in the village, CSU Members rush out to see if one of theirs is in any trouble.
Parochialism still exists, but it's boundaries have changed to include a multitude of castes and communities.

9.6. Village Level Worker (VLW) Withdrawal

Field Worker C. Babu feels that 4 of his 27 VLWs cannot be trusted to even remain as ordinary Members after they get withdrawn in another 6 months. Of the remaining, 17 are fit to be good and capable CSU Representatives who can take their respective villages further down the Coolie Sangha building road. The remaining 6 are so perfunctory that the CSUs may not even notice the fact of their withdrawal.

Field Worker Gangappa merely says that 6 of his 33 VLWs are bad. He has no great expectations from the remaining 27.

- Due to the severe drought and problems of migration, DLDP works were taken up for the very first time in Gudibanda taluk. Many VLWs went about in a bossy manner saying that it was their job was to keep proper attendance registers, etc. After a few weeks the CSU Representatives rebelled saying:
"It takes just a few minutes for you to tick the attendance register. For the rest of the time you too can work hard in clearing boulders and carrying head loads just like us. There is no need for you to wander from one batch to another like some overseer. We Representatives are quite capable of supervising our own batch performance. Moreover, it is in the land owner's interest to make sure that quality work is done – not yours!"

9.7. Women Functionaries

When making their respective Baseline surveys, Village Health Workers noticed that domestic violence was not fully reported. They reported this to their Mahila Trainers, who told them that if a woman did not have the courage to even speak about her problem in the Mahila Meeting, she would surely not be able to follow up on any action plan to solve her problem. They were made to understand that, just as a general empowerment of the Coolie caste-class had was an absolute pre-requisite for undertaking community based development activities, an overall gender focus was a vital precondition to address specific problems of individual Coolie women.

- When the monthly GCS Meetings first began, about 2 years back, women CSU Representatives and VHWs had to be chaperoned. It is not fair to only blame their husbands. Very often it was the women themselves who were scared to travel alone to the Taluk headquarters.
Today there is embarrassed laughter, bordering on disbelief at their earlier stupidity, when this is ever mentioned.

Unlike in the other taluks, most Gudibanda VHWs have continued undisturbed for the past 5½ years without being constantly changed for frivolous reasons. As a result they have acquired appreciable community health skills.

- All school going children continue to receive their annual health check-up and follow up treatment.
- There has been a marked reduction in the number of delivery cases that need emergency attention in a government hospital.

- 2 Cancer Detection Camps were held with clockwork precision in Gudibanda town. When there was some local disturbance in that town, the 3rd was held in Bagepalli town. Follow up is immaculate. Patients diagnosed in the 3rd stage have been taken to Bangalore.

But the flip side to this is that, unlike in the other taluks, the Gudibanda VHWs are not strong in empowerment skills, and they do lack conceptual clarity on gender and feminism.

9.8. CCFs

The tendency to grant bulk sanctions of CCF loans is slowly changing. It is now being regarded as an instrument to gradually instil economic wherewithal in a people, and not a temporary scheme to be quickly milked dry.

- Some months back, there was a horrible bus accident where 3 Member Coolies from Lakkepalli and Korepalli villages were killed and more than 40 injured. Nearby Clusters swung into action to help the wounded, transport them to hospital, arrange for hospital bills to be reduced, etc. Lakkepalli CSU used this as an excuse to allow their CCF Overdue to climb. In Korepalli, (mostly women) borrowers paid back their CCF dues on time, wondering why the tragic accident had to be used as an excuse to default on their loans. Moreover, when Korepalli rotated their CCF they refused to give loans to any of the accident victims, saying that they were in no position to concentrate on their businesses.
- When making their Summer Agenda, a Member Coolie from Korepalli said that he wanted community support to re-start his pork shop. This was successfully implemented in spite of severe opposition from jealous *Ryots*. When rotating their CCF, ADATS Staff suggested that this person be assisted to expand his business. He refused, saying that he was not quite ready for any expansion.

9.9. Sangha Funds

All the Gudibanda CSUs will enter into the Sangha Tax regime from January 2003. From then onward it will be the annual declaration of income and the paying of a fixed rate of tax which will determine CSU membership. Much discussion is focussed on this momentous event.

- We have to see Sangha Tax as the only instrument which will give life to the CSUs for “*the next 100 Years!*”. Otherwise all this will turn out to be so temporary. As Bagepalli taluk has shown us, it is not so important to make detailed calculations as to how much money we will need in order to run our own children’s programme or continue with health activities. It is the culture of honestly declaring incomes and consciously choosing to stay within the discipline of the Coolie Sangha by paying Tax every year that is important.