

# ADATS Bagepalli Forestry Project

## 605 050 Laxmamma's story

"I live in Mohammadpura village of Chintamani taluk, with a family of four. Before being a part of the Coolie Sangha, I was looked down upon by my own family. I was not a part of the decisions taken in my family. After joining the Coolie Sangha and attending Mahila Meetings where one woman from each household meets on a fixed day every week, I have now become more aware of my rights.

"During the Village and Taluk Coolie Sangha meetings there were several discussions on the need for a more permanent source of income for our families.

We did not want our children to struggle like us. We decided to shift from growing food crops to establishing tree crops. For the past 14 years, some of us have been doing this, in spite of others calling it a pipe dream.

"During one of the Taluk Coolie Sangha meetings we got to know that ADATS had registered our efforts as an Afforestation/Reforestation Project. We felt so happy when we came to know that what we were doing will help everyone in the whole world. My family received 200 saplings to plant on our land. During the initial years, many saplings died, but ADATS staff helped us bargain with local nurseries to buy new saplings and replace the dead ones. We also got some saplings from the government horticulture department. Today, I have 135 Mango trees.



"Mango trees take several years to start fruiting. It has been two years since we have started harvesting Mangoes. Last year, I earned ₹ 9,000 from selling fruit. My family has decided to take up a new business to ripen and sell these Mangoes ourselves, without a trader.

"From a Taluk Coolie Sangha meeting, I am now aware that we have generated some VERs and that each is worth about ₹ 1,000. I have been informed that the Mango trees on my land will fetch me about ₹ 62,000 because

they absorbed 62 tonnes of poisonous gases over the years.

"The Coolie Sangha has been telling us that we must all think like business women. I now know what that means. I know to do different businesses during different seasons. My family now treats me with utmost respect. One more thing. I decided to educate my daughters and they now go to college."

