

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES TAKEN AT THE HNTC, GAREMALLAPADU DURING 1996-1998

ITDA, Bhadrachalam has taken extensive steps in the last two years to develop Horticulture Nursery cum Training Center (HNTC), Garemallapadu as a model HNTC. *This HNTC has produced the largest number of successful cashew grafts in the state, has modern methods of farming systems for demonstration, had conducted a lot of training programs for tribal farmers of the district as well as from almost all ITDAs of the state in these years, made reasonably good profits and has a sound audited accounts.* The following are the activities in a nutshell:

1. Production of grafts:

HNTC, Garemallapadu took up the production of cashew grafts for the first time in 1996-97 in a big way. **72,000** successful *cashew grafts*, out of the total 1,20,000 successful grafts produced in the ITDA, Bhadrachalam, were produced here using softwood-grafting technique. This is the **largest collection** of cashew grafts in any farm *in the state*. This year upto now 60,000 successful grafts have been produced. This is in addition to the **1,50,000** successful mango grafts, 25361 sapota grafts and plants of other varieties like custard apple, soap nut, jackfruit and ornamental plants.

2. Trainings:

Conducting training for tribal farmers and propagating new methods of farming technique is the main aim of the Horticulture Nursery cum Training Centers (HNTC). HNTC, Garemallapadu has conducted 10 training programs for tribal farmers of Khammam district this year. Moreover farmers from the ITDAs of Rampachodavarem, Etturagaram, Srisailam, Parvatipuram visited this farm this year. As per the directions of the Commissioner Tribal Welfare, Andhra Pradesh training was conducted for selected farmers from *all ITDAs in the state*. Each training module was for twenty farmers and had duration of eight days.

The farmers are taught softwood and veneer grafting, air and ground layering techniques, application of pesticides and orchard maintenance. There is a training hall and dormitory for the stay of the farmers in the farm. On 15th June, 96 a library was started with books related to horticulture worth over Rs 15000. On 1st of August, 97 "**Aramam**", the renovated *guesthouse* was also opened here for the convenience of visiting senior faculty members and other officers.

Apart from these training programmes for the farmers from other ITDAs, a number of training programmes are taken up for the tribal boys who are willing to set up satellite nurseries in their mandals. They undergo three months training program here. They are given financial assistance to set up the nurseries. The grafts they produce are either sold locally or bought by the ITDA for supplying to the beneficiaries of the horticulture programme. The fact that there are more than 25 successful satellite nurseries functioning in the TSP area with the active assistance of the ITDA bears testimony to the fact that the training efforts are fruitful.

3. Profits and Accounts:

Most of the grafts produced here are mostly used for the horticulture program of this ITDA. The balance is sold to other governmental agencies like DRDAs on payment. Since the quality of the grafts produced here is very good, there is great demand for the grafts. From the sales proceeds of these grafts, this HNTC has made a net profit of Rs 18.75 lakhs in 1996-97, after deducting the expenditure on farm maintenance and wages to about 120 laborers engaged here.

This was ploughed back for the improvement of the farm, renovation of the guesthouse, formation of the ornamental garden back etc. In January 98, even a tractor was purchased for using in the farm from these profits.

In September 98, the AAO, Local fund audit attached to the ITDA, Bhadrachalam was asked to conduct the audit of the accounts of the farm from the year 1994-95 onwards. He has submitted the report after auditing all the accounts for the period.

4. Maintenance of the farm:

The maintenance of the farm has been streamlined. From this year onwards grafts are placed in standard trenches of 300 grafts each for correct accounting. Various registers have been opened to keep track of the work. For eg. muster rolls, registers for daily production of grafts, sales of grafts and other farm produce.

In August, 97 the lay out map of the farm covering 72 acres was prepared on a big board and displayed outside the guest house. Each block has been named and indicating boards have been placed. Separate places have been earmarked for mango, cashew - rootstocks as well as grafts, ornamental plants and other plants. There is a rose garden with over 100 varieties of roses. An ornamental garden covering 2 acres is being built. The boulevards were lined with plants and bricks. The farm is maintained very neat and clean.

5. Introduction of modern techniques:

In the farm there are five pits for **vermiculture**. The farmers are taught to use vermiculture and compost more and more instead of chemical manure. There is rain gauge, an anemometer installed. Sprinklers, pipe irrigation etc are also demonstrated.

The work on the construction of an **agro-shade net house** covering a massive area of 2000 square meters (22,000 sq. ft-probably the largest in the state) was started on January 1st, 98. The work is now completed. With this, almost 1,00,000 cashew grafts can be stored in the shade house without getting affected by the high temperature experienced here during summer. The special shade-net used would cut down the heat by 75%, according to the specification given by the suppliers of the net.

The work on the construction of a **green house/mist chamber** was also started on that day and it would be completed by March,98 end. This is to ensure controlled temperature and humidity for the newly produced grafts.

In November, 97 a shed was constructed to take up **oyster mushroom** cultivation on an experimental basis. The first crop has already come. If this is found profitable, tribal farmers will be encouraged to take up mushroom farming. The mushrooms produced would be supplied to the nearby ashram school students as a nutritive food. Some medicinal plants and vegetable dyes are also taken up for demonstration purposes.

Work on an ornamental garden covering an area of 3 acres is also in progress. It is intended to show the variety of plants seen in this district, new exotic and native species of ornamental plants, flowering plants to the farmers on training. Also shown will be various soil conservation techniques.

6. Sericulture:

There is a sericulture plot of 6 acres to demonstrate to the tribal farmers the mulberry cultivation. Mulberry cuttings are given from here to the tribal beneficiaries who have taken to sericulture. There is a LR seed farm where the silk worms are reared. This unit supplies Disease Free Local Race P1 seed cocoons to the Grainage at Wyra, where CB DFLs are prepared for the tribal beneficiaries.

7. Welfare measures for the workers:

The workers are paid daily wages @Rs 44.00 per day, as per the rates fixed up the District Collector for the unskilled labourers of the district. This is much more than they actually get, if they went out to do daily work outside the farm.

To take care of the *children of the workers*, a **school** has been started by the ITDA in the adjoining Garemallapad village. At present this is a Mabadi or a community school, though proposal has already been sent to the Government for the sanction of a regular school here. The village has already been provided with electricity and drinking water facilities by the ITDA, Bhadrachalam.

G.ASOK KUMAR IAS
PROJECT OFFICER
ITDA, Bhadrachalam