Status Report on KOLLUR

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Kollur is one of the two villages where CEC is implementing UNDP supported food security programme selected for the study. There are 31 members in the women's sangham. There was delay in grounding the work in this village as it was selected later as a replacement to another village.

The main components of the food security programme in this village are fallow land programme and grain storage bin for the food grain bank.

LAND LEASE

Land lease programme was not taken up in this village during this project period. In the past the women's sangham attempted this and it did not prove to be beneficial. The experience with it proved to be unsatisfactory. In 1996-99 they had leased in 6 acres of land for cultivation. During these three years returns were not sufficient even to cover the necessary expenses. They did not get returns to pay for their labour. Members of the sangham felt that it will not be viable to take land on lease in this village. One of the reasons for this below par returns is the land available in this village is not fertile and it needs more investment to get a good crop and the returns on this investment may not be commensurate.

FALLOW LAND

Under the food security programme under examination fallow lands owned by members of the women's sangham was sought be brought under cultivation and add to income/food security of the members. Members were provided assistance to plough the fallow lands, to buy manure and seeds. This activity was under taken in the years 2000-01 and 2001-02. During 2002-03 no fallow land development was taken up as funds are not allocated to this during this year. The members of the sangham also appear to be hesitating to take any more funds as most of the past advances were not cleared. Under the fallow land programme 127.20 areas were brought under cultivation.

CROPPING PATTERN IN KOLLUR

Crop	Year 2000-01			Year 2001-02		
	Land in Acres	% of Land	Total Yield in Quintals	Land in Acres	% of Land	Total Yield in Quintals
Jowar	45.25	35.57	60.20	40.20	31.60	64.25
Green gram	44.70	35.14	30.80	43.00	33.81	36.80
Red gram	10.25	8.06	0.95	10.55	8.29	8.45

Bengal gram	10.00	7.86	7.50	12.50	9.83	10.90
Safflower	12.50	9.83	9.00	11.00	8.65	9.20
Sunflower	11.00	8.65	12.00	12.00	9.43	12.00
TOTAL	133.70	(1.05)	120.45	129.25	(1.02)	141.60

The above table shows that the crop intensity is more than one implying that all the land is cultivated, and in some of the land more than one crop is grown.

The above table on cropping pattern shows that food grain accounts for about 36% of the land brought under cultivation in the first year and about 32 percent in the second year of the project. Pulse crops, green gram, red gram and bengal gram, accounts for major portion of the cropped area. In the first year these crops accounted for 51 percent of the cropped area and in the second year 52 percent. While a proportion of green gram and red gram is kept for self consumption remaining is sold. Bengal gram is completely sold in the market. Safflower and sunflower crop yields are entirely sold in the market. Nearly 18 percent of the cropped land is used for these two crops. If we add bengal gram also to these two purely commercial crops then these purely commercial crops occupy nearly one third of the cropped area.

While 120.45 quintals of agricultural output was produced during the first year this increased to 141.6 quintals. Nearly half of this was accounted by jowar. Its output was 60.20 and 64.25 quintals during the first and second year respectively.

How to explain this cropping pattern decisions?
Food security is achieved through the commercial crops?
Or whether the need to repay loan is making them to take up commercial crops?
Then what happens to the explanation that grain is collected towards the loan amount?

GRAIN STORAGE

The grain bin in Kollur village became operational during the year 2002-03. Though the bin was ready for use it could not be used during 2001-02 as the jowar grain was spoiled because of untimely rain during harvest of the crop and moulds formed on the grain. This discolored grain could not be stored for long and some part of it is also not fit for human consumption. This bin is used during the year 2002-03.

Table: Grain Stored in the Bin

Source of grain	**Quantity in quintals**
Hiring out thresher	10
Siddapur	7

Mirzapur (N)	1
Total	**18**

At present there are 18 bags of green jowar in the bin collected from khariff crop 2002. While 10 quintals of jowar came from hiring out the thresher machine, 7 quintals are purchased from the women's sangham of Siddapur and one quintal from women's sangham of Mirzapur (N). They bought the threshing machine with the financial support provided as a part of the UNDP supported project on women centred food security programme. For each quintal of grain threshed they receive three kilograms for hiring out the machine. They purchased grain from Siddapur and Mirzapur (N) sanghams at the rate of Rs. 450 per quintal.

No grain came from fallow land programme to be stored in the bin. They appear to prefer to return the advance in the shape of cash rather than in grain. One of the reasons pointed out by the members for not taking any more loan from CEC is that they were not able to clear the past loans and they do not feel like asking for more.

They planned to withdraw grain from the bin during weeding season of the coming kharif season, some time in August – September 2003 by which time they think the present grain stocks with the members will exhaust. They may withdraw much earlier also depending on the demand of the members. For while some have access to more grain others do not have that much access. Households differ in their capacity to earn and store grain. Depending on the difficulties of the members, depending on the necessities of the members they may advance the time for withdrawl of grain from the bin.

The price at which the grain is to be distributed/sold to the members is yet to be decided. They will decide about the price before starting to use the grain stored in the bin. This price may not be below the price at which they bought it from the other villages that is Rs. 450 per quintal.

TEACHNICAL ISSUES

Members of the sangham are actively involved in assessing the storage needs of the sangham and choosing the kind of bin that they want. Particularly lessons from Mirzapur (N) showed the need to take in to account the views and perceptions of the sangham members instead of leaving it completely to the technical people. The need to factor in the local knowledge and practices is also highlighted in the process of selection of the type and size of the bin to be constructed for the woemn's sangham in Kollur.

Before deciding on the bin in Kollur members of the sangham visited neighbouring villages where grain storage bins are already in operation and exchanged the experiences of the respective sanghams. They visited Mirzapur (N) village where a concrete bin is in use and Mirzapur (B) where a metal bin is in use.

The experience with the first bin showed the need to have two compartments in the bin so that two types of grain can be stored at the same time. The experience with the first bin

also showed the need to have a lighter inlet lid as the presently used concrete lid proved to be heavy to open and close. As an alternative fibreglass lids are designed to solve this.

In the case of metal bin local expertise is not available to erect it locally. It needs to be transported after fabrication from the city of Hyderabad which involves lot of expenditure. This problem also comes in the way of having bigger bins. The metal bin in Mirzapur (B) has the capacity to store 3 tonnes only, while villagers want a bigger one.

In this area laterite stone is available. These stones can be chiselled to build the structures in whatever shape we want. Also, the expertise to use this stone is available locally. This also caught the attention of the sangham members. They decided to use this stone in the construction of the bin. They also decided to have a structure with the capacity to store 10 tonnes of grain. In order to store different varieties of grain they planned to have two compartments in the bin.

Main features of the Bin:

- Bin capacity is 10 tonnes.
- Bin has two compartments with the facility to store 5 tonnes of grain in each part.
- The bin is constructed using the locally available laterite stone.
- Local masons who have the experience and expertise in construction using laterite stone are employed. Minimum of external expertise is used.
- Fibre glass lids are used.

Table: Total construction cost of the Bin.

Particulars	**Rupees**
Steel	3,525
Cement and bricks	3,479
Sand and mud	8,000
Stones	6,000
Paints	2,135
Lids	1,500
Labour and Other costs	1,952
Total	26,591

Compared to the concrete cement bin of almost of the same size built in Mirzapur (N) this structure is cheaper. In Mirzapur (N) the cost of construction of the bin was Rs. 36,000 and at current prices it could be Rs. 42, 450.

Besides the storage structures to store the grain collected by the sangham the project also addressed the problem of pest infestation during the storage period. One important danger faced by the grain stock is infestation by insect pests. The trend is to do away with chemical practices s they pose danger to those involved in treating the grain as well as

those consuming the grain. Admixture of insecticide with the grain is not advisable. Alternative non-chemical means need to be explored.

Farmers in Andhra Pradesh and other states are already very familiar with drying their crops by spreading them on the ground. Frequent sun drying and cleaning by picking and winnowing is used to control insect infestation. In order to protect the stock to be put in the silos, without resorting to the use of chemical pesticides, solarisation of sorghum is attempted since this is very similar to existing practice. Whereas farmers redry their grain by putting it in the sun, the objective of solarisation is not to dry but to heat the grain and hold it at a high enough temperature to kill any insects that may be present. Under the solarisation practice grain is spread thinly with thickness of one and a half inch. This grain is spread on gunny bags or on plastic sheets with straw under it as insulation. Then this grain is covered with polythene sheets in envelop form so that heat is retained within the envelop leading to the death of pests. This new treatment of grain against pests does not involve any chemicals and ordinary people with out any expertise can use it. Also, it is not costly and within the reach of poor rural women.

The members of the sangham are trained in solarisation of grain. The demonstration of the practice was held in the village itself for the convenience of the members. Later all the members of the sangham were involved in treating the grain collected to be stored in the bin and storing it in the bin. In the beginning only a few apart from the leaders of the sangham Manikyamma and Nagamma used to take the responsibility….

The project has helped the NGO staff and technical staff to understand the need for taking into account the social dimensions and needs of the women's groups, and the need for taking in to account local agro-climatic conditions in designing and operationalising the decentralised, community based grain storage structures. This is equally applicable to handling pest infestation of the grain.

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

According to the scheme of the things a five member Food Security Committee elected by the members of the women's sangham will administer the programme. There is a committee headed by Manemma. In the end only Manemma attended to all the duties. Now and then she is assisted by another member Nagamma. Participation by other members is not perceptible. Is it the failure of the leader to mobilise the members ? or is it the failure of the organisers to conscientise the leaders and members alike?

Even when a meeting is notified well in advance Manemma, president of the sangham, has to run around the village to bring the members to the meeting …

Given the cropping pattern and work availability in the village there is enough leisure/spare time for the women to participate. But the participation is not that way forthcoming. There is need to put more effort in mobilising the general members …

Over the period there appears to be some improvement. In the recent solarisation of grain all the members participated. All the members of the sangham were involved in treating the grain collected to be stored in the bin and storing it in the bin. In the beginning only a few apart from the leaders of the sangham Manikyamma and Nagamma used to take the responsibility.

This brings to the fore issues of participation. With out the energetic participation of the communities or beneficiaries it will become difficult to sustain the programme. In a situation of negligible participation the demand for transparency will also be low. With out proper participation and transparency it is difficult to visualise community endeavour. The decentralised food security is a community effort and for its success participation of all the beneficiaries and transparency of the process is a must.

In this context the role of a leader has a crucial place. The leader has to lead, but not just do all the work by herself. She has to see that all the members participate regularly in the community effort and also keep them informed about all the developments. Along with this all the members should also be conversant with the working of the programme.

Lack of participation and role in decision taking will affect the functioning of the programme. This is evident from the problem they faced in acquiring a piece of land to construct the grain storage bin in this village. In many villages where similar programme is initiated women's sanghams lobbied with the village community/panchayat to allot vacant panchayat land for constructing the bin. In Kollur village there is vacant land belonging to the panchayat, and the members of the sangham located it. The next step was to obtain a clearance from the president of the panchayat who is a elected person. He does not stay in the village but in the nearby town of Zaheerabad. Initially he consented to the proposal. Then a male member of one of the sangham members raised an issue that that piece of land belonged to him but not to the village panchayat. The intention was more to get some financial benefit by this blackmailing. The member of the sangham tried her best to dissuade him but in vain. It appears that the elected representative also lent some support to this person as he has the power to clear the claim. He also intended to benefit from the deal. Instead of coming to the help of the women's sangham he sided with the person who tried to create hurdles. This is an example of how the people's representatives in stead of being facilitators turn up as tormentors. This will have implications at the policy level… In the end sangam decided to forego it and selected a plot of land belonging to a private person and members of the sangham contributed to it. Each member contributed Rs. 20 and collected Rs. 600 to pay for the small piece of land. some

At the same time there are also instances of co-operation from male members. They received support from a male member of one of the members – Narsayya. He helps them in keeping the accounts of the sangham and generally advises them in agricultural work.

Exposure of the members of the sangham to new initiatives/practices
The nature of intervention/mobilisation and its impact on the evolution of the institutions to organise and manage dcentralised food security……..

The economic condition of the village and its influence on DFS….

The village vs the sangham……

Sustaining the initiative over a long period……..

The project has helped the NGO staff and technical staff to understand the need for taking into account the social dimensions and needs of the women's groups, locally available building materials and local expertise in using these materials in designing and operationalising the decentralised, community based grain storage structures.

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