

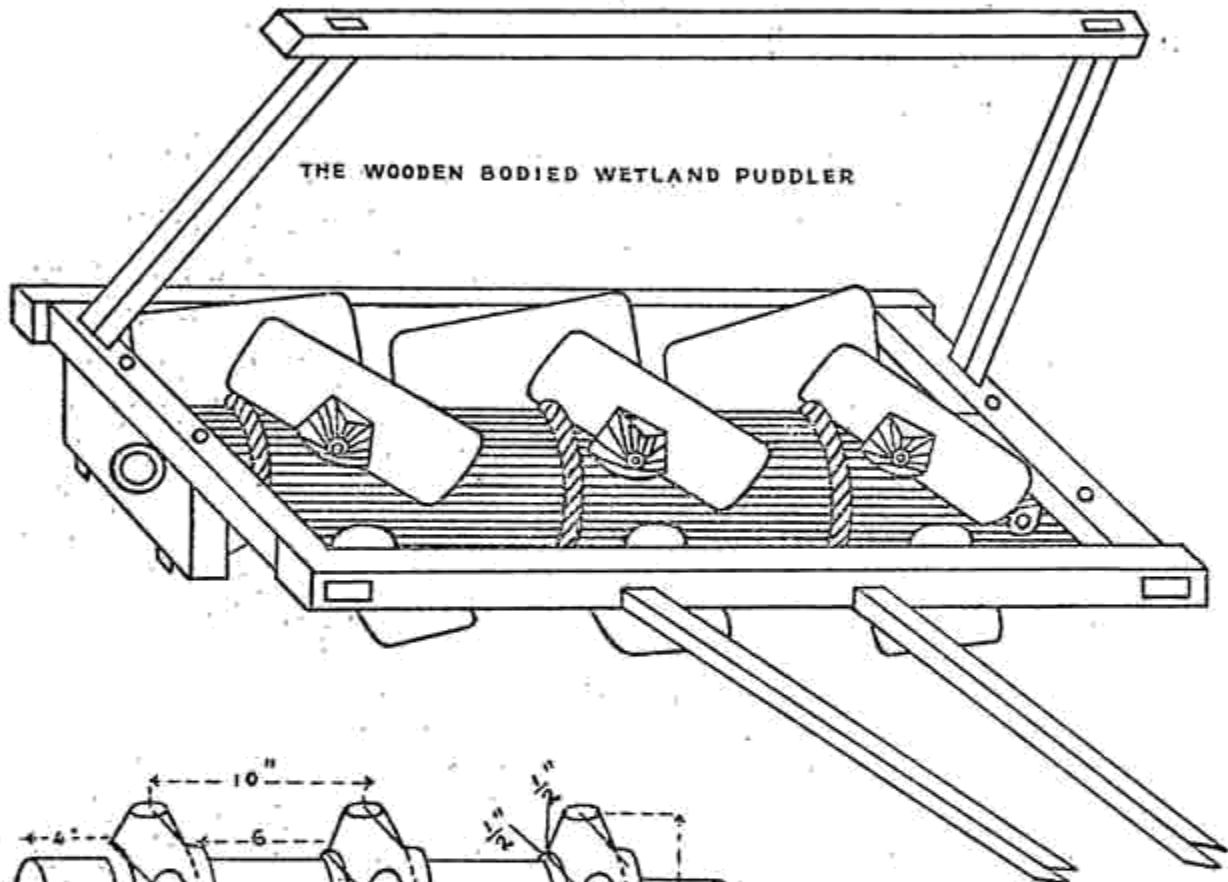
## The Puddler

By M. SANJEEVA REDDY,

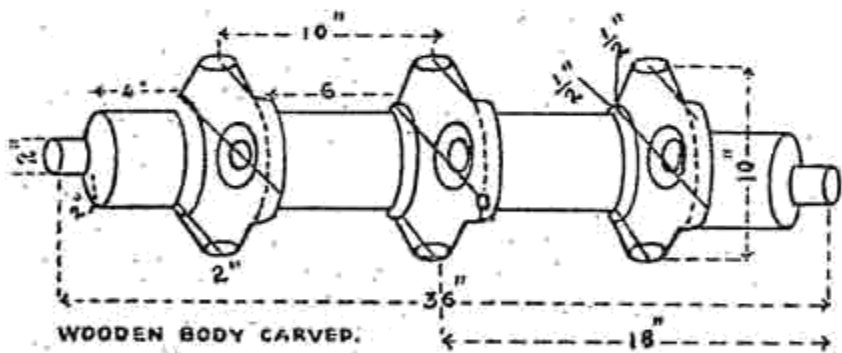
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The "puddler" is an ingenious agricultural implement. It is used primarily for puddling and secondarily for trampling leaf manure in wetlands for paddy cultivation. It is, therefore, a dual purpose implement. Just as a tank is the main weapon on land to win a war so is this puddler—now nicknamed wetland tank—for the successful cultivation of paddy with the minimum labour on maximum area within a minimum time limit. It was introduced in the Hindupur Taluk of the Anantapur District for the first time in 1940 by the Agricultural Department when the price of each was Rs. 21. Its price now is Rs. 36 which is beyond the means of an ordinary cultivator. This original implement is of all iron parts consisting of galvanized iron pipe 3 feet long, 3 cast iron hubs of 4 spokes each to take in iron plates, flat iron handle and frame and a number of bolts and nuts that cannot be made or repaired by a village smith. Due to war the price of iron as everybody knows has gone up and a time has now come when the minimum quantity of iron will have to be used for such implements.

Its usefulness and familiarity on the one hand and the prohibitive cost on the other makes one neither give it up nor go in for it and leaves him in a dilemma. At such a time Sri K. V. Seshagiri Rao, the local Agricultural Demonstrator made a puddler of all wood except the plates which cannot be replaced by any other cheap material. This consists of a log of babul *Acacia arabica* (*thumma* in Telugu and *jali* in Kanarese) 3 feet long and 10 to 11 inches in diameter. For an implement which works in water and mire no other wood is better fitted. This log is so carved out even by an ordinary village carpenter to contain all parts in one, viz., axle at either end, the 3 hubs with 12 spokes—3 on each side to take in iron plates 10 to 11 × 6 inches. To prevent the wood from being worn out the two ends of the axle are covered with iron plate rings. The whole body turns on these two axle ends in two babul wood bushes (the only wearing parts requiring replenishment for every 20 acres work at a very cheap cost) which are in turn fitted to a frame of babul wood by means of wooden pegs to which are fitted the babul wood handle and two shaft poles of any other available wood. The iron plates used were not new but were cut from old discarded jaggery pans thrown away long time ago in stack yards. In these days this wooden puddler has come as a boon to the *ryots* of quite ordinary means too. For a *ryot* who possesses, as he generally does, all these materials this implement costs him almost nothing and he can get it made by his own carpenter. If one has to get it made by purchase of all materials it costs about Rs. 15 as detailed below:



THE WOODEN BODIED WETLAND PUDDLER



[K.V.S.RAO]

Babul wood for body-frame, handle, etc. Rs. 2—8—0. 2 shaft poles Rs. 1—8—0. Iron plates (at the present rate) Rs. 7—0—0. Making charges Rs. 3—8—0. Nails, rings, etc. Rs. 0—8—0. Total Rs. 15—0—0.

Being intimate with all-iron and all-wood puddlers, I am of opinion, that the latter being heavier works steadily, puddles well and tramples leaf branches to a good depth uniformly with ease.

**The Puddler—a food production drive implement** To prepare an acre of land in major portion of the Anantapur District and particularly in the southern taluks and the adjoining portions of the Mysore State six ploughings are to be given with a country plough (cross, across and diagonal) which require 18 pairs of animals at 3 pairs per time. In addition to this Rs. 2 are required for trampling leaf by human labour. This is a very slow method requiring about 20 days mainly due to want of sufficient number of animals either of his own or for hire. It is very tedious and the animals get worn out. In the main the results are that only a few acres of land could be cultivated, the season of planting is long delayed and the yield ultimately goes down. If a puddler is used only 7 pairs of animals are required to get ready an acre, six pairs to work the country plough twice and one pair of average size to work the puddler twice or thrice. Thus Rs. 2 and labour of 11 pairs are saved. When an iron plough like Cooper No. 11, Kirloskar No. 14 or P. S. G. No. 16B is used 3 pairs of animals are enough, two pairs to work the plough once and one pair to work the puddler twice or thrice, thus reducing the labour by 15 pairs and Rs. 2. Be there leaf trampling or not the puddler is highly essential for economic and quick cultivation of paddy on a large area with good results.

In these days of world war when exports and imports have been greatly affected the main problem to solve has been to find ways and means of increasing food production specially that of rice. The Taluk Agricultural Improvement Committee of Hindupur which was started in December 1940 at the instance of the local Agricultural Demonstrator with the main purpose of disseminating improved methods of agriculture on a mass scale as a means of food production drive got a dozen of such puddlers made locally and distributed them as prizes along with other labour saving and efficient implements like Bellary *gorrus*, *guntakas*, *danthulu*, iron ploughs in place of the usual prizes of cash, cups and medals with the object of demonstrating them in various places from where the knowledge may disseminate further.

Interested and enthusiastic as I am in such schemes of welfare of a country I earnestly pray that the concerned authorities and the public in general and the *ryots* in particular take to this simple and invaluable implement—the wooden bodied wetland puddler.