



# Rhythms in Development - II

*A brief analytical report of the various activities and programmes that emerged in the course of our involvement mainly with the Adivasis of North Andhra Pradesh during 2002 - 2007*



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**Shrikant Joshi (June 24, 1953 – April 3, 2006)**

Shrikant spent his final year with us. He was an unexpected gift. In 2005 we received a letter from him desirous of engaging in some concrete activity with Laya. We jumped at this opportunity and engaged him as an 'Accompanist,' a word coined by him, on our herbal based health care project.

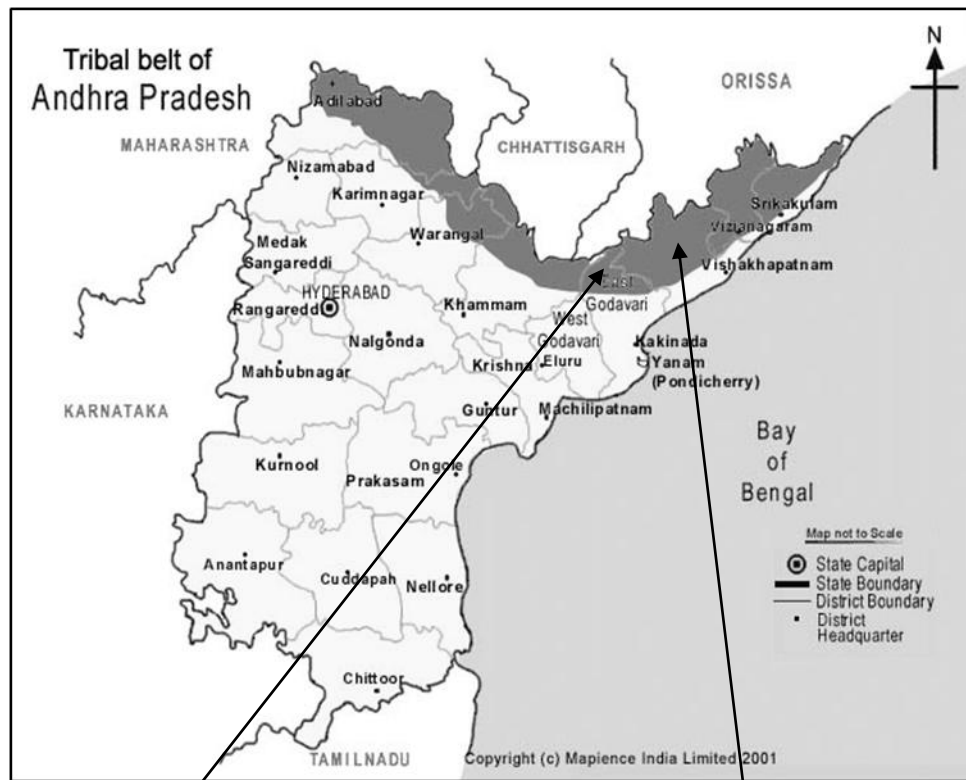
In no time he was involved in a wide array of programme activities and engaged with our team at all levels. Given his special quality of empathetic listening he became a mentor to many of our colleagues within the organisation.

In the short period that he was with us, Shrikant had won the hearts of all the members in our team.

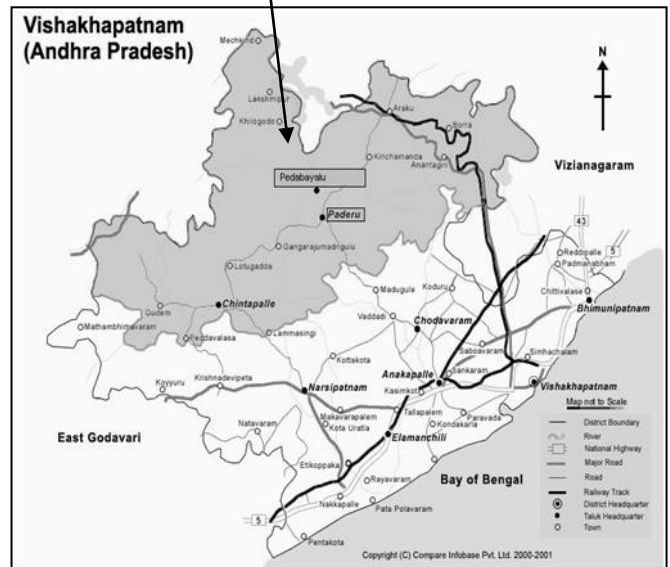
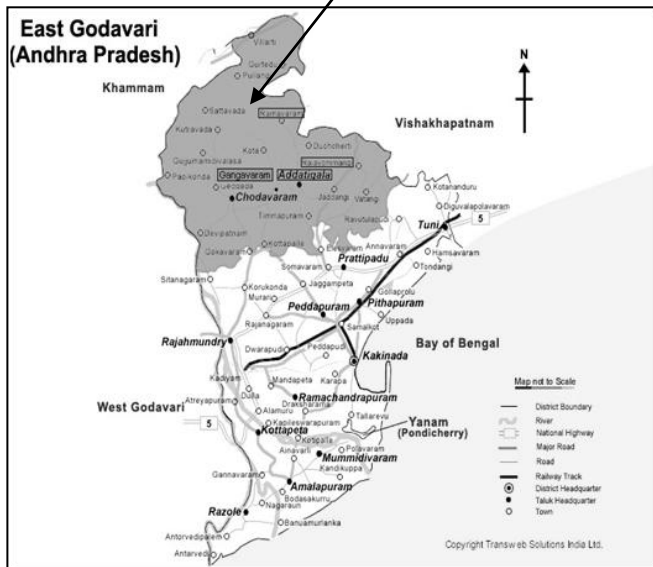
We miss you dearly Shrikant but we know that your spirit is overlooking us with love and care!

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### AREAS OF INTENSIVE INTERVENTION



## Preface

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This report traverses Laya's engagement with adivasi communities in the last five years of its long and winding journey that began in 1985.

This period has been one of consolidation for us at one level while embarking on new initiatives on the other. In the process of our work we have experienced many successes as well as challenges. It is in fact this combination of successes and challenges that has kept us going.

While deepening our intervention in our core areas of intervention: human rights, natural resource management, herbal-based health care, micro-finance and youth and women's empowerment, we were called upon to grapple with the need for convergence between sector based interventions within the organisation. Our regular strategic planning and review sessions contributed immensely to collective thinking and future directions.

We were fortunate to be evaluated as an organisation in 2003 with the initiative and support of Cordaid. This gave us insights into our own functioning and helped to steer our course in a meaningful direction.

Our sincere appreciation to all those who have supported us in our efforts, especially our donors.

**Our Vision:** *We envisage a socially just and humanized society where the marginalized communities find a space for survival with dignity. The vulnerability of such communities is under greater threat with the forces of globalisation and privatisation on their day-to-day life situation.*

**Our Mission:** *Empowerment of marginalized communities for assertion of their rights and to promote relevant sustainable alternatives at the grassroots level.*

**Our Goals:**

- *To promote empowerment of communities in urban, rural, adivasi contexts;*
- *To promote sustainable development initiatives at various level;*
- *To undertake capacity development initiatives with various target groups: especially youth and women;*
- *To build strategic alliances with other voluntary organisations, networks, and educational institutions for social development;*
- *To develop an alternative database through research and documentation to educate, influence policy and support local initiatives;*



## 1 THE CONTEXT: CHANGING REALITIES AND CHALLENGES

### 1.1 THE CONTEXT

Laya in its work with adivasi communities into its 20<sup>th</sup> year has been through several stages of successes and experienced many obstacles in addressing their core concerns. It is not easy to pin point what has been the efficacy of this involvement through the years simply because the outcome of every intervention, positive or negative has led to new insights towards shaping the road ahead.

Situating the organisation as a system that is open to learning has helped build a positive perspective in understanding and relating to social change as a continuous process where communities remain integral to any intervention. We are essentially concerned with the identity of adivasi communities. Adivasi communities are increasingly marginalized in spite of inhabiting resource rich areas and are constantly threatened by commercial interests that interfere with their habitats. The involvement of the market and the government as external agents of development are impacting their livelihood. This is evident in the gradual erosion of their changing patterns of livelihood practices as well as their community oriented value systems.

The threat to adivasi identity must be understood within a socio-historical context of the adivasi communities in the region. The colonial regime had entered into an extractive, exploitative relationship with adivasi communities. The local non-adivasi feudal lords under the patronage of the British rulers continued their hold over these resource rich regions unchecked. Later independent India did enact protective laws yet the executive system has been inefficient in their implementation. Subsequently non-adivasi influx into the area has increased significantly. Today they constitute 48% of the population and own almost 56% of the land in the region demarcated as the *agency areas* of Andhra Pradesh

### 1.2 CHANGING REALITIES

#### 1.2.1 ADIVASI IDENTITY AND THE MARKET

Contemporary neo-liberal discourse speaks in favour of opening out the markets. The word 'open' implies freeing the process that determines production, selling, buying and consumption of goods and services. The assumption is that the playing field will ensure the welfare of all based on the rationale of 'individual agency'. It ignores the fact that an individual is a product of a socio-economic, cultural and political history that has already determined his/her choices. It is precisely this right to choose that has the market and adivasi communities in conflict. Adivasi

communities inhabit resource rich areas that contain precious raw materials that fuel the market. The buyers in the market perceive these raw materials as products to accumulate and exploit in promoting their interests toward the pursuit of 'profit'. Cheap raw materials improve the efficiency of production, increase profit, which they reason is rightfully theirs, since they have the knowhow to do it. What is not valued is that the raw materials come cheap because they are subsidized or deemed to be gifted by mother earth. For the adivasi communities it is quite a different story. They share a symbiotic relationship with these natural resources that sustain them.

Social justice is almost always relegated when it is juxtaposed with economic advantage. That adivasi communities would find themselves forced to be ideologically, socially and culturally uprooted, as well as physically displaced from their natural habitat, is considered part of the pay off in the neo-liberal development agenda. 'Displacement' remains a major threat not just in the form of project displacement, but also induced through land alienation, deforestation, depletion of natural resources and the like.

This is predominantly evident in the context of land issues in the adivasi context. Land is one of the capitals of production, which the market recognizes as 'rent', a means to sustain ownership. Market investors continue to scan the very corners of the earth, horizontally and vertically in search of ways and means to find available land to reduce the cost of production. With the increase in population and consumption levels in mainstream non-adivasi society, land has steadily upped its price in dramatic proportions.

Adivasi communities value land in quite a different way. The value of land to them is more than just an economic resource base, but an inseparable part of their socio-cultural being with which they share an integral relationship. They use land only in as much as the community needed the resource for their survival. Moreover, the regenerative element of land is given adequate allowance in adivasi societies, thereby facilitating a balance between 'nature' and 'human' beings.

Thus the pressure on acquiring 'land' in adivasi areas has meant the erosion of what was once a common property resource. 'Title deeds' were not previously a part of an adivasis' vocabulary. Government interventions, pre-colonial and post-colonial have forced adivasi communities to perceive land as individually owned rather than as a common property resource. Adivasi communities over time have been forced to differentiate 'land' as individual units requiring legal affirmation and protection. The once prevalent community bond with land and nature that shaped the identity of adivasis is being irreparably destroyed.

### 1.2.2 ADIVASI IDENTITY AND THE GOVERNMENT

The government's approach to development in the adivasi areas is inconsistent. While the administrative laws and government policies to a large extent respect and protect adivasi interests, the people responsible for their execution at various levels do not. A deep-rooted apathy towards adivasi communities prevails as a culture of the administrative system. Adivasi communities are conveniently stereotyped as backward, illiterate, uncivilized, etc. Tragically this attitude is being perpetuated in schools and colleges in the adivasi areas by non-adivasi teachers to the point where we see young educated adivasi youth being alienated from their own culture and rich customary traditions. The substance of what they are being taught has little or no relationship with their immediate surroundings. Strangely while the government has several positive laws that allow adivasi youth to enter the mainstream system, there has been little effort to imbibe and disseminate their own traditional knowledge and belief systems through the educational system.

The frustration over the failure of development programmes, policies, laws, etc., to enhance the livelihood threshold of adivasi communities has only perpetuated the belief that 'adivasis' are in fact just what they are said to be. Consequently the market players with their political affiliations are struggling to remove protective measures over adivasi resources. Apparently national policy frameworks related to development projects prioritize 'public purpose' over adivasi interests rationalising and legitimizing land acquisition through its 'eminent domain' status even if it contradicts protective legislations of adivasi land. The inevitable reality is that directly or indirectly the adivasi communities are forced to grapple with external forces to defend their rights.

We believe that adivasi communities can defend their right to livelihood resources and their cultural heritage from these external influences. How this would be deemed possible raises operational dilemmas/challenges. Nonetheless their struggle to withstand and negotiate with the complex external environment continues unabated.

## 1.3 A PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

### 1.3.1 CHALLENGES/DILEMMAS

While the market and the government are the visible proponents of these external forces, there are also internal factors within the adivasi community that have impacted their identity. There is a growing amnesia of their traditional knowledge systems, customary law, language, song, dance and other social customs. Their ways of settling disputes and maintaining a particular lifestyle attuned with the humanist approach to living is gradually giving way to a



more commercialized, self-centric, individualistic way of living more inclined with mainstream culture prevailing in the non-advasi areas.

The once prevalent barter system is now being turned into a money economy. The effects are seen in the changing agricultural patterns. Cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, tapioca, etc., have begun to appear where previously food crops used to be the norm. Various kinds of millets, grains, pulses etc., were adequate in taking care of their nutritional needs directly. Money is now sought to meet increasing aspirations associated with material things that are outside their cultural realm, often leading to food insecurity as well as a general vulnerability to the market and its vicious oscillations. This is particularly apparent among the younger more exposed adivasis.

The younger generation over a period of time has come to devalue their customary socio-economic practice in favour of the consumer driven lifestyle of the non-advasis. They perceive their own cultural practices as being inferior and archaic, embracing instead the values drawn from the mainstream media and its proliferation of material images, movies, dance and song as their models of aspiration. In effect, they do this without realising they are in the process of alienating themselves from their own rich community heritage.

This is the challenge. The dilemma is in maintaining a balance between the advasi youth's articulated aspirations and the community's real needs. On one hand we do not want to be directly responsible for their choices and on the other we hope to facilitate informed processes through which they may make their own decisions for their future. We hope to augment the pool of resources (technical, human and material) that guide these decisions towards making their own meaningful choices. In other words we recognize the advasi community's right to self-determination to be supported in making informed decisions.

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### 1.3.2 OPERATIONALISING SOCIAL CHANGE

Facilitating change and change processes has been one of our core concerns. In order to understand and relate with advasi communities as subjects of development processes, it is imperative to develop a strategic and updated understanding of their contextual reality. We believe in consistently reflecting on our own actions and on being in regular dialogue with the advasi communities through which we hope that we can derive a fair amount of success in effecting their development. Our way forward is to suggest, facilitate and demonstrate models of development critically evaluating the progress, conceptually and operationally.

## 1.4 WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

We have been grappling with several kinds of interventions at the grassroots level. These have been in various arenas, linked together directly and indirectly, and instrumental in forging our strategies for the way forward. The underlying challenge is on the one hand to ensure that the rights of the adivasis are safeguarded and on the other hand to promote micro alternatives that address their overall livelihood needs. The interventions need to cope with changing realities as well as stand the test of time for qualitative transformation.

### 1.4.1 LAND ALIENATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

When the organisation first took shape, we were confronted quite accidentally with the issues related to non-advansi encroachment of adivasi land. After directly taking up cases for litigation we realized the need to promote a local understanding of the laws protecting adivasi interest. Although we continue to take up legal cases on behalf of the adivasi communities, related to land, other human rights abuses and atrocities especially on women we are simultaneously facilitating and building the capacity of adivasis to struggle for their rights utilising their legal entitlements. Internally adivasi societies have their customary law that is being overshadowed by the new political governance systems. In this regard the external legal system needs to be sensitized, so it may respect the local justice system in the adivasi context. In other words, a creative response externally and internally is necessary to facilitate community level dispute resolution mechanisms in the adivasi context.

In the course of our intervention we have felt the vacuum of a rights based legal perspective in the local context. The existing legal machinery hardly ever responds to the real needs of the adivasi community. A need was felt to promote paralegals who could represent the legal needs of the community. Our initial involvement has extended into a programme that is now a part of a national level Institution, the Indian Institute of Para Legal Studies (IIPLS).

### 1.4.2 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Ensuring the repossession of alienated land to the adivasi is only half the problem resolved. The other half is to convert these entitlements into productive assets. Efficient utilisation of land involves ensuring improved production as well as enhanced productivity. This involves methods of agriculture that are not only more efficient but are also effectively sustainable in the longer run. Adivasi communities traditionally have been growing food crops, which were relatively inefficient monetarily but were adequate in meeting their food security needs. The aggressive marketing of cash crops has changed their pattern of cultivation as well as consumption. Consequently there have been short-term gains financially with adverse issues of decreasing overall productivity due to the overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, depleting the

nutrients in the soil. This is apart from being vulnerable to the highly fluctuating external market prices and erratic climatic conditions. Thus viable alternatives in terms of what can be grown, as well as technical inputs related to water and soil conservation and the usage of organic inputs becomes all the more relevant. Our challenge is in engaging with the community in a process of dialogue on how best to cope with this, food/cash crop dilemma.

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#### 1.4.3 HERBAL- BASED HEALTH CARE

Access to health remains poor due to lack of adequate and inept ways in which the primary health centres and other local health institutions are run. The outreach and track record of allopathic health care promoted by the government has been dismal. The less said about the other government sponsored alternative medicine: AYUSH, the better. The challenge has been to promote and upgrade an alternative mode of health care, which is based on the traditional knowledge of adivasi communities and is accessible and cost effective. Hence, our efforts have been to empower, revitalize and develop sustainable ways through which herbal-based health care can be promoted. The issues that we are addressing relate to the popularisation of traditional knowledge for effectiveness and outreach of health services; attitudinal change in the community to herbal-based medicines and the standardisation of herbal medicines for common diseases; countering government apathy and antipathy to adivasi health practitioners; and finally to defend the cultural rights of adivasis to practice their health care system.

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#### 1.4.4 MICRO-FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Incomes within adivasi communities are not regular. Managing resources particularly with respect to monetary savings remains a new concept. To create and sustain a self-reliant micro financial institution in such a situation is problematic. Simply because promoting financially sustainable institutions involve inculcating entrepreneurial skills along with understanding and utilising markets within and outside the adivasi context. This has been a difficult ground to tread. Yet we remain committed in continuing our effort in micro-enterprise and micro-savings as pertinent to a learning process that with institutional linkages (government and non-government) can achieve improved access to credit and opportunities to markets that ensure a better deal to the adivasi producer. The challenge remains in searching for alternatives to ensure a sufficient level of financial viability to meet their livelihood aspirations without compromising their food security needs.

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#### 1.4.5 CAPACITY BUILDING OF YOUTH AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING OF CBO

Building capacities to empower adivasi communities to lead and sustain processes that shape their response to the factors that impinge on their ability to live meaningfully and with dignity is

part of an overall objective of Laya. We have organized a series of capacity building programs, some issue specific others more generic focusing on mainly young men and women. Through these programs we have tried to nurture leadership of community based organisations (CBO). The emergence of adivasi led CBO is fairly recent with results that have not been always encouraging. Mainstream influences often thwart the CBO's role in promoting the collective interest of the community. Thus our concern now, lies in facilitating them to recognise their own potential to play a role, which places their community's interests at the centre and in the process also realize their own aspirations. The challenge is in being able to channel their frustrations creatively so that they may find spaces for meaningful community based involvement.

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#### 1.4.6 GENDER FACTOR

In addressing the gender as a cross cutting theme in our intervention, we have applied four key insights in strategy planning:

- that women like men have different and specific needs
- that women are in a disadvantaged position in relation to men with reference to access and control over means of production
- that women are an integral part of bringing about a change in power relationships within their families and communities; and
- that women have a crucial role to play in social transformation processes.

*Our journey continues...*

## 2 LAND ALIENATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In spite of the protective laws in Scheduled Areas the rights of adivasis remain continually violated. For us human rights are the basic rights related to human existence as stated in the Constitution of India, which refer more specifically to the socio-economic and cultural rights of adivasi communities. For adivasis the threat to land, water and forests is a threat to their livelihood, which is symbiotically connected to their identity as ethnic groups. Furthermore their civil and political rights are threatened as well, since they are often caught in the midst of the conflict between the militant groups and the police.

Laya's work related to Land Alienation and Human Rights is undertaken by Resource for Legal Action (RLA), an autonomous functioning unit.

In the last five years RLA's key areas of involvement are:

- Accessing the legal system and promoting alternative dispute resolution systems to safeguard the rights of adivasi communities;
- Empowering adivasi communities to assert their rights within the Constitutional framework

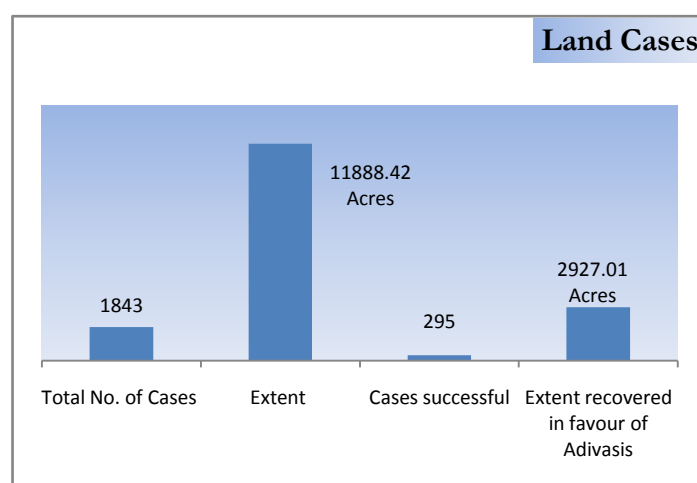
### 2.1 ACCESSING THE LEGAL SYSTEM

#### 2.1.1 LEGAL ADVOCACY

**Legal Advocacy** relates to cases ranging from land rights issues to maintenance cases, bail applications, primarily in situations where adivasis denied justice due to the superior resources and influence of their opponents, and Public Interest Litigations (PIL). Such cases mainly relate to the following:

**Land Cases:** So far about 22,000 acres have been repossessed by adivasis due to our intervention. During this reporting period

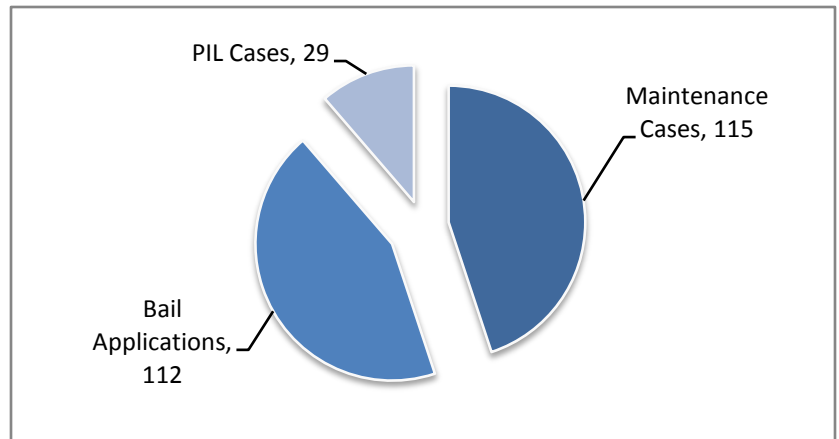
RLA has taken up a total of 1843 cases covering an extent of 11888 acres land. Of these 295 cases an extent of 2927 acres land have been decided in favour of adivasis.



Monthly maintenance to women through legal support, 115 adivasi women (mainly deserted by non- adivasi men) have been successful in obtaining monthly maintenance.

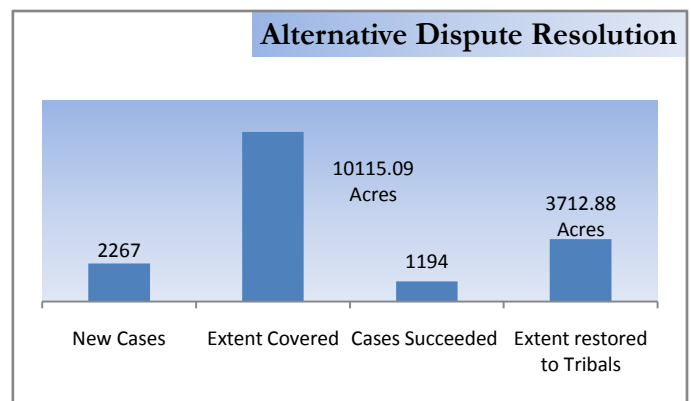
Bail Applications: Where adivasis have been remanded in police custody bail applications are facilitated. 112 such cases were successfully handled. There was a sudden increase in bail applications in 2006-07 related to 80 adivasis, 17 of them women, allegedly arrested in land and forest cases and lodged in the Central Jail.

Public Interest Litigations (PIL): RLA has taken up 29 such cases in this reporting period. These cases relate to official negligence, questioning non- adivasis' illegal dwelling, unregulated gemstone mining and other such issues.



### 2.1.2 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

ADR refers to cases, which have been resolved outside the legal justice or court system. So far RLA has successfully managed to restore 3712.88 acres of land to the adivasis through this method.



## 2.2 EMPOWERING ADIVASI COMMUNITIES

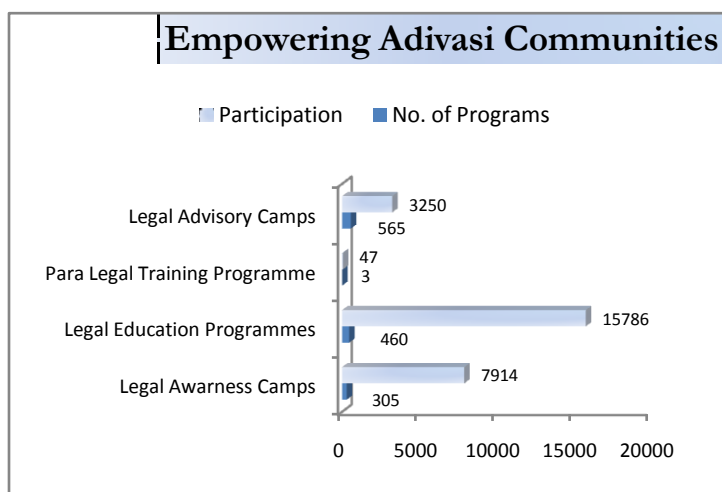
### 2.2.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

This relates to the following ways and means by which adivasis are oriented and trained in legal aspects:

**Legal Awareness Camps** are conducted in villages to inculcate a basic understanding of accessing justice through the legal systems. 305 camps have been organized with a participation of 7914 adivasis.



**Legal Education Programmes** catered more to the youth. They largely focus on the understanding of the right to self-governance, land rights and other related legal issues. They suggest ways to address local issues and take up measures through which the community can resolve them. 460 such programmes, attended by 15786 adivasis, have been carried out.



**Legal Advisory Camps** are periodically held mainly on weekly market days in nodal areas, where legal cases are identified, legal advice as well as suggestions are offered, particularly in drafting petitions or representations to authorities on various administrative and legal issues.

**Paralegal Training Programmes** are predominantly long-term and short-term training processes for selected adivasi youth so that they may be able to play the role of paralegals in various contexts. In this region the focus has been mainly on land rights. These training programmes were initiated by RLA and later affiliated them to the IIPLS.

In addition, **Sensitisation Programmes** on 'Agency Laws' were undertaken periodically for officials such as the Special Deputy Collectors/Revenue Divisional Officers, Tahsildars, Deputy Tahsildars working in the Scheduled Areas of Andhra Pradesh. This has created a positive impact to some extent on the style and functioning of government officials in dealing with land issues.

## 2.3 CAMPAIGNS AND DOCUMENTATION

RLA has been instrumental in spearheading a large number of campaigns supported by other units of the organisation. The campaigns relate to land issues, legal violations and policy concerns. RLA has

Year	Documentation				
	Surveys	Reports	Booklets /Books	Translations	Documents /Studies
<b>2002-2003</b>	10	7	1	2	1
<b>2003-2004</b>	5	0	1	0	0
<b>2004-2005</b>	4	0	4	0	2
<b>2005-2006</b>	8	3	3	0	0
<b>2006-2007</b>	17	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	44	10	10	2	3

also been involved in various documentation processes, which have facilitated informed action and campaign activity at the grassroots level.

***A recent intervention on illegal land acquisitions...***

On November 22, 2006 an enquiry was made by Joint Collector East Godavari on a direction from the Secretary of Adivasi Welfare on the representation of RLA team members on illegal acquisition of lands from nonadivasis. In the enquiry in Rampachodavaram about 300 adivasis and other leaders attended and represented the issue. Out of 300, 180 were men and 120 were women.

The enquiry officer (Joint Collector of East Godavari district) who conducted public enquiry against illegal land acquisitions submitted his report to the government. The report states that the RDO (Regional Division Officer) Rampachodavaram was paid huge amounts as compensation to suppress the illegal acquisition of lands by non-adivasis without taking into the consideration of the rights of adivasis. He recommended a disciplinary action against the RDO. The report was brought out on April 3, 2007.

### 3 NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Natural Resources form the 'core' source of adivasi livelihood. The ecological management of natural resources has been the underlying factor contributing towards a dignified, locally appropriate and ecologically sustainable lifestyle among adivasi communities. Natural resources with favourable conditions can generate required abilities and assets for the outcome of desired livelihood security options at the household, community and village levels.

In the recent past, however, a series of changes at the local, regional, national and global levels in the socio-economic and environmental conditions, have increasingly affected the nature, status and conditions of the natural resources – the 'core' source of adivasi livelihood. These thereby have significantly affected the fabric of sustainability of livelihood security in adivasi areas.

This is particularly significant in the High Altitude Tribal Zone (HATZ), one of the 7 geo-climatic zones of Andhra Pradesh.

Our main objective in improving sustainable productivity of natural resources is to ensure that adivasi communities of the HATZ value and equip themselves with sustainable technologies in natural resource management to be 'food secure' and have basic livelihood security.

#### 3.1 INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

During this reporting phase we have been involved in developing an integrated farming package that enables adivasi farmers to make optimum use of their lands. This was carried out intensively in two Panchayats: Dalipadu (East Godavari District) and Peddakodapalli (Visakhapatnam District) were selected since they are in remote areas and where the organisation had a previous working relationship. Dalipadu panchayat consists of 7 villages and Peddakodapalli, 26 villages. In the course of developing baseline information we tried to identify Below Poverty Level (BPL) families by analysing the net agricultural and non-agricultural incomes falling below Rs. 15,000 per annum. The data revealed that as many as 62% in Dalipadu and 67% in Peddakodapalli of the families were below the poverty line.

Each village community based on its own unique situation identified areas for intervention. Our role was to accompany the village to address their livelihood concerns keeping in mind the most vulnerable families. The approach to the interventions was facilitated through strengthening people's institutions in taking up development initiatives in the village. This was important from the perspective of sustainability. The innovative initiatives, especially in relation to value added mixed cropping in agriculture was taken up with farmers who were ready to experiment on their own farms.

### 3.1.1.1 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES

**SRI (System of Rice Intensification):** This was initiated in demonstrative plots in the last rabi season<sup>1</sup> (December 2004) to increase the yield of paddy with low investment and less water consumption. 42 farmers (of whom 15 were women) introduced SRI in 10.75 acres of land in 16 villages of Peddakodapalli. The results were very encouraging in as much as there appeared to be a significant 40% increase in the yield. In Dalipadu 6 farmers in 2 acres took up this initiative but the venture did not succeed due to the lack of moisture availability at the time of transplantation.



Farmer holding his crop on a SRI Field

The changes were observed during the demonstration and post-demonstration of SRI in Peddakodapalli. The investment cost decreased by 25% in terms of labor and fertilizers. Technically in terms of water usage SRI cultivation consumes 30% of the water normally required for regular paddy cultivation.

**Value added mixed cropping:** 32 farmers from 12 villages in Peddakodapalli and 92 farmers from all the villages in Dalipadu took up this initiative comprising a combination of crops.



Value added mixed Crops

Alternative crops were introduced instead of commercial crops like cotton,

which were found to be unreliable and had negative effects on the soil when cultivated indiscriminately. The alternative crops introduced in Dalipadu were ginger and turmeric. Also extension of cultivation was promoted comprising maize, ragi; pulses like black gram, green gram, red gram; tubers like *chemma*<sup>2</sup>, pedapendalum<sup>3</sup> in both the panchayats resulting in

<sup>1</sup> There are two major cropping seasons, namely, Kharif and Rabi. The Kharif season is during the south-west monsoon (July-October). During this season, agricultural activities take place both in rainfed areas and irrigated areas. The Rabi season is during the winter months (October-March)

<sup>2</sup> Elephant ears - *Ciladium esculentum*

<sup>3</sup> Greater yam - *Dioscorea alata*

reduced dependence on cotton, increased income and availability of vegetables, pulses and tubers for direct consumption during the season.

**Organic fertilizers:** Vermi-compost was the main focus: 8 pits in Dalipadu and 92 pits in Peddakodapalli were undertaken. The purpose was mainly to encourage farmers to use organic compost rather than rely on chemical fertilizers. The response from the farmers was better in Peddakodapalli, as compared to Dalipadu.

**Kitchen gardens** were introduced with 9 varieties of seed material mainly for vegetables and greens in 157 households in Dalipadu and 90 households in 22 villages of Peddakodapalli panchayat. The objective was to create opportunities for nutritive diet. In Dalipadu, vegetable seeds were especially supplied to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families apart from encouraging kitchen gardens.



Kitchen garden

**Horticulture** included coconut plants, mango, pineapple, custard apple, guava, chickoo, and orange being grown on adivasi farmers' lands. On an average the survival rate was as much as 70%. Approximately 550 farmers participated in this initiative, which was started in 2003. So far there have been little returns in terms of fruit. The plants are still at a growing stage. Returns are expected from 2008 onwards for species like guava, custard apple, cashew and mango.



Horticulture on Sloping lands

**Community grain banks:** These have been functioning successfully in the last two years. The major grains stored were paddy<sup>4</sup>, ragi<sup>5</sup> and sama<sup>6</sup>. The adivasi field assistants are maintaining records of transactions in every village. Grain banks are especially useful in lean times when the farmer is forced to depend on external support.

<sup>4</sup> The English term *paddy* specifically means “wet rice field”, not just any area where rice is grown (derived from Malay *padi* “uncooked rice”)

<sup>5</sup> Finger Millet

<sup>6</sup> Little Millet



**Rainwater harvesting** by digging pits in about 5% of the land results in increase of about 30% in crop yield. This technology has been tested in East Godavari district and found to be effective. 22 pits were dug during the project period in Dalipadu. The major obstacle to the replication of this technique is that it is labour intensive and the adivasi farmer is not yet willing to bear the cost.

### 3.1.2 REGENERATION OF ENDEMIC SPECIES: SEED DIBBLING

Seed dibbling<sup>7</sup> in 11 types of economically important species was undertaken covering 600 hectares of degraded forestlands within a cluster of 20 villages in Peddakodapalli. Out of the 11 species, large quantities of *pongamia pinnate* (pongamia)<sup>8</sup> and *caryota urens* (elephant palm)<sup>9</sup>, soapnut, broom grass and shikakai seeds were dibbled. The germination and survival of these species (except soapnut) is about 60%. Apart from the above five species,



Domestication of broom grass

#### Increase in density of the species in the surveyed areas after seed dibbling

Species	Value Addition after seed dibbling
<b>Pongamia</b>	1% to 5-10% increase
<b>Broom grass</b>	2% in forest areas (almost nil in the case of domestication) to 5%-6% increase Domestication of hill broom was initiated in 3-4 villages
<b>Elephant palm</b>	about 1% to 40% increase
<b>Soapnut</b>	0% (newly introduced on an experimental basis) to 5% increase
<b>Shikakai</b>	1% to 40% increase
<b>Wild mango</b>	1% to 3% increase

small quantities of *rauvolfia* (sarpagandha), *sterculia urens*, jafra, jackfruit, wild mango and sampenga seeds were also dibbled. The major outcome of this activity was that we can see a lot of roots stock of *pongamia*, *caryota*, shikakai, broom grass, wild mangoes, and other species. This intervention could be replicated in other degraded forest/podu lands.

Most of these interventions are in podu (shifting cultivation) lands and hence directly benefits the families. The roots' stock has been so far supportive to the growing of creeper pulses.

<sup>7</sup> Seed dibbling refers to the making a small indentation in the surface of the soil where the seed is placed.

<sup>8</sup> This tree bears minor oil seeds.

<sup>9</sup> It is colloquially known as *Gilliga Chettu* from which *Gilliga Kallu* the fermenting tree sap is tapped.



Domestication of broom grass has resulted in increased income from harvesting broom ear heads and making of brooms. The real benefits however will accrue after the species grow in time.

### 3.2 EXTENSIVE INTERVENTION

These interventions mentioned were extended to other areas. The following table indicates our work at a broader level:



Utilized shady places for income generating crops

#### Awareness Campaign on effects of cotton farming

A study was initiated to investigate the proliferation of cotton farming in the adivasi areas of East Godavari district and its impact on social cultural and economic lifestyle (increase in indebtedness) of adivasi farmers. The study resulted in a campaign to create awareness on the harmful effects of cotton farming on the land (soils) and socio-cultural and economic lifestyles of adivasi communities.

Natural Resource Management - Extensive Intervention			
Intervention	East Godavari	Visakhapatnam	
<i>Sustainable Agriculture</i>	<i>No. of Families</i>	<i>No. of Families</i>	<i>Total</i>
SRI	111	125	236
Mixed crops	488	110	598
Alternative Crops	227	0	227
Live Fencing	96	150	246
Micro land development	234	0	234
<i>Organic Manure</i>			
Vermicompost	100	80	180
Green manure	199	125	324
Penning	50	0	50
Composting	36	0	36
<i>Rainwater Harvesting</i>			
5% model	15	1	16
Bunding	8	8	16
Seed dibbling	11	6	17
Plantation	11	6	17
<i>Integrated Farming</i>			
Floriculture	88	112	200
Horticulture	285	30	315
Kitchen Gardens	112	275	387
Fisheries	25	16	41
Poultry	26	0	26

### 3.3 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Science and Technology unit has played a role in researching and developing innovative methodologies to improve the existing local technologies in agriculture and collection of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP).

#### 3.3.1 ACTION RESEARCH EXPERIMENTATION

1. **Conservation and Scientific Tapping of Gum (*Steruclia urens*):** Action research experiments were undertaken to ascertain scientific tapping of gum karaya trees for better quantity, quality and sustainability. The findings were shared with local gum collectors and a training module was developed.
2. **SRI:** Trials of SRI in Paderu were conducted to improve the quality of crops.
3. **Experimentation in Farm Compost Preparation:** Experiments were conducted in the use of palm fibre conversion in vermi-compost. The manure developed in this process adds value to the soil's ability to retain moisture. Scientific testing of manure showed positive results.
4. **Earthworm Supply Centre:** An earthworm supply and demonstration centre was established at Tantikonda, Rajavomangi mandal, E.G. District.



Gumkaraya propagation through stems

#### 3.3.2 PROMOTION OF AGRO-FORESTRY MODELS

The following models of agro-forestry were promoted as demonstrations to facilitate farmers in economically viable and sustainable use of their lands and for effective afforestation:

- Casuarina plantation of 150 acres for 120 farmers in 10 villages, Rajavomangi mandal, E.G district;



Casuarina Plantation

- Seed dibbling in 1200 acres deforested in Peddakodapalli, Peddabayulu mandal, Visakhapatnam district;
- Restoration of *Caryota urens* (elephant palm) species in Peddakodapalli. Density of the *caryota* species increased by 90% in the area;
- *Sterculia urens* restoration (Rajavomangi mandal) and broom grass domestication (Peddabayulu mandal);
- Mixed cropping demonstrated to 50 farmers to strengthen their existing practice.



Restoration of *caryota urens*

### 3.3.3 VALUE ADDED TESTS

- Experimenting with by-products of gums such as gum powder, granules, etc.
- Trying out ways for value addition to wild mangoes and pineapple such as pickles, jams, jellies, etc. So far nearly 10 products have been developed from wild mangoes. Women have been involved in their preparation and are also selling the products in the weekly local market.

### 3.3.4 FIELD STUDIES

- A study of mixed cropping in the adivasi context including the use of traditional methods.
- A study documenting gum tapping and ways by which to sustain quantity, quality of extraction and handling practice, while also conserving the tree.
- A study of palmyra tree and the use of its different parts in the adivasi livelihood.

### 3.3.5 TECHNOLOGY DISSEMINATION

- 150 gum tappers were trained on the sustainable ways of gum extraction.
- 6 training programmes for VSS/CFM members were conducted in the management of people's institution vis-à-vis forest management.
- 100 progressive farmers were involved in discussing the importance of mixed cropping.
- 4 exposure visits for 100 farmers to agriculture research stations.
- Involvement of CBOs in the studies, experiments and research to facilitate their own learning and involvement in disseminating the new technologies in the region.

## 4 HERBAL BASED HEALTH CARE

Adivasi areas of East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts have seen a decline in the overall health situation. People in these areas suffer from endemic health problems such as tuberculosis (TB), malaria, gynecological problems<sup>10</sup>, diarrhea, and jaundice. During the monsoon season deaths due to malaria are not uncommon.

Access to mainstream health care in these areas is limited. The government has not allocated adequate resources to cater to the health needs. Epidemic diseases have been neglected in terms of remedial and preventive measures. Adivasi communities inhabiting these areas without proper access to clean drinking water, sanitation and adequate nutrition are vulnerable to disease. Meanwhile changing lifestyles and food habits due to external forces have resulted in the decrease in local health care knowledge and resources. Consequently this has led to the dependence of the adivasi community on unqualified private health practitioners (quacks), whose services are expensive and often ineffective. In addition the government has not made an attempt to understand, recognize and develop prevailing local herbal-based knowledge systems that could materialize in health care practices that would be socially and economically relevant in the adivasi context.

Since 1993-1994 we started investigating into the viability of traditional medicinal knowledge systems within the community and its legitimacy in the region. What began as a process to study and revitalize traditional knowledge systems has developed into our Herbal Based Health Care Unit. In this unit we have developed a set of processes that ensures safe, effective and affordable health care within the adivasi community based on traditional health practices involving traditional health practitioners (vaidus) and trained community health practitioners.

### 4.1 VANANTHARAM

A significant outcome of the Alternative Health Care unit's involvement is the construction of a Health Centre (Vanantharam) in an adivasi region. The idea behind the establishment of this entity was to lend visibility to traditional adivasi medicine whose legitimacy in practice was being questioned by the mainstream so called modern medicinal system. The purpose was also to bolster the confidence and credibility of existing Traditional



Vanantharam

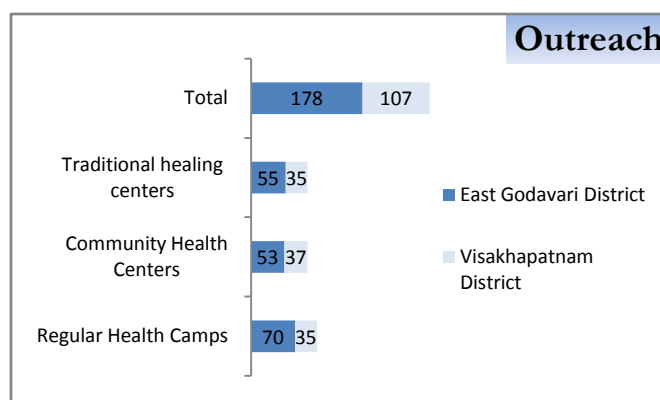
<sup>10</sup> Especially vaginal discharge (*leucorrhea*) also known colloquially as 'white discharge'.



Health Practitioners (THPs), besides creating a space for young men and women interested in practicing herbal medicine to acquire value added skills to function as community health workers.

## 4.2 OUTREACH

Our outreach in two districts during this reporting phase was 285 villages: 178 in East Godavari District and 107 in Visakhapatnam District.



### 4.2.1 REGULAR HEALTH CAMPS (RHC)

Regular Health Camps are organized at the weekly markets (shandy) where there is a regular gathering of the local community. Located in a small hut/stall



the Community Health Practitioners (CHPs) offer medical advice and treatment through herbal medicine. In the last 5 years 16,316 patients have been treated.

Regular Health Camps		
Year	No of Places	Treated
2002-03	4	2131
2003-04	4	2655
2004-05	8	3206
2005-06	9	4408
2006-07	10	3916

### 4.2.2 COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES (CHC)

Community Health Centres are located in the village where they serve as nodal health centres run by CHPs for villages nearby. 17708 patients have been treated in these centres during the last 5 years with an increasing outreach.

Community Health Centres		
Year	No of Places	Treated
2004-2005	24	4282
2005-2006	30	6463
2006-2007	33	6963



### 4.2.3 TRADITIONAL HEALING CENTRES (THC)

These centres operate in the same manner as the Community Health Centres, except that they are run by Traditional Health Practitioners (THPs) who are members of the THP Federation. There are 90 Traditional Healing Centres: East Godavari District (60), and Visakhapatnam (30).

#### 4.2.4 TRADITIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS NETWORK

Two Traditional health Practitioners Networks of the same name Advivasi Sampradya Mulika Vydyula Sankshema Sangham were formed: one in East Godavari district (130 members) and the other in Visakhapatnam district (80 members). Both are registered with the same name under the Societies Registration Act. The two networks are involved in campaigns to protect endangered herbal species as well as to create awareness of particular epidemic diseases such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, etc. As a part of this campaign they are also involved in creating awareness on endangered species to prevent outside agents from indiscriminately acquiring these species from the local community. The members of the networks also conduct curative health camps collectively to exchange and build on their knowledge of herbal plants and their medicinal use.

#### 4.2.5 CAPACITY BUILDING

To expand the outreach of traditional health practices the Herbal Based Health Care unit has initiated training programmes with THPs to build on their existing knowledge. We have been working with them to upgrade their knowledge and skills as well as address issues that arise during their practice. We also involved traditional birth attendants in improving their skills to conduct safe deliveries.

Young men and women who are interested in herbal medicine have also been inducted in a training process spanning over 10 months. So far 70 youth (35 male and 35 female) have been trained in the practice and preparation of herbal medicine. 23 of these adivasi youth have received certification from Jana Sikshna Samasta (recognized by the Ministry of Human Resource Development). They are using the knowledge and skills they have gained as community health practitioners in their respective local areas.

#### 4.2.6 HERBAL GARDENS

Two mother herbal gardens are operative with more than 130 disappearing and endangered medicinal plants. In addition 10 community herbal gardens have been raised with about 30 medicinal plant species each. These gardens (particularly mother herbal gardens) apart from conserving particular species of medicinal plants also serve as aids in the learning processes being carried out at Vanantharam and other community health centres. The community herbal gardens, nurtured by the community serve as a local source of medicine for common ailments.



Medicinal plants nursery for the distribution



#### 4.2.7 DOCUMENTATION

AHC has conducted intensive interviews with 110 traditional health practitioners to document traditional health knowledge and practice. 250 medicinal plants and information related to their use in herbal medicine has been documented. A herbarium<sup>11</sup> has also been organized in Vanantharam. This information is being utilized in framing the curriculum of the CHPs as well as in developing training aids.

##### ***Major Achievements***

- Rejuvenated faith and confidence in herbal based medicine within the community
- Created awareness of use and conservation of medicinal plants within the community
- Provided treatment to more than 24,506 patients in the last 5 years through various health camps;
- 30 community health centres are rendering health care service to 90 villages;
- A resource centre established, equipped with training, documentation, treatment and research facility.

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<sup>11</sup> A collection of dried plants mounted, labelled, and systematically arranged for use in scientific study

## 5 MICRO CREDIT AND MICRO ENTERPRISE

The fundamental problem facing adivasi households is their ability to access and utilize resources to improve their livelihood security. It is estimated that approximately 90% of adivasi families depend on informal credit sources for 80% of their credit needs. The informal credit suppliers, who are mostly moneylenders or trader-cum-moneylenders, enjoy a thriving market for their services since there are very few accessible viable alternatives available to the adivasis. Absence of effective institutional support systems for income generation activities has also aggravated the problem. This has been our experience in the adivasi areas of East Godavari district. With this in mind we have promoted Manyaseema, a credit and savings service cooperative initiated with self-help groups as the main stakeholders. In addition we have facilitated other micro credit institutions and business enterprises through mutually aided cooperative societies.



Capacity building program on Micro Credit & Micro Enterprise

### 5.1 MANYASEEMA (ADIVASI COOPERATIVE BANK)

Manyaseema was initiated as an alternative bank catering to a federation of SHGs in E.G district. This institution is being managed by adivasi self-help groups' representatives. In February 2007 Manyaseema was registered as a Micro-Finance Institution under the Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act (MACS), 1995.

<b>Manyaseema Financial Statement, March 31, 2006<sup>12</sup></b>	
<b>Total groups Saving (Rs. in lakhs)</b>	11.8
<b>Cumulative Loan Disbursed (Rs. in lakhs)</b>	19.79
<b>Loan outstanding (782 individual members) [Rs. in lakhs]</b>	10.58
<b>Avg. Loan Size Rs.</b>	1,608
<b>Interest charged by the Federation</b>	24%



Data sharing of SHG's at a cluster level meeting

<sup>12</sup> The figures used here are an outcome of an evaluation of Manyaseema that was carried out between 22-25<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 by Mahila Abhivruddhi Society, Andhra Pradesh (APMAS), Hyderabad.



resource management and systems, it had to improve considerably in the areas of asset quality, efficiency, profitability and services to groups/members.

In addition to Manyaseema, 3 other self-help groups' federations in Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts have been initiated. They are in the process of formation and consolidation in terms of a formally viable system.

## 5.2 MICRO ENTERPRISE

The main focus behind micro-enterprise initiatives was to provide alternative access to markets. In the past 5 years TRIMACS (Tribal Mutually Aided Cooperative Society) a registered Cooperative Society was promoted to play a leadership role in instituting and coordinating Marketing Action Groups (MAGs). In 2002 four MAGs and two sub centres were working in an operational area of 15 villages. They were involved mainly in the marketing of palm fiber, cashew and tamarind. Subsequently TRIMACS acquired dealership for the brand 'Shakti' and was selling its products through local kiosks. They also acquired sewing machines and plate pressing equipment for production of leaf plates (Adda leaf plate). The Society now functions independently. They have their own website, [trimacsbazaar.com](http://trimacsbazaar.com).

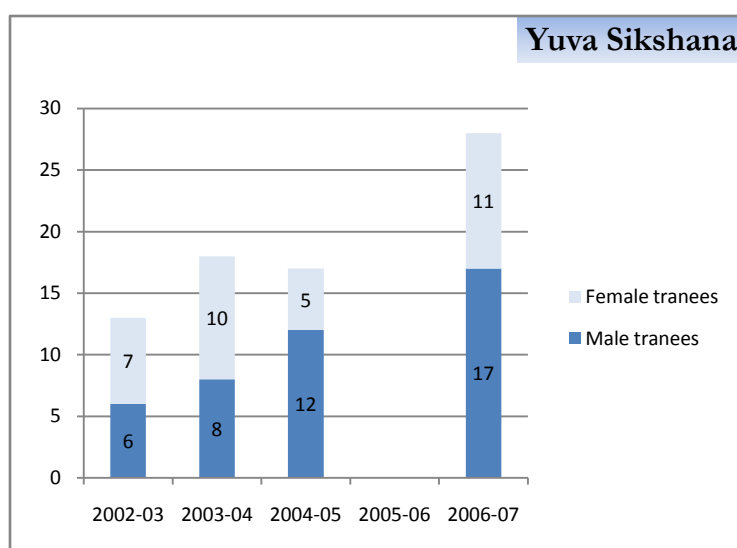
Subsequently two new Mutually Aided Cooperatives (MACs) were initiated in East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts known as Boddagandi MAC and Matsyagedda MAC respectively. They are in the process of being registered and are marketing local produce in their respective regions namely hill brooms, adda leaf plates, tamarind, ginger, turmeric, pipalli, pulses, etc. Boddagandi MAC operates from a roadside village, Mangampadu where the MAC has acquired four sewing machines and a pressing machine to manufacture leaf plates.

The future perspective is to strengthen and consolidate micro-credit and micro-enterprise initiatives for enhancing livelihood opportunities.

## 6 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Our quest towards facilitating alternative leadership in the adivasi context has been focused mainly on youth: young men and women with whom we have initiated different kinds of capacity building processes and accompanied them in sustaining leadership in representing the interests of adivasi communities. The idea was to develop an alternative perspective where local communities take charge of their own development.

Involvement with youth and their skill development covers multiple interest areas pertaining to rights over resources, sustainable agriculture, traditional health care, youth leadership, traditional and cultural knowledge systems, etc. The outcome of our effort is paying dividend in creating a cadre of informed young men and women as adivasi activists in the region. In the preceding years the capacity building and networking processes have reached out to various categories of adivasi representatives such as activists, village level committee members, women farmers, panchayat leaders, single women, self-help groups, forest protection committees, etc. The challenge continues in building capacities to confront difficult value choices and to take informed decisions in a situation where external forces conflict with the concerns of vulnerable communities. In this context the leadership provided by youth is vital and our accompaniment processes have been ongoing.



### 6.1 OUTREACH

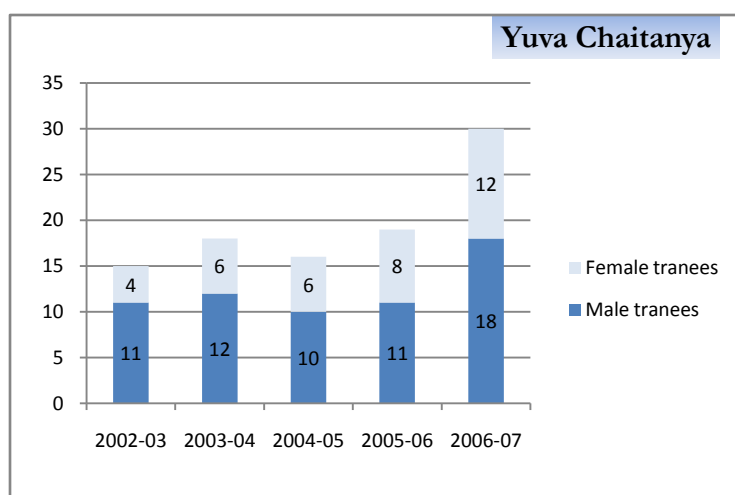
The empowerment processes with youth cover an extensive area of all the agency areas in the seven districts (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam and Warangal) of Andhra Pradesh. These processes are of two basic types: long-term and short-term.

### 6.1.1 LONG-TERM TRAINING AND ACCOMPANIMENT

Long-term processes are region specific with respect to Yuva Chaitanya (Visakhapatnam) and Yuva Shikshana (East Godavari). Extended over one year, training sessions are conducted for a period of 5 days every 2 months. 25 to 30 trainees are selected each year. The criteria for selection are: a basic understanding of the issues within the candidates' respective communities; their willingness to work on community issues; and basic literacy skills. Generally potential participants are expected to have basic literacy skills. The course comprises theoretical and practical sessions. During the course of the programme the participants are encouraged to organize and conduct awareness meetings on issues of their community.

Because Yuva Chaitanya and Yuva Shikshana are region specific, located in our districts of intensive intervention, the curriculum is designed to take into account the differing conditions in the two districts with reference to the government schemes, land holding patterns, health and sanitation, forest cover, etc.

As part of the long-term capacity building process, 'Parichay' is a fellowship program, which is more generic to the larger context of adivasi issues in the seven districts. This fellowship program is a one-year accompaniment and training process. Application forms are disseminated widely and published in the *Manyamlo*<sup>13</sup>. A six member Board scrutinizes the applications and shortlists potential participants for final interviews. Around 30 participants are selected each year. Criteria for selection relates to their prevailing skills, motivation and perspective to engage with development within their community. During the course of the programme training sessions are conducted over a range of issues that cut across the adivasi communities, including displacement, land rights, human rights violation, livelihood issues, micro credit and enterprise, youth involvement in development, etc.



<sup>13</sup> A quarterly magazine on adivasi issues that has been in circulation since 1994.



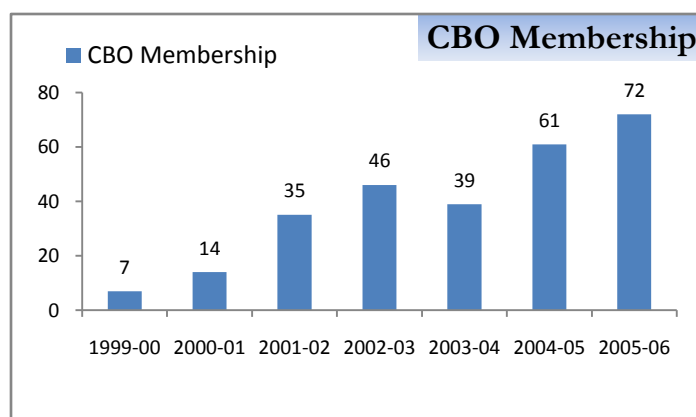
The participants of these processes are encouraged to join existing CBOs or form their own group. They are expected to use the knowledge and skills acquired to organize sustainable development processes with issues relevant to their differing contexts.

### 6.1.2 SHORT-TERM SKILL SHARE WORKSHOPS

Short-term workshops are focused training sessions for particular aspects of skill development. Some of the key areas which have been explored through these intensive training initiatives relate to health care, natural resource management, land rights, culture, education, etc. The participants of these programmes are CBOs members and/or individual youth interested in these particular themes. They are expected to utilize this specialized knowledge and skills within their community apart from the general responsibilities that they may be assigned by their CBO.

### 6.1.3 COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH CBOs

For young men and women who come together to form a CBO, a process of accompaniment to support and facilitate their work is in place. The key areas with which we have engaged with CBOs (technical support) include land rights, forest issues, culture protection and promotion, self-governance (model panchayats) during the last five years. The CBOs who have been a part of this accompaniment process are expected to organize and conduct awareness programmes/demonstration models on relevant issues and community/resource development on the basis of the key areas in which they have acquired knowledge and skills. In addition the CBOs are facilitated to develop capacities in organisational development as well as in building second line leadership through various training initiatives undertaken by this unit.



District CBO Meeting

#### 6.1.4 PROMOTION OF CBO FEDERATION

A significant step has been the promotion and establishment of a CBO federation in 2000 under the aegis of Andhra Pradesh Adivasi Sangala Samakya (APASS). 72 CBO members attended the last convention in 2006. The federation has been involved mainly in critically assessing the relevance of state level policies on adivasi areas such as the adivasi policy, forest policy, displacement policy and other policies. As representatives of adivasi communities they



CBO Federation Convention

have presented petitions, memoranda to local Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) recommending changes in the draft National Adivasi Policy. They have challenged the concept of Adivasi-Battalions mooted by the state government to respond to naxalite militancy and protested the displacement likely to be caused due to the construction of Polavaram, a large dam project on the river Godavari in the region. These campaigns seek to create awareness about the effects and opportunities of policies at the local level with their local constituent communities. The federation is also involved in facilitating the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) at the local level. As a federation they engage in lobbying and advocacy with the government bureaucracy to implement adivasi welfare schemes and programmes.

The membership of CBOs in the federation has been steadily increasing. We provide technical support to the federation with regard to knowledge/information and strategy in design and implementation of their campaigns. Apart from this once in two years an Organisation Development (OD) exercise is conducted with the Federation. During this process impact, acceptability, sustainability within the adivasi community is assessed. In addition we facilitate self-assessment of their performance and accordingly aid them in building their perspective and strategic plan for the future. We provide the federation with material and financial support towards incidental expenses for their meetings and campaigns when requested.

### **Girimitra Seva Sangham (GSS): The growth of a dynamic CBO in Vizianagaram District**

The eleven founder members of this CBO are ex-Yuva Parichay trainees. The CBO was started in 1994, focusing on savings and credit activity. In time this group expanded its programmes to various other issues affecting them in the local area.

#### *Before 2002...*

They initially challenged the non-advansi traders, who were exploiting them and slowly questioned the power of the non-advansis, who used to take decisions on behalf of the tribals in their village. In 1997 they confronted the Girijana Cooperative Corporation (GCC) which is a government initiated marketing agency for the tribal communities in the Scheduled Areas of Andhra Pradesh. As a result of their agitation they succeeded in forcing the GCC to give them the current market price for tamarind. They also initiated a campaign against the consumption of arrack (country liquor) in the villages. In 1998 they took up a major case of corruption by the local Village Administrative Officers (VAO) who were not giving them proper receipts for their land and house tax. In 1999, with the assistance of youth, women and elders in the villages GSS took up a project to build their village roads and repaired the local school. Meanwhile their efforts at thrift continued. 40 self-help groups were regularised and they received matching grants from ITDA. In 2000 they took up a case against a bus conductor and driver for attempting to rape two women in the village. The bus driver was fined Rs. 80000/- and this amount was given to the concerned women. That year their group also decided to participate in the panchayat elections and one of the key members from their group was elected as a Panchayat President.

#### *2002 and after...*

In 2002 they got a check dam constructed worth Rs160000/- in Thurpunaiduguda village, Kurupam mandal with the financial assistance from the ITDA. The core team of 11 founder members continue to be active. The total membership has gone up to 150, working in 44 villages in two mandals (Kurupam, G.L. Puram). GSS now has savings of Rs. 150000/-. One of the founder members, Durga Rao was reelected as Sarpanch in 2005. A major panchayat in which GSS is operative was declared as a model Panchayat. In the recent past a key achievement was to lobby with the government for the release of 150 active youth in the area who were arrested on false charges. The police claimed that they were naxalites. GSS was successful in getting them released. Another major achievement was to support the inhabitants of two villages residing on a hilltop for cultivation of vacant 'forest' lands. The forest department is now in the process of legitimising their rights on these lands. Apart from these initiatives GSS is active with the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Scheme and continues to interface between the community and local government representatives.

## 7 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

As in most adivasi regions in India the benefits of 'growth development' through liberalisation has not percolated down to men and women equally. The adverse consequences of development militate more against women than men. Adivasi women suffer from a triple handicap: as women, as rural people and as adivasis.

It has been clear to us through our involvement that:

- Stress for family well-being increases for the women when poverty increases;
- Women are driven out of the productive activities with loss of access to and control of natural resources;
- Women's status within her family and community is adversely affected as their participation decreases;
- Physical needs especially reproductive health care needs of women are unmet or adversely affected;

In this context we have focused on the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength to exercise their right to self-determination to influence the direction of change. Some of the key issues of women in the region are:

- Discrimination of women and work on the basis of sex;
- Lack of access to education to girl children;
- Rights violation in relation to marriage, family harmony;
- Lack of property rights for women;
- Sexual exploitation – at workplace, institutions, during 'development' activities like mining in adivasi areas;
- Atrocities on women by police during combing operations and investigations;
- Lack of access to health care services (both at family level and government level);
- Domestic violence;
- Cultural and belief systems militating against women;
- Alienation of resources affecting women adversely;
- Displacement of women due to 'development' projects.

### 7.1 AREAS OF INTERVENTION

With these issues in mind we have been working on processes to build the capacity of adivasi women leaders to safeguard human rights in a geo-specific area, sensitize adivasi panchayat leaders (both men and women) on human rights violations with special reference to women,

and strengthen networking processes among adivasi women to prevent violence against women. Consequently we have undertaken relevant field-based studies to gain insights into processes of Violence against Women (VAW) and disseminate project results by developing a document on capacity building to respond to issues of VAW in adivasi areas.

## 7.2 CAPACITY BUILDING OF ADIVASI WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Six workshops in 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh were organized in Srikakulam, Vizianagram, East Godavari, West Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Khammam. In all 335 women participated with the highest representation from Vizianagram and West Godavari. All the participants were in leadership programs either as members in panchayats, social activists or as self-help group leaders. Some of the basic issues discussed during these workshops related to education, family violence, health, working environment, property rights, etc.



Capacity Building of women leaders (Srikakulam District)  
7 - 9 July, 2003

In addition a series of workshops were also conducted in other adivasi regions of other states in the country such as Orissa, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Assam, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In all 205 participants attended these workshops. The workshops were conducted by our team with the support of local organisations in respective regions. The workshops focused on the issues experienced by women in the different regions.

## 7.3 STRENGTHENING NETWORKING PROCESSES

The networking process in the region involved major meetings of adivasi women representatives from the adivasi areas of six districts of Andhra Pradesh.

During these meetings issues related to empowerment of adivasi women, adivasi women's rights, education awareness, women's health, adivasi traditions and customs, identifying and dealing with women's issues, child labour, discrimination of wages on the basis of gender, formation of CBOs etc. were discussed. The difficulties experienced by women on these issues were shared and a commitment to tackle them was expressed.

## 7.4 WOMEN LED CBOs

Through the networking and capacity building initiatives taken up as a part of our project activity various women led CBOs have emerged in the region. The CBOs have been working on various issues: desertion, securing land titles, alcoholism, dowry, wage discrimination based on gender, education related issues, issues related to sexual abuse of adivasi girl children in hostels, health issues and governance particularly relating to adivasi policy.

Women Led CBOs	
CBO	District
Venkateswara Mahila Sangham	Warangal
Action for Girijan Development	Khammam
Vanaja	East Godavari
Girijana Mahila Chaitanya Sangham	East Godavari
Mother Theresa	East Godavari
Adivasi Mahila Sankesema Sangham	East Godavari
Vikasini	Visakhapatnam
Manya Sravanti	Visakhapatnam
Mahila Bharati	Visakhapatnam
Adivasi Mahila Chaitanya Sangham	Vizianagaram
Adivasi Mahila Manya Jyothi Sangham	Vizianagaram
Girijana Mahila Sangham	Srikakulam
Adivasi Mahila Sangham	Srikakulam



## 8 ALTERNATIVE DATA, NETWORKING AND CAMPAIGNS

### 8.1 ALTERNATIVE DATA GENERATION

As a Resource Centre, Laya has been generating relevant information through documentation at the field level by undertaking issue based surveys, various studies on key areas of concern, and by publishing periodicals. Through the years we have been able to develop a wealth of information that at one level is useful in planning and designing appropriate strategies and on the other enables us to critically understand policies to suggest informed changes in major policies relating to the adivasi context.

Each team in Laya, be it in the field of human rights, health care, natural resource management, access to markets and credit or youth empowerment, is located in a different place and have their own ways of recording and documenting information that brings value to its work. At the Resource Centre in Visakhapatnam a copy of this information is kept for reference. This allows the members of the team involved in these particular areas to share details of their work. It also helps us converge on major policy issues related to adivasis such as the forest bill, adivasi policy and the displacement.

#### 8.1.1 PUBLICATIONS

1. The Call of the Communities, 2002, English
2. Rhythms in Development, 2002, English
3. Agency Prantha Chattalu – Nyaya Vidya, 2003, Telugu
4. Abhivrudhilo Adhivasilu, 2004, Telugu
5. Jalachaithanya yatra, 2004, Telugu
6. Adivasi Prantha Udyamala Nepadyam – Ikya Porataala Aavasyakatha, 2004, Telugu
7. Land Rights of Adivasis in Andhra Pradesh (English), 2004, English
8. Mannem Gundello Bauxite Bandalu, 2005, Telugu
9. Prathi Pantapy Adhivasila Drukpadham (Cotton Farming: The Adivasi Perspective), 2006, Telugu
10. A booklet on the Draft Adivasi Policy Draft, 2006, Telugu
11. Adivasi Vyayasaya Paddathulapy Sikshanaa Deepika, 2006, Telugu

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### 8.1.2 PERIODICALS

Two periodicals have been in circulation for more than a decade.

**Manyamlo** is in Telugu; four issues are produced in a year. This periodical has been in circulation since 1994. *Manyamlo* caters basically to adivasi youth to inform them about pertinent issues that concern the adivasi context. It has over the years built a considerable readership base among adivasi youth, NGOs and other civil society representatives. Our effort is to reach out to CBOs and other NGOs working with the adivasi communities in this region.

**eco-ethic** is an English periodical that caters mainly to issues related to Climate Change. The idea behind *eco-ethic* is to create awareness among development practitioners about the effects of Climate Change as well as update the readers on some of the basic debates happening on this issue nationally and internationally. It has an all India outreach.

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### 8.1.3 STUDIES

1. Sustainable Visakhapatnam (A Working Document), 2002
2. Activity Profile of Konda Reddy Women in Boorugupalem village in East Godavari District – A Pilot Study, 2002
3. Marriages between Non-Adivasi Men and Adivasi Men: perception of women partner: A Pilot Study, 2002
4. Feasibility Study of Manufacturing and Marketability of Palmyra Fiber Brushes at Barrimamidi, 2003
5. Indebtedness: A Case Study of Nusilimetta Village, 2003
6. Village Profiles of Dalipadu Panchayat (A Statistical Compendium), 2003
7. NGOs: People's Organisations or Just Non-Governmental Organisations? – A Case Study on LAYA – by Shirin Naseem, 2003
8. An Introduction to the Study of 5% Model (Soil and Water Conservation) Adopted in Addatigala Area in Andhra Pradesh, 2003
9. Study on Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) in Adivasi Areas of AP: A Policy Perspective. (Both in English & Telugu), 2004
10. Assessment of Food Security in Adivasi Regions of Andhra Pradesh, 2004
11. Status of Customary Law in Adivasi Communities, 2004
12. A Study on the Strategic Interventions of the Resource for Legal Action (RLA) – by Dominic A.C. Jones, 2004
13. Survey on Pattern of Institutional Borrowing in Adivasi Areas, 2004
14. A Study on Deserted Adivasi Women in Six Districts in AP, 2005
15. Village Profiles of Pedakodapalli: (A Statistical Compendium; Part I & II ), 2005

16. Impact Assessment of “Empowerment of Adivasi Women in India” – A Laya Project, supported by ‘UNIFEM’, March 2005
17. Sustainable Livelihood: A Participatory Case Study of Laya’s Experience, by Sanjay Khatua, 2005
18. Property Rights of Adivasi Women: Konda Reddy in AP and Kondh in Orissa, A Field Based Study, 2005
19. Promotion of Livelihood in Pedakodapalli, 2005
20. “Empowerment of Women in Adivasi India: Capacity Building for Adivasi Women: Process Documentation of Project Experiences, 2005
21. Cotton Farming: The Adivasi Perspective, 2006

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#### 8.1.4 DOCUMENTS

1. Functioning of Agency Courts and Nature of Cases, 2002
2. Podu Land in Five Mandals: East Godavari Distirct; Rampachodavaram, Devipatnam, Gangavaram, Marredumilli and Y. Ramavaram, 2002
3. Girl Child Education (Back to School) in Rampachodavaram and Gangavaram mandals, 2003
4. Case Study of Health situation in Regulapadu village, 2004
5. Decentralized Energy Options in the Orissa and AP Adivasi Context – A Background Note, 2004
6. Deserted Adivasi Women in Lakonda, 2004
7. Landless Poor in Gangavaram mandal, 2004
8. Land Leases in Rampachodavaram, 2004
9. Current status of Minor Irrigation in the Agency Division of East Godavari Distirct: Rampachodvaram, Gangavaram, Devipatnam and Marredumilli Mandals, 2006

#### 8.2 NETWORKING

Laya believes in positive networking and collaborative relationships as non-negotiable tools in achieving success in shared concerns. This includes playing leadership roles in facilitating networks and institution building processes and participating in common actions at the local and national levels. This is manifested in the nature of networking processes that each of the units are engaged with in their grassroots’ involvement.

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##### 8.2.1 LOCAL NETWORKING

###### ***Networks Facilitated:***

1. Agency Land Rights Protection Committee
2. Adivasi Mahila Hakkula Sadhana Committee

3. Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Institutions' Rights Struggle Forum
4. Polavaram Mumpu Badhitula Hakkula Sadhana Committee
5. Traditional Health Practitioners Networks in East Godavari and Visakhapatnam Districts
6. Manyaseema: a Micro-Finance Institution
7. CBO Federation: Andhra Pradesh Adivasi Sangala Samakya (APASS)

### ***Membership in networks***

1. National Watershed Development Programme
2. Lok Adalats
3. Student Union, Paderu, Addatigala and Srikakulam.
4. Girijan Employees Union, Paderu and Srikakulam
5. Seethampeta Mandal Panchayats Network.

### ***Collaborations***

1. AYUSH Department for organising health camps and training programmes
2. Malaria Department, for training of CHPs in malaria prevention and treatment
3. Advisory Council for High Altitude Tribal Zone (HATZ) in training programmes on SRI
4. Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) – Chintapalli and Pandirmamidi
5. Agriculture and Forest, Horticulture Department
6. AFPRO , Hyderabad
7. Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad
8. Center for World Solidarity (CWS), Action Aid relating to “Panchayati Raj Institutions”
9. Human Rights Forum (Human Rights Workshops)
10. Legal Cells, ITDA: East Godavari and West Godavari District
11. District Legal Services Authority, East Godavari District
12. Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development (APARD), Hyderabad.
13. Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), Hyderabad.

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## **8.2.2 NATIONAL LEVEL NETWORKING**

We have been founder members of three national level networks and continue to play an active role in the institution building processes for sustainable outcomes:

**National Youth Foundation (NYF):** The National Youth Foundation is a national network consisting of 5 regional clusters, Andhra Pradesh (Yuva Chetna Vedica), Karnataka (Samvada), Gujarat (Janvikas), Maharashtra (Anubhav Shiksha Kendra) and North India (Pravah). Each cluster is a sub-network of organisations which are actively involved with youth on issues relevant to their context. Laya acts as the secretariat for Yuva Chetna Vedica. The NYF is

embarking on a major strategic planning exercise in which Yuva Chetna Vedica will be actively involved.

**Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change (INECC):**

INECC was instituted in a Mumbai workshop on Climate Change in 1996. The convener of this network is also the executive director of LAYA. INECC is a network of individuals and organisation representatives who are concerned with Climate Change particularly with reference to the Indian situation. INECC believes that Climate Change is a part of a larger environment crisis and addresses the basic issue of ecologically destructive development processes that have been globally pursued. The issue of Climate Change raises basic questions of social and environmental justice and has a direct bearing on development alternatives for the future.

Laya acts as the secretariat of INECC. The current initiatives of INECC are focused on the role of decentralized energy options in the adivasi context.

**Indian Institute of Para-legal Studies (IIPLS):** The Indian Institute of Para-Legal Studies, promoted by Janvikas, Ahmedabad was initiated in 2002 to legitimize the role of paralegals in the mainstream justice delivery mechanisms and to improve the quality of paralegal training. A paralegal bridges the gap between community, lawyers and judicial systems. As an institution

During this period we have also had collaborative relationship with two Asian Networks:

**South Asia Network on Food, Ecology and Culture (SANFEC):**

This is a network of South Asian groups on food security issues in response to the World Food Summit organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, Rome, Italy in 1996. Under the Diversity Award Programme of SANFEC we successfully completed the project on Mixed Cropping Systems of Adivasi Communities in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh in 2005.

**Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE):**

ASPBAE is a regional association of organisations and individuals engaged in both formal and non-formal adult education, working with and through government agencies, universities, NGOs, community groups, trade unions, indigenous people's and women's organisations, the media, and other institutions across the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 1964, the network currently comprises around 640 organisations and individuals as members, and operates in 30 countries of the region. We are assisting ASPBAE in developing a policy brief/position paper on Indigenous Education in India.

### Role of paralegals...

- Delivery of services: pre-litigative work;
- Education and awareness;
- Facilitating alternative community dispute resolution systems;
- Adding social perspective to courtroom lawyering;
- Documentation and data collection;
- Negotiation, counseling and conciliation.

IPLS focuses on the rights of adivasis and dalit communities, women and people in institutional care.

Laya with its past experience in legal action has been one of the founding members of the network. The role of Laya is facilitating the institutionalisation of regional processes in the East India region.

### 8.3 CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are collaborative processes to raise awareness over issues, while also creating a platform for adivasi communities to assert their rights in a public forum.

#### Major campaign issues undertaken:

- Review of Community Forest Management (CFM) project;
- Strengthening of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI);
- Displacement of adivasis due to Bhupathipalem and Surampalem Reservoirs;
- Property rights of adivasi women on both ryotwari and government lands;
- Quick disposal of cases in Scheduled Areas;
- Corrupt practices in Agency Courts of ITDA area of East Godavari district;
- Lack of irrigation facilities for adivasi lands, and diversion of water resources to the plains;
- Framing the rules for local governance in accordance with the PESA (Panchayat Raj Extension to Schedule Areas) Act;



A Rally on land, water, and other natural resources with 23 tribal groups



- Lack of government action on atrocities against adivasi women;
- Proper implementation of Land Transfer Regulations;
- Inclusion and implementation of the National Adivasi Policy in accordance with the PESA;
- Polavaram Project submergence;
- Problems of migrant settlement in East Godvari district;
- Issues of adivasi students;
- 'Delimitation' process in adivasi areas;
- Illegal land purchases by Rural Divisional Officer (RDO);
- Recognition of podu cultivation in the Schedule Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006;
- Opposing the government move to establish a adivasi battalion;
- Adverse implications of cotton farming in the adivasi areas;
- Indiscriminate and unsustainable harvesting of medicinal plants and unsustainable consequences;
- Lack of government response to epidemic-prone health problems such as malaria.

The campaign processes have involved organising rallies, dharnas, marches, conventions, meetings, workshops, disseminating pamphlets/posters, undertaking media advocacy, submitting memoranda, petitions and facilitating representations to concerned officials and elected representatives. In cases of corruption, the officials took action at the local level. In issues regarding policy, the campaigns have helped in drawing attention of officials/elected representatives to the particular problem at hand so that they can take relevant action or specific recommendations in their reports.

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### 8.3.1 IMPACT

**Land Rights:** The government of Andhra Pradesh set up a Land Committee in 2005, chaired by a Minister to study and suggest recommendations to resolve land issues in the state of Andhra Pradesh. RLA presented a detailed report suggesting the changes to be brought in the administration and legal frame for effective enforcement of Adivasi Land Laws at a key internal meeting, where RLA was invited. The final report of the Land Committee to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2007 reflected 75% of the recommendations made by RLA.

Involvement in land issues and campaigns on land rights has facilitated our presence in the lok adalats to ensure justice. Furthermore in some landmark legal cases the government was forced to reopen proceedings against non-adivasis who have illegally usurped lands, which actually belong to adivasi communities.

**SRI:** Our involvement with SRI cultivation has facilitated government and other organisations such as CARE-STEP to adopt and disseminate this practice.

**Cotton Farming:** The campaign relating to the indiscriminate plantation of cotton contributed to making an informed decision by adivasi farmers on the choice of mixed crops to be grown on their lands.

**Herbal Plants and Medicines:** Campaigning for the relevance and cost effectiveness of herbal medicines in adivasi areas has led to a revitalisation of the traditional herbal system of health care in the region.

The specific campaign against unsustainable collection of rare medicinal plants in the area: tippatiga (*tinospora cordifolia*) and naramamidi (*lichea glutinosa*) by facilitating the THP network to initiate various processes such as a signature campaign, dissemination of pamphlets, undertake rallies and ultimately submit a memorandum to the District Collector resulted in a marked reduction of sale of these herbs to the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC).

**Human Resource Empowerment:** In all processes relating to protection of adivasi rights the drivers of initiatives have been adivasi representatives. The CBO federation with significant participation of women, has actively campaigned on local issues particularly on for a adivasi policy at the State level as on many other local issues that are adversely militating against adivasi interests. The obstacles to success have been many but the real achievement has been in the capacities developed for advocacy initiatives among youth and women in this adivasi region.

## 9 NEW INITIATIVES

The new initiatives are a response to emerging concerns or attempts to develop new methodologies of intervention.

### 9.1 DECENTRALIZED ENERGY OPTIONS (DEO)

Interest in DEO stems from an analysis of lack of access to energy needs in the adivasi areas, which are remote and out of the mainstream. Some parts of adivasi areas are outside the reach of the electricity supply grid. Even those within the grid, are not assured of electricity on a regular basis: frequent breakdowns leave them without access to electricity in their villages. DEO, while rooted in renewables as a source of energy, also has the key dimension of local management of the energy generated, wherein there is no alienation between the producer and consumer of energy.

#### **Because...**

- It is crucial to facilitate access to energy to these communities which experience a high degree of marginalisation;
- The concept of community with collective decision making processes is still prevalent in adivasi areas; community control of DEOs is likely to be more workable in adivasi areas;
- It could arrest out-migration if enhanced livelihood opportunities are created;
- Relevance to sustainable development can be demonstrated by appropriate use of natural resources and control over the process of energy generation

#### *Why adivasi community?*

In the project areas we are currently involved in promoting micro-hydro and solar energy initiatives.

Laya's involvement with INECC had spurred a series of meetings and discussions on Climate Change and its relevance to the adivasi context. In 2006 as an outcome of a workshop on DEO and adivasi communities in the Eastern Ghats held at Visakhapatnam, a DEO Action Committee was formed as a part of INECC. We undertook as part of the network activity, to do feasibility studies for DEOs in the adivasi belt of the Eastern Ghats region comprising four States: Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The overall feasibility report is due in early 2008.

## 9.2 COMMUNITY VIDEO UNIT (CVU)

The medium of video can be a powerful instrument of social change, especially if people's voices appear on screen highlighting their own perceptions of issues they face and the problems that they encounter in their day to day lives. The purpose of this unit is to train young activists with skills in interviewing, script writing, photography, editing and screening so that they can play an effective role as community producers. This idea was proposed to us by Drishti Media Collective, Ahmedabad, who in partnership with Video Volunteers New York, USA offered to collaborate on the



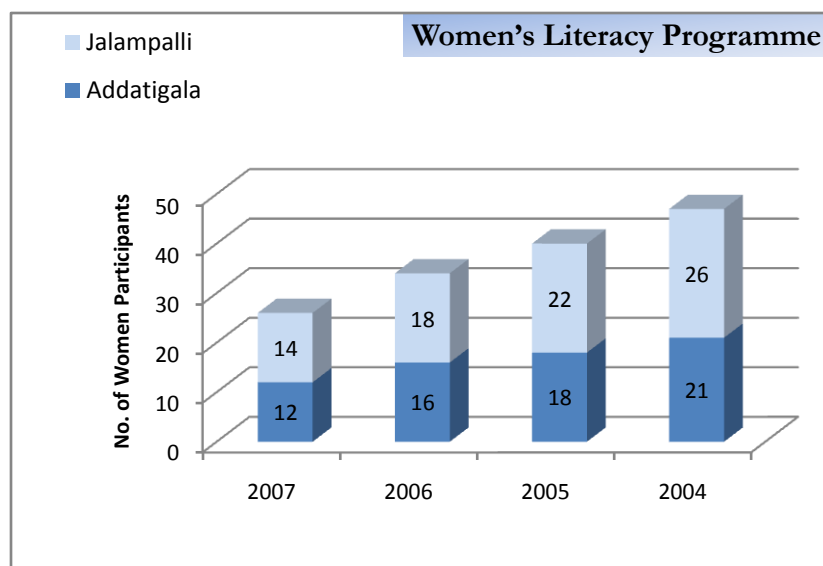
Preparing for an Interview

training design and operational processes. The purpose was to create video magazines based on people's perspective on problems, issues, positive experiences and their life situation in general. The belief is that such a portrayal of live reality would spur people to act and become partners in the social change process.

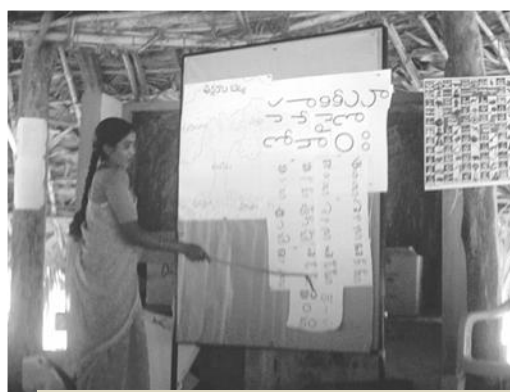
Last year 7 young Konda Reddy adivasis, 3 men and 4 women were trained. They have produced so far 3 short video magazines and have travelled to different villages screening these videos. After the screenings in each village they undertook discussions with the support of the Laya team members on the issues portrayed in the videos, and focused on possible actions.

Video Magazines Produced		
S.No	Theme	Period
1	Malaria fever	Aug-Sep 06
2	Basic Infrastructure	Oct-Nov 06
3	Food Security	Dec-Feb 07
4	Saving and Money Lending	Mar-April 07
5	Adivasi culture and Traditional Knowledge	May- Jun 07

### 9.3 CRASH LITERACY CAMPS FOR POTENTIAL ADIVASI WOMEN LEADERS



This was the first experience of Laya in undertaking a ten-day crash literacy programme with potential adivasi women in the adivasi region of North Andhra.



Literacy Program for women

The main objective of this effort was to reach out to adivasi women learners and equip them with basic literacy skills, especially their ability to read in Telugu and numeracy skills in order to facilitate their effective functioning as leaders at the grassroots' level.

As the women can speak the language fluently we felt that there must be a way by which their literary skills could be developed quickly rather than in a long-term accompaniment process as in traditional adult literacy classes. The idea of this possibility emerged during a chance interaction with representatives of Astha, Rajasthan and Nirantar, New Delhi at a workshop organized by ASPBAE on Indigenous Education. Both these organisations have attempted this approach to literacy and were successful. However the

Ms Pardani Gunamma 30 years of age, belonging to the Bhagata adivasi community of Addugulput village, Visakhapatnam district, shared her experience as a learner

As a child of 11 years I was married to my aunt's son. He was 10 years older to me and hence I refused to go to his house as his wife as he had already developed a relationship with another adivasi lady. I then decided to remain single shouldering the responsibility of my sister's children as she had died at a young age

I never got an opportunity to go to school and study, although I felt the need to read and write.

In the night school which I attended for three months I learned to recognize letters.

When Laya, introduced the literacy programme in 2004, I decided to participate. The programme was very interesting as compared to the night school because the learning was focused and the methods adopted for teaching were simple taking into account individual capacities and day to day life experiences. The input session on different issues, rights; and filling of applications for accessing schemes was very useful as these things were important for a leader. The literacy programme helped me to improve my writing skills and confidence.

I am now able to write reports. I contested the recent Panchayat elections and was elected a ward member.

medium of literacy for both these organisations was Hindi. Hence we began to look for a resource organisation in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society (APMSS) was suggested to us by Nirantar, an organisation with a considerable experience in literacy. Our attempts to interact with APMSS failed. Hence we decided to start from scratch and consider this initiative as a meaningful challenge.

We generated local material and worked out a methodology suitable for a ten day period. Initially in house there was scepticism about the efficacy of this venture but in time this scepticism has given way to enthusiasm especially among the adivasi trainers.

The participants came from three adivasi districts of Andhra Pradesh. They belong to various tribes. A large number of them were Konda Reddy. The age levels were mainly between 20-40 years. This age group has a very large number of illiterates according to our experience because a decade ago the access to formal education in adivasi areas was very limited. Quite a large proportion of the women in this age group have had some exposure to literacy, usually of an informal nature: through their children or through having participated and dropped out of non-formal education attempts made earlier by the government or voluntary agencies in the region. This has helped to achieve positive results. By the end of the period about 30% can read and write words, another 30% can read simple sentences and the remaining are able to read stories. In the case of numeracy skills the women are helped to read and write numbers, do simple calculations and read time. So far 147 participants have been through 8 such programmes.



## 10 MAJOR EVENTS AND EXPOSURE VISITS

### 10.1 PARTICIPATION IN MAJOR EVENTS

#### 10.1.1 CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP) 8, DELHI, OCTOBER 21-27, 2002

The International Conference of Parties 8 on Climate Change as part of the United Nations Framework of Climate Change Convention was held in Delhi in 2002. For INECC and Laya this was an opportunity to link up the concerns of marginalized communities with policy perspectives.

One of the significant learnings that has emerged through involvement with the Climate Change issue is that the entire debate must be anchored to the principle of sustainable communities. Our initiative for COP 8 was to engage actively in enabling people from marginalized communities, including youth, whose survival is at stake in the major eco- regions of India to converge in Delhi and attend side events after having participated in regional processes on Climate Change.

#### 10.1.2 ASIAN SOCIAL FORUM (ASF), HYDERABAD, JANUARY 2-7, 2003

ASF was an offshoot of the World Social Forum (WSF) where a number of individuals and NGOs working on alternative development came together to celebrate and deliberate on issues of development. A series of conferences/workshops/seminars on a range of issues were organized. The entire team of Laya participated in this event. We decided to attend the forum with our entire team to take taking the opportunity to learn and develop insights into development issues outside our local context.

#### 10.1.3 WORLD SOCIAL FORUM (WSF), MUMBAI, JANUARY 15-22, 2004

Some of our programme team members also participated in the WSF. As part of the INECC initiative, we in collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission, Mumbai organized an exhibition of posters depicting the varied dimensions of Climate Change. We also organized a conference on Climate Change where we, particularly the INECC network members, shared perspectives on Climate Change and decentralized energy options.

#### 10.1.4 ADIVASI SAMVAD -III, ADDATIGALA, FEBRUARY 1-4, 2005

Adivasi Samvaad has been an opportunity created for dialogue among adivasis in the Indian context initiated through two major conventions in 1995 and 1999. The third convention was

organized in 2005 at Vanantharam, a centre for promotion of herbal based health care, in the congenial surroundings of the forests near Addatigala, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

Nearly 150 adivasi representatives from 10 states: Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Assam, Nagaland, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka participated in the convention.



Adivasi Samvad-III declaration

As a host to this event of 4 days we were witness to the dialogue amongst adivasi communities from these regions. During this Samvaad the focus was to continue with the dialogue that began earlier on identity, land, forest, governance and a separate adivasi policy. Also to revisit new challenges affecting adivasi communities arising from changing realities and reviewing the role of adivasi leadership in responding to these changes.

The discussions were vibrant and engaging. The key highlight of this Samvaad was the leadership role played by the representatives of the adivasi communities. The sense of ownership and the articulation of issues were remarkable. The atmosphere was a mix of celebration and seriousness of purpose. Apart from the main sessions there were a wide variety of stalls representing information and initiatives from the different states as well as artifacts representing adivasi culture. The day sessions were followed by cultural presentations such as adivasi dances for festive occasions and contributions from each state in the form of adivasi songs and role plays.

The concluding session included action plans within State groups.

### **Closing declaration...**

‘We, the Adivasi/Indigenous People of India, original daughters/sons of the soil, vow to Protect, Conserve and Fight in solidarity for our Natural Resources, Culture and Rights and dedicate ourselves to work for development and enhancement of society.’

### 10.1.5 GAME4CHANGE, ANAKAPALLE, JUNE 22-25, 2005

The National Youth Foundation (NYF) in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in keeping with the resolution of the UN General Assembly<sup>14</sup> organized an event called 'Game4Change'. This event was aimed at bringing together young people through a series of sports and cultural events in the country. Game 4 Change celebrates youth and youthhood, the cornerstones for any society. As one of the clusters of the National Youth Foundation (NYF), Yuva Chetna Vedica took the responsibility to organize the event in this region. Under the aegis 'Adudhaam Marudhaam'<sup>15</sup> we sought to rejuvenate local sport and rural art forms. To lend credibility to these events national sports' celebrities such as Sunil Gavaskar, P.T. Usha, Geet Sethi, Dhanraj Pillay and Md. Azharuddin were invited as NYF-SDC ambassadors. Geet Sethi, Dhanraj Pillay and Md. Azharuddin attended the Anakapalle Game4Change event.

## 10.2 EXPOSURE VISITS

### 10.2.1 SRI LANKA ON SYSTEM OF RICE INTENSIFICATION (SRI), SEPT 7-11, 2004

This exposure visit for us was organized by Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (OCAA), Australia to gain an experiential understanding of SRI in the context of promoting sustainable agriculture as part of the sustainable livelihood programme. The objective of the exposure visit was to understand the technology of SRI and its socio-cultural and economic aspects in order to consider its appropriateness and relevance to the programme areas of Laya. As an outcome of this visit, we are promoting SRI in our focused areas of intervention.

### 10.2.2 VIETNAM ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN HEALTH CARE, OCT 11-19, 2006

With the support of OCAA, Australia and local assistance of Dr. Hong-Truong Luu, Programme Coordinator, Center for Biodiversity and Development (CBD), Institute of Tropical Biology, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam we had the opportunity to visit Vietnam, a country that has achieved integration of traditional and alternative medicine into national public health care. We visited health care institutions from the commune to the national level. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to gain insights from this experience in promoting this system as a relevant, affordable and effective system of health care.

<sup>14</sup> "The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 58/5 in its 52nd plenary meeting on 3rd November 2003 wherein it declared that 2005 would be the year of Sports and Development and further stated that Sports is a means to promote education, health, development and peace. It is also exalted member countries and civil society organisations to contribute to the celebration in an appropriate way and to allocate resources to the theme".

<sup>15</sup> Adudhaam literally means 'let's play'; Marudhaam means 'let's change'.

## 11 GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

### 11.1 GOVERNANCE

Laya is legally registered under the Societies' Registration Act of 1860 and under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) of 1976. The Society has a General Body of 12 members, governed by a Board of Management of 7 members, which advises the Secretariat through the Executive Director. The Board meets thrice a year, each meeting consisting of two days: one day for an interaction with the field team and the second day for governance meeting on policy issues. All our Governance members are professionally qualified and have wide experience in the field of development.

#### 11.1.1 GENERAL BODY

1. *Prof. B. Devi Prasad, Professor, Social Work Department, Andhra University*
2. *Mr. Dominic D'Souza, Associate Director, Laya, Visakhapatnam*
3. *Dr. D.V.R. Murthy, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam*
4. *Dr. Lata Narayan, Youth and Child Studies Department, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*
5. *Ms. Mani Mistry, Executive Director, Children of the World, Mumbai*
6. *Mr. Minar Pimple, Asia Deputy Director, The United Nations Millennium Campaign, Bangkok*
7. *Ms. Maveen Soares Pereira, Programme Manager, South Asia Dept. of International Development, U.K.*
8. *Dr. Nafisa Goga D'Souza, Executive Director, Laya*
9. *Ms. Nandini Narula, Janvikas, Ahmedabad*
10. *Ms. N.V. Rama, Regional Coordinator, Sahyog Community Coordination Network, Hyderabad*
11. *Prof. T. Sudhakar Reddy, Department of Fine Arts, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam*
12. *Mr. Walter Mendoza, Development Consultant, Centre for Education and Documentation, Mumbai*

#### 11.1.2 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

1. *Prof. B. Devi Prasad, Professor, President*
2. *Dr. Nafisa Goga D'Souza, Secretary*
3. *Mr. Walter Mendoza, Treasurer*
4. *Dr. Lata Narayan, Member*
5. *Ms. Nandini Narula, Member*
6. *Prof. T. Sudhakar Reddy, Member*
7. *Dr. D.V.R. Murthy, Member*

## 11.2 MANAGEMENT

The Executive Director is assisted by a team of unit facilitators, who constitute the Programme Policy Team. At the finance level we have a finance advisory team and a finance administrator for financial management of the organisation.

We are a team of 37 fulltime personnel. The unit approach has helped us to decentralize systems for more effective functioning. Each unit has been encouraged to function autonomously in administrative matters but also to collaborate through organic linkages with other units on the programme front. Of the 37 personnel, 10 are women, of whom 4 are in key decision making positions. We are assisted by and collaborate in the field with adivasi representatives and community-based organisations in all the districts of the project area.

In terms of the general management strategy of the organisation, we believe in maintaining relatively small core personnel with a wide outreach through our network with CBOs and collaborative relationships with other NGOs.

### 11.2.1 ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS

Our organisational systems encourage autonomy of functioning at the unit levels. It is envisaged that some units will emerge as autonomous organisations in time and Laya Resource Centre will provide a coordinating link for a network of organisations. We encourage transparency as far as possible. We have broad policies which facilitate efficiency in management.

#### The functional units are...

1. Resource for Legal Action (focuses on human rights and legal issues)
2. Parichay (focuses on youth/women empowerment)
3. Natural Resource Management
4. Science and Technology (newly established unit, working closely with NRM)
5. Micro Enterprise and Credit
6. Traditional Medicine and Health Care
7. Documentation, Advocacy and Policy Unit
8. Information Technology Unit
9. Finance Unit

#### Our centres and locations...

1. Resource Centre for Adivasis, Visakhapatnam district
2. Project Laya, Addatigala, E.G. district
3. Pravaha, Sirsapalli, Pedabayalu mandal, Visakhapatnam district
4. Resource Unit for Legal Action (Field Centre), Rampachodavaram, E.G. district
5. Resource Unit for Legal Action, Rajahmundry, E.G. district
6. Laya Training Centre, Jalampalli, Visakhapatnam district
7. Vanantharam Health Centre, Addatigala, E.G. district
8. Gumarapalem Training Centre, EG district.

In terms of financial systems we have developed specific standards and principles which we follow in our day-to-day functioning as well as financial control systems at the main office and at the field offices. We have been making efforts to make our reporting systems transparent, meeting quality standards and easily accessible. This facilitates monitoring of programmes regularly.

As regards financial sustainability, since several years Laya has sought to address this challenge. Several decisions were taken at the Board of Management level towards enabling the financing of the running costs of the organisation. This has mainly been carried out through the charging of service costs where applicable and for the use of training centre facilities. To a less extent this has been possible through voluntary contributions for the periodicals and other publications.

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### 11.2.2 MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEMS

As a team we meet regularly: for coordination, reporting and strategy planning functions. Team building and linkages are maintained among staff through:

- Monthly/Fortnightly staff meetings organized at the unit and Resource Centre level;
- Quarterly coordination unit meetings organized at the unit levels;
- Six monthly strategic meetings: representatives of each of the units;
- Policy meetings: annual and when required;
- Sharing of learning from workshops, seminars, training programmes attended.

The thrust areas, the goals and specific objectives, the planned activities for each programme, and the expected outcome are the basis for the monitoring and reporting systems.

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### 11.2.3 LAYA EVALUATION

In 2003 when Cordaid<sup>16</sup> suggested an evaluation we welcomed the opportunity to review the efficacy of our strategic interventions and strengthen our systems of governance that had been initiated internally.

Between July and August 2003 Laya had its first comprehensive external organisational evaluation. Previously we had had only particular aspects of our work reviewed. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess Laya's capacity in playing an interventional role in relation to the adivasi community in Andhra Pradesh as well as to explore the possibility of Laya playing a strategic role in Cordaid's policy development on the empowerment of adivasi communities in

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<sup>16</sup> One of our major funding partners



India. The results of the evaluation were encouraging validating among other aspects, the capacity of the organisation to play policy level roles in the larger adivasi context.

The evaluation also brought out **several challenges**:

*“Laya represents essentially a resource centre type organisation drawing its expertise and learning from its grassroots engagement. It will continue to play a facilitative role on two major thrust areas: safeguarding basic rights and developing viable micro-alternatives. These initiatives are intended to have a multiplier effect through Laya’s experience in capacity building and networking. This implies that Laya has to focus on upgrading the skills of its own team to play the required capacity building roles more effectively;”*

*“Building a perspective of organisational convergence to address specific commitments utilising internal strengths of the organisation effectively;”*

*“The importance of strategising in a way that will have far reaching effects in relation to the impact sought to be created within the adivasi community;”*

*“Policy level intervention to initiate a process of promoting deliberations on a framework of an adivasi policy in the Andhra Pradesh State context.”*

*-Excerpts from the evaluation report*

As a result we undertook concrete steps to address these particular issues.

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#### 11.2.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2006, three years after the evaluation process we undertook an internal strategic planning exercise within each ‘thematic unit’ to develop a strategic action plan for the next phase of our involvement. Each unit revisited and articulated their vision, mission, objectives and plan of action as also their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, points of convergence between units and identified and deliberated on campaign issues. This process occurred over a series of strategic meetings over a period of one year. Two key strategic workshops were supported by the participation of members of the Board of Management. The outcome was 3 working documents, which form the basis of our collective strategic mission for the future.

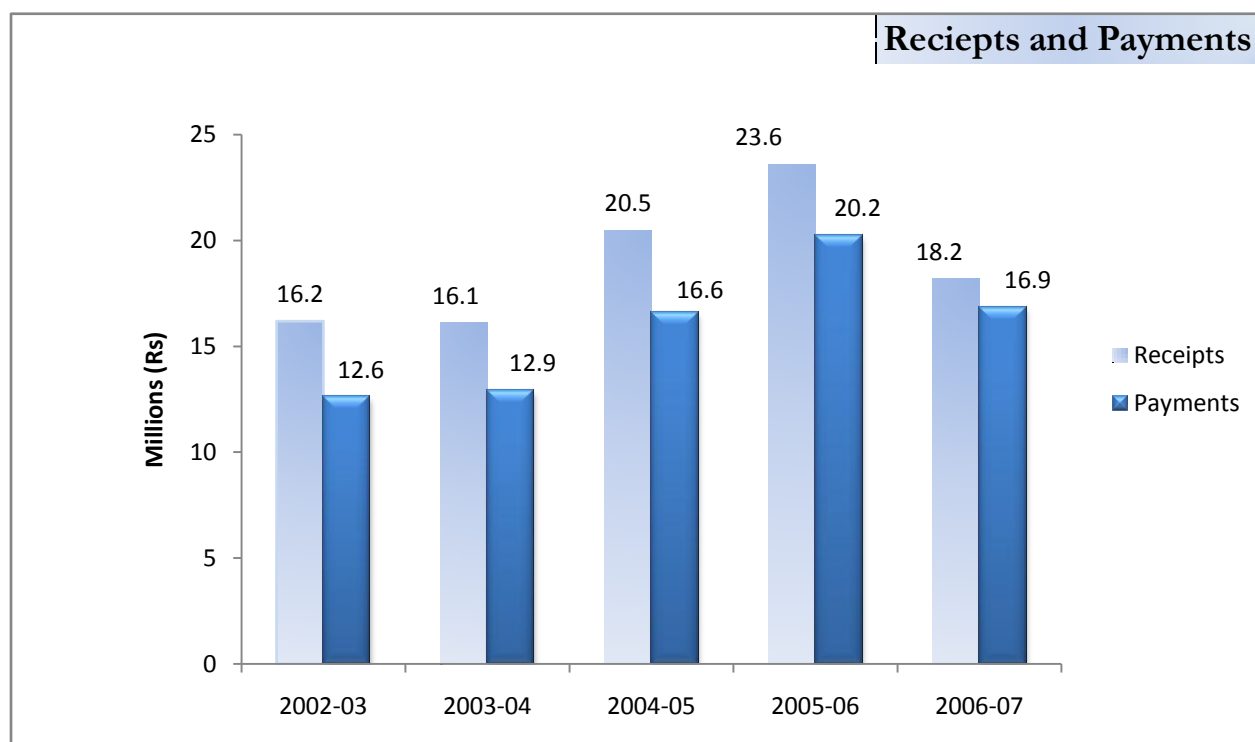
#### 11.3 FINANCE

Financial management is a critical aspect of our accountability towards the donors and our constituency. Our experience in developing systems of financial accounting, monitoring and planning has developed as we have had to take up additional responsibilities during the process of our institutional growth. NGO financial management constitutes the processing of several projects with varied time lines. As an NGO registered under the Societies Registration act and

the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) we are required to submit our audited statements in time and in order.

The financial system has been through a significant change since inception in decentralising the processes of monitoring of budget v/s expenditure, now being the major responsibility of individual units.

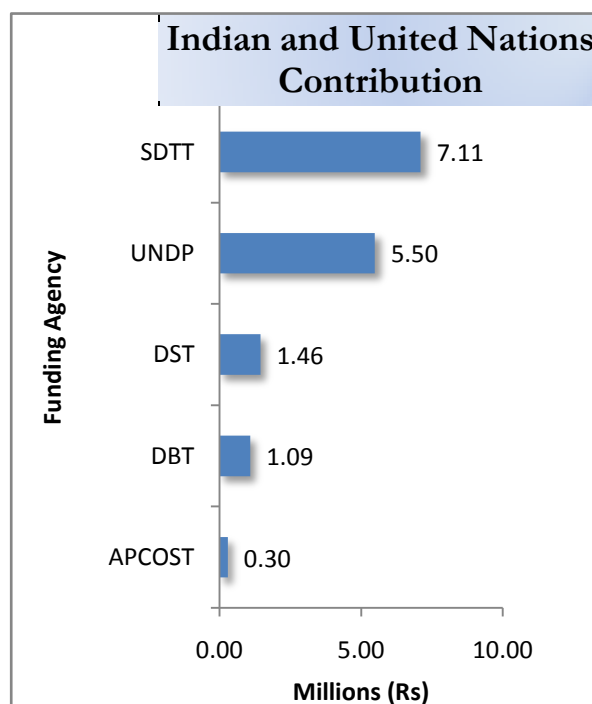
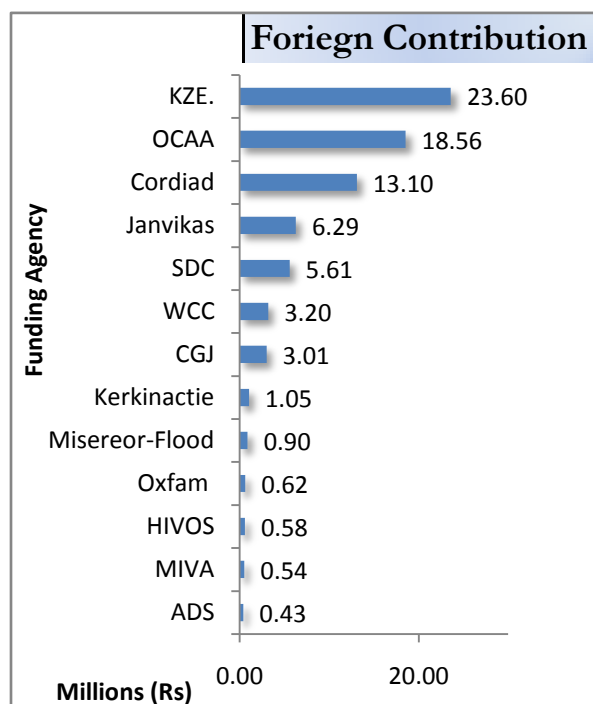
### 11.3.1 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW (2002-07)



As is evident in the 'receipts and payments graph' in 2003-04, 2005-06 and 2006-07 our payments have exceeded our receipts. This was possible because during those periods we had outstanding amounts that accrued as balance from the previous year's receipts. In addition we also utilized significant portion of our Maintenance, Upgradation and Development Fund (MUDF) to support our CVU programme in 2006-07.

### 11.3.2 FINANCIAL RESOURCE SUPPORT

List of Support Agencies	
Foreign Contributors	Indian Contributors
CORDAID, The Netherlands	Andhra Pradesh State Council of Science and Technology (APSCST)
Katholische Zentralstelle fur Entwicklungshilfe e.V (KZE), Germany	Department of Science and Technology, Government of India (DST, GOI)
Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (OCAA), Australia	Sri Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland	United National Development Programme (UNDP)
Ford Foundation (FF),	Department of Biotechnology, Government of India (DBT, GOI)
Academy of Development Science (ADS)	
Consulate General of Japan (CGJ), Japan	
Oxfam, United Kingdom	
MIVA, Switzerland	
Misereor, Germany	
Kerkinactie, The Netherlands	
HIVOS, The Netherlands	



The Laya Team - Past and Present (2002-2007)			
VISAKHAPTNAM			
Name	Responsibility	Joined	In Service/ Resigned
Nafisa Goga D'Souza	Executive Director	Founder Member	In service
Dominic D'Souza	Director	1996	In service
Seshu Surya Prasanna Kumar D.	Operations Support, Office Assistant	1993	In service
Shankar Rao P.	Operations Support, Driver and Office Support	1994	In service
Prasad L.V.	Natural Resource Management Unit, Coordinator	1997	2003
Srivatsav G.	Operations Support, Computer Programmer	1997	2003
Vesavila A.	Women Empowerment Unit, Coordinator	1997	2002
Nagamani V.V.	Finance and Accountants, Coordinator	1998	In service
Venu Gopal R.	Science & Technology, Coordinator	1998	In service
Vijai Kumar L.	Micro Credit and Enterprise Unit, Coordinator	1998	2005
Viplav Kumar P.	Accounts, Support	1998	In service
Mallikharjuna Rao L.	Alternative Documentation Unit, Coordinator	1999	In service
Ramulamma Ch.	Office Maintenance, Support	2000	In service
Savithri K.	Parichay Unit, Field Support	2000	2002
Swamy G.	Coordination, Field Support	2000	2002
John Britto	Parichay Unit, Coordinator	2001	2002
Sekhar J.V.	Computer Unit, Coordinator	2001	In service
Uday Bhaskar D.	Office Administration, Coordinator	2001	2003
Vijaya T.	Climate Change, Project Coordinator	2001	2005
Madhavi Rani M.	Women Empowerment Unit, Coordinator	2002	2006
Nagalakshmi E.	Computer Unit, Programmer and Data Entry	2002	2006
Siva Prasad P.S.	Accounts, Assistant Coordinator	2002	2006

<b>Srinivas Rao B.</b>	Parichay Unit, Coordinator	2002	In service
<b>Indira Rani N.</b>	Research Coordinator	2003	2005
<b>Manisha Banerjee</b>	Administration, Coordinator	2003	In service
<b>Srinivasa Rao K.</b>	Parichay Unit, Field Support	2003	2006
<b>Kantha Rao T.</b>	Parichay Unit, Field Support	2004	In service
<b>Madhav Rao R.</b>	Operations Support, Driver and Office Support	2004	In service
<b>Mohan B.</b>	IIPLS, Field Support	2003	2004
<b>Nageswar Rao B.</b>	IIPLS, Programme Coordinator	2004	2006
<b>Rajani M.</b>	Parichay Unit, Field Support	2004	2005
<b>Samata A.</b>	Operation Support, Documentation Assistant	2005	2007
<b>Satyanaraya M.</b>	Computer Unit, Programmer and Data Entry	2005	In service
<b>Shrikant Joshi</b>	Accompanist	2005	2006
<b>Bhavani G.</b>	Accounts, Support	2006	2006
<b>Kanaka Rao B.</b>	IIPLS, Programme Coordinator	2006	In service
<b>Lavanya K.</b>	Accounts, Support	2006	In service
<b>Siddharth D'Souza</b>	Documentation and Training Associate	2004	2005
	Human Resource Support	2006	In service
<b>Ajita Tiwari</b>	Climate change, Project Coordinator	2007	In service
<b>ADDATIGALA</b>			
<b>Bulliyya G.</b>	Field Area and Herbal Based Health Care Unit, Coordinator	1986	In service
<b>Koteswar Rao K.</b>	NRM Unit, Coordinator	1986	In service
<b>Pushpa Raju K.</b>	Resource for Legal Action, Field Support	1986	In service
<b>Ravi Kumar A.</b>	Micro Credit & Enterprise, Field Coordinator	1993	In service
<b>Satyanarayana G.V.V.</b>	Accountants, Field Support	1993	In service
<b>Srinivasa Rao N.</b>	CVU Unit, Trainee	1998	In service
<b>Padmavathi A.</b>	Women Empowerment Unit, Field Coordinator	2003	In service

<b>Ravi Kiran T.</b>	NRM Unit, Field Support	2003	2005
<b>Lakshmana Dasu M.</b>	NRM Unit, Field Support	2006	2007
<b>Srinivas S.</b>	Alternative Health Care Unit, Field Support	2006	In service
<b>PADERU</b>			
<b>Ravindra V.</b>	NRM Unit Field Support and Field Area Coordinator	1993	In service
<b>Raghavendra Rao K.</b>	NRM Unit, Field Coordinator	2002	2006
<b>Narayana I. S.</b>	NRM Unit, Field Coordinator	2004	In service
<b>Sudha Rani M.</b>	Women's Empowerment, Field Support	2004	2005
<b>Mohan V.</b>	RLA, Field Coordinator	2003	In service
<b>Sarada Vijaya A.</b>	Women Empowerment , Field Support	2006	In service
<b>Sitaram M. V.</b>	Accounts and Administration, Field Assistant	2006	In service
<b>RAJAMUNDRY AND RAMPACHODAVARM</b>			
<b>Trinadha Rao P.</b>	RLA Unit, Coordinator	1987	In service
<b>Annapurna M.</b>	RLA Unit, Advocate	1993	In service
<b>Ram Babu P.</b>	RLA Unit, Field Support	1998	In service
<b>Ram Babu M.</b>	RLA Unit, Driver and Office Support	2000	In service
<b>JALLAMPALLI</b>			
<b>Prasad R.</b>	Jalampalli Training Centre, Caretaker	1997	In service



## GLOSSARY

<b>APASS</b>	<b>Andhra Pradesh Adivasi Sangala Samakya</b>
<b>APARD</b>	Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development
<b>ADR</b>	Alternative dispute resolution
<b>ASF</b>	Asian Social Forum
<b>BPL</b>	Below Poverty Line
<b>CBD</b>	Center for Biodiversity and Development
<b>CBOs</b>	Community Based Organisations
<b>CFM</b>	Community Forest Management
<b>CHCs</b>	Community Health Centres
<b>CWS</b>	Center for World Solidarity
<b>DEO</b>	Decentralized Energy Options
<b>FCRA</b>	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
<b>GCC</b>	Girijan Cooperative Corporation
<b>HATZ</b>	High Altitude Tribal Zone
<b>INECC</b>	Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change
<b>MACs</b>	Mutually Aided Cooperative Society
<b>MAGs</b>	Marketing Action Groups
<b>MLA</b>	Member of Legislative Assembly
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MUDF</b>	Maintenance Upgradation and Development Fund
<b>NREGA</b>	Rural Employment Guarantee Act

<b>NTFP</b>	Non-Timber Forest Produce
<b>NYF</b>	National Youth Foundation
<b>OCAA</b>	Oxfam Community Aid Abroad
<b>OD</b>	Organisation Development
<b>PESA</b>	Panchayat Extension to Schedule Areas
<b>PIL</b>	Public Interest Litigations
<b>PRI</b>	Panchayat Raj Institutions
<b>RARS</b>	Regional Agriculture Research Station
<b>RDO</b>	Rural Divisional Officer
<b>RHCs</b>	Regular Health Camps
<b>RLA</b>	Resource for Legal Action
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SERP</b>	Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty
<b>SRI</b>	System of Rice Intensification
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>THCs</b>	Traditional Healing Centres
<b>THP</b>	Traditional Health Practitioners
<b>TRIMACs</b>	Tribal Mutually Aided Cooperative Society
<b>VAW</b>	Violence against Women
<b>WSF</b>	World Social Forum