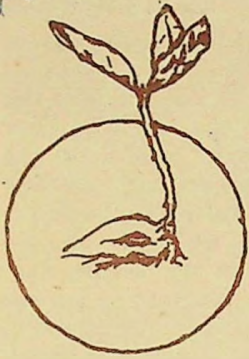


COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL
326, V Main, 1 Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034
India

30 OCT 1992



Janashakti

(for private circulation only)

july 1992

vol.2.No.3

Kulavalli Land Issue

Kulavalli is a cluster of nine villages in Bailahongal taluk, Kittur, Karnataka. It has a population of about 1800 and covers over 9900 acres of land. Of this only around 490 acres of land is cultivable and around 6700 acres of land comes under forests.

This was an "inam" village granted to one Sri Lingangouda bin Iranagouda of Khodanpur. Kittur, of course, is a well known place in the annals of Indian history. Among the rulers who governed Kittur, Rani Chennamma stands out as a heroine who withstood the British invasion. It is said, if not for the betrayal by the insiders, the Britishers could not defeat her as it has been the case of many of the rulers of India. Sangolli Rayanna was a close associate of Kittur Chennamma. He was captured by the Britishers with the help of treachery. The one who betrayed Sangolli Rayanna and helped the British to capture him was bestowed with this land. Such gifts were known as "inam" and the recipient of the gift is known as Inamdar.

The inam has been abolished under the provisions of the Bombay Personal Inams Abolition Act 1952 which came into force on 01.08.1953. In 1961 Karnataka government brought into effect the Land Reforms Act. Under this Act, many tenants approached the land tribunal for grant of occupancy

rights under section 48A of the Land Reforms Act. Some were given occupancy rights while majority of the applications were rejected on the ground that the land is forest land, since the government had transferred an area of 7965 acres of land to the Forest Department by a notification in 1955. This was contested in the court of law. One Mr. R.K. Desai along with five others managed to get the judgement in their favour from the Divisional Bench on 10.07.1988. The judgement though recognised that the management of vegetation vests with the Forest Department, the ownership of land is not changed due to the notification.

A large junk of the land has been leased out to West Coast Paper Mills for the cultivation of Eucalyptus trees and other land has been distributed to various tenants.

Leasing of these lands not only violates the provisions of the Karnataka Land Reforms Act 1961, but it also violates the directions contained in the Notifications under sec.35(1) of the Indian Forest Act 1927. Secondly

the said lands are utilised for purposes other than the forest, which itself is a violation of the restrictions imposed on such lands. Large areas are cleared for cultivation. The villagers pay rent to the Inamdars in lieu of the cultivation. Even though the tenancy has been prohibited under Karnataka Land Reforms Act, a large number of farmers of this village are cultivating the lands as tenants. These tenants are changed every two or three years to desist them from staking any claim on the lands filled by them.

The end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991 proved to be a remarkable period in the life and activities of Fedina's programme at Kittur. Federation of Voluntary Organisations for Rural Development in Karnataka (Fevord-K) had negotiated with the Forest Department in involving local people in developing degraded forests. The Forest Department, though hesitant initially, agreed in principle, to experiment in certain

contents

Rto and after	3
Participatory Planning	5
News Corner	7

10/10/92
3/8/92
GCU

areas, specially where voluntary organisations for rural development were active amidst people. They were requested to interact with the Taluk/District level Forest Departments and find out areas where degraded forests exist, and involve people in their development.

The team at Kittur, after much discussion, decided to explore the possibilities of initiating this programme and involve the villagers in the development of degraded forests. Dr.Gopal Dabade, the team leader at Kittur, met the Range Forest Officer (RFO) and informed him of the intention of the team and requested collaboration of the forest department to identify the degraded lands. To in-

lagers from Kulawalli who were proceeding to Kittur to sell the firewood in order to purchase other commodities that are required for their survival. It was their livelihood. Of all the days, this day happened to be different. The Forest Beat stopped them, seized their cycles and informed that Dr.Gopal Dabade has lodged a complaint against them of illegally cutting trees and selling firewood etc. No amount of pleading worked. They had to return home without their cycles. Gangadhar, one of the team member came to know about this incident as he was residing in that village.

On the following Sunday, the team took this matter up for discussion in

The Inamdar had his vested interests at stake for various reasons mentioned earlier. Added to that, the lease that he had entered into with West Coast Paper Mills would come to an end in 1992. If there are some problems by the people and if they would become aware of the whole situation, he would be at the losing end. Hence, he was interested to get into the situation and get full control of the issue so that he could have smooth sailing and keep the "conscientizers" away.

Before getting the information from Gangadhar, Gopal had met the Forest Beat to find out the details from him. The forest Beat presented a different picture then and even promised that he would clear any misunderstanding people have concerning Gopal. After receiving the information, Gopal once again met the Beat and took him to Kulawalli. The people had gathered, Inamdar too was present and the heated discussion began. Meanwhile the Inamdar had sent a taxi to Kittur and brought a police constable to be part of the meeting. The Inamdar, with the help of his "goondas" had also brought the people of Machi to this meeting. He had served large amount of liquor to the people of Kulawalli and most of them were drunk. Hence, no explanation from Gopal or from his colleagues was of any use as the people were not in a position to understand but only demand. The Forest Beat made no attempt to tell the people that there was no complaint lodged by Gopal, rather he began to dance to the tune of the Inamdar. The whole days discussion was fruitless and ineffective. Finally they all made Gopal agree to pay to Inamdar Rs.1000/- as compensation and ransom to redeem the cycles. The Inamdar took the money and promised to consider this amount as community money and would be spending it towards the repairs of the village temple.

The trouble was not over. The next day, the Forest Beat and the constable turned up at Gopal's residence and demanded money for the help they rendered to settle the matter. If not



will they ever get this land ?

roduce the team and himself, Gopal gave him a copy of the annual report of 1989-90 in which the various activities of our programme were detailed.

This report also contained details about the local issues, specially concerning land and forests, about illegal felling of trees and its transportation with the connivance of local landlords, politicians and forest officials.

A couple of days passed. On the morning of 28th December, the Forest Beat caught hold of nearly ten vil-

lagers from Kulawalli who were proceeding to Kittur to sell the firewood in order to purchase other commodities that are required for their survival. It was their livelihood. Of all the days, this day happened to be different. The Forest Beat stopped them, seized their cycles and informed that Dr.Gopal Dabade has lodged a complaint against them of illegally cutting trees and selling firewood etc. No amount of pleading worked. They had to return home without their cycles. Gangadhar, one of the team member came to know about this incident as he was residing in that village.

On the following Sunday, the team took this matter up for discussion in

their weekly meeting. They, after discussion, came to a conclusion that it could be a routine matter of checking and that there may not be any need of the team getting into it. Gangadhar returned to the village after the team meeting. In the village the Inamdar met him and informed that he has called a meeting of the villagers the next day and he would like Gangadhar to participate in the meeting. Gangadhar sensing some trouble sent word for Gopal and also requested Gopal to bring the Forest Beat along with him for the meeting.

for them, they claimed, that Gopal would have been made to pay a higher amount and even would be beaten up. They strongly believed that it is they who pacified the people and hence they should be well rewarded and efforts compensated. Finally they made Gopal to part with Rs.300/-.

On the other hand, the Inamdar saw the threat he would be facing soon if he left things this way. He along with one Mr. Prakash Marihal, a local leader and a relative of a Jilla Parishad member, met the people of Kulawalli and demanded to accept the following conditions:

- i. Mahila Sangha of Machi should be terminated
- ii. Non-formal and literacy classes must be stopped
- iii. Kisan Nursery must be wound up and
- iv. Gopal and his team members should not be permitted to enter the village.

They also promised that they would get the amount from Forest Officers which was sanctioned for growing Kisan Nursery. They almost forced the villagers to go along with them to Bailahongala, the taluk headquarters, and meet the forest officials. The RFO, of course, flatly declined to advance any money towards Kisan Nursery as he had to follow certain norms. Hence the people were asked to go back, but the people did not return till they were paid some money towards travel and food by the Inamdar.

The growth of Mahila Sangha, non-formal education, saving scheme among the women, demand for receipt by the villagers for the rent paid etc., were all irritating factors for the Inamdar and he wanted all this to be stopped immediately. The Inamdar had connections in the forest department and somehow or the other he came to know the details presented in the annual report submitted to the forest department. Hence, he played

Editorial

RIO AND AFTER

RIO DE JANEIRO hit the headlines of the global media during the latter part of May and the first half of June. The "Earth Summit" for the first time in the history of the world, held at Rio, witnessed the biggest "mela" of political leaders and heads of States to express their concern towards the well-being of this planet called EARTH. The declarations were watered down to suit the interests of the dominant nations of the world. The Bio Diversity Convention was the bone of contention. The world powers threatened not to sign the document unless it favored their interests. There is a general feeling that this document has given in to the issue of intellectual property and patents.

India showed keen interest in the Earth Summit and even in signing the declarations. The political leadership vowed to do everything to preserve this Earth environmentally sound and safe for the future generations to live.

On the other hand, it wasn't really a summit of those concerned. The Multinational Corporations, World Bank and others dominated the show and even controlled it. One wonders what they were really interested in! The really concerned people from all over the world were at a parallel gathering some 40 km away from Rio Center.

It would be interesting to reflect on the following issues regarding this great event which was the first of its kind: i) The interest the world media showed on this issue before and during the event has suddenly waned away, and as usual they have focused on other interesting events like Wimbledon and soon it will be on Barcelona. Rio has become a part of history, a event to be recorded and forgotten.

ii) Back home, the statement made by our leaders at Rio were very encouraging, but the reality is disappointing and frustrating. The very same people who made tall promises are unwilling to have a second thought on the things they planned. For them development is the other word for Exploitation. This also rather clear from the delegation our leaders permitted to go to Rio from the NGO sector.

The need of the hour is to become aware of this issue and the implications involved. Identify and make people alert of the ecological degradation and our lopsided developmental policies. It is necessary to inform all and sundry about what lies behind the International Aid and how it subsidizes the multinational corporations. Let us keep our eyes and ears open to the havocs to be caused from "Environmental Aid" that is to flow in.

the game to subvert the work of the team by playing different games and creating problems.

Added to this, in Kulawalli and Machi villages, the issue of giving land on lease was often discussed. People were becoming aware of the land issue, Karnataka Land Reforms Act and also about the abolition of Inamdari system etc. On the other hand there were moves to get hold of the degraded forest lands in order to develop it not so much to provide raw material to the Industry but to provide the necessary forest based things to the villagers. All these made the people who had vested interests to play their cards on time and they were quite earnest to bring a halt on all the non-formal education, saving schemes and specially the women's organisation.

Appeals were made to Jilla Parishad to distribute the land, but as the people were well aware, all these went unheard as the close relatives of Jilla Parishad members were involved in the illegal felling of trees etc. During these moments of frustration, overwhelming support came from the neighbouring voluntary organisations and also from FEVORD-K. The President of FEVORD-K personally visited the area along with the members of Samaja Parivarthana Samudhaya, a voluntary organisation based in Dharwad, which mainly takes up issues pertaining to environment, forests and land. They met the Deputy Commissioner of Belgaum and briefed him about the situation. The group also visited Machi, Galaginamada and Ningapur.

The villagers of Ningapur and Galaginamada promised full support to the villagers of Machi and specially to the Machi Mahila Sangha. The people from these villages visited Machi on the next day to express their support and solidarity. The PSI of Kittur, one Mr.M.A.Amarapur along with his constables also visited Machi and Kulawalli. A meeting was convened and the villagers saw through the game played by the Forest Beat, along with the Inamdar and others.

At Machi, the PSI handed over Rs.300/- to Machi Mahila Sangha to replace the tiles of the shed where the women had started a handloom. This amount was donated by Mr.Sadananda Kunavalli, a well wisher of the team. He had close links with the PSI as he had taught the PSI during the latter's schooling. Though the DC of Belgaum had promised to visit the villages, he failed to fulfill his promise.

The whole incident shows that the land is the main issue. In this area the Inamdari system still exists. It requires a thorough study of the issue.

SPS has come forward to study the issue. FEVORD-K has taken it up in its Consultative Committee meeting and wrote officially to the persons concerned in the Government Departments. The Government has promised to look into this matter and the Development Commissioner taking a serious note of this issue, has written to the persons concerned in Belgaum, Bailahongala and Kittur. From the office, the co-ordinator of FEDINA, wrote an official letter to

all the persons concerned both in Bangalore as well as in Kittur, Bailahongala and Belgaum. All these have become effective. The AC visited the area and gave necessary access to land documents to study the whole issue and instructed his subordinates to co-operate with voluntary organisations in the study of the land issues in Kulawalli and surrounding areas. The Tahsildar of Bailahongala has clearly stated that there is a genuine case which should be taken up for public litigation.

The Asst.Tahsildar has visited the villages and conducted a survey of the land and with the help of our staff the villagers have filed applications for land rights and land records. All this has been done. Now an action plan has been drawn up to tackle this issue from state level as well as from the village level. Opinion has been mobilised and attempt has been made to document this process. This also made the villagers aware of the whole process and the working of the various government officers, as they had to meet them for various reasons. The people are confident that they will own the land that they till today. There is a general feeling that justice is on their side.

The elders told us almost 500 years ago that there is going to come a time when you will not be able to drink the water. That water would become the enemy. That our great elder brother, the sun, from whom all life comes, will burn and smoke. That the thundering voices of the grandfathers that bring the rain will begin to kill the trees as it happens with acid rain,

We were taught that every chief must have skin seven spans thick to withstand the barbs and arrows mostly from his own people. And not to counsel for oneself, our family or our generation. But every decision should reflect on the welfare of the seventh generation from now. The time has come for such leadership"

Indian chief: Oaren Lyons at Rio Earth Summit 1992
Quoted in India Today

Participatory Planning-Action Process

One of our long cherished dreams at Chengam was to start a Health Center on top of the hill, due to the utter lack of modern health care in the project area. Moreover, since we have to walk about 15 to 20 kms to the top of the hill the lack of a place to keep even our personal belongings in our project area was keenly felt. As a practical and resource conservation measure, we wanted to construct a small room for our belongings alongside the Health Center.

Due to several reasons, which in hindsight seem quite trivial, we did not initiate the process of concretizing this until our monthly meeting in May. Till then this remained in the 'concept and ideas' plane. At this particular meeting however, a discussion was launched into the needs and future direction of our work, during one of our training sessions conducted by our Bangalore office staff.

Our initial approach was to ask for a monetary grant to finance the construction. But he led us onto a deeper search as to our perception that this was the vital requirement of the people. This broadened the scope of the discussion and it was soon obvious that the tribals did have their own health system which was an integrated part of their life system. Moreover, a tribal physician was also administering adequate medical aid to the people when required specially for snake venom and other poisons free of cost. Thus it became obvious that though in our perception a health center was a vital necessity, it was not as important as we thought it was. But it was realized that though indigenous medicine was effective for the majority of the ailments,

it was inadequate in areas in which modern allopathic medicine could give succor to the people. In recognition of this a First Aid Center was proposed.

Another necessity that the discussion threw up was the fact that there was no facility available for training or organizing. Most of the facilities that were used so far were makeshift and thus impeded any organized mobilization or training effort for the people. Once this was brought to the attention of the group it was felt that more attention should be paid to this aspect of the problem. It was decided to construct a room adjoining the FAC for training.



The Training Center

We then turned our attention to the means for getting the work done. All arguments as to the necessity for aid was persuasively turned down by Promod who pointed out that unless the group and the tribals took active part in the construction and make some contribution towards the actual construction, the center would never be totally accepted by the people. Moreover he pointed out that this could be an ideal test of the peoples receptivity to our programs and could be a gauge of the success of our past conscientization and mobilization

programs in the area. This was taken up as a challenge. We were to be ready for the inauguration in three months, by Independence day — August 15th, 1991.

To our great surprise and pleasure, land was donated by the villagers of Perumuttam. Since Murugesan, one of our staff, was from the same village, it was felt that he could coordinate the help that was volunteered by the village. Work started with great enthusiasm and went on in full swing with the active participation of our staff and the villagers. But this initial spurt of enthusiasm was soon dampened by the hostility and opposition of some tribals from other villages.

We soon managed to convince them of our aims and that the facility was for them also. Then came the opposition of the forest officers who felt threatened by the peoples' initiative. The unity of the people who had put in a lot of work and were by now firmly committed to their project proved to be a deterrent to any mischief that might have been planned. Thus the decision to involve the people gave us unexpected

dividends in the construction phase itself.

One issue that stands out in this process convincingly demonstrates the impact that our programs had on the people and the identification of the people with the center. The foresters are a terror to the people. In order to stop the work and due to the fear that the peoples unity caused to them, one of the foresters physically assaulted the carpenter and threatened to foist false charges of sandal wood smuggling on him. The area coor-

dinator Mr. Magimaidass was out of station that day. Ms Ambika, one of our staff, boldly confronted the forest official and got him to apologize. The people were also emboldened to openly come out in support of our action. This open opposition to the forest officials is unprecedented.

Apart from our contribution of skills, our only outlay was the hospitality extended to the other workers. The land, material and labor was contributed, at very nominal rates, by the people themselves. This has enervated the people, and has shown them a concrete manifestation of the **People Power** that we had so often told them about but which had always remained something intangible and abstract for them. For us too, in the group, it was gratifying to see a concrete manifestation of our efforts at awareness building and mass mobilization. The self-confidence of the people, and the self assurance that they had even in face of the opposition of the forest officers — whom they used to dread — made all the effort worthwhile.

The center, which started off as just a one room training center is now a complex with a hall and a kitchen totaling about 600 sq. feet surrounded by fruit trees, plants, vegetables, a place set apart for organic farming and bee keeping on one half acre. It was inaugurated on the 18th of Dec 1991. The enthusiastic tribals fenced the whole area and laid out volley and ring ball courts.

This is, of course, not the end of the process. Indeed, there are enough indications — we already have firm offers of land and labor donated free for a school — to convince us that this is only the beginning of a very successful process that can be duplicated in other areas with a little effort.

The dynamism that is unleashed in these processes of peoples participation is truly tremendous. They are liberated from a feeling of being pawns in the hands of fate and finally — and for most, the first time — to be in control of some part of a constructive endeavor. They become active agents of their own liberation.

FEDINA NEWS CORNER

BANGALORE

Fedina get-together

The long awaited get-together of the Fedina family took place at Shubada, Mangalore, from July 23rd to 25th. Nearly 60 staff members from our various project areas were present at this get-together. As in previous years this year too we availed this oppor-



freedom of expression !!!

tunity to equip ourselves with the current issues such as the new economic policy and its impact on the society, liberalisation, etc., These sessions in no way marred the fun and fellowship we usually have when the whole fedina family come together.

P R A:

The co-ordinator of Fedina presented a paper on Participatory Rural Appraisal (P.R.A) and its relevance for NGO's. The staff of ICRA, FEDINA and Pipal Tree were present at the occasion. He briefed us about the basics of PRA and how to conduct this. In the ensuing group discussion it was found that PRA worked best in homogenous communities.

SARJAPURA

World Health Day:

On April 20th, World Health Day was celebrated at Ramanaikanahally at Sarjapura. Health education classes and other conscientisation programmes were part of the celebration. The doctor and his team from Dommasandra Primary Health Centre conducted medical check up and gave medicines to those who were sick.

Environment Day:

World Environment Day was commemorated at Baipanahalli with various functions. Seedlings were distributed to all those who took part in the meeting. Cultural programmes which highlighted the importance of a healthy environment were enacted to convey the message of environment day.

H. D. KOTE

Tribal Arts Festival:

For the first time an art festival of tribals was conducted at Tumkur Government College from May 27th

to 31st. Tribal artists from H.D. Kote, Hunsur, B.R. Hills, Kanakapura and Kodagu areas took part in this festival. The twenty member delegation of B.K.S. was led by their leaders Somanna, Rajanna and Manjunath.

cholera and the deaths, some tribals have left the hadi and moved to other places. B.K.S. representatives visited the colony and provided medicines and other help to those who were still there.



experimenting collective farming

Traditional art works of tribal communities of Yeravas, Soligas, Betakurubas and Koragas were presented at the festival.

Minister of Forest visits Adivasi colony:

Mr. E.T. Shambhunath, Minister of Forest, visited Damanakate colony in H.D. Kote on April 11th. Smt. Chandrabhabha Urs, M.P. from Hunsur, also had accompanied the Minister. The purpose of the visit was to study the situation of the tribals and to hear their grievances. Nearly 1000 tribals had come to meet the Minister and to brief him about the problems they are facing. Mr. Shambhunath has assured the people that he will look into the matter and efforts will be made to solve their problems in the near future.

Cholera claims five lives:

At Kanthanahadi, near Sargur, five tribals died of cholera in the month of May. Following the attack of

CHENGAM

From darkness to light:

The people of Melthattiapattu village in Jawadu Hills who were deprived of electricity for the past 14 years have once again managed to have bulbs burning in their homes, thanks to the constant struggle they had with the Electricity Board Authorities. The village was electrified as early as 1977 and for about one year the villagers had a good time looking at their children studying under electric lamps. However, things changed much within a year and they were in the list of electrified villages of the government. The electric lines and posts stand testimony to it sans electric power.

From the first day Fedina-Scope started working in Jawadu Hills, we were fighting with the authorities to get this facility back. The 14 year long curse was lifted thanks to the pressure from the people and our staff at Chen-

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
326, V Main, 1 Block
Koramangala
Bangalore-560034
India

NILGIRIS

Re-organisation:

In an effort to improve the functioning of Fedina at Nilgiris, the project area is now divided into three areas. The areas are: Ambalamoola, Kottad and Bitherkad. Each area has a community development worker to organise the programmes.

Training programme:

For the colony committee representatives of Nilgiris, a three day training programme was conducted at Sulthan Bathery. During the three days of training Luckose Jacob, K.K. George, E.T. Raju, Philipose V. and P.C. Jose took classes on various topics. Ms. Bella Rosario of Oxfam also addressed the participants.

New centres:

Ten more new centres have been identified at Nilgiris and work has already begun. A total of forty tribal hadis are now covered by our programme. Literacy classes are conducted at the new centres as an entry point.

WAYANAD

South Indian Meeting:

Delegates from different Adivasi groups working and living in different places in South India (Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh) met for the first time at Attappadi near Palghat from 21st to 25th June 1992. The meeting, first of its kind in South India, discussed the problems faced by the tribals especially South Indian tribals.

They have decided to have an All India Adivasi Meeting in Wayanad in October 1992. Wayanad AAS representatives Kumar Vazhavatta, Balan V.P., Shankaran Kalloor, Kutian Puttussery and Adivasi Development Committee representatives C.K. Jan,



social forestry: a long way to go

Thanka, Narayanan, Jayan and Balan attended the Attappady convention.

Women's seminar:

Women's seminars were conducted in Kuppady and Vengoor centre of Bathery area. The role of Adivasi women in the development of an indigenous society was discussed in detail during the seminars. Agnes Lukose, Leelamma Thomas, C.K.James and Shantha moderated and gave guidance to the seminar.

Community hall at Vaduvanchal:

A community hall has been built for Vaduvanchal area at Valassery centre. The hall will be a multipurpose one as it will function as area office also. Made by the voluntary pooling of human resources by the AAS members, the building is testimony to the growing co-operation and togetherness among indigenous people of Wayanad. On June 19th, the AAS president Kuman Valamvayal inaugurated the hall in the presence of hundreds of Adivasis. Lukose Jacob,

Babu V.P, Mani Kottoor, Babu Valassery, Kesavan, Onan, K.G.Balakrishnan and E.T.Raju gave felicitations.

Plantations destroyed:

Yet another environmental hazard. In the earlier days Wayanad was famous

for its forests and beauty. Stripped of its original nature and greenery, Wayanad is too fragile now to resist the unlimited power unleashed especially when nature becomes ferocious at times like monsoon. Vazhavatta Vanitha Committee's prestigious co-operative plantain cultivation was completely destroyed by the floods. Adivasi Aikya Samithi and Fedina representatives visited the flood affected places and met for contingency relief plans. Elsewhere in the district monsoon landslides and flash floods claimed fifteen lives. Apart from huge losses to the cultivation, the flood has caused severe hardship to the people. Our team at Wayanad is in full swing to cope up with the situation.

KITTUR

The coordinator along with Vasu from Bangalore office visited Kittur and had meetings with our staff there. An evaluation of the previous year's activities and chalking out future programmes at Kittur were the main highlights of the meeting. This visit has given a moral boost for the team at Kittur.



Attempts to Restore Nature to its glory