New Agroforestry Site: Kotumachigi village

- About 20 Km from the town of Gadag
- Population of 11,000
- Number of Houses 1400
- Population below poverty line ~25%
- Drinking water: Only one well with two abandoned (dried up)
- Two open ponds, mixed use and only for a month or two after the rainy season
- Average Family holding: Up to 8 acres
- Groundwater at an average of 250 ft
• Average rainfall: 250 to 500 mm per year

• Main crops: jowar, wheat, maize and pulses.

• Commercial crops: groundnut, chillies, onion and cotton

• Red and black soil
Drudgery for water and fuel is a burden for women and children. A Pre-project survey is needed to track the data on drudgery, health, and education for women and children.
Soil sampling has started to initiate carbon measurements. Farm pond construction will start in two weeks. Raingages have been purchased to get village students to start taking measurements everyday. Weather Stations and soil moisture are next.
Education till grade 10. Loss of farmers/labor to nearby towns and cities. Need to install weather stations to generate interest in the environment. Water harvesting in schools.
Much focus has been placed on indoor air-quality but the impact of proximity to livestock and other animals on health issues has not been tracked carefully. We are trying to work with Dr. Gopal Dabade (Medical doctor), to consider studying this problem.
The farm pond is done. Now waiting for the rain to start....
Rainfall was below normal for May and June but picked up nicely in July. La Niña was firmly established by then. So 2010 is basically a normal year for monsoon but we still have to explain the patterns and the devastating Pakistan floods!

The raingage really helped to see that it rained pretty much every day in July. The contrast between an agricultural drought and a meteorologicla drought was quite clear during May-June since it rained at the right time to allow planting and July-August rains drove expected output in most places. We clearly need skillful intraseasonal rain forecast! Rainfall data will be digitized soon.
All the trenches collected the rain and the farm pond really worked! Villagers are really happy to use the water for drinking. We need to do this for the whole village since one of the bore wells has serious fluorosis problem and kids are beginning to have joint pains and the teeth show clear indication of excess fluoride. Veena and her team is leading the water testing and we will drive rainwater harvesting.
The farmer was seriously concerned about planting trees let alone 2500 seedlings but they all survived! By next year, we will know if the farmer really believes that trees do provide income throughout the year. Vermi-composting is yet to start.
Riding a tractor is always fun. But riding the ox-ford is even more fun.
Soil carbon is barely 0.5% in the field! So it is critical to measure it to quantify the impact of agroforestry.
Telling the kids about climate, water, and isotope analysis was real fun even though the lunch made me real sick all night. But talking to the farmers was much more challenging just in terms of wondering if I really know more than them!
Rain ravage forces exodus from Gadag tandas

Children, old, infirm, pregnant and new mothers left behind

GADAG: Loss of crop due to heavy rain over the past few weeks has forced residents of Majjur and Varavi in Shirahatti of Gadag set on a mass exodus to far off places in search of livelihood.

Left behind in the village are only the old and infirm, children, pregnant and new mothers.

More than 500 people have left their homes in the neighbouring villages - Varavi, Chabbii, Kundrai, Mahalingapur as well. And, hundreds of women and men in groups are preparing to leave for destinations such as Mangalore, Chikmagalur and Goa.

Standing crop damaged

Heavy rain that lashed the district recently damaged the standing crop on vast tracts of land, obviating the need for agriculture labourers.

The tanda residents, whose livelihood depends on wage labour, will have to wait till the next monsoon to get work. A large number of them have already left for coffee plantations and sugar cane fields in Goa, Karwar and Chikmagalur.

Couples who have none at home to take care of their young children, have left the tanda with the young, forcing them to drop out of school.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, aimed at preventing precisely such distress migration has not been of much use as the members of these tandas, who live in abject poverty, need daily wages for sustenance. Under the MGNREGS, wages are paid once in a week, and in any case, the programme is riddled with corruption and hobbled by bureaucratic sloth and callousness.

DH News Service
IIMB forays into weather info service

Crop alert system launched on pilot basis

BANGALORE: Farmers who are at the mercy of nature now have a reason to rejoice.

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) has set up a Weather Resource Centre at Gubbi in Tumkur district as a pilot project to provide advance information to farmers on weather conditions.

The centre was inaugurated on Monday.

Express Weather (EW), a Kolkata-based weather forecasting company, will provide relevant data on weather and put in place a crop alert system, and a weather-related implementation for controlling crop diseases.

According to EW Managing Director and CEO Angushu Das, the centre will work on the Proof of Concept (PoC) basis. PoC refers to the demonstration of a concept or theory to verify its usefulness.

Software applications will be provided by Wipro whereas Intel will provide the hardware.

“PoC Systems will provide connectivity. A team of specialised agriculturalists, headed by plant pathologist R D Rauwal, will guide farmers on issues like sowing, use of pesticides and fertilisers. While the entire process of generating relevant information and passing it on to the farmers will be automated, the team will work closely on developing the input,” Das said.

Although the means of sending information on weather to farmers has not been fixed, Das says mobile applications may be used for this. The system will function round the clock. The information will be about mango, berel nut and banana which are the major crops of the region.

“Heavy rains, time of sowing, and use of fertilisers play a crucial role in a successful crop. Wind direction, moisture content of soil, dew, humidity, etc., also play an important role in cultivation and harvesting. Farmers simply cannot afford to be unaware of these issues. Hence, the project will benefit them,” Das told Deccan Herald.

Nearly 10,000 farmers in the four gram panchayats are expected to benefit from the initiative. Weather forecasting technology based on numerical models such as the Global Forecasting System and Weather Research and Forecast will be used for predicting the atmospheric conditions.

Precise forecasts will be made up to 100-metre domain, while accuracy of prediction for rainfall, humidity and dew measurements will be 90 per cent, Das added.