

Progress Report on

The Farmers Renaissance Program in Sivagangai Area

Period - April to March 2012

1. Introduction

The farmer renaissance program in Sivagangai was initiated in April 2008 to support the farmers in taking up agriculture actively. As the project area being located in the dry belt, farmers practiced rainfed cultivation. In the event of failure of monsoon rain, the farmers cannot take up agriculture activities.

The major problems of the local farmers were being addressed by initiating watershed development program, a decade back. Nearly 3,000 hectares of lands were treated under watershed, which subsequently resulted in increase of groundwater level.

The implementation of the farmer renaissance program in 2008 has helped the farmers in taking up agriculture practices seriously due to the provision of the following services.

- Assisted farmers with deepening of wells, bore wells, drip irrigation, water pipelines, to use the ground water effectively for irrigation purposes.
- Guided to bring in wasteland under horticulture crops cultivation.
- Supported to raise short term crops such as vegetables and groundnut crops and
- Alternative livelihoods through cattle wealth promotion for additional income generation on regular basis.

During the first phase, i.e., from April 2008 to March 2011, over 500 farmers were brought in, assessed their needs and supported them accordingly.

Subsequently, the benefits created among the farmers had attracted other farmers from the neighbourhood towards the Farmers Renaissance Program. Accordingly, the second phase was initiated in April 2011 with the purpose of not only to support new farmers but also guide the existing farmers.

2. Coverage of Farmers

As on March 2012, this program has been able to register 1035 farmers. During the reporting period, 585 farmers were covered and assisted based on their needs.

- Under ASSEFA Italy grant : 125 *farmers*
- Under Revolving fund : 460 *farmers*

3. Training to Farmers

The farmers were given regular training based on the assessment. During the reporting period, 245 farmers were given the following training.

- Integrated Farming Practices : 75
- Organic Farming – Certificate processing : 15
- Veterinary Care Services : 120
- Fodder Development : 35

These trainings were conducted with the support of external source persons. The services of the students of the ASSEFA Community College were also utilized to train the farmers in Integrated farming practices and fodder development.

4. Financial Support for Livelihoods Activities

Depending upon the needs of the farmers, supports were extended for the following.

- Water management services
- Agriculture crops development
- Cattle wealth promotion including milch animal, calf and goat rearing.

During the reporting period, 585 farmers were extended financial support for the above activities.

4.1. Water Management Services (10 farmers)

Extended support to 10 farmers under water management services. These include

- Drip irrigation : 2 farmers
- Borewell : 5 farmers
- Distribution pipelines : 3 farmers

Out of total support to 10 farmers, 3 were supported under ASSEFA Italy grant for bore wells and 7 under revolving funds.

4.2. Agriculture Crop Development (101 farmers)

Supports were extended to raise short-term crops such as vegetable, groundnut cultivation. Out of the total assistance to 101 farmers,

- Under ASSEFA Italy grant : 04 farmers
- Under Revolving Fund : 97 farmers

4.3. Cattle Wealth Promotion – Milch Animals (333 farmers)

A large number of farmers were supported to buy milch animals. They were mainly advised to get hybrid animal i.e., jersey cross, suited to the local environment and also yield more milk than the local breed. Out of the total support to 333 farmers,

- Under ASSEFA Italy grant : 87 farmers
- Under Revolving Fund : 246 farmers

4.4. Cattle Wealth Promotion – Calf Rearing (22 farmers)

In addition to milch animals, farmers were assisted to buy heifer calves. During the reporting period, 22 farmers were supported to buy heifer calves. Apart from financial assistance, they were guided to purchase good animal from the nearest animal market. Out of the total support to 22 farmers,

- Under ASSEFA Italy grant : 03 *farmers*
- Under Revolving Fund : 19 *farmers*

4.5. Cattle Wealth Promotion – Goat Rearing (110 *farmers*)

Supports were extended to rear goats. Out of the total assistance to 110 farmers,

- Under ASSEFA Italy grant : 28 *farmers*
- Under Revolving Fund : 82 *farmers*

4.6. Community College for extension services

The services of the students of the community college, preferably who get trained in Integrated Farming System Course, were utilized in implementing the Farmers Renaissance Program.

These Students, as part of their field work assignment, had supported the program in

- Identifying deserving farmers
- Assessing the problems faced by them in respect of agriculture practices.
- Soil and water testing to guide farmers in selecting suitable crops and application of other inputs and
- Training to the farmers in the selective topics.

In Sivagangai area, five students were involved in delivering these services. In July 2011, they appeared in the final examination and passed out with distinction.

During the current academic year also, 4 students from Sivagangai had enrolled in the Community College for Integrated Farming System course.

4.7. Status of Revolving Funds

In order to sustain the program i.e., to ensure the continuity of the various activities initiated under farmers renaissance program, revolving funds are being built up at the project level.

As on March 2012, a sum of Rs. 5,561,500 has been built up as revolving fund, out of the total project fund assistance of Rs 5,870,000 to 587 farmers. This fund is being utilized to meet the credit needs of the farmers for agriculture related activities on revolving basis. As on March 31, 2012, this fund has been rotated to an extent of Rs 7,750,000, supporting 756 farmers.

Thus, financial support had been extended to 1343 farmers with both project as well as revolving funds as on March 31, 2012. Of these total farmers, some had received financial support for the second and even third time after paying the entire financial support.

Classification of farmers based on number of financial support received

First time	Second time	Third time	Total
1035	303	05	1343

4.8. Financial Report

The Status of ASSEFA Italy fund:

- Opening Balance : Rs 1,138,393
- Receipt (Euro 3,000) : Rs 186,270
- **Total in Rs : Rs 1,324,663**

Out of the total fund of Rs 1,324,663, a sum of Rs 1,250,000 has been spent for the programs. Hence a balance of Rs. 74,663 is available at ASSEFA.

Budget Vs Actual for the period from April 1st to March 31, 2012

S. No	Particulars	Proposed		Actual			
		Units	Amount in Rs	Units	Project Fund	Revolving Fund	Total in Rs
1	Water Management	50	500,000	10	30,000	70,000	100,000
2	Agri Crop Development	400	4,000,000	110	40,000	1,110,000	1,150,000
3	Milch Animals	100	1,000,000	333	870,000	2,460,000	3,330,000
4	Calf Rearing	50	250,000	22	30000	190,000	220,000
5	Goat Rearing	50	500,000	110	280,000	820,000	1,100,000
	Total	650	6,250,000	585	1,250,000	4,650,000	5,900,000

4.9. Conclusion

The farmers renaissance program has been beneficial to the local farmers in many aspects. Of course, the foremost is the awareness and hope generated among the farmers to practice integrated farming on economically viable basis. The build up of revolving funds help the farmers to have an easy access to credit for agriculture and allied related activities.

As on March 2012, the farmers were able to build up Rs 5, 561,500. Of course, these funds were rotated to an extent of Rs 7,750,000, supporting 756 farmers so far. It is higher than the support extended with the project fund of Rs 5,870,000 for livelihood activities to 587 farmers.

During the reporting period, the program is implemented as per the plan. As on March 2012, able to support 585 farmers with Rs 5,900,000 for livelihood activities against the target of 650 farmers with Rs 6,250,000 i.e, able to realize about 95% of the target.