

*Profile of*  
***Banglapadugai Centre***



*February 2006*

*The village of Banglapadgai is situated between Rangasami Peak and Bhavani Reservoir, about 40 km from Kotagiri town. 25 Irula families live here. This Village Resource Centre started in June 2005.*

Keystone has been working with Land Development in Banglapadugai since 1999. There is a nursery here and a seed bank in the nearby village of Samaigodal. At the Village Resource Centre, NTFPs are value-added before being sold in the Green Shops of Keystone. Preparing, packing and weighing of Last Forest products are done. The centre is held by Banglapadugai Women's Progressive Group founded in April 2004. Most of the women also work here, six of them on a regular basis. Many are related. The elevation of Banglapadugai is 800 metres above msl.



#### **Future plans for Banglapadugai Centre**

A new construction is being built at this very moment, where the new Village Resource Centre will be. Also a shop is planned to be in there, for villagers to buy some of their products at a lower rate. Probably more women will start working at the centre when the building is ready.

## Products, package size and peak season

### Nellikai, Nov-Jan

Amla Candy	50g	100g		
Nellikai Jam			200g	
Nellikai Pickle				350g
NMF unsalted	50g	100g		
NMF salted	50g	100g		

### Lime, Apr-June

Lime Pickle	175g
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### Spices, Mar-May

Nutmeg		50g	
Mace	25g	50g	
Clove	25g	50g	
Black Pepper		50g	100g
Cinnamon, whole		50g	

### Shikakai, Dec-Feb

Shikakai with Amla	100g
Shikakai with Hibiscus	100g
Shikakai with Vetiver	100g
Shikakai powder	100g

### Coffee, Dec-Feb

Arabica Coffee	50g	100g
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### Silk Cotton, Mar-May

Pillow
Cushion
Mattress



#### **Packing capacity**

5 kg of Nutmeg is packed and cleaned in one day, by three people. Cutting of 13 kg Amla is done by one person in a day. After that the Amla is boiled and then left in sugar for 10 days. 10 kg of Amla Candy is packed in one day, by three people.



**KALAMMA** is married and has three children. She has worked with the Women's Group for three years and likes every single task at the centre. Her native place is Vakanamar a couple of km from Banglapadugai and she used to work at a coffee estate. Right now she is at home with her baby but will start to work again. She likes working with organic products

because it is good for health. She wants them to expand doing more products and that the Women's Group should work more independently. She dreams of getting more money so she can grow more food to be self sufficient.



**KAMALA** fills in for the women who are temporary at home with their new-born babies and now works here three to four days a week. She is 48 years old and has been helping out with the production for two-three years. She used to work at a coffee estate and now wants to join the Women's Group. Working at the Resource Centre is a lot more fun, since the work is varied.

She has one daughter and lives alone, since her husband passed away. While she likes Candy packing the most she also suggests that they should start making Beeswax Balms, Beeswax Candles and Soaps. It would be good with more women joining the Women's Group. She wants to start cultivating her own land again.



**MAHALAXMI** has been working here for three years, earlier she was at a coffee estate. She is 20 years old and has four brothers. She works three-four days a week and was on leave the day we visited Banglapadugai. Sometimes she works on her own land.



**MARAKKA** is 29 years old and has two children, the youngest only six months why she now only works two-three days a week. Previously she worked at a coffee estate and her husband is working at a vanilla estate. Her native place is Kolikottai and she doesn't have any brothers or sisters. Working here for three years she now wants the Women's

Group to grow with more people and more buildings and produce, like Beeswax Balms and Candles.

**RAMI** is around 48 years old and is working here temporary while some women are on maternity leave. She has three daughters, one son and six grand children. She is a member of the Woman's Group and wants to continue working at the centre. It is very important to have some older members in the group, she thinks, because many



young women move after marrying. It would be nice with more people working at the centre when the new building is ready. She wants the centre to develop by more produce and more opportunities.

**SAROJA** is 21 years old and is in charge of the centre. She has worked with Keystone for three years, before that she worked at a tea estate. Her favourite task is to clean cinnamon and clove. Her family consists of two sisters and she lives with her uncle. She likes organic food because it is good for your health. She thinks the centre could improve by getting bigger; more products, employees and buildings. Her vision of the centre in the future is that they



will learn more and that it will grow with for example, more products. For her own future she wants to save some money, to build a house of her own and to cover health expenses. She also wants to marry and have two children.



**SASIKALA**, 28 years old, has worked here for three years. Before that she worked at a tea estate. Born in Kalambali, she moved here when she got married twelve years ago. She has three children and her husband works at a tea estate. She prefers Amla Candy packing and suggests that they should start producing

Beeswax Balms and Honey Soap. She also wants the centre to develop with more sales, not only to Keystone but to other places too. She wants them to have a shop of their own in

Banglapadugai as well. Her personal dream is for her children to study well and get a good job. She wants her children to marry within the Irula community but if they fall in love with someone else she will be happy for them anyway.



**SIVAMALAR** just delivered her fourth baby and is on leave for three months. She is 28 years old and has worked here for three years. She finds cleaning most fun. Before she joined the Women's Group, she did estate work, which her husband still is doing. She is born in the nearby village of Verikur.

**VANAJA** is 20 years old. After finishing 8<sup>th</sup> standard she started to work at a tea estate. Three years ago she began to work with Keystone and is very happy about the new centre being built. She lives in Banglapadugai with her mother, brother and sister-in-law. She finds her job interesting, likes that it is close to her home and finds sealing most fun. Starting to produce Beeswax Balms, Jam and Jelly are some of her ideas for development. She finds organic products, like millets, interesting and good for health. In the future she wants more opportunities, more work and more money! She wants to marry around the age of 25 and have two children.

