Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Program 2009-2012

PROGRESS REPORT
01.04.2010 TO 30.09.2010

Submitted to:
ICCO, Netherlands, Project No.: 03-02-00-678
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## INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. NO.</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE NOS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FROM     TO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DIRECTOR’S REPORT</td>
<td>4         11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>OUTCOME &amp; IMPACT</td>
<td>12        22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>22        32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>32        34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CHANGES IN DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS</td>
<td>34        37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE WORK</td>
<td>37        38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CASE STUDIES</td>
<td>39        43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ANNEXURES</td>
<td>44        62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLNo.</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AF-EC</td>
<td>Accion Fraterna, Ecology Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Agriculture Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>APREGS</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>APMAS</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivrudhi Samakhya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Area Team Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BIFRSA</td>
<td>Bio-intensive Farming System in Rainfed Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Cluster Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Civic Driven Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Clean Development Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Centre for Environment Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>CER</td>
<td>Certified Emission Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>CLDP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Land Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Common Property Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>DFO</td>
<td>District Forest Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>DWMA</td>
<td>District Water Management Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>DRDA</td>
<td>District Rural Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Field Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>FCN</td>
<td>Fair Climate Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>FES</td>
<td>Foundation for Ecological Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>Grama Sasyamithra Samakhya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>Intensive Bio-mass Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ICRISAT</td>
<td>International Crop Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>IFS</td>
<td>Integrated Farming System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>IKP</td>
<td>Indira Kanthi Pathakam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>ITES</td>
<td>Information Technology Enabled Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>IWMP</td>
<td>Integrated Water Management Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>LCF</td>
<td>Low Carbon Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Field Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>LEISA</td>
<td>Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>LMD</td>
<td>Local Market Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>MGNREGS</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>MPDO</td>
<td>Mandal Parishad Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>MRO</td>
<td>Mandal Revenue Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>NABARD</td>
<td>National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>Non-pesticide Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>NADEP</td>
<td>NArayan DEvrao Pandary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>PDD</td>
<td>Project Design Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>Public Distribution System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>PME</td>
<td>Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>PPME</td>
<td>Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>RDT</td>
<td>Rural Development Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>ToT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Scheduled Caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>SHG</td>
<td>Self Help Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>SMG</td>
<td>Sasya Mitra Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>System of Rice Intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>Soil and Moisture Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>STO</td>
<td>Socio-Technical Organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Frame Work Convention on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>Village Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>WDC</td>
<td>Watershed Development Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Information

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Author of the Report : Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy
1. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

1.1 General situation of Anantapur

1.1.1 Implementation of MGNREGP in AF’s program area

The year 2010-11 began well for the farm laborers. They accessed adequate employment in their own villages under MGNREGP, during the reporting period. Because of the huge impact of last year’s severe drought even the medium and some of the big Rainfed farmers were also forced to seek employment under MGNREGP. In AF’s 230 program villages, totally 39,454 laborers (25,136 men and 14,318 women) from about 34,000 families availed 1,150,291 person days of employment during the reporting period. On an average each family could avail about 34 days of employment at an average wage rate of Rs.94 per day and earned about Rs.3,200 during the reporting period.

AF organized awareness campaigns for educated labor youth on how to access their rights under MGNREGP. They were trained on the control of corruption in the program, verifying the muster rolls, daily attendance, measuring the quantity of work done, unit rates for various works etc. Now most of them are able to confront the local govt. functionaries on the bottlenecks in program implementation. AF and Govt. of AP have an MoU for cooperation under which, AF is invited for all mandal level review meetings of MGNREGP, wherein details of works done, labor worked and payments are made available to AF for wider dissemination. This has created more transparency and accountability among the Govt. field functionaries.

1.1.2 A promising Kharif for groundnut ends in a Green Drought!

2010 Kharif season began promisingly for the farmers of Anantapur. There were good rains in the month of June and most of the farmers started sowings enthusiastically. Following are the particulars of Rain fall distribution in AF’s program area during the present Kharif season:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rainfall Particulars</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<td>Normal average in mm</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>118.0</td>
<td>338.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual received in mm</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>107.8</td>
<td>149.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>403.7</td>
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The above data shows that, in the months of June, July and August the rain fall received is more than normal and in September it is less than normal. Generally, more than normal rainfall in the month of August is very unusual.

The total rainfed cultivable area, belonging to 46,128 farmers, in AF’s 230 Program villages is 356,440 Acs. Of this rainfed cultivable area:

- Groundnut was sown in 295,960 Acs (About 83% of the total rainfed cultivable area), belonging to 35,968 farmers. 139,990 Acs (about 47% of the groundnut area) was sown early because of good rains in June. The remaining 155,970 Acs (about 53% of the groundnut area) was sown in the month of July.
• Food crops like Jowar, Bajra, Red gram, Green gram, Sun flower, Korra etc and Castor were sown in about 28,900 Acs (About 8% of the total rainfed cultivable area), belonging to 6,918 farmers.

• 32,480 Acs of Black soil area (About 9% of the total Rain fed cultivable area), belonging to 3,242 farmers, will be sown with Bengal gram during late October.

The expected yields from the above crops are as under:

• The status of groundnut crop sown in the month of June is promising and the farmers are expecting a normal yield this year.

• The status of crop sown in July is not so good. The yields are expected to drop by about 45-50%, leading to a Green Drought for more than half of the rain fed farmers.

• About 50–60% yields are expected in Jowar, Bajra, Red gram and Korra.

• About 40–50% yields are expected in sunflower and castor.

• The Seed Banks have provided useful service to the farmers. They did a good job by identifying the farmers preferences, procuring seed of both groundnut and other food crops from various sources and supplying quality seed to the farmers, in time.

• They have also played a crucial role in mobilizing the seed from Govt. under its contingency plan.

1.2 Turbulence in AF:

(Please also refer to AF’s report in this regard sent in September 2010)

1.2.1 An Unexpected Turbulance

It was all very normal in AF until some rumours of misappropriation of some program funds from Settur area started trickled in, during the last week of June’ 2010. Some rumors came to notice that in two Clusters (10 villages) of Settur Area, payments about Rs.50,000/- were made for Vermi & NADEP Compost units in March 2010 without actually constructing them. Immediately, two teams comprising of senior ATLs and PME staff were constituted by the Director to physically verify the units and report the status. They established prima facie evidence that irregularities like; (a) Making false payments, (b) Poor construction quality, (c) Violation of payment procedures and (d) Trying to protect the guilty, had been committed by the staff.

1.2.2 The Actions Initiated: 100% physical verification of the NADEP & Vermi Compost units.

Based on the above, the Chairperson, the Director and the Board of Trustees reviewed the situation and suspended all the 6 involved staff with immediate effect. Then the Board of trustees constituted a 2-member Physical Verification Team comprising of the Head- PME and a senior Agriculture Officer, which conducted the physical verification of the units in the presence of the suspended staff and submitted its report on 26th Aug’2010. Following are the conclusions from the report:
There is misappropriation of program funds to a tune of about Rs.48,000.

Program funds were handled indiscriminately by the staff accused in both the clusters.

The middle level management staff, AO and ATL, not only failed miserably in performing their duties but also been hand-in-glove. They have committed a grave breach of trust and willfully resorted to misappropriation.

This shameful episode, compelled AF to go for a total self-evaluation of the activities and self-cleansing process to uphold its virtues of honesty and financial integrity. So, not caring for either the precious time lost or the consequences, AF decided to go for 100% physical verification of all Vermi & NADEP compost units and conduct an internal audit of all Seed Banks established since 2008-09 covering all its 230 program villages. Eight 2-member teams (one senior and one grass-root level staff) were constituted and physical verification process began across the program area. AF also designated a senior member of PME Team to conduct an internal audit of Seed Banks. He started the internal audit of Seed Banks to look into their financial status.

1.2.3 The very decision to take up internal audit of Seed Bank brought out voluntarily confessions of some misdeeds in Kudair Area.

The decision to audit the financial status of all the Seed Banks induced some “Confessions” of “handling and keeping” some cash with staff in Kudair Area. Kudair area staff shuddered with panic, as all its 14 staff members were either directly involved or were spectators in a vicious intranet of illegal handling of project funds granted to Seed Banks during 2006-09 phase. Once the internal audit began, the panic-driven Kudair area staff, 13 of them except the ATL came to the Head Office and confessed in writing that about ₹ 2.58 lakhs of Seed Bank money, unauthorised was with the ATL for more than a year. This fact was highly shocking, disturbing and shattering! They blamed the ATL for illegally holding project funds with himself. However they also confessed that some of them had personally borrowed money from the ATL, knowing fully well that it is Seed Bank money. Moreover, all of them have reported during 2009 kharif seasons as if everything had functioned normal with the Seed Banks, which shows their involvement in this malpractice!

1.2.4 Harsh Decisions taken by AF

AF had always shown zero tolerance for any financial misconduct. But this kind of involvement of so many staff at a time was unprecedented and a challenge to handle, as it created a turbulence in the organization. Totally 22 staff members were involved either directly or indirectly these malpractice! Then AF’s Board of Trustees reviewed and felt strongly that no tolerance should be shown towards financial misconduct and all the 22 staff should be dealt with firmly, to send a strong message across the organization that (a) AF will not tolerate any financial misappropriation, (b) The misuse of any funds however small, would certainly lead to dismissal and (c) Trying to protect the guilty is as serious as being corrupt.

Consequently, all the staff involved were first suspended. Then they were told that they have to face criminal action for their financial misdeeds. However they were
given an option to repay all the illegal amounts due and resign if they wish to avoid criminal action. Particularly the ATL- Kudair who was keeping a cash amount of Rs. 2.58 lakhs was asked either to deposit the amount back or face a criminal action. Fearing the consequences he promptly deposited back Rs.258,000 to AF in 2 days. All the 22 staff members including 2 ATLs and 2 AOs have resigned. All of them have agreed that they have committed financial misdeeds and given their consent letters to collect the illegal amounts from their gratuity. Accordingly:

The total misappropriated amount to the last paise, of Rs. 362,747 has been recovered from the resigned staff either in cash or from their gratuity amount. Of this amount, Rs. 309,947 is the seed banks’ amount and the remaining Rs. 52,800 is the Vermi & NADEP compost units’ amount.

1.2.5 A complaint by one or two of the accused ATL to ICCO and EED

Meanwhile one or two of the resigned staff approached ICCO & EED with an allegation that AF has indulged in the misuse of program funds (Foreign Contribution). With malicious intent, they have alleged that AF is collecting the assistance given for development of alternate livelihoods during 2007-09 in the form of “local contributions”. Obviously, they could not come up with any better allegation. AF has already sent a detailed clarification in this regard to ICCO & EED. (For details Please refer to AF Note on alleged “Foreign contribution – Misusing the funds”, dated 13th September, 2010).

1.2.6 Summary of the findings of 100% Physical Verification

8 physical verification teams were constituted with two members each with clear terms of reference to physically verify, assess the quality, enquire regarding payment with the beneficiary, take a photo of the each unit with the beneficiary etc. Accordingly the physical verification process was undertaken on crash basis and completed the field work in two weeks. The teams verified 1806 Vermi compost units, 401 NADEP compost units, met 220 + beneficiary farmers and 230 village GSS committees. It is a massive crash operation done objectively to assess the field reality with regard to NADEP and VERMI compost units. And one senior staff was designated for internal audit of financial transactions of all the 127 seed banks.

Following is the brief summary of the 100% Physical Verification of Vermi & NADEP compost units and internal audit of Seed Banks across AF’s program area of 230 villages:

Fortunately, in general the findings were heart-warming. The findings gave us a morale boost, given the depression we were due to the incidents explained above.

Findings of Vermi & NADEP compost units physical verification

- Totally, there are 43 clusters in AF’s program area of 230 villages.
- In Vermi & NADEP compost units a misappropriation of funds, worth Rs. 52,800 was found in 2 clusters reported earlier. Payment has been made for 72 Vermi compost units and 28 NADEP units in these two clusters, during 2009-10. Of them, 27 Vermi compost units worth Rs. 21,600 and 11 NADEP units, worth Rs. 26,400 have not been constructed at all. 6 VCUs constructed under
Government Horticulture department program, worth Rs. 4,800 were falsely booked under AF”s program.

- In the remaining 41 clusters all the 1,734 Vermi compost units and 373 NADEP units have been constructed and there is no misappropriation of funds by any staff member.

- However of the 1,734 Vermi compost units, 320 units (18 %) do not meet the quality standards fully and of the 373 NADEP units, 92 units (25 %) do not meet the quality standards fully. These units are either under sized or do not have proper shades or compost making is not systematic.

- So, AF has initiated immediate quality improvement measures to ensure 100% quality in future. AF’s Agriculture Officers are re-designing the units, based on the learnings from the evaluation process, which will be communicated to the field staff and monitoring staff.

- AF has also developed unique “Identification Code (IC) Nos” to all the Vermi & NADEP compost units, constructed during 2008-2010, to avoid any possibility of misuse in future. All the present units, being constructed now also bear these IC Nos, which are painted prominently on them.

**Seed Banks**

- The books of accounts of 127 Seed Banks were verified, cross-checked with the pass sheets of banks and internal reports. Here again the findings were a morale booster to us, as malpractices have not happened in other areas.

- Totally, there are 43 clusters in AF’s program area of 230 villages.

- In Seed Banks, misuse (Handling) of funds by staff members, to a tune of Rs. 309,947 was found only in 30 Seed Banks in 10 clusters of Kudair area which came out of “Confessions”. The total amount deposited in these 30 Seed Banks was Rs. 450,000. Of this amount, Rs. 309,947 was with staff members, Rs. 121,358 was with the farmers and Rs. 18,695 was in the Banks in Seed Bank accounts. However the total amount of Rs. 431,305 (Rs. 309,947 + Rs. 121,358) was totally recovered and deposited into the Seed Bank accounts, before making settlement of the resigned staff.

- In the remaining 33 clusters of Kalyandurg, Settur and Dharmavaram areas there are 97 Seed Banks. The total amount deposited in these 97 Seed Banks was Rs. 1,455,000. Of this amount, Rs. 714,524 was with the people, which was totally recovered and deposited into the Seed Bank accounts. All these 97 Seed Banks have been well maintained and there is no misuse of funds by any staff member.

- However there was some laxity on the part of some staff members of these 3 areas in recovering the amounts due from farmers.

- So, AF has given top priority to the monitoring of these Seed Banks, to drive away any laxity of its staff either in maintaining accounts or in collecting back due amounts from people.
1.2.7 Learnings: All’s well that ends well!

This whole episode, though very emotionally very painful and disturbing, it has in the end greatly helped in strengthening AF and making it surge ahead with steely resolve. It exposed the gaps in AF’s field monitoring systems and helped in developing a more robust and effective monitoring system. It helped AF in improving its MIS by reducing the data base errors through systems of validation and triangulation. It has helped to introduce physical verification and quality monitoring before the payments were made. It has also helped AF in improving its adaptability to adverse conditions and changing needs.

This episode has brought to focus the following important learnings:

- There is an immediate need to develop a strong central field monitoring system and triangulation of the field reports received at the central office.
- There is a need to review and strengthen the systems of financial management, procedures and checks & balances in the field.
- There is a need to focus sharply and strengthen the Sasyamitra Groups, Grama Sasyamithra Samakyas, which are being newly formed, to make them play an active role to ensure absolute transparency in financial transactions.

1.2.8 The Future course of Action

AF has started to internalise the above learnings into its program planning. It has started initiating necessary changes and giving a total make-over to its staff structure, its CBOs, its planning and monitoring systems at all levels, procedures, processes etc. It is also reviewing its activities, log frame, action plans and the budget. AF would try to operationalize the above changes by end October and wants to implement the modified program from November with renewed zest & zeal. The results of the changes initiated will be reported in the October’2010 – March’2011 report.

1.2.9 And a blessing in disguise!

Now the pain is almost over and we are all rebound our confidence and commitment. We end up clean with a good feeling. There was a need for AF to reduce its costs particularly on salaries and transport. It is necessitated because ICCO has reduced its funding level to AF from 1.1 million euro in the previous phase 2006-09 to 0.6 million euro in the current phase 2009-12. The transport vehicles AF has already disinvested its vehicles and outsourcing the vehicle on a reduced scale. Now the reduction in staff nos. by about 28 totally (22 on account of the turbulence and 6 on other personal reasons) has really come in time to strengthen AF financially and programmatically. It would have been hard to remove the staff otherwise! So, it is a blessing in disguise and Act of Providence! Today we believe AF is more consolidated, strong, effective and more sustainable.

1.3 Update on NABARD funded watersheds

AF is working in 6 Watersheds funded by NABARD. Of them 3 watersheds were sanctioned in Nov’2007 under batch-I, and the other 3 watersheds were sanctioned in
Aug’2008 under batch-II. AF collaborated with NABARD because the objectives of the NABARD program were matching with AF’s long-term objectives. Also it is complementary to AF’s SA program and can contribute to the achievement of AF’s goal.

The Watershed Development Committees (WDCs) are implementing the program in a participatory approach. They have adequate representation of women, landless and other occupational groups. All the decisions regarding planning and implementation of activities are taken by WDC. These activities are implemented in a transparent manner and the details of works and payments are painted on the walls in the prominent places in villages, they have implemented activities like (a) SMC works to improve the land carrying capacity, (b) Rock Fill Dams and Stone Gully Plugs to heal up the gullies, (c) farm ponds to harvest rain water in the rain fed lands, (d) Mango Plantations for crop diversification and providing safety-net against droughts, (e) Bio-mass Plantations, and (f) Grass fodder for the livestock. **The achievements during the reporting period are in accordance with the Action plans.**

### 1.4 Update on IWMP watersheds

Govt. of Andhra Pradesh has sanctioned 2 mega watersheds to AF Ecology Center under Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP), thanks to its experience and reputation in implementing many Govt. Watershed Programs in the past. One of them, the Muttala mega watershed is situated in Atmakur mandal and another one, the "Bandameedapalli" mega watershed in Rapthadu mandal. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for "Muttala" watershed has already been submitted and the DPR preparation for "Bandameedapalli" watershed will be taken-up as soon as the MoU is signed. At the same time watershed works in Muttala watershed will also be started. AF is in the process of setting a Watershed Computer Centre (WCC) at AF office, as per the guidelines of IWMP.

### 1.5 Update on CDM Biogas project

During the reporting period, AF’s Biogas project under Clean Devt Mechanism (CDM) has progressed well, almost as planned. AF took up this project as it contributes to mitigation of climate change and earns carbon revenues to the participating farmers for 21 years. It supplements and adds value to AF’s ongoing SA Program. It also helps in creating wide-spread awareness on the burning issue of climate change and its effect on environment and ecology.

During the reporting period, AF has prepared the data base of 15,000 potential participating families in the Biogas project. AF also conducted a sample **Fuel wood usage survey** with about 800 participating families. This survey brought out many comparative trends in fuel wood usage between the present and 20 years back scenarios, like; (a) Quantity of fuel wood used by the families, (b) Type of fuel wood used, (c) Distance traveled to collect fuel wood, (d) Frequency of fuel wood collection, (e) Amount spent on fuel wood and (f) Other fuels used for cooking and lighting purposes etc. AF also organized a **Stake Holders’ Consultation for the Gold Standard Premium Quality Carbon Credits** at Anantapur on 25.08.2010. The main purpose of organizing this consultation was to realize more value for the Certified
Emission Reduction units (CERs), generated through the CDM Biogas project. These CERs a.k.a Gold Std. CERs have an enhanced value than other CERs in the Carbon market, because of the pro-poor nature of the project. This consultation was well attended by about 700 men and women farmers from across 15 mandals of Anantapur, where AF is planning to implement the project. The speakers including the District Collector, Project Directors, and AF staff educated the participants on (a) Benefits of saving forests, (b) Benefits of using bio gas, (c) Holistic idea of the implementation process & benefits of CDM project. There was a separate session to clarify participants’ doubts. There was also a session on Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) related to the bio gas project. These 12 indicators were read out to the participants and all of them gave their responses. About 90% of the responses to the SDIs were positive and about 10% responses were neutral. There were no negative responses to the indicators from the participants. The consultation ended after taking feedback from all the participants. (For more details, please read Annexure-2, Stake Holders’ Consultation for the Gold Standard Premium Quality Carbon Credits).

The Project Design Document (PDD) preparation by the FCN Tech team is in the final stages. The Web Hosting of the PDD and Registering with UNFCCC is likely to be completed by November’2010. If everything goes on well, the project is likely to be approved by the UNFCCC by March’2011.

1.6 Update on Low Carbon Farming (LCF) project

AF has initiated the process of preparation for taking up a LCF project under Voluntary Emission Reduction (VER). It is taken up jointly by a group of 5 likeminded NGOs, viz., AF, PWDS, BEST, SACRED and SEDS, who are also partners of FCN. Environment Defense Fund (EDF) of USA has agreed to provide technical support to LCF. This project can bring in additional benefits of carbon revenues to the participating farmers, who practice eco-friendly agriculture practices like low tillage, bio-composting, diversified cropping, tree cropping etc. AF is preparing to take up this project first as a pilot during the year 2011-12 with about 2000 farmers in about 4000 ha. of land. During the reporting period, the following activities related to LCF project have been in progress:

- Selection of practices
- Selection of beneficiaries
- General Staff Orientation
- Technical trainings on taking GPS readings and uploading in the Polygon recorder Software and creating Shape Maps of Discrete plots.

An LCF expert, Mr. Rakesh Tiwari has been appointed to guide the 5 NGOs through the project. Such an LCF project when taken up on a scale, supplements and adds additional incentive and motivates farmers to take up eco-friendly SA practices.
2. OUTCOME & IMPACT

2.1 Project Objective:
To enhance the quality of life of 60,000 resource poor farmer and farm labor families by promoting; (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Additional off-farm & non-farm livelihoods, (c) Youth rehabilitation in non-farm sector, (d) Access to basic services and (e) Pro-poor policies, through CBOs, in a participatory approach encompassing gender and equity.

2.1.1 Objectively Verifiable Indicators:
Indicator-1 : Status of family - Economic and Food Security.
Indicator-2 : Diversity in skills and employment.
Indicator-3 : Occupational mobility among rural boys and girls towards non-farm sector.
Indicator-4 : Rate of distress migration.
Indicator-5 : Social and Gender equity in benefits.

2.2. Objectives for Project Components (Specific Objectives):

2.2.1 Component-1 : Promoting Sustainable Agriculture
Indicator-1: % of farmer families practicing at least 3 NPM / LEISA practices.
Indicator-2: % of farmer families practicing multiple cropping with at least 3 other crops.
Indicator-3: % of farmer families accessing land developmental works under MGNREGP.

2.2.2 Component-2 : Promoting the access of basic services and promoting diversified livelihoods.
Indicator-1: % of job-seeking labor families accessing a minimum of 100 days of employment under MGNREGP in a year.
Indicator-2: % of labor families accessing basic services like PDS, education, health.
Indicator-3: % of labor families accessing credits for dairy/livestock development.
Indicator-4: % of labor families with their youth (both boys & girls) either employed in non-farm sector or self-employed.

2.2.3 Component-3 : Alliance Building and Policy Advocacy.
Indicator-1: No. and type of other NGOs and CSOs, with whom alliances are made.
Indicator-2: No. of CBOs involved in policy issues.
Indicator-3: No. & type of issues identified and represented at various levels.
Indicator-4: No. & type of issues taken up for lobbying with Govt.
Indicator-5: Changes brought about in policies / implementation procedures.

2.2.4 Component-4 : Organizational Development.
Indicator-1: Improved gender policies within the organization.
Indicator-2: Gender & social equity policies integrated in program activities.
Indicator-3: PPME reports prepared.
2.3 Achievement of Project & Project Component Objectives

2.3.1 Achievement of Project Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IND No</th>
<th>Impact Indicator</th>
<th>Status during the Reporting Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Status of family - Economic and Food Security.</td>
<td>Anantapur faced the Worst drought in the past 50 years, during 2009 kharif, because of delayed monsoons. The last harvest the poor farmer families had was in Dec’ 2007, as 2008 was also a drought year. They had a good crop only 3 years back. Even this year more than half of the poor farmer families are going to face a crop failure again because of the Green Drought. AF promoted short duration food crops like millets, pulses and vegetables extensively by activating the Village Seed Banks. The Seed Banks identified farmers’ crop preferences, procured &amp; supplied quality seed, in time. <strong>As a result about 6,918 rain fed farmers sowed food crops like millets and pulses, in their 7,876 ha. of lands which created some food security for them.</strong> AF also assisted poor farmer and farm labor families, who were not accessing the PDS. Now, 37,346 farmer and farm labor families (About 87% of the 43,155 families, enrolled into AF’s SMGs) are accessing PDS, which has also ensured food security to an extent. The economic status of these families would have been terrible, and they would have broken-down financially, had not MGNREGP come to their rescue to an extent. AF played a facilitative role in making the communities plan the works in time and monitored the implementation of the program. <strong>As a result, in AF’s 230 program villages, totally 39,454 laborers (25,136 men and 14,318 women) from about 34,000 families availed 1,150,291 person days of employment during the reporting period. On an average each family could avail about 34 days of employment at an average wage rate of Rs.94 per day and earned about Rs.3,200 during the reporting period, which saved them from financial break-down and created some sort of financial security.</strong></td>
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<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Diversity in skills and employment. Occupational mobility among rural boys &amp; girls towards non-farm sector.</td>
<td>Anantapur has highly adverse agro-climatic conditions, recurring droughts, lack of industries, lack of marketing facilities, falling economy and ever increasing poverty. In these harsh conditions the diversity in employment and occupational mobility, particularly for Women and Youth, have larger significance. So, AF is striving hard to bring diversity in employment of rural women and Youth, both in off-farm and non-farm sectors as well.</td>
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• During the last phase (2006-09), AF provided Alternate livelihoods for 2607 farmer and farm labor women. About
60% of them are continuing those livelihoods and earning incomes ranging between Rs. 3,000-5,000 / family / year.

- Women from about 1,894 poor farmer and farm labor families have accessed loans from banks and purchased Dairy animals, Sheep & Goats.
- Totally 229 rural youth, 60 boys and 169 girls have been trained during the reporting period. Of them 136 have already found employment.
- Of the 169 girls trained in AF's tailoring centers during the reporting period, 38 girls have been linked to small business promoters, who give them piece work on contract basis. On an average they are earning about Rs.1500/- to Rs.2000/- per month. 16 girls are working in tailoring shops in adjacent villages and they are earning about Rs.1200/- to Rs.1800/- on an average per month. 54 girls are working on their own at their homes in the villages and earning about Rs.800/- to Rs.1,000/- per month.
- Of the 60 boys trained in AF Driving Schools during the reporting period, 28 have already been employed with Private employers and earning about Rs.4,000/- to Rs.5,000/- per month.

This has enhanced the self worth of rural women and youth in the community. Their importance has grown in the family and their opinions are being considered in family decisions. They have become confident and outgoing and want to work and earn more.

The Occupational mobility of rural youth was very low because:

- There was a dearth of low-end jobs in the employment market.
- The salaries were also low in these Skill-based jobs.
- In MGNREGP works, there was a possibility to earn on par with these jobs, at home.

AF has to work on finding better market for skill-based employment, to improve the occupational mobility of rural youth.

| 4  | Rate of distress migration. | Distress migration has totally stopped in all the 230 villages in AF's project area, thanks to MGNREGP. Only seasonal opportunistic migration is there to an extent. |


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<th>PCO No</th>
<th>IND No</th>
<th>Desired End Result (By 2012)</th>
<th>Achieved during April-September 2010</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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| 1     | 1      | Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 80% practice at least 3 of the following NPM & LEISA practices:  
- Grow border crops.  
- Grow inter crops.  
- Use pest traps.  
- Introduce bio-pesticides.  
- Introduce bio-fertilizers.  
Totally, 43,155 small and marginal farmer families have been enrolled into AF’s Sustainable Agriculture program. Of them, during the reporting period:  
- 4,047 families (9.4%) have used Pest traps in their fields, for biological control of pests.  
- 2,185 families (5.1%) have applied Bio-pesticides to their crops.  
- 8,702 families (20.2%) have used Bio-fertilizers like Farm compost, Vermi compost and Jeevamritam to their crops.  
Totally, **11,275 families (26.1%) have adopted all the above practices, besides growing Border & Inter Crops.**  
The performance of this indicator has gone down this year (Only 26.1%) because:  
(a) The dropped indicators on Border and Inter crops (dropped as they have already become a general practice among farmers) have brought down the % of performance drastically.  
(b) Also achievements were low, because of the staff disturbance, during the sowing season in July and August. | |
| 2     |        | Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 60% practice multiple cropping with at least 3 of the following crops :  
- Fruit tree crops.  
- Farm forestry with timber, fodder and bio-mass plantations.  
- Food crops like millets, pulses etc.  
- Vegetables Fodder.  
Of the 43,155 small and marginal farmer families, during the reporting period:  
- 835 families (1.9%) have grown Fruit tree crops.  
- 5,879 families (13.6 %) have raised Farm forestry in their farm lands.  
- 6,918 families (16%) have grown Food crops like Millets & Pulses.  
- 5,273 families (12.2%) have grown Vegetables in their farm lands.  
- 3,999 families (9.3%) have grown perennial fodder in their farm lands.  
Totally, **6,386 families (14.8%) have adopted multiple cropping with at least 3 other crops in their fields.**  
The no. of farmer families with fruit crops is less, because AF is not providing fruit plants & has to mobilize it from Govt. & other agencies.  
The achievements in practicing multiple cropping by small and marginal farmer families are low during the the reporting period, because there was staff disturbance for 3-4 months in the sowing season. | |
| 3 | Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 20% improve the carrying capacity of their lands by accessing land developmental works under MGNREGP. | Of the 43,155 small and marginal farmer families, during the reporting period:

- 6,415 families (14.9%) have accessed land development works like Compost Pitting & Farm Ponds under MGNREGP.

In the 6 NABARD watersheds, during the reporting period:

- 140 farmers have accessed land development works like Soil, pebble and stone bunds, Water absorption trenches etc in their 685 Acs of farm lands.
- 12 farmers have excavated farm ponds in their lands.
- 14 farmers have raised 32 Acs of mango plantations and 102 farmers have grown useful bio-mass plants in their 685 Acs of farm lands.

The MGNREGS implementation has been reasonably satisfactory in the district, during the reporting period. However the achievement is low because Govt has taken a decision not to take up Bunding works on private lands, which used to be a major activity for improving the carrying capacity of private lands.

The NABARD watershed program implemented by AF, has been progressing well. |

| 2 | 1 | Of the total 36,000 farm labor families (incl. small & marginal farmers), every job-seeking family gets employment under MGNREGP, whenever and for as many days as it wants during a year. | Of the 33,912 families have worked in MGNREGS during the reporting period. Out of them there are 25,136 men laborers (63.7%) and 14,318 women laborers (36.3%).

- Totally 1,150,291 person days of work was provided @ 34 person days/family during the reporting period.
- Total payment made under MGNREGS in our project area during the reporting period is Rs. 108,126,865. Each family could earn Rs. 3,190 at an average wage rate of Rs. 94 per day.
- Women got equal wages, on par with men.

The no. of families, worked in MGNREGS is more because; even the medium rainfed farmers were also forced to work as labor, due to the severe drought last year. |

| 16 |
| 2 | Of the total 36,000 farm labor families, 90% access basic services like PDS, education, health etc. | Of the 1,800 poorest farmer & labor families group surveyed (5% sample);  
- 1,565 families (86.9%) are accessing PDS.  
- 527 families (29.3%) have 996 children of primary school age. Of them 943 children (94.7%) have been enrolled. But 126 children (12.6%) have dropped out. Presently, 817 children (82%) are continuing in primary schools. (Indicates better retention rate in primary schools) | The divide between the rainfed small and marginal farmers & laborers has become very thin. So, both farmer and labor families were considered for the survey. |
| 3 | Of the total 36,000 farm labor families, about 2000 families (5.5%) access credit support from Banks for the purchase of dairy animals or small ruminants. | Of the 1,800 farmer and labor families surveyed;  
- 37 families (2%) have accessed loan from Banks & other agencies for dairy animals during the reporting period.  
- 58 families (3.2%) have accessed loan from Banks for the purchase of Sheep and Goats during the reporting period. | |
| 4 | 10% of the 36,000 farm labor families, diversify the occupational base of their youth (farming to non-farm sector) thro’ job-oriented skills and entrepreneurship development. | Of the 36,000 farm labor families, 229 families (0.6%) have diversified their occupational base from farming to non-farm sector, during the reporting period.  
- 169 Girls have been trained in Tailoring & Embroidery.  
- 60 Boys have been trained in Driving.  
- ITES course will be started in January 2011. | |
| 3 1 | Building issue based alliances with concerned NGOs & CSOs:  
a) To focus on policy & implementation | AF has taken the following measures to focus on issues related to policies & implementation, mobilizing public opinion and lobbying with Govt.:  
- Actively participated in Issue |- |
|   | on issues related to agriculture, off-farm & non-farm livelihoods, accessing employment and basic services etc. | based alliances like (a) Food security coalition (b) All India Coordinated Millets Imprt Program (AICSMIP), (c) Empowerment & Entitlements coalition for Social equity (d) Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).  
  • Also AF has been lobbying for taking up dry land horticulture Under MGNREGP.  
  • Discussed with CBOs, at different levels to identify issues related to SA and Rural livelihoods and consolidate people’s voice for advocacy.  
  • Arranged public campaigns, Rallies at different levels on SA, to publicize the issues and for a Govt – public interface.  
  • Presently conducting Research on issues related to SA for taking up national level advocacy thro’ E&E coalition.  
  • Presently lobbying with Govt. for promotion of Millets & their inclusion in PDS, Subsidy for practicing SA etc.  
  • Under ICDS, AF lobbied for providing freshly cooked food for mothers and children in the Anganwadi centres. |   |
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<td>b) To mobilize public opinion on the above issues and represent them in relevant forums</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) To lobby with Govt. for appropriate action.</td>
<td>c) To lobby with Govt. for appropriate action.</td>
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| 2 | Bringing on desired changes in policies and / or in the implementation procedures. | The process of Lobby & Advocacy with Govt. is in progress and as a result;  
  • Freshly cooked food is introduced in Anganwadi centres on an experimental basis in Anantapur district.  
  • Rainfed horticulture is taken up under MGNREGP in some select districts including Anantapur. |   |
| 4.1 | By 2012 AF Ecology Centre has:

(a) Improved gender sensitivity among staff.

(b) An operational PPME in place.

(c) Improved expertise in:
   (i) Sust. Agrl, (ii) Alternate livelihoods devt and (iii) Training rural youth in job-oriented skills & Rehabilitating them.

(d) Accounts & Finance shifted from RDT and Self - managed.

|  | AF has initiated the following measures to achieve the planned results by 2012:

- Gender policy has been framed in a participatory process involving all AF staff.
- Ensured equal representation of women in all CBOs and in their leadership positions, giving preference to the women for convener’s post.
- Making payments related to program activities to women.
- AF Women Team is playing a role in enhancing the capacities of women staff and addressing both their personal and work related problems.

- AF has requested Context International, The Netherlands to provide consultancy and support its PME Cell, in making PPME operational.

- AF has arranged trainings on Sustainable Agriculture, Seed Banks & Alternate livelihoods devt, to improve their expertise in the above areas.

- AF staff have also been oriented on Clean Devt Mechanism (CDM) and Low Carbon Farming (LCF).

- Accounts and finance have been shifted from RDT office and are being self - managed by AF Ecology Center, except for FCRA and Income Tax requirements. |
2.4 What other observations did you make? Please mention any thing that may be enlightening for the progress of the project. Provide case stories if any in the annexure.

Some important observations:

- Generally, the farmers’ inclination towards growing short duration food crops like millets and pulses has increased. (please refer to case story-1)
- The System for Rice Intensification (SRI) is catching up with Paddy growers in AF’s program area. (please refer to case story-2)
- More and more people are showing interest in getting bio-gas units for their households.
- Farmers’ preference for the usage of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides (Decoctions of locally available herbs) is increasing because of the saving in investment. (please refer to case story - 3)
- Women are showing a lot of interest in raising kitchen gardens around their households. (please refer to case story - 4)

All these observations can contribute to the achievement of AF’s development goal considerably.

2.5 In case that you observed any negative outcome, please describe.

AF’s job-oriented skills training programs for rural youth have not yet recovered from the adverse effects of recession and the consequent crash of skill-based employment market. During the Reporting Period, there was a shortage of lower end jobs in computers, hospitality, retail sales, electrical works etc. in which AF has been training the rural youth. Even the rural youth have also not shown adequate interest in skill-based employment and most of them were focusing on wage labor works in MGNREGS, as they were easily available. This had a direct impact on AF’s Skills training program, as it could not go ahead and train the rural youth in these job-oriented skills, without a job-guarantee.

2.6 Could any impact (Positive or negative) be observed in the wider context of the project that might be related to the project interventions? Do those observed facts contribute to achieving the development goal?

Anantapur faced the Worst drought in the past 50 years, during 2009 kharif. 2008 was also a drought year. The last harvest the poor farmer families had was 3 years back in Dec’ 2007. Even this year more than half of the poor farmer families are going to face a crop failure again because prospects of a “Green Drought” (due to excess of rains for groundnut crop) are looming large. Last year, 10,600 rain fed farmers (About 25% of the 43,155 farmers) had grown short duration food crops like millets, pulses and vegetables because the rains had failed to appear even until late August. But during the Reporting Period, though the monsoons arrived in the right time, some of the farmers’ apprehensions of facing yet another drought made them go for the short duration food crops. As a result, 6,918 rainfed farmers (About 16% of the 43,155 farmers) sowed food crops like millets and pulses, in their 7,876 ha. of farm lands, which has created some food security for them. Farmers’ apprehension of facing...
droughts can be a contributing factor in motivating them to grow short duration food crops and address the issue of food security to an extent. 

These adverse conditions (Recurring Droughts) are also seen by AF as an opportunity to propagate the irrelevance of the conventional Green Revolution model of agriculture, as there is no point in wasting money on chemicals when one is not sure of the returns and make a strong case of its Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) program.

These conditions also provided a good opportunity for the GSSs and the Seed Banks to work together for the procurement and distribution of required seed for contingency crops and thus strengthening them in the process.

The above trend will have more relevance and can contribute further to the achievement of AF’s Development goal in the long run.

The wage rates in MGNREGP are good and the farm labor families are getting benefited by that. This is a very positive development that has come about in recent times. However it has its own share of negative effects - The cost of labor for already volatile agriculture has gone up heavily, because the laborers are demanding high wages on par with MGNREGP rates or even more! Though it is very good for laborers, yet small, marginal and even medium rain fed farmers are unable to afford the high cultivation costs, particularly when the yields are not guaranteed due to failure of rains. Consequently a major chunk of rain fed farmers has turned into laborers.

This is highly undesirable and disastrous because it could lead to the disappearance of small and marginal farmers from agriculture and forced to become labour – a downward occupational mobility!

2.7 Which methods did you use for assessing outcome and impact?

2.7.1 Impact Assessment:

- Impact Assessment was done in a participatory methods like focused group discussions, group interviews and individual interviews, involving the target population throughout the process.

- Impact assessment was done in 36 villages (About 16 % of the 230 project villages)

- 50 families were selected for impact assessment from each village ( 19 % of the average 260 families per village).

- Totally, 1,800 families were selected for impact assessment ( About 4 % of the 43,155 families enrolled into AF’s program).

- Household survey was done for these 1,800 families to collect information for assessing the impact.

- Ration cards were verified.

- Data was collected from various sources like (a) School attendance registers, (b) Govt. mandal level Offices, (c) Fair price shop records (d) MGNREGP website etc.
2.7.2 Outcome Assessment:

- Outcome Assessment was done in a participatory manner by having Focused Group Discussions (FGD) involving the farmers and farm laborers throughout the process.
- Outcome assessment was done in all the 230 project villages.
- For Outcome Assessment, the data of all the participating families was considered.
- The main source of this data is the Village Activity Registers being maintained in each of the 230 villages by the STOs - Our village level staff.
- Information on Outcomes was also collected from various means like (a) Random Physical Verification, (b) Interviews with farmer & farm labor families, (c) GSS records etc (GSS is a federation of primary farmers’ groups @ village level).
- Data was also collected from various sources like (a) School attendance registers, (b) Govt. mandal level Offices, (c) Records of AF Skill Training Centers & Driving Schools etc.

3. ACTIVITIES:

Following are the main activities implemented by AF:

3.1 Awareness generation on Sustainable Agriculture

3.2 Facilitation of CBOs

3.3 Trainings

3.4 Promoting Sustainable Agriculture practices

3.5 Promoting crop diversity and crop rotation

3.6 Promoting Tree Crops under rainfed conditions

3.7 Developing long term Integrated Farming Systems

3.8 Skill development and youth rehabilitation

3.9 Policy Advocacy and

3.10 Interventions in NABARD funded watersheds.

3.1 Awareness generation on Sustainable Agriculture

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture is the core program of AF – Ecology Centre. Generating awareness on Sustainable Agriculture is an important part of AF’s work. AF is implementing short term activities like LEISA practices and long term activities like developing suitable and sustainable farming systems for the harsh Agro-climatic conditions of Anantapur. AF is spreading awareness on the above activities thro’ Village level Awareness Campaigns, Mandal level Ecology Campaigns and District level Ecology Campaigns.
3.1.1 Village Level Awareness Campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture.

Two village Level Campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture are organized every year, in each village. The campaigns include important demonstrations and exhibitions of various Sustainable Agriculture practices. The GSS and SMGs are facilitated by STOs to organize these campaigns. In these campaigns preparation of liquid bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides with locally available materials is demonstrated to the farmers. The practicing farmers shared their experiences in practicing SA, interact and discuss with other farmers. All the farmers in the village, including women are motivated to participate in these campaigns.

During the Reporting period, only 66 Village Level Campaigns (29%) could be conducted, against the planned 230, because of staff disturbance in AF during July-September 2010. 3,167 women farmers (51%) and 3,073 men farmers (49%), totally 6,240 farmers attended these campaigns. Of them, 1,312 (21%) are from SC community and 442 (7%) from ST community.

3.1.2 Area level ecology campaigns.

Each Area consists of two mandals and each mandal has about 30 - 35 villages. From each village 12 - 15 farmers, both men and women are mobilized to participate in these Area level ecology campaigns. The mandal level govt officials like agriculture officers, horticulture officers, Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO), Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO) also participate and educate farmers about the schemes available with their depts. This provides first hand information to the farmers to access various available Govt. schemes. The campaigns include exhibitions of different varieties of seeds and plants suitable to Anantapur agro-climate, medicinal plants, fodder plants, fruit plants, bio-diversity of various species, indigenous materials used in preparation of bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers. Photo exhibition of successful practices is arranged to attract farmers attention. Various issues such as ecology, agriculture, climate change, rural handicrafts are discussed in the campaigns. Local art-forms are performed to entertain people and also in appreciation of local culture being integral to agriculture and environment.

During the Reporting period, 4 Mandal level Ecology Campaigns were conducted, during June 2010. 1,850 women (56%) and 1,462 men (44%), totally 3,312 members attended these campaigns. Of them, 759 (23%) are from SC community and 252 (8%) from ST community. For more details please refer to Annexure-II, “Ecology Days – 2010”.
3.1.3 Project level ecology campaign

A Project level ecology campaign was organized on the eve of Environment Day on June 13th at Anantapur. About 1300 farmers (700 men+ 600 women) from project villages, other NGOs, CSOs social & environmental activists participated in these campaigns. Important district officials like Collector, project directors of DWMA & DRDA and officials from Horticulture and Agriculture departments also participated.

The campaign focused on the issues of ecology, environment, sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods. Traditional dances with environmental messages and folk dances were organized to keep the farmers educated and entertained. Exhibitions were organized on traditional food bio-diversity, suitable varieties of crops and tree species, types of animals, traditional weapons, indigenous materials which are used for making bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers, traditional seeds etc. The farmers following SA practices shared their experiences with the participants. The specialists in sustainable agriculture, social and environmental activists gave their messages and reminded the responsibility of protecting the environment and bio-diversity, for our own survival.

3.2 Facilitation of CBOs

3.2.1 Individual meetings

To promote SA, AF staff has organized informal meetings with farmer families to create awareness on specific SA practices suitable for them. They also have organized meetings and discussions with SMGs and GSS. The message about SA practices is spread across the village by the farmers, SMGs and GSS. The staff, assisted by SMG and GSS identifies the farmers interested in adopting SA practices. These farmers are educated and trained in detail to take up specific SA practices like diversified cropping and preparation of vermi compost, NADEP compost, solid & liquid bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides etc.

3.2.2 Facilitating SMGs and GSS

The STOs organize regular meetings with SMGs and GSS and discuss implementation of various planned activities and create awareness on their benefits. Writing catchy slogans and pictorial paintings on walls is taken up in the villages to draw the attention of farmers. Selection of beneficiaries for
3.3 Trainings

3.3.1 Specific trainings on specific practices for selected farmers.

Suitable farmers are selected for certain activities, which involve special techniques and skills. During the reporting period, 313 farmers practicing SRI method of paddy cultivation and 43 farmers practicing Integrated Farming System (IFS) under rainfed conditions have been trained on some special practices and techniques.

3.3.2 General trainings to men and women farmers.

During the reporting period, 23 cluster level Gender trainings (62% of the planned 37) were organized. 727 men (65% of the planned 1,110) and 768 women (69% of the planned 1,110) attended these trainings. Women’s issues like Sharing women’s work load by men, Domestic violence, Girl child education, Economic freedom to women, Women’s decision making in family matters and cropping choices, Women’s livelihoods, Women health etc were dealt in these trainings.

3.3.3 Staff trainings.

Training needs of staff at various levels have been assessed and need based trainings have been organized to brush up their knowledge on the relevant practices and topics. In the month of Apr’ 2010, a Training of Trainers (ToT) program was organized to all the 62 field staff, comprising of STOs, FCs, AOs and ATLs, in two batches. The program was facilitated by APMAS. The objective was to train AF staff in various training methodologies and the concepts of SMGs & GSSs. After the completion of the program, the staff said they got clear ideas on how to organize SMGs & GSSs and impart trainings to them on various aspects like; the importance of small groups, active participation, leadership, decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, attitude & behavior, communication etc. In June’ 2010, a 1-day orientation was organized to all 72 AF staff on Climate Change and Clean Devt Mechanism (CDM) by Mr. Ram Esteves of ADATS, Bagepalli. Three trainings varying from 2 to 4 days were organized under NABARD program. These trainings were facilitated by FES, Madanapalle, which is Resource Organization for NABARD program. Totally 10 of our staff.
members, working in NABARD funded watersheds including STOs, Engineers, AOs and one ATL attended these trainings. Subjects like Natural resource management, Livelihoods development, Net planning, Record maintenance etc were dealt in these trainings. In Sept’ 2010, a 1-day orientation was organized to the 42 AF staff on Community organization and facilitation of SMGs & GSSs, by Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy, director, Accion Fraterna. The services of external resource persons and the expertise of other organizations were also utilized, depending on the need. Besides, magazines on SA practices, Organic farming, Agricultural policy issues etc, in local language are subscribed for all the staff. AF Staff are also sent to other organizations for trainings and exposures as and when needed.

3.4 Promoting Sustainable Agriculture practices

3.4.1 Pest traps (Pheromone traps & Color boards).
Demonstrations on installation of pheromone traps and color boards have been taken up to monitor the incidence of pests and to trap them mechanically before they are multiplied.

During the Reporting Period, 1,406 farmers (61% of the planned 2,300) have been mobilized to install pheromone traps, in their 2,682 ha of farm lands (58% of the planned 4,600 ha). Of them 270 farmers (19%) belong to SC/ST community. 1,448 farmers (63% of the planned 2300) have been mobilized to install white and yellow boards in their 2,540 ha of farm land (55% of the planned 4600 ha). Of them 304 farmers (21%) belongs to SC/ST community.

3.4.2 Bio-pesticides.
Education and awareness is created on the ill effects of chemical pesticides and the high investment needed for agro-chemicals. Indigenous, local resource based low cost alternatives are explained to the farmers. The focus is on prevention of pest & disease incidence and when necessary using bio-pesticides like decoctions of local wild plants and hot spices.

1,483 farmers applied bio-pesticides to their 2,709 ha of farm lands. Of them 340 farmers (23%) belong to SC/ST community.

3.4.3 Bio-Fertilizers
Education and awareness is created on the high costs and the ill-effects of chemical fertilizers on soil, water, food and on people. And some incentives are provided to go in for vermi compost and NADEP composting. Solid & liquid bio-fertilizers
like Jeevamrutham, Amruthpani etc are promoted extensively as they do not involve any additional cost.

During the Reporting Period, 106 farmers (23% of the planned 460) have established vermi compost units. Of them 24 (23%) belong to farmers from SC/ST community. 98 NADEP units (21% of the planned 460) have been established. Of them 31 (32%) belong to farmers from SC/ST community.

1,543 farmers (67% of the planned 2,300), applied the liquid bio-fertilizer-Jeevamrutham to their 2,486 ha of farm land (54% to the planned 4,600 ha). Of them 277 farmers (18%) belong to SC/ST community.

3.5 Promoting crop diversity and crop rotation

3.5.1 Food Crops like Millets & Pulses
AF is educating and advocating Multiple cropping in the place of groundnut mono crop, with a view to improve food and nutritional security at each household level. More and more women were mobilized to these meeting and campaigns. The crops advocated are redgram, caster, pearl millet, sorghum, foxtail millet, field beans, cow pea etc, which can be grown as pure crop and mixed crop or intercrop with groundnut. During the reporting period, 6,918 rainfed farmers (150% of the planned 4,600) have grown food crops like millets & Pulses. Women have played a key role in cultivation of food crops, besides this the seed banks were actively involved in promoting alternate crops.

3.5.2 Vegetable cultivation.
AF is promoting vegetable cultivation in two ways. One is in the farm lands and another is promoting kitchen gardens for household food and nutritional security. 1,577 farmer families cultivated vegetables in their farm lands (103% of the planned 4,600). Of them 312 families (20%) belong to SC/ST community. 3,786 families raised kitchen gardens (41% of the planned 9200 families). Of them 717 families (19%) belongs to SC/ST community.

3.5.3 Fodder cultivation.
AF is organizing and facilitating the farmers to access annual fodder seed being supplied by animal husbandry department on subsidy. For raising perennial fodder is being raised by farmers themselves through fodder slips. 3,999 perennial fodder plots were organized (87% to the planned 4,600 plots) by 3,999 farmers. Of them 428 families (11%) belong SC/ST community.
3.6 Tree Crops under rainfed conditions.

3.6.1 Rainfed horticulture

AF is extensively promoting Fruit Tree Crops, particularly with rainfed farmers. AF is advocating that every rainfed farmer should have at least 30% of each farmer’s land under various fruit tree crops, so that when annual crops fail, the tree crops will provide some assured income to the farmers. AF itself had not provided any incentives for tree crops, but educated and enabled farmers to access horticulture programs being implemented by RDT and Govt.

During the Reporting period, 835 farmers (116% of the planned 720) accessed fruit plants supplied on subsidy by RDT and from horticulture dept. and planted in their 470 ha of dry land (163% of the planned 288 ha). Of them 252 farmers (30%) belong to SC/ST community.

3.6.2 Farm Forestry.

AF Ecology Centre is promoting Farm Forestry on the field borders and field bunds in order to produce bio-mass for farm composting and green fodder in summer months. The farm forestry is promoted by direct seed dibbling (which is most inexpensive and best suited to our agro-climatic conditions) in the months of June and July, when the rainy season sets in. The varieties of plants chosen are pongamea, glyricidia, neem etc. The survival of last years farm forestry ranges between 30% to 35%.

During the Reporting period 6,031 farmers (52% of the planned 11,500) have dibbled seed in their 12,618 ha of farm lands (55% of the planned 23,000 ha).

3.7 Development of long term crop models of suitable Farming Systems to Anantapur agro-climatic conditions.

AF is developing demonstrations of three model of rainfed Farming Systems, suitable to agro-climatic conditions of Anantapur. These three farming models are aimed at creating sustainable agri-production on rainfed lands integrating annual crops, tree crops and animals, with low cost and low external inputs. Following are the three models:
3.7.1 Integrated Farming System (IFS)
In this model annual crops, tree crops yielding fruit, biomass and fodder and small unit of dairy animals are all integrated in one ha., of rainfed land.

43 IFS plots have been organized by AF in its program area. The survival of fruit plants in these plots averages from 85 to 90% and that of bio-mass and fodder plants averages from 55 to 60%. During the present rainy season, gap filling was completed in all the IFS plots. This model will take 5 years to start production at an optimum level.

3.7.2 Bio-intensive Farming System in Rain fed Areas (BIFSRA)
This model is developed under the technical guidance of Dr. O.P.Rupela, Principal Scientist, (Retd) from ICRISAT, based on his research experiment in ICRISAT. This model aims at producing adequate bio-mass on farm for mulching the land particularly during summer months, to avoid exposure to sun, rain and wind. This concept is that when the soil is mulched properly the biotic life in the soil is conserved and nurtured. Consequently, it does not need any additional manure and it can hold the moisture for longer periods and crop is assured under rain fed conditions.

AF has organized 8 demo plots, one each in 8 mandals of its program area. The survival of fruit plants in these plots ranges from 80 to 90% and that of bio-mass plants ranges from 55 to 65%. During the present rainy season, gap filling was completed in all the BIFSRA plots.

This plot will take 4 to 5 years to yield adequate biomass for mulching the plot.

3.7.3 Intensive Bio-mass Development (IBM)
Intensive Bio-mass development on rainfed lands is demonstrated in order to produce biomass on the farm and produce farm compost on the same farm to replace chemical fertilizers.

Totally, 464 ha of rain fed lands, belonging to 258 farmers have been covered with dibbling of biomass plants. 188,620 plants (41% of the planned 460,000) have survived and gap filling was completed during the present season.

3.8 Skills development and youth rehabilitation program
The main Objective of the program is to develop non-farm job-oriented skills among rural youth and rehabilitate them by facilitating their access to Skill-based employment, thereby improving their occupational diversity and occupational mobility.

3.8.1. Skill training centres
After observing the down ward trend of the skill-based employment market and the falling economy in the region, AF decided to organize only ITES trade at both centres with a capacity of 25 trainees in each centre. But the course on ITES trade also could not be started during the Reporting period. Presently, youth mobilization campaigns are being conducted in all mandals. The ITES trade will be started in the month of December, 2010.
3.8.2 Tailoring Centres

AF has established 15 tailoring centers for girls in its project area. About 25 – 30 girls are trained in each batch. The course duration is 4 months.

During the reporting period 169 girls have been trained in Tailoring and Embroidery. Of them, 38 girls have been linked to small business promoters, who give them piece work on contract basis. On an average they are earning about Rs.1500/- to Rs.2000/- per month. 16 girls are working in tailoring shops in adjacent villages and they are earning about Rs.1200/- to Rs.1800/- on an average per month. 54 girls are working on their own at their homes in the villages and earning about Rs.800/- to Rs.1,000/- per month.

3.8.3 Driving schools

During the reporting period i.e., from April – Sept’ 2010, 60 candidates have been trained at Anantapur and Kalyandurg Driving Schools. Of them, 34 candidates (57%) belong to SC/ST community. After market study and analysis, AF has decided to start a course on “Heavy Motor Vehicle Driving” as part of upgrading the driving school. The course is likely to commence from Jan’ 2011 onwards. The additional inputs like Spoken English, Personality Development etc., are very helpful to the trainees in getting placements. Of the 60 boys trained in AF Driving Schools during the reporting period, 28 have already been employed with Private employers and earning about Rs.4,000/- to Rs.5,000/- per month.

3.9 Policy advocacy at different levels

The Objectives of promoting Policy advocacy at different levels are:

- To facilitate farmers’ CBOs and the farmers, to identify their livelihood issues related to; (a) Govt Agriculture policies, (b) Implementation of basic services like PDS, MGNREGP, (c) Alternate non-farm livelihoods etc.
- To mobilize collective voice of people on issues to represent at various relevant levels of Govt machinery for effective Lobby & Advocacy.
- To do advocate for pro-poor policies with State/Central Govts, by forming networks /grids of CBOs, NGOs & CSOs.

AF has conducted policy campaigns on two major themes, i.e. Sustainable Agriculture & MGNREGP.
3.9.1 Campaigning on Sustainable Agriculture policies

6 mandal level campaigns have been organized on Sustainable Agriculture, in all the 8 mandals of AF’s program area. Totally 2,840 farmers (1,414 men and 1,326 women) have participated in these campaigns. In these campaigns the advantages of Sustainable Agriculture, the ill-effects of Green Revolution model of agriculture and issues in practicing of Sustainable Agriculture were discussed extensively. These campaigns voiced the need to bring the policy changes towards eco-friendly agriculture and do away with chemicals in agriculture. And voiced to focus on rainfed agriculture which is badly neglected in the current policies.

3.9.2 Campaigning on MGNREGP on issues, procedures and policies

8 mandal level campaigns have been organized on NREGP, in all the 8 mandals of AF’s program area. Totally 2,102 farm labor (1,146 men and 956 women) attended these campaigns. In these campaigns, the required policy changes in MGNREGP and issues related to procedural bottlenecks in implementation were discussed extensively. In these campaigns the district Government Officers concerned with NREGP are bought face to face with labour to discuss the problems the labour are facing in policies and procedures and argue for appropriate changes. These campaigns are also an opportunity to redress the grievances of labour like corruption, delayed payments, delayed employment etc.

3.10 Interventions in NABARD funded watersheds.

AF is working in 6 Watersheds funded by NABARD. Of them 3 watersheds were sanctioned in Nov’2007 under batch-I, and the other 3 watersheds were sanctioned in Aug’2008 under batch-II. AF collaborated with NABARD because the objectives of the NABARD program were matching with AF’s long-term objectives of; (a) Upgrading and conserving natural resources like trees, soil, water, bio-diversity (b) Enhancing the productivity of farmers’ degraded lands, (c) Recharging the depleted ground water reserves, (d) Promoting tree-based farming systems, (e) Promoting Crop diversification and vegetation development in rainfed lands and (f) Promoting Sustainable Agriculture practices like NPM and LEISA (g) Provide alternate or additional livelihoods for the landless and women. It is complementary to AF’s SA program and can contribute substantially to the achievement of AF’s goal.

The watershed programme is being implemented in a participatory approach involving the people. At each watershed village a Watershed Development Committee (WDC) is organized with consensus of the whole village. In organizing the WDCs adequate representation is given to women, landless and other occupational groups. All the decisions regarding planning and implementation of activities are taken by WDC and implemented under its supervision. Following are the activities implemented under NABARD watershed program in the 6 watershed villages during the reporting period:
• SMC works have been implemented in 780 Acs of rain fed lands, belonging to 140 farmers.
• 23 Rock Fill Dams and 48 Stone Gully Plugs have been constructed.
• 7 Farm Ponds have been constructed, belonging to 7 farmers.
• 14 farmers have raised 32 Acs of Mango Plantations and 102 farmers have raised Bio-mass Plantations in their 685 Acs of lands. Grass fodder was grown in all the 6 watershed villages by broadcasting the seed.

All the activities are implemented in a very participatory and transparent manner and the details of works and payments are displayed prominently by painting on the walls in prominent places in the villages.

Farmers’ Clubs have been formed in 6 watershed villages with a membership of 10-12 farmers. Their Objective is “To access technical knowledge and awareness on the latest developments in the field of agriculture from various sources, disseminate the knowledge among all the other farmers in the village, motivate them to use this knowledge for enhancing agricultural productivity and work for the holistic development of the village”.

4. CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION:

4.1 Related to management structure:

a) Coverage of target families reduced and focus increased:

AF started its Sustainable Agriculture Program during Kharif 2007, in 230 villages of its project area. The goal of the program was to promote Sustainable Agriculture among farmers and bring a paradigm shift from GR model of agriculture. AF also began to organize a suitable CBO structure to implement its SA program. On an average, AF enrolled about 200 farmer families from each village and formed 7-8 village level CBOs, called Sasyamitra groups (SMGs) with 25–30 farmer families. By federating them at village level, Grama Sasyamitra Samakhyas (GSSs) were formed with 9–11 conveners and co conveners of SMGs.

But after 3 years of implementation of the SA program, AF realized that Working with whole village including rain fed and irrigation farmers, small and marginal farmers and landless was not very effective because; (a) the number of families in each village was too large to work with and (b) the interests of various types of farmers like irrigation farmers, rainfed farmers, small & marginal farmers, SC/ST farmers were vastly different. Consequently, both our focus and resources had become thin to make an impact on the whole village and their varied interests could not bind them effectively in SMGs. So, AF changed its strategy and decided to work at the following two levels in each village:
**Level-1:** To work at the whole village level for awareness generation on sustainable agriculture and need based technical and extension services on sustainable agriculture, for which, only about 10% of the staff time would be invested.

**Level-2:** To work with focused attention with about 100 select families, comprising of (a) 25 poorest landless labor families, (b) 50 poor labor cum rain fed farmer families (among them 25 would be necessarily SC or ST families) and (c) 25 farmer families with irrigation facilities.

These 4 categories of families would be organized into 4 respective SMGs in each village. In each of these groups atleast 12 farmers would be women. Each group will select one convenor and one co-convener and one among them would be a woman. GSS will be formed with 8 conveners & co conveners of SMGs.

4.2 Related to Job-oriented Skills Training for rural youth:

- From 2009-10 onwards AF started managing the Skills Training Centers on its own. Meanwhile, the global economic melt-down forced AF to re-think its strategy. The skill-based employment market has not yet recovered. During the reporting period only 60 candidates have been trained at Anantapur and Kalyandurg Driving Schools. AF is studying the opportunities to work with youth on vocational training as well as integrating youth into its Sustainable Agriculture Programme.

- After market study and analysis, AF has decided to start a course on “Heavy Motor Vehicle Driving” as part of upgrading the driving school as there is a great demand for heavy vehicle drivers like Buses, Trucks, Earth Movers etc. The course is likely to commence from Jan’ 2011 onwards

4.3 Related to staff composition:

There was a major staff turnover during the Reporting period. The total number of staff has reduced from 89 to 61. Following is the brief summary:

- Totally, 28 staff members (2 ATLs + 3 AOs + 8 FCs + 14 STOs + 1 Driving Instructor) resigned for their posts, due to various reasons like;
  1. Misuse of program funds (22 members/2 ATLs+2 AOs+6 FCs+12 STOs),
  2. Personal problems (2 members/1 AO +1 STO)
  3. Better opportunities (3 members/2 FCs + 1 Driving Instructor ) and
  4. Health problems (1 STO).

- As a result the grass root level staff, especially STOs are allotted more villages i.e. from 5 -7 villages per STO to about 9 -10 villages per STO now. However, the total number of program villages remains the same at 230.

- The cadre of Field Coordinators is dissolved.

- All the field staff, in a major reshuffle including STOs, AOs and ATLs have been transferred to new places.
Totally, 5 staff members (3 Agriculture Officers + 1 SMS- watersheds & Forestry + 1 Driving Instructor) have newly joined the organization.

The strength of women staff has reduced from 14 to 10 (1 woman ATL + 4 women FCs have resigned and 1 woman AO has newly joined). However their percentage has increased due to reduced no. of staff.

2 FCs and 2 STOs have been promoted as new ATLs.

PME cell is strengthened by the inclusion of 2 Field Monitors. The role of senior ATLs has been shifted as Field Monitors.

One new Subject matter specialist (A retired District Forest Officer) was employed to oversee the implementation of Govt. IWMP water sheds, NABARD funded watersheds, CDM Biogas project, Development of CPRs and forestry program.

4.4 A blessing in disguise:

Apparently so many staff leaving in a short-time may appear to be a problem. However, given the present situation of a) reduced funding from ICCO for the current phase (2009-12) and that ICCO further may have to reduce in future, the staff learning AF is an unforeseen advantage. AF has been thinking of various ways to cope with the situation. Now it has become easy to manage. AF has been preparing to work through Village Volunteers and fewer Socio Technical Organizers. So, AF now would proceed on the lines of selecting and training Village Volunteers from each village. These volunteers will also be useful in future for management and monitoring of Biogas project under CDM and Low Carbon Farming Project as they can provide a much closer monitoring and follow up at each farmer and community level.

5. CHANGES IN DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

5.1 Are there important changes in the direct political environment since the inception of the project

Yes. Despite the political turbulence, the A.P. State Govt. is continuing its pro-poor and pro farmer policies like free electricity to farmers, Subsidized rice for the poor @ Rs. 2/- Kg, Arogya Sree (A popular health scheme, which has made poor access quality health services even in private and corporate hospitals) 108 & 104 emergency health services, Indiramma housing, reimbursement of education fees for students, support prices for Agriculture produce, supply of seed, crop insurance, old age pensions, pensions for physically and mentally challenged, MGNREGS, Right To Information (RTI) etc. All these schemes directly or indirectly contribute to the achievement of our project objective. The political agitations throughout the Telangana districts (Northern region of Andhra Pradesh state) are still continuing for a separate "Telengana State", causing disturbance in Telengana region and Hyderabad City - the State Capital. There have been no
serious agitations in other parts of the state as the special committee appointed by Central Govt. has been looking into the matter. The latest development is that all major political leaders from Telangana region including the ruling and opposition parties are in favor of a separate Telangana state, whereas the leader from rest of the state are in favor of a United Andhra Pradesh. The Municipal elections scheduled in the month of September, 2010 have been postponed for political reasons. The present political environment had no adverse effect, whatsoever on AF’s work or its project area, during the reporting period.

5.2 Are there important changes in the Direct Social environment since the inception of the project.

Yes. The implementation of MGNREGS, Indiramma housing program and other pro-poor programs by Govt has created lot of positive impact on socio-economic conditions of the people in AF’s program area. AF has been playing a crucial role in enabling people to access the pro-poor programs. AF along with other NGOs lobbied for and succeeded in bringing required changes in some implementation procedures of MGNREGS by involving the farmers and labour groups. There was no distress migration during the reporting period. The MGNREGS work has been stopped from the month of August 2010 in order to make labor available for agriculture operations throughout the state. As a result some labor families who were entirely dependent on wage labor suffered, since there was no regular work in agriculture. In spite of the severe droughts and crop failures for the last 3 years, poor farmer and farm labor families were able to send their children to schools and availed better health facilities, because of the income from MGNREGS work. About 15% - 20% families have availed housing from Government. The Govt has streamlined the PDS by removing the ineligible ration cards. The old-age pensions were also streamlined. But still there are some eligible families, which have been left out and AF staff has been assisting those eligible families in getting ration cards and old age pensions. The prices of all commodities and food grains have gone up and people are finding it very hard to cope with the inflation. During the present kharif season Anantapur experienced a prolonged wet spell causing damage to the groundnut crop. It is going to be a “Green drought” (crop failure due to excess rains) this year and more than half of the farmers families will face a lot of socio-economic problems. They have lost hope and looking forward to get the crop insurance from Govt., for last year’s crop. Women could avail some financial help from Govt., through SHGs and VOs. The recession-hit, skill-based employment market is yet to recover and lower end jobs in computers, hospitality, retail sales etc. are still not available easily.

5.3 Are there important changes in the direct natural environment since the inception of the project.

Yes. Mainstream agriculture (The Green Revolution model) is highly vulnerable, particularly under rain fed conditions. During the present season, farmers were very enthusiastic as there were timely rains and went for sowing of ground nut crop in 3 spells i.e., during (a) 1st week of June, (b) last week of June and (c) 1st fortnight of July. The climate was quiet abnormal. There were almost continuous
rains from 15th June to 1st week of September- quiet a long wet spell! August, which is a dry month was very rainy this year. As a result the flowering, peg penetration and pod formation in groundnut crop have been affected adversely. Only the stems and leaves have grown luxuriantly. The south west monsoon was advanced by one month affecting the total cropping pattern in Anantapur.

The vegetative cover on field bunds, wastelands and CPRs has improved thro’ farm forestry program of AF and MGNREGS. The continuous rains during July, August, & September months helped in improving both surface storage in water bodies and recharging ground water reserves. There is better survival of plants and vegetation has improved in the program villages.

5.4 Do those changes have implications for the relevance of the project.

The relevance of the project is further enhanced with the increased variability in weather conditions. This climate variability has enhanced the relevance and need of AF’s Sustainable Agriculture program. The unexpected continuous rains forced the farmers to rethink about the mono crop of groundnut and it might encourage to go for multiple cropping with food crops which ensures food fodder, and economic security. The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides was also low during the reporting period, which saved farmers’ crop investments. Many farmers showed interest in adopting sustainable agriculture practices for ground nut crop and Orchards.

Because of the awareness created by AF, people were in a better position to access Govt resources like, subsidies on seed, bank loans for low interest, education loans and agriculture equipments (Sprayers, Sprinklers, Drip) etc.

Thus the change in natural environment has helped AF in implementing its SA program, by increasing its relevance with the farming community.

5.5. Do those changes have implications for the project goal?

The changes mentioned above are reinforcing the appropriateness of the project goal i.e., to create family assets, reduction in rate of distress migration, increased enrollment of children, increased access to health services and maximum mobilization of Govt resources. The MGNREGS and other Govt schemes are contributing to the achievement of AF’s project goal. Under MGNREGS Natural resources like soil, water, vegetation are being developed and managed apart from employment generation and the SA practices are being promoted under AF’s Sustainable Agriculture Program. The DRDA, under IKP (Indira Kranthi Pathakam) has been promoting sustainable rural livelihoods (Dairy and non-farm IGAs). MGNREGS has been playing a vital role in improving short term livelihoods. Village level institutions like SMGs, GSS, besides MSS and ZSS are being promoted and strengthened to voice for pro-poor policies at different levels, apart from active involvement in implementation of program activities. AF along with the District administration is doing lobby and advocacy work at state and national level to implement MGNREGS works throughout the year to stabilize the income of labor and farmers families.
5.6 Do those changes have implication for the project objective?

The changes in natural environment are pointing towards a severe drought during this year. But it has created favorable conditions for educating the farmers on AF’s core objective of promoting Sustainable Agriculture. The crisis in mainstream (Chemicals-based) agriculture is being used as an opportunity to promote Sustainable Agriculture. Awareness regarding Govt. policies and schemes has increased among the people, especially among SMGs and labor groups, because of AF’s awareness campaigns, monthly news letters etc. AF has very good relationship with all political parties and Govt. functionaries. AF has taken initiative to bring in the ‘Millet’s’ in to the Public Distribution System. The District Administration has positively responded to include ‘Millet’s’ like Ragi, Pearl Millet, Fox Millet and Jowar in PDS, to ensure nutritional security at family level. The Govt. in principle has agreed to implement this in select AF villages, which helps AF to promote more food crops. The Vagaries of monsoons have increased the relevance of AF’s program and the achievements so far indicate that our present work is relevant and in congruence with the project objectives.

5.7 Is the underlying problem analysis of the project still valid.

Yes. AF worked on management of natural resources like land, water, vegetation and livestock thro’ watershed devt programs during 1987 - 2007 in its program area. Now after consolidating the NR base, AF has shifted its focus to Sustainable Agriculture and Diversified Livelihoods. AF has been analyzing the situation with target people and realized the need to (a) Increase agricultural productivity in the long term on a sustainable basis and (b) Improve non-farm livelihoods in general and particularly for women and youth. The present program has been designed based on systematic problem analysis and it is still very much relevant and urgent. AF is open to adapt to the changing needs and to incorporate necessary programmatic changes if necessary.

6. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE WORK

6.1 Based on your experience do you see a need for changing the planned activities to achieve project objective: Yes ☒ No ☐

6.2 If necessary please update the project planning: Not necessary

6.3 In case of need for consultancy; In what area?

6.3.1 There is need for consultancy in improving our PME. We propose to involve at different levels the target families and the CBOs in Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and establish a system of Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME).
6.4 What are the lessons learned

6.4.1 Some important learnings have come regarding targeting the whole village and composition of the CBOs. Working with whole village with all families including rainfed and irrigation farmers, small and marginal farmers and landless has not been a workable idea in view of it’s a) the number of families are too large in each village to work with and b) high heterogeneity in the interests of various types of farmers. Consequently, our attention and resources were getting thin and wide to make an impact on the whole village. And the heterogeneity in interests of various types of farmers was not binding the families in Sasyamithra Groups. So, it was decided to work at two levels in a village. One level is at the whole village level for awareness generation and need based technical services on sustainable agriculture. Only about 10% of time would be invested in this awareness creation and need based technical advice. Another level is to work with focused attention with about 100 select families, comprising 25 poorest landless labor families, 50 poor labour cum rainfed farmers (among them 25 would be necessarily SC or ST families) and another 25 farmers with irrigation facilities. These 4 categories would be organised into 4 respective Sasyamithra Groups in each village.
“SRI” PRACTICE PRODUCES BUMPER HARVEST

A case study of Umesh – A paddy grower from Kairevu village, Settur.

Umesh, a farmer from Kairevu village in Settur area used to cultivate paddy traditionally in his land. Year after year, he was making high investments on Chemical fertilizers and Pesticides and getting low yields. So, his debts increased year after year. Investors, bankers and co-farmers started disappearing by the very sight of Umesh, scared that he would ask for more loans.

He attended an awareness campaign organized by AF, wherein he learned about the LEISA practices and the benefits in practicing SRI method of Paddy cultivation. He was attracted by the low-cost farming methods and wanted to try them out. So, he practiced SRI in 1 acre on an experimental basis. In place of chemical fertilizers he applied green manure (from the leaves of trees around his field) and 10 cart loads of cattle dung. He also applied 200 kg of Vermi compost from his Vermi compost unit, established with AF’s support. He dipped the paddy saplings in Jeevamritam before transplanting them.

Other farmers in the village including his family members were apprehensive of the yields, but he continued undeterred and took the advice of AF staff, whenever necessary. AF provided a set of weeder & marker to him. With the help of weeder, he did weeding and mixed the removed plants in the soil by ploughing. Within a month his family members’ apprehensions started fading out, as they were amazed to see the healthy growth of the crop. His neighbors started enquiring, as to what he had done, to get such a healthy crop.

Then he applied liquid Jeevamritam, to the paddy crop. Instead of using Chemical Pesticides, he established Pheromone traps and Color boards to control pests & diseases. He also applied decoctions of locally available materials like chilly, garlic, sour butter milk, neem powder etc for control of pests & diseases. He did Weeding 5 times with the cono-weeder, and ploughed the removed weeds back into the soil, which improved the soil fertility and helped in getting extra yields. He also applied Azolla, which helped in fixing Nitrogen in the soil and saved the expenditure on urea. Each plant developed 50 to 80 tillers and had a very luxuriant growth.

Umesh and his family members were delighted to get a bumper yield of 31.5 quintals (42 bags of 75 Kgs) from his one acre of land under SRI – A whopping 6 quintals...
more (8 bags of 75 Kgs) than the yield from traditional paddy! In traditional method, he got only 25.5 quintals (34 bags of 75 Kgs) of paddy. He also got a better price for the SRI paddy, because of superior quality. Consequently he decided to cultivate SRI in all the 3 acres of his irrigated land during Rabi.

Like Umesh, 564 farmers have grown paddy adapting SRI method in their 232 ha. of land and they have got all very good yields.

Comparative Cost- Benefit analysis per Acre

a) Expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Traditional method of Paddy cultivation (In Rs)</th>
<th>SRI method of Paddy cultivation (In Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparative Cultivation cost</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seed cost</td>
<td>1,200 (For 60kgs/AC)</td>
<td>40 (2Kgs/AC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fertilizer Cost</td>
<td>1,750 (DAP, Complex and Urea)</td>
<td>1,000 (Cattle dung, Vermi Compost and Jeevanritam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sowing Cost</td>
<td>1000 (10 Labor)</td>
<td>600 (6 Labor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Weeding Cost</td>
<td>1,500 (15 Labor)</td>
<td>500 (5 Labor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pest Control Cost</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>700 (Decoctions, pheromone traps and color boards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Harvesting Cost</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure Rs.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9,550</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,640</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Gross Income:

i. Traditional Method:
   25.5 Quintals x Rs.930/Qtl = Rs. 23,715

ii. SRI Method:
   31.5 Quintals x Rs.1030/Qtl = Rs. 32,445

c) Net Profit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Method of Paddy cultivation</th>
<th>Income from Paddy (Rs.)</th>
<th>Income from Fodder (Rs.)</th>
<th>Total Income (Rs.)</th>
<th>Expenditure (Rs.)</th>
<th>Net profit (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>23,715</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>24,915</td>
<td>9,550</td>
<td>15,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>32,445</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>34,245</td>
<td>5,640</td>
<td>28,605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

It is clearly evident from the above Comparative Cost- Benefit analysis that the Net profit per Acre from SRI method of paddy cultivation is 86% more than the Traditional method of paddy cultivation, besides saving water by about 40 – 45%
Case Study 2

S. A PRACTICES PROVE BENEFICIAL EVEN DURING DROUGHTS

Case story of a dry land farmer from Guruvepalli village, Kundurpi

Mr. K. Ramaswamy is a poor dry land farmer from Guruvepalli village of Kundurpi mandal. He is a member of Sasyamithra Group facilitated by AF. His family consists of 5 members. They have 5.19 acres of rain fed land wherein they cultivate groundnut.

The family used to invest about Rs. 27,000 every year, for growing groundnut crop in their 5 acres of dry land. Though they got good yields initially, gradually the yields started decreasing due to recurrence of pests and diseases. During the drought years when there were low crop yields, they suffered losses and used to borrow money from money lenders. Moreover they had been facing continuous Crop failures in 2008 & 2009 kharif seasons. So, again they borrowed money from money lenders for crop investment and their debts became compounded. Consequently the family got entangled in a vicious debt trap and was forced to work as wage laborers in MGNREGS. But, the two earning members of the family could earn about Rs. 12,000, during last year, which they used to clear their debts.

At this juncture, Mr. Ramaswamy and his wife attended a Sustainable Agriculture campaign organized by AF in Guruvepalli village in 2010. They decided to try Sustainable Agriculture practices for one crop season. So, they met the Agriculture Officer separately, gathered all the details and got motivated to adopt SA practices. Under the guidance of AF staff they practiced all the LEISA/NPM methods on their 5 acres of groundnut crop. They applied 20 cart loads of farm yard manure which resulted in good crop growth. They purchased Rs. 8000/- cost of seed. They also arranged pheromone traps and color boards in the field to control the pests. Instead of Chemical fertilizers, they applied “Jeevamritham” to the crop. During August, there was an attack of “Aphids” (Black sucking pests) in the village. Most of the farmers applied chemical pesticides but Ram swamy applied chilly & garlic decoction which costed a meager Rs. 150. They also sprayed Neem oil which costed Rs. 400. They spent Rs. 5,600 towards labor charges for Sowing, Inter cultivation and Harvesting. Altogether they invested Rs. 14,150, on their 5 acres of Ground nut crop.

During Kharif-2010, a Green drought is expected in Anantapur and the expected Ground nut yields have come down heavily. In Guruvepalli village the average expected yield this year is about 2.0 - 2.2 Qtls / Ac. Ram swamy’s family is expecting an yield of a minimum of 25 bags (10 Qtls) from their 5

“We are very happy that we invested only half of the amount the other farmers in my village have invested and got same yields on par with them. We have realized the advantages of using bio-pesticides & bio-fertilizers. We will continue these practices and spread them across our village”

Ramaswamy
Rain fed farmer
Acs of land @ 2.0 Qtls / Ac, on par with other farmers in the village. They are expecting to earn at least Rs. 30,000 from the sale of their produce @ Rs. 3,000/- per quintal. After deducting the expenditure they are expecting a net profit of Rs. 15,850 and Rs. 2,500/- worth groundnut haulm.

Mr. Ramaswamy’s family members are feeling very happy for practicing Sustainable Agriculture. Because all other factors being the same, their net income from groundnut crop from their 5 acres of land will increase by at least Rs.13,000/- every year, as their investment has come down from Rs.27,000/- to Rs.14,000/-. Their experience has convinced them that Bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides are equally effective when compared to chemical fertilizers and pesticides, besides being economical, harmless and nature-friendly. The family vowed never to go for chemical farming again. Their neighboring farmers have appreciated their decision of going for Sustainable Agriculture practices and they are also motivated to take up SA Practices in their lands.

Totally, 11,275 farmer families have taken up Sustainable Agriculture practices in their 26,338 ha. of farm lands, during the reporting period.
**NUTRITIONAL SECURITY WITH KITCHEN GARDEN**

A case study of Obulamma, Muddalapuram village, Atmakur.

Obulamma lives in Muddalapuram village with her husband and 3 children. She is a member of AF’s SMG group in the village. The 25 members of the SMG used to meet once in every month and discuss about their crops, agricultural issues and the SA practices they have adopted. During the present season AF staff member convened a meeting and suggested them to raise kitchen gardens, whoever have space around their houses. The SMG members discussed amongst themselves about this and particularly the 13 women members in the SMG showed interest in raising kitchen gardens. They prepared the list of 16 families, who have space around their houses and willing to raise kitchen gardens.

Obulamma’s family was among them. The family lives in a house constructed by RDT, with a front yard. This front yard was unkempt for long and many weeds, bushes and wild Creepers had grown all over. AF staff supplied them with good quality vegetable seed, as part of AF’s Kitchen Garden promotion program. The entire family worked for two days and cleared the wild plants, leveled the land and made a fence around it. They sowed the seeds of various vegetables like chilly, tomato, brinjal, ladies finger, snake guard, bitter guard, Ridge gourd etc. Their children fetched water from a nearby hand pump and watered the plants. The Kitchen Garden was well looked after by the family.

The plants had a healthy growth and within three months they started yielding vegetables. With a meager investment of Rs. 20/-, Obulamma and her family were able to consume fresh vegetables, worth about Rs. 2,500 almost throughout the year. Now the family has achieved nutritional security to an extent. They are also distributing some of the surplus vegetables to their neighboring families, free of cost as a good will gesture. Consequently, their neighboring families have a very friendly relationship with them and are protecting the kitchen garden from cattle and watering it, in their absence.

**“I am very happy that my Kitchen Garden has come up so well. Earlier we used to eat groundnut & chilly powder with meals and we could afford the luxury of eating vegetables only on festival days. But now everyday is a festival for us! Thanks to AF for suggesting to raise Kitchen Garden and supplying good quality seed.”**

Obulamma
House wife

Totally, 3,786 families have raised kitchen gardens around their houses and improved the nourishment and nutritional security of their families, in AF’s program area during the reporting period.
ToT WORKSHOP ON CIVIC DRIVEN CHANGE (CDC)

Introduction:

A Training of trainers (ToT) workshop on CDC was organized by CECOEDECON, during 25–28 May’ 2010 at Swaraj Campus, Jaipur in Rajasthan state. About 23 members from 6 countries and 14 states of India participated in the ToT. A public event was organized on 28 May’2010 where in delegates from different back grounds in Devt field participated besides ToT trainees. Sharing of ToT experiences, CDC updates, issues, Indian perspectives of CDC and follow ups were discussed in the public event. Mr. G.Bheemappa, a senior staff member from AF attended the ToT.

Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to enable the participants to get:

- A clear understanding about Civic Driven Change and the different insights and viewpoints that emerged from the global ongoing debates;
- A clear understanding on the link between Indian discourses and practices on change and Civic Driven Change;
- Clarity on the relevance of Civic Driven Change in the Indian context;
- An understanding about the implications at policy and operational levels in adopting CDC in work of the respective organizations and
- A concrete plan of action to be carried out by the Core Group collectively and by the members in their respective organizations.

Introduction to the Civic Driven Change

CDC is a set of ideas, thinking and debate about citizen-led change processes in society. It is not an established theory; rather it is work-in progress, emerging approach and concept. The term citizen in the Indian context means people” or community or collective” but emphasis is always on change. Its meaning changes with context, place and period. CDC is built upon the practice, engagement and experience in concrete situations. There is no claim that CDC is brand new. The main elements of CDC thinking comes from existing debates and practices in different contexts.

Origin of CDC:

The origin of CDC can be linked with the critique of the theory of change which is understood as a linear process. It has also evolved from the concept of challenging the undue importance given to state and market. For neo-liberal economists, markets are considered as engine of growth. CDC questions this and tries to create a domain which is different from state and market; by reasserting the role of citizens in the change.
Meaning of CDC:

CDC consists of civic, driven and change. Civic means there are some values attached to it which provides an emphasis on citizens. It is the energy, skills, ideas, imagination which drives a citizen for change. Change can be natural but in CDC, a deliberate efforts and action are required. And finally, Change could be fundamental or transformational which can take you from one particular situation to another. It is also political in nature as it addresses the power structure and power equation in society, family and community. Change can have different dimensions; it may not only be structural but can be personal too. In the Indian context, the concept of “sarvodaya’ is very appropriate in this regard which denotes „taking care of the whole” and where people are at the centre.

Building Blocks of CDC:

In common parlance citizenship is understood in a narrow way. CDC tries to deconstruct it by defining it in a horizontal manner where people create connectivity with each other. It is again an evolving concept which develops as we work together. Similarly, Democracy is something which is beyond representative politics, as a way of life which starts from family, organizations and community. It contains a normative element.

Civic agency: is used in the change process. It includes people’s capacities, skills and imagination to bring change which comes from deep within. At the core of it is the understanding that all of us have dreams and imagination to change things. Once the civic agency is activated people start connecting with each other and the resulting civic action brings about change in the society.

Features of CDC:

Co-Creation: Creation is not an exclusive act. When you do it together, it evolves intrinsically. In rights approach, we will see ourselves as receiver or consumers whereas the state and markets are the producer. Co-creation says we are also part of production. It is a process of co-creation by the citizens in which government participates.

Role of experts or outsiders: CDC strongly challenges the role of experts. It emphasizes on the solutions that are home-grown which implicates that change should be owned by people and community which are central to the change process. However, it does not rule out the particular contribution from the outside agencies. They can play a role of catalyst at some point of time but they cannot own and steer the whole process.

CDC literature also distinguishes between the mobilizing and organizing. Going to a village with predetermined ideas for which you need to mobilize people to work around you cannot be CDC. CDC promotes organizing, where an outside agent can be involved in a process that is initiated by people or the external agent makes a limited contribution. In CDC, you be part of the organizing by people and be a part of the dialogue.
Thus we can summarize CDC as something which offers a lens which connects current debates in a novel way. It helps to unpack and focus on deep causes of poverty, marginalization and injustice. CDC generates fresh insights, synergies and innovation in addressing the issues of power distribution in a community/locality.

**Characteristics of CDC from the stories shared by the participants**

**These can be summarised as below:**
- Change starts from self for which self motivation and self initiative is very significant.
- For any change to begin there will always be a spark
- Perseverance or patience is the key for bringing any change
- Leadership or agents of change have a definite role in the CDC
- Awareness or sensitisation can smoothen the process of bringing change
- In CDC, Community is always at the centre; it is always the ownership of the community
- Effective communication is a key element in CDC
- Ultimately in CDC, there is a collective effort or action
- Conflict is also a key component in change process

**Considerations for applying CDC**

- People’s supremacy needs to be acknowledged
- Emphasis needs to be paid on the collective action driven by the citizens.
- Process is important – how you consult, involve, and make them express their ideas
- The concept is still evolving which have lots of diversity
- There is an urgent need to bring a change in the role of NGOs; it provoke us to rethink about the NGOs role in change process
- Situations are not static but changing
- Critical and crucial information needs to be disseminated to the remote corners of the society in order to bring change

**CDC Approach, Function and Role of NGOs**

**Some Theoretical Considerations:**
CDC creates discomfort because when you are out of the box in unknown territory, you have to reposition yourself. The change process is endogenous which is driven by the energy of our imagination. External agencies also have a role to play in the change process. India has a long history of people’s movement, social reforms, and community action which many a time have been facilitated by the external agencies like NGOs.
These organisations are very complex in nature. These organisations are driven by identity, values, culture, mission, vision, and strategy. All these have implications on the lower level of organizational complexities.

If you compare an organisation with an onion and if you peel it slowly; you will come to the heart of the matter. And the heart of the matter is your vision, values, identity etc. and normally in an organisation the heart and soul does not change very much. There can be many layers around it and those layers like physical forces, staff competencies, system etc may change a bit. In order to achieve the dream of an organisation its function needs to be defined properly. For example, if you want to achieve your vision, and you want to respect your identities and values and you have a particular mission and strategy, then you organisation will have to perform certain functions. Thus, we can say that functions of an organisation are directly related to its core values.

For example our vision is to create a space for voices of the poor; we need to play a role of facilitator.
There can be a variety of roles which a development organisation can play. Some of these could be:

### Table 1: A Matrix of Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Role Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNSELLOR</td>
<td>“You do it; I will be your sounding board”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACH</td>
<td>“You did well; you can add this next time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTNER</td>
<td>“We will do it together and learn from each other”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACILITATOR</td>
<td>“You do it; I will attend to the process”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>“Here are some principles you can use to solve problems of this type”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODELLER</td>
<td>“I will do it; you watch so you can learn from me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTIVE OBSERVER</td>
<td>“You do it; I will watch and tell you what I see and hear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNICAL ADVISER</td>
<td>“I will answer your questions as you go along”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDS-ON EXPERT</td>
<td>“I will do it for you, I will tell you what to do”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Functioning and role of NGOs:**

NGOs were started as a means and over the years it has become an end in itself. So there is an urgent need to review our culture whether we are carrying the values that we have come together with. There is also a need to reform the structures as it also sometimes works as a handicap if the context changes. Similarly there is a need of transformation our role from leader to co-creator; from outside experts to facilitator. NGOs will have to go back to what was the very core purpose of NGOs. We also have to rethink our perspective and the role.

Minimising the role of the NGOs and bringing community into the centre solicits shift in our attitude. Conventional role of NGOs needs to be reduced but we can always play a role of enabler and facilitator. We should also think of reorganising at the organisational level even when it comes to resources about harnessing community and its social capital. NGOs can also work as fuelling the spark.

A few people with bright ideas can change the world and quite often we kill that by formalizing it. As a matter of fact funding agencies cannot support an individual. One funding agency took 10 months to decide whether they wanted to support an individual in a country where there are no institutions at all. Sometimes these CDC efforts are there and NGOs recognised is over funded and the effort dies. It was also realised that institutionalisation is not the role of the NGO.

**Way Forward: Exploring options for further joint programmes**

Some of the areas which emerged unanimously as the options for further joint programmes are as follows:

- Documentation and sharing of stories of change through virtual network, blog, online info-sharing etc.
- More meetings, trainings, discussion, consultations needed to deepen the understanding about the CDC.
- Liaisoning with government agencies, corporate, religious groups and other stakeholder in promoting the principles emerged from CDC.
It was also decided to take conscious efforts so that CDC does not get instrumentalised. It should not happen that NGOs are starting taking funds in the name of CDC.

All these activities would be jointly facilitated by a core group consists of CECOEDECON, IDSJ, NFI, PAIRVI, and Sewa Mandir. Mr. Ajay K Jha (Director, Pairvi) was selected as the informal convenor of the core group.

**Conclusion:**

The ToT was very interesting and thought provoking since it imparted on each individual and strategy to carry the learning back to their respective organizations. AF would like to document the small and minute change driven by the citizens. We often tend to over look these changes. We share the success stories of CDC initiatives with our partners and other NGOs. AF would like to include some parameters of CDC in our planning, monitoring and evaluation besides promoting principles and stories of CDC through newsletters.
STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION MEETING
THE GOLD STANDARD PREMIUM QUALITY CARBON CREDITS

INTRODUCTION:

During the year 2009-10, AF Ecology Centre decided to take up a Bio-gas project under Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), as it contributes to the mitigation of climate change and brings additional carbon revenues to the participating farmers for next 21 years. The biogas project supplements and adds value to the ongoing Sustainable Agriculture Program of AF Ecology Centre. It also helps in creating wide-spread awareness on the adaptation and nutrition of climate change and its relevance to Sustainable Agriculture. The forests in the district are thin and scanty and the rainfed agricultural is exclusively dependent on monsoons. This district is considered as the driest part of Andhra Pradesh, and the biogas project is much more relevant as it reduces dependency on forests for fire wood and helps in livelihoods improvement of the people in the project area.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CDM – BIOGAS PROJECT:

The main objective of this programme is to save local trees and environment by constructing 15000 Biogas units for 15000 families in 15 mandals of Anantapur district.

3. PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- Awareness to the stakeholders on CDM- Biogas programme.
- Seeking views and opinions of different stake holders on the proposed biogas CDM program.
- Assuring stake holders that the project is truly beneficial and have no negative effects either on individuals or environment.
- Learning the issues that have to be particularly dealt in the project.

In this context AF had organized a consultation of the stake holders of Biogas CDM project, on 15th September, 2010 at LKP hall, in Anantapur.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING:

- To give a holistic idea about the implementation process & benefits of Biogas CDM project to the stake holders
- To clarify their doubts & apprehensions if any regarding the CDM Biogas
- To get their opinions & suggestions on the project implementation.
5. PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING:

- Newspaper advertisements were given widely publicizing the planned event.
- AF field staff gave awareness to the people about the consulted at Anantapur town and at all the village through conducting meetings, arranging posters, banners and distributing pamphlets.
- Concerned staff gathered the people from about 400 villages and guided them to the venue.
- Staff shared other responsibilities like Printing invitations, Hiring a hall, Registration, Stage arrangement, Lunch, Cultural events, Anchoring, Conducting the meeting, Minutes recording, Conducting Question & Answer session, Evaluation etc, among them and performed well.

6. PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVENT (685):

Totally 685 participants registered and participated.
- Enrolled farmers from 15 mandals
- Writers, Civil Society Organisation, CBOs
- Local Elected Panchayats Representatives
- Other NGO representatives

- By 10.30am all the invitees reached the venue.
- It was observed that people were watching the banners which were hanged to the wall in side the meeting hall explaining the hazards of using firewood and the benefits of bio-gas use.
- The dignitaries arrived at the meeting hall were interested and were asking the staff for the written material on bio-gas project.
- Concerned citizens from Anantapur town who read about the meeting in news papers voluntarily attended the meeting on their own interest to know the details of the project.

7. SPEECHES BY THE DIGNITARIES:

a) Mr. Kareem Head- Sustainable Agriculture, AF-Ecology Center, introduced AF programs and project goal to the participants. He said that AF has planned to work with 15,000 farming families belonging to 15 mandals of the District. The organization like to work with those who understand the program and show interest to benefit from the project. He asked the participants to listen to the speakers carefully and tell their opinions and raise questions if they have any.
b) Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director AF-Ecology Center, explained about the objectives and implementation procedures of the program. He also explained about the natural calamities like untimely rains, seasonal imbalances and continuous droughts etc that are taking place in Anantapur because of deforestation. With this perspective, AF has planned to construct 15,000 bio-gas units for the selected families in 15 mandals of the project area. He also explained about the likely income & expenditure that comes for each family under this project. He said that, the bio-gas units will help them to lead a better life by achieving good health, particularly for women & children and income to the family.

c) District Collector Dr. B. Janardhan Reddy said in his speech that, “Kitchen is the heaven for most of the women”. They like to get water whenever they turn the tap and a over they can light on. These two are the main facilities every woman likes to have in their kitchen. Water and fuel wood cause a lot of problems to women. If we provide these two, they will feel like being in the heaven twice/thrice in a day. On the other hand use of bio-gas units will increase the cattle population in the villages which can add additional income to the families. Moreover they can experience a two in one benefit from the units. One is immediate free supply of gas directly to the kitchens and second one is Biogas slurry extracted from the unit which can be used as a fertile manure to the fields. He said that he is very happy that, the use of bio- gas, the children (especially girls) will find time to attend the schools instead of going for fire wood collection. He advised the heads of Anganwadi and Government Schools to establish bio-gas units in order to serve clean & healthy mid-day meal to the students.

d) Mr. Murali, Project Director DWMA, said that the day was very precious for the women, because in the near future 15,000 women are going to have their daily cooking done easily by the establishment of bio-gas units. “It is the best idea to save family’s income and protect personal health. After 7 years they can enjoy the Carbon Remittances and all these 7 years they can enjoy in-time gas supply, good health and clean & healthy food” he added.

e) Mr. Lakshmi Kantham a (Rtd) Conservator of Forests said that, in the present situation more industries & vehicles have come up. As a result, the carbon emission has been increased, resulting in, un-timely rains and infestation of pests and diseases to crops. “By using bio-gas we can decrease the carbon release in to the atmosphere. We can make cooking easier and healthy by using Biogas. We can also improve the economic status of the family” he said.

f) Ms. Bhanuja, Director, REDS appreciated AF for arranging a magnificent meeting with all its stakeholders. She appreciated the men for attending the meeting because they are the people to understand women’s problem and respond positively. She advised the people to keep this as agenda point in their group meetings and discuss on it in detail. She asked AF to give wide publicity in villages and she wished that, Anantapur should become the no. 1 district in the state in promotion of bio-gas units.
g) **Ms. Anuradha, Advocate** said that, she came to know about the meeting through the newspaper and attended to know the project, and got better understanding now. She appreciated the AF for taking up such a good program which is helpful to the rural people both economically and Socially (health wise).

h) **Mr. Venkatappa, NEDCAP** said that, Maintenance of the units is more important. If 50-75 kg dung is mixed in 50 liters of water and poured in the unit it will produce gas that is sufficient for preparing food for 3 times/ family with 5-8 members.

i) **Erri Swamy, GSS Co convener, Idukallu** explained the problems he faced with LPG gas, like more cost, late supply, and fear of damage/gas leak /break.

j) **Sreenath Reddy, Chairman, Watershed Committee** said that we can prepare food for 10 members using bio-gas. The extract (Slurry) is also used for the preparation of vermi compost and as manure for the crops.

8. ANSWERING QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS:

People expressed many doubts /fears /uncertainties associated to the construction and maintenance of bio-gas units in the Question hour. The Director Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, AF-Ecology center clarified them in the local language. Most of the questions came on the maintenance of the unit and the possibility of providing loans for purchasing cattle.

9. GATHERING STAKEHOLDER’S OPINION ON “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS”:

Mr. Bheemappa, AD, AF-Ecology Center conducted the ‘sustainable development indicators exercise. About 8 staff members stood in the middle of the people in 5 different places. They had the printed formats of 12 indicators with them. Mr. Bheemappa read out each indicator aloud in local language from the stage. Staff members repeated it to the people and noted down their responses/reflections in the format against the indicator. i.e., Positive responses Negative and Not know responses got from the participants.

10. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING:

- Mr. Kondaiah AO & team took feedback from the people. They have organized 5 groups of 20 members each and distributed the feedback forms containing 3 questions. People were asked to write their opinion against each question. For the illiterates, staff scripted the matter said by them, after writing they read it for their confirmation and then took their signature/thump print.

- The meeting was closed with the thematic songs sung by the cultural team on the uses of bio-gas & problems of firewood usage which attracted the attention of the audience and helped the illiterate persons to understand the concept of bio-gas easily. Mr. Bhaskar Babu, ATL said vote of thanks. Delicious lunch was served to all the participants.
ECOLOGY DAYS – JUNE, 2010

1. Introduction:
Five Ecology Day celebrations have been organized by Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhyas (MSSs) & Grama Sasyamithra Samakhyas (GSSs) in the month of June, 2010 in AF Ecology Centre Project Area. One is organized at the project level in Anantapur on 13th June and the other four were organized in the four areas headquarters of the project area. Celebrations took place on 22nd June in Dharmavaram, on 23rd June in Settur, on 25th June in Kuderu and on 27th June in Kalyandurg. About 1300 farmers (About 600 women and 700 men) from 230 villages have been participated in the district level campaign. In Dharmavaram about 800 farmers (450 women and 350 men) from 55 villages, about 612 farmers (350 women and 262 men) from 60 villages in Settur, about 700 farmers (400 women and 300 men) from 50 villages in Kuderu and about 1200 farmers (650 women and 550 men) from 65 villages in Kalyandurg area attended the campaigns.

Mandal Samakhya members took lead in organizing the events meant for educating and sensitizing the people about the importance of the Ecology and Environment in the context of, Global warming and Natural calamities. The participants include active farmers, conveners and co-conveners of SMGs, MSSs, NPM practitioners, Organic Farmers, (Sustainable Agriculture practitioners) belonging to rainfed and drought affected poor, small and marginal farming community. Project Directors of various Govt. agencies, Village Surpanches, MPTC members, VO leaders DWMA, DRDA and IKP staff also joined the celebrations. The MSS members of the above mandals, together with AF staff planned about the venue, awareness themes to be focused, items to be exhibited, cultural items to be presented, guests to be invited and food arrangements etc. The venues decorated and looked like multicolored and bubbly like big festival fairs. Women and men looked joyfully, wearing eye-catching colorful attires.

2. The Objectives:
Following are the main objectives of organizing the Ecology Day:

- Creating consciousness and sensitizing on the problems of ecological degradation due to over exploitation of Natural Resources, like water, forest, vegetation, use of chemicals in agriculture, etc.,

- Creating awareness to the rural community on (a) Pollution of Soil, Water and Air through the use of poisonous chemicals in agriculture and (b) The dangerous effects of chemical pollution on total eco-system and human health.
• Motivating the farmers to avoid mono cropping and go in for tree cropping, crop-rotation, diversified varieties of food grains which have become rare today, and to motivate them to use those food grains regularly, which will add to their good health on one side and soil health on the other.

• Educating the farmers (a) to stop using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and (b) to demonstrate how to adopt the eco-friendly and low cost Sustainable Agriculture practices.

• Stimulating the farmers to regain control over Agriculture (i.e, seed, manure, pest control) by using only the traditional, indigenous seed varieties produced locally, low external input and NPM.

• Amplifying the role and responsibility of farming community in restoring ecological balance by defending the local eco-system and bio-diversity including Human beings, Animals, Birds, Insects, Trees and Nature as a whole.

4. Building Consciousness and Sensitizing on problems of Ecological imbalance

4.1 Awareness building through Rangoli:

Colorful Rangoli was drawn in front of the venue which attracted the attention of all men & women. A woman’s face was drawn with multicolored food grains like red gram green gram, black ginjelly, wheat, Ragi, Jowar, Bajra, Korra and rice etc. the concept is that a woman symbolizes nature, which is a source of energy and diversity. The millets & pulses, those are traditionally used for the preparation of tasty food like curries, chutneys, powders, sweets & hots and protects their health. They play main role in the family’s food in-take. A caption was written above the Rangoli as “Grow different grains (Navadhanyalu) and achieve food and nutritional security”. Farmers were very much impressed by the diagram made with nine kinds of grains which was a pictorial message to follow.

4.2 Building perspective through Exhibitions:

A massive exhibition was set with many attractive stalls illustrating (a) SA practices through Flexes, Photos and models, (b) Organically produced Vegetables & fruits, (c) Different varieties of food grains, (d) A variety of local medicinal herbs, (e) Animals and (f) Handicrafts items by rural women, at the venue to catch the attention of the participants.
There were stalls exhibiting charts on (a) Non-negotiable practices (b) Advantages of NPM & LEISA in Sustainable Agriculture, (c) Preparation of various Bio-pesticides (Decoctions prepared from locally available herbs and material). Some stalls exhibited with different types of Bio-fertilizers and liquid fertilizers. The idea was to generate awareness and interest on SA practices and to motivate and stop the farmers from using Chemicals and to pull them back to the eco-friendly Bio-pesticides and manures.

Some stalls exhibited different kinds of food grains, oil seeds etc. The idea was to create awareness among young farmers on traditional and some endangered varieties of food grains, which have high health and nutritional value.

Various kinds of locally available medicinal herbs were displayed. The idea was to remind people of the value of local medicinal herbs, used by our ancestors, that have no side effects and to revive their use in future.

Some stalls sold handicrafts like sarees, baskets, bags, candles, scented sticks, toys and eatables prepared by women Income Generation (IG) groups. These stalls were arranged to create interest among women to take up skill-based non-farm IGAs.

Some stalls displayed a variety of vegetables, fruits and greens, produced organically. The idea was to create awareness among the farmers on the growing importance of the organic products.

People thronged all these stalls with great curiosity and interest as they were educative and informative. There were lively discussions all-round the stalls and the staff were quiet content and happy that the purpose of setting up the exhibition was fulfilled.

4.2 Awareness building through messages by eminent persons

The meetings were presided by the Woman Conveners of MSS. Project Directors of various Govt. agencies, many officials from different sectors like Agriculture, DWMA, Forest Dept, elected representatives of PR’s, VO leaders, Horticulture Dept, MPDO, MRO and RDT staff attended the campaigns. They addressed the gatherings and gave some interesting messages on (a) the climate change, its causes and effects, (b) the over exploitation of natural resources, (c) the hazardous effects of poisonous pesticides on people, animals and environment, (d) the disadvantages in using hybrid seeds and (e) the diminishing bio-diversity, particularly cattle population.
Following are the excerpts from the speeches delivered during the Ecology Day held at Anantapur:

- **The Director AF-EC** has explained the importance of celebrating Ecology Day. He said that human beings are playing main role in devastating the ecological balance. If the same situation is continued, in future it will be very difficult for any living being to survive on this earth. So, to propagate the message that each person has the responsibility of protecting the environment from various pollutions like air water, soil etc., and grow as many trees as possible, the Ecology Day has been celebrated world wide. Environment includes hills, trees, cattle, animals, birds, insects and human beings people should learn the exact grounds for the environment blemish, its effect on man kind and ways to over come this through this campaign. The agriculture practices followed by the ancestors were eco-friendly. They were living in such a way that both human kind and other living creatures co-existed on sustainable basis. The so called new civilization or modern living is destroying the nature. So, we have to rethink about our life styles.

- **The project Director DWMA** said that past is past. People can’t change whatever destruction of environment took place till now, but people should be very conscious to learn how to protect the existing environment and follow the measures to safe guard it. He said that once upon a time there were thick forests in Anantapur. Huge crowd of elephants used to exist in it. Now people are unable to see one also, and the starving wild animals like bears are riding over the villages harming people crops and live stock. He suggested people to dig trenches on the hills & mountains to harvest the rain water and increase the ground water levels. To grow bio-mass plants on the field bunds and to construct farm ponds in rainfed land. Also he suggested them to turn their agriculture towards horticulture to have stable Annual Income. Especially for Anantapur, growing trees is the only solution to increase the ground water levels and protect the environment.

- **Lakshmi Kantham, Retired DFO** said that 2010 is declared as the year of bio-diversity. In a healthy environment 72% nitrogen, 27% oxygen and 1% other gasses should be there. If it is imbalanced, our life style will be affected. He said that man is evolving as gigantic brutal creature that spoils the world’s environment. He made a request to the audience to stop using plastic covers and reduce the use of motor vehicles.

- **Mr. Subba Reddy DFO** said that as forest and fodder lands are destroyed, forest animals are coming into the villages. He invited the gathering that forest plantation would be taken up by the Government under MGNREGP and every one should take part in the program.

- **Kishtappa the Director of RIDS (Rural Integrated Development Society)** said that the recommended forest cover for any district is 30% of its geographical area. In Anantapur it is only 10%. Human beings are responsible for the forest degradation. If they nurture and protect the forests, they will protect us by balancing other ecological elements.
Dinesh, an environmental activist said that protection of ecology is very much linked with the practice of traditional cultivation methods. To get healthy food we have to grow crops with organic manures. Each farmer has to produce all varieties of food grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits organically in order to live healthy with nutritional security.

Mr. Bhaskar Babu ATL, Dharmavaram took forests as the standing example for sustainable agriculture practices. He asked the people to think on two questions. 1) Who gave water to the plants in the forest? 2) Why trees in the forest grow more height and girth? Later he said that more number of big trees survive in the forests as they absorb and store the rain water. So, the ground water levels are increased. As the big trees spread over longer spaces and cover the land from direct heat, rain & air. Plenty of fodder and other kinds of plants grow strongly in the forest. He suggested the participants to grow trees in the agriculture fields which cover the land with greenery.

4.3  Awareness building through Cultural Programs:
4.3.1 Role plays:

The two role plays “Tree” and “Rain is the Nectar of the farmer” performed by DWMA cultural team overwhelmed the gathering and helped in entertaining, educating and sustaining the interest and liveliness among the participants. Both the plays were educative and gave the message that the healthy life of all living beings depend on the existence of trees and bio-mass we have. If we practice any activity that causes harm to the nature & trees, we might lose everything. So, it is everybody’s responsibility to grow as many trees as possible. Both the plays were presented with the blend of comedy and entertainment were helpful, in reaching the message to audience in the right way.

“Tree” depicted the problems arise by cutting trees. “Rain is the Nectar of the farmer” The play gave the message about the importance of increasing ground water levels and storage of rain water, how the increased number of bore wells reducing ground water levels and the solutions to store rain water.

4.3.2 Folkarts - Keelu Gurralu, Puppet show, Kolatam, Meesala Narasimhudu & Uralu:

The ancient local traditional folk performances “Kolatam” “Keelu Gurralu” “Puppet show”, “Meesala Narasimhudu” “Droupadi Vasthrapaharanam” and “Uralu” which are disappearing these days were the special attraction of the program. People were delighted to see the age old attires worn
by the artists and the dances performed were very much appreciated by each and every member present. This was done to entertain the people and introduce the art to the youth.

4.3.3 Songs:
The situational songs sung by the cultural team highlighted the program content in a coherent manner. The songs described the importance of Forests, Rains, Protection of Soil fertility, Planting and Protection of Trees etc. These songs attracted people very much and it was observed that the participants were totally immersed and enjoyed them.

5. Lunch:
All the people relished the simple but delicious traditional lunch cooked with millets arranged at the venues. They were served sweets prepared with green gram, Rotis prepared with Jowar and Korra rice with Brinjal curry & Horsegram rasam for lunch. All these foods have high nutritional value and our forefathers used to eat them regularly. Now-a-Days the people in the villages have forgotten how to cook them. People returned back to their villages by evening with heartfelt contentment, discussing about the events and feeling happy about the day.

6. Reflections:
6.1 Excerpts from People’s response:
• The conveners & co-conveners promised to share the message of the program in their respective villages by arranging meetings to SMGs & GSSs.
• “I have learnt about different kinds and varieties of seeds available in the nature and understood that man is mainly responsible for their disappearance’. So, it is our responsibility to restore them.”
• “I have learnt that if I grow big trees around my field, they will store plenty of rain water and help my field to produce good yield.
• “I have learnt that by not using chemicals in farming, I can safeguard nature.”
• “I have learnt that by practicing NPM, I can add for the environment protection”
• “I have learnt that cultivating Navadhanya (9 types of food grains) will provide food security.”
• “I have learnt that ‘Horticulture’ is better than ‘Agriculture’ both economic & health wise.
• “We enjoyed the campaign like a Thirunala / Parusa.”( fairs of deities)

6.2 News paper clippings:
Many local daily news papers covered elaborately the program on Ecology Days organized by AF. The media personnel praised AF for organizing such an innovative useful campaign and said that, they haven’t seen even of such seeds, fruits, tools and implements.
7. Conclusion:
The objective of creating ecological awareness and sensitizing the people was successfully achieved through the ecology day using different ways and means.

The participating farmers had good awareness on ecological deprivation and need for nature friendly agriculture in order to promote and protect the ecological balance. The participating farmers (women and men) expressed their happiness to see the various types of seeds, grain, plants, agriculture implements, etc. They also expressed their willingness to put the learnings, into practice.
TANKS’ FESTIVAL
(Festival of traditional waterbodies)

Celebration of completion of 500 years of crowning ceremony of Sri Krishna Devaraya the king of Vijayanagara Empire

Introduction:
Andhra Pradesh state Government decided to celebrate the completion of 500 years of the crowning ceremony of Sri Krishna Devaraya – The most popular king of Vijayanagar empire, of which Anantapur is a part. The district collector of Anantapur gave a call to the people and public and private organizations in the district to celebrate the occasion. He requested AF on this occasion to organize the most important event of organizing a “Tank Festival”, as Sri Krishna Devaraya is fondly remembered by the people of Rayalaseema, as the king who constructed numerous Irrigation tanks and helped farmers to survive in this desert prone district of Anantapur. So, AF organized the Tank Festival at Dharmavaram Irrigation Tank, which is a big tank with more than 2000 acres of Ayacut. About 4500 people from the surrounding villages participated in the celebrations held on 30th July’2010. District and Mandal level officers and officials from various Govt. departments participated in the celebrations.

Background:

The renowned king Sri Krishna Devaraya, of Vijayanagar Empire was crowned in the year of 1570, 500 years back. During his reign he gave prime importance to farmers’ welfare and constructed numerous tanks for irrigation in semi-arid region of Rayalaseema, particularly in Anantapur. Most of the existing tanks in Anantapur were constructed during his reign and majority of those tanks remain as main source of livelihood for people in many villages. Thus the tanks have become the integral part of the peoples’ lives and culture, and are being maintained till today. So, people take pride in celebrating the “Tanks Festival” in his honor and fond remembrance.

Cultural Events:

The program started with a procession, from Dharmavaram town to the irrigation tank, where in about 4500 people from different villages of the region had gathered. The participants include rural people, students, farmers, Govt. officials, AF staff, SMG and VO members, local artists etc. About 180 cultural artists participated in the procession and exhibited different traditional and local art forms with colorful attires. There were
slogans praising the king and folk dances by the participating people. There was a special attraction of 40 bullock carts with colorful decorations following the procession. The cultural events include puppet shows, Keelu gurralu (Flying Horses), Maragallu (Long legs), Kolatam by women, Chekka Bhajana, Tiger like costumes, Folk songs etc. People were mesmerized with the cultural programs and felt as if they traveled back in time to Sri Krishna Devaraya’s period, 500 years ago.

Ethnic food items and Festive foods were prepared and exhibited by the department of ICDS and people were attracted to see the delicious traditional food items. They include Sunni Undalu (A type of mallet sweet), Ragi cakes, Nuvvula laddu (Sweet made of sesame & Jaggery), Jowar cakes, Guggullu (boiled Beans), Chegodeelu (Hot snack), Nippatlu (Hot snack), Athrasalu (Sweet snack) etc.

Then people gathered in an open place near the tank bund and the cultural teams and artists exhibited their programs. People felt as if they were part of Vijayanagar Empire. Especially thomarts of school children enjoyed the most.

Deliberations (Speeches) of VIPs:

Mr. Murali, PD, DWMA, said that the tanks constructed during the reign of Sri Krishna Devaraya, have provided permanent livelihood to many families in the district. Mr. Kodanda Rami Reddy, tahsildar, explained in detail about the history of the ‘Tank’. Later Dr. Malla Reddy, Director AF praised Sri Krishna Devaraya for his future vision of constructing ‘Tanks for the welfare and livelihoods of people by increasing both ground water and surface water. He also said that there is a need to protect and maintain these structures. All the Govt and Non- Govt dignitaries, farmers (Women & Men) gave their valuable opinions and suggestions for improvement on this occasion.

Conclusion:

All the participants were provided with good lunch and the celebration was a grand success. The District Collector, Mr. B. Janardhan Reddy, the District collector, Mr. B. Janardhan Reddy, said in his concluding remarks that ‘Tank Festivals’ were celebrated in many places throughout the District, but the celebrations organized by AF at Dharmavaram tank was the highlight in the District.
Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre

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