

ASSEFA 50

Marching Ahead in Rural Development since 1969...

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ORIGIN OF ASSEFA.....	1
2. EVOLUTION OF ASSEFA.....	6
3. ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE.....	16
4. DESIGNING THE PROGRAM.....	19
5. PEOPLE CENTRIC APPROACH.....	21
6. ASSEFA, THE SALT IN THE SOIL.....	23
7. UPS AND DOWNS.....	29
8. SILENT MARCH OF THE PEOPLE THAT ASSEFA FOLLOWS	31
9. A SEED FOR A JUST SOCIAL ORDER.....	40
10. ANNEXURES	
a. Gentle flow of ASSEFA	43
b. ASSEFA promoted community organisations.....	44
c. ASSEFA – The Global link and support.....	45
d. Coverage – ASSEFA Programs.....	46

1. ups AND DOWNS

ASSEFA has experimented with numerous innovations, in the last five decades, to address the issues of the rural people. Though, programs are designed and implemented with the concurrence of the target section, ASSEFA still faced difficulties due to the external factors. These include:

- Natural calamities – cyclone, storm, flooding, tsunami...
- Government policies
- Retention of potential human resources

ASSEFA has been working in the coastal area of Cuddalore district with the victims of the tsunami since 2004. It has established a chain of model schools to provide holistic education to the children of fishermen and neighbourhood vulnerable families.

However, this area is prone to frequent storms and heavy rains. Therefore, the education program often gets affected by bad weather and the school's infrastructure also gets damaged. Hence, ASSEFA needs to attend to the repair work regularly considering the safety of the children.

Further, our intervention with small and marginal farmers, in the same area, also gets disturbed by the weather. During those periods, ASSEFA needs to start again from the beginning to support them with livelihood activities.

Government policy is the other factor which affects the development sector. The recent policy in Andhra Pradesh made the micro-finance sector collapse in India. Although, ASSEFA initiated micro finance did not get affected, but had an impact when the Reserve Bank of India brought in lots of regulations subsequently.

The regulations had compelled ASSEFA's lending organizations to give credit to the individuals instead of SHGs. Consequently, the SHGs gradually lost their committed involvement in development programs.

Similarly, Government policies towards education forced ASSEFA to surrender schools in more than 100 villages with all infrastructure and facilities to the Government for management.

When ASSEFA was started, many youths joined and supported the cause for village development. During that period, there was limited scope for employment in other sectors. Hence, ASSEFA had manpower including volunteers who were subsequently trained, and placed in different development projects.

However, in recent years, getting youths into the development sector has become a challenging task for various reasons such as:

- Mobility has increased due to improved transport facilities.
- People are aware of many opportunities due to advanced communication system.
- Scope for jobs in other sectors has increased with attractive packages.

Hence, after higher studies, youths prefer to opt to other sectors due to attractive packages and scope in career growth. Even, the youths who join the development field, cannot be guaranteed to remain for a long term due to the above reasons.

Moreover, due to globalization, the economy is changing fast in India including its villages. As a result, the aspirations and needs of the rural people are also changing. This forces development practitioners to assess and amend the welfare programs that suit the needs of the target people.

2. SILENT MARCH OF THE PEOPLE, ASSEFA FOLLOWS THEM

ASSEFA has been involved in introducing new programs besides implementing the on-going programs, during the year 2017-18. These initiatives are covered in the following sectors highlighting the major initiatives.

a) Empowering Rural Women...

- **Digital Literacy Program:** This program is implemented in collaboration with TATA and Google India. In the first phase, 1057 women Saathis (friends) have been trained and engaged in enrolling and creating awareness among other women in their allocated villages. To date, nearly 800,000 women have been brought under this program across 3391 revenue villages in 16 districts.
- TATA has sanctioned the implementation of the second phase of the digital literacy program in the left over villages in the 16 villages. Under this phase, it is proposed to bring in 1500 saathis additionally to enroll 1,500,000 women from April 2018 to October 2018.
- To continue the first phase of the digital literacy program, FRENDA, a company promoted by TATA, is working with ASSEFA to design the digital livelihoods program. A team from FRENDA has visited the operational area of the Saathis and did a study on the scope for livelihood opportunities for the rural women.
- **Niti Aayog Program:** The Central Government of India and TATA has selected 72 backward districts to develop into model districts. Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu is one of the districts selected under this program. The progress of the development of the district will be assessed on the following key indicators:
 - ✓ Health & Nutrition
 - ✓ Education
 - ✓ Agriculture & Water Resources
 - ✓ Financial Inclusion & Skill Development
 - ✓ Basic Infrastructure

- ASSEFA has been assigned to monitor the progress of the development of the Virudhunagar district using our Saathis. This would include the base line survey and development progress at regular intervals.

b) Rural Livelihoods Promotion

- **Farmers Renaissance Program:** Farmers have received needs based support through eighteen FRS units established across six districts in Tamil Nadu. Over 12,000 farmers had been enrolled as on March 2018. During this period, the new initiative introduced was value addition and marketing to our SMBT clients. Products such as Coffee powder (2 tons), pepper (1.25 tons), coconut oil (350 litres) and rice (30 tons) were marketed through MBTs.
- **Promoting Producers Companies:** In order to give suitable legal entity to the farmers groups formed under the Farmers Renaissance Program the following "Producers Companies" have been promoted.
 - ✓ ASSEFA Livestock Producers Company in Kariyapatti area
 - ✓ ASSEFA Milk Producers Company in Chithamur area and
 - ✓ ASSEFA Seed Producers Company in Sothupakkam area

Further, it is planned to promote two more Producers Companies, one in Thandikudi area and another in Coastal area of Cuddalore district. **Seva Coffee Powder** and **Seva Pepper**

- **Collaborations for Farmers welfare:** In order to support small and marginal farmers, ASSEFA is collaborating with Samunnati, an agro value chain company. During the last year, credit worth Rs. 172.03 million was arranged for 17,202 farmers through SMBT to undertake agriculture and livestock rearing activities.

Similarly, a linkage with Akshaya Pathra is being explored to supply milk and curd. Akshaya Pathra is a reputed charitable Bangalore based organization, involved in supply of nutritious food including milk and curd to school children.

- **Action Research Centre in Thonugal:** Thonugal is located in Kariyapatti block of Virudhunagar district. ASSEFA has been working there for **more than 3 decades**. It is located in the dry belt area. Mass migration of male family members takes place during the off season or failure of monsoon, as there are no other opportunities for employment.

In order to make these farmers work in their villages, ASSEFA is planning to establish action research centre to initiate activities in the following sectors.

- ✓ Agriculture & Water Resources
- ✓ Financial Inclusion & Skill Development
- ✓ Education and
- ✓ Health & Nutrition

c) In Health Care Services...

- **Community Drinking Water:** This is carried out in collaboration with TATA Projects Limited. As on date, 80 Reverse Osmosis water purifiers have been installed to benefit 35,000 to 40,000 families. These plants were supported by TATA, funding partners, individual philanthropists and loans from State Bank of India and Sarva Jana SevaKosh.
- **Special Scheme for Cuddalore District:** In order to ensure safe drinking water year-round to the local people in Cuddalore district, which is often affected by natural calamities, ASSEFA is involved in installing 30 RO plants with the support of TATA Projects Community Development Trust.
- **TQ Mall, an entrepreneurship opportunity for Saathis:** This is a One Stop Shop for highway commuters, farmers and the rural population. TQ Mall with a typical size of 300 sqft will be installed in HPCL petrol pump outlets to offer safe affordable drinking water, packaged quality foods/beverages, Seva products, solutions & services.

TQ Mall is being initiated in collaboration with Tata Projects Limited (TPL). It is proposed to promote 25 TQ Malls, during 2018-19, to be managed by SMBTs via internet Saathis. The investment cost of each Mall is Rs. one million. The possibility of mobilizing these funds is being explored jointly with TPL.

- **ASSEFA, the Technical Partner of TATA** to install new RO plants as well as to attend service call for repairing of plants in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. ASSEFA has built up a technical team of five members, who are mostly selected from the rural areas. They were given in-house training by TATA in its factory at Hyderabad for four weeks.
- **Micro-water purifier plants for household purposes:** In collaboration with Green Ways Grameen Infra Pvt Ltd and Ion Exchange of Mumbai, ASSEFA is planning to provide micro RO plants for household purposes at an affordable price. The capacity of the plant is 10 LPH. Awareness creating among the people on the importance of the product and pilot testing are being carried out. ASSEFA is planning to reach out to 1000 families during 2018-19.
- **Toilet construction:** As part of promoting hygienic living, rural households are supported with the construction of toilet and sanitation facilities and improvement of dwelling places such as cross ventilation, replacement of roofing, flooring, electrification, etc. During the year, 2017-18, 1025 households were supported under this program. In order to give special thrust, separate structure is being created exclusively in implementing this program across Tamil Nadu.
- **Mother and Child Health:** Since the tragedy of the Tsunami in 2004, ASSEFA has been providing holistic Mother and Child Health (MCH) services to the fishermen communities. Due to poor knowledge on health care and inadequate hospital facilities, severe anemia among pregnant women, new mothers and adult girls are observed.

Comprehensive MCH services are provided in the coastal areas of Marakanam, Pondicherry, Cuddalore & Karaikal and in Gingee area. A team of 114 members including volunteers headed by an experienced lady physician had provided the following services during the year, 2017-18.

- Ante Natal Care services were offered to 595 pregnant ladies and Post Natal Care services to 532 young mothers.
- Supplied nutritive mix to 3000 pregnant women, young mothers, school children and their parents.
- Awareness camps conducted to benefit 420 adolescent girls about personal hygiene, human anatomy, anaemia, food and nutrition, child rights and physiology
- Attendance of 1,700 out-patients in our mini clinics at Gingee and Marakanam.

- **Health camps:** In other project areas, ASSEFA organized health camps in collaboration with like-minded hospitals such as Meenakshi Mission, Aravind Eye, SKG, Sandhya Hospitals, etc.,.

During the year, 2017-18, organized:

- Camps : 79
- Coverage : 83,699

The treatments were done free of cost by linking under State Government Health Insurance policy.

d) Rural Education

- **Quality Teaching:** Started collaborating with organizations such as Teach for India (TFI), Karadi Path and Mathi Foundation, who have expertise in effective teaching methodologies. Their resource persons were invited to assess the caliber of ASSEFA teachers and train them to be more effective. Recruited four resource persons from Teach for India to improve the teaching standard in our schools in Madurantagam and Coastal Areas.
- **Linking CSR for Improvement of Infrastructure:** ASSEFA has availed CSR from Ramboll India Private Limited, Chennai, in constructing toilet / urinal facilities as well as painting school buildings for schools at Periyakalakadi village. Requested the company to extend their support to other schools in Uthiramerur area.
- **Responsibilities of Managing SarvaSeva Schools:** Entrusted the responsibility of managing Sarva Seva Schools to the following local Education Trusts promoted by ASSEFA.
 - ✓ **Foundation for Holistic Development of Children:** Responsible to manage the schools in Madurantagam area.
 - ✓ **Seva Mission for holistic education:** Responsible to manage the schools in Uthiramerur area.
 - ✓ **Coastal area health and education foundation:** Responsible to manage the schools in Coastal area in Cuddalore district.
 - ✓ **Sarvodaya Health and Rural Education Foundation:** Responsible to manage the schools in Gingee and Marakanam areas.
 - ✓ **Basic Education Foundation:** Responsible to manage the schools in Natham area.
 - ✓ **Sarva Seva Education Trust:** Responsible to manage the Sarva Seva schools in Virudhunagar & Sivagangai districts and in Vadugapatti.

As on March 31, 2018, 11,870 children are benefited with primary, middle & high school education, Sarvodaya Pailagam for slow learners and other school children and higher education for youths with the support of 497 teachers.

e) Environmental Promotion

- **Climate Proofing Project:** Implemented in collaboration with NABARD. The purpose of this program is to help the farmers adapt to climatic change in respect of crop cultivation, livestock rearing, tree crop cultivation and use of clean energy. This program is implemented in three watershed areas of Madurai district. NABARD has sanctioned this program in three watershed areas in Sivagangai district also.
- **Green to Greener:** In dry land area, promoting tree crop cultivation is essential to safe guard soil wealth as well as to generate income. To create a profitable model, ASSEFA is planning to promote tree crops cultivation in 100 acres of land in Kariyapatti and T Kallupatti areas. The suitability of tree crops and collaborative partners are being explored to implement this noble program.
- **Nursery for Tropical Tree crops:** Proposed to develop a nursery in Kariyapatti area with tropical tree crop samplings. This, being a dry belt area, will motivate the local farmers to cultivate tree crops as alternative income generating activities.
- **Introduction of Clean Energy:** Application of solar lights for domestic purposes is being introduced in collaboration with ECOLIFE Company in Tamil Nadu. These include
 - a) Solar lantern
 - b) Home lighting and
 - c) Street lighting system.

1783 households were motivated to use the solar lighting system. In addition, ASSEFA has selected Thondamanpatti settlement, consisting of 60 households, near Chathrapatti in Madurai District to enable all households to use only solar lighting. This settlement does not have any conventional power supply.

3. A SEED FOR JUSTSOCIAL ORDER

ASSEFA has been active in the development sector for the last five decades. During these years, it has experimented with economic, social and cultural initiatives to benefit the rural people. ASSEFA has also gained vast experience in designing and implementing programs to create positive impacts among the target population.

Based on the learning and feedback, ASSEFA changed its focus and strategy every decade giving new dimensions to its development interventions. The focus of every decade broadly:

- 1st Decade: Development of Bhoodan lands
- 2nd Decade: Gramdan and initiation of community welfare programs
- 3rd Decade: Integrated programs for community development
- 4th Decade: Promotion & strengthening community organizations for sustainable development and
- 5th Decade: Collaborations for multi-services for quality of life

In the next decade, ASSEFA plans to focus on developing “PEACE ZONES” by integrating all development initiatives including filling of gaps in the selected areas. While doing so, it wants to develop a justsocial order for the people to follow.

Moreover, the fifty years of services of ASSEFA to the local communities coincides with Gandhi ji 150th anniversary year. Hence, ASSEFA’s focus to developing “Peace Zones” will be a fitting tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.

ASSEFA envisages the “Peace Zone” as the place where non-violent communities lead a happy and good quality of life with necessary primary/basic needs met in an eco-friendly environment. These zones are expected to have the following salient features

a. Structural aspects:

- Decentralized structure with people / stakeholders representation
- Activity group based structure at village level
- Federation of these groups at block level for coordination and guidance
- Oriented to regulatory system and not control system

b. Governance aspect:

- Representation of active stakeholders at the governance level.
- Members’ elected / selected for specific period. Process repeated to give others an opportunity to participate in governance.
- Decisions on consensus basis.
- Regular meeting to monitor the direction of the initiatives/programs as per the rules and regulations and
- Transparent operation.

c. Economic aspects:

- People will attain food sovereignty / food security
- Production to meet the local needs
- Surplus sold to neighbouring communities
- Distribution by co-operative system
- Conversion of local produce to value added products to meet the local demand.

d. Environmental aspect:

- Green to Greener – *More trees / vegetation / fodder*
- Application of clean energy – *solar light / smart stoves / bio-gas*
- Use of bio fertilizers / pest / insect repellants
- Structures to harvest rainwater and preserve top soil
- Social environment by welcoming people from different faith and ensuring space for them

e. Education aspect:

Focus on developing children into good / responsible citizens through teaching:

- Ethical values
- Respect for different faiths and gender
- Local history
- Skill development
- Farming and livestock rearing
- Environmental education to protect and promote natural wealths..
- Preservation of traditional culture, wisdom and knowledge
- Reverence for local initiatives

f. Social aspect:

- Simple living
- Hygienic living environment
- Use of toilets with proper sanitation facilities
- Access to safe drinking water
- Knowledge of first aid and traditional healing methods
- Linkage to hospitals / health care centers

Further, in all its operational areas, ASSEFA plans to implement Gandhian constructive programs such as supply of drinking water, improvement of dwellings, disposal of human waste, community organized marriages, wasteland development, reintroduction of traditional crops as well as trees, livestock promotion, etc., based on the needs assessment.

Seminars, workshops, exhibitions, etc., are also planned to educate our children, workers and beneficiaries of the relevance of Gandhian concepts even today and what ASSEFA has achieved in the last five decades. All stakeholders including beneficiaries, supporters, workers, etc., will be invited to these programs and their contribution will be acknowledged.

Gentle Flow of ASSEFA since 1969..

Period	Focus	Partners	Programs	States Covered
Phase I (1969 - 1978)	Developing Bhoodan Lands.	Landless farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing waste land under cultivation 	Tamil Nadu Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
Phase II (1979 - 1988)	Developing Gramadhan and Introduction of other programs	Farmers, women and children	<p>Integrated agri practices and initiation of other programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed & improve Irrigation facilities Food crops cultivation Social forestry Animal husbandry Children education & health care services 	Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
Phase III (1989 - 1998)	Community Development	Women, farmers and children	<p>Multifaceted approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land development Agriculture promotion Dairying and livestock rearing Development finance Khadi and village industries Children Education & health care services Women Development 	Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
Phase IV (1999 - 2008)	Promoting and strengthening Community based organizations	Activity based groups at village level. Federated at block and state level	<p>Established C.B.Os with suitable legal entity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual Benefit Trusts (MBTs) <i>for women</i> Livelihoods MBTs <i>for farmers, artisans..</i> Education Trusts <i>for children education</i> SJSK, a NBFC <i>for Development finance</i> SSGS <i>for KVI activities</i> SNFL, <i>microfinance for women</i> 	Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh Maharashtra, Karnataka, Pondicherry & Tamil Nadu
Phase V (2009 - 2018)	Collaborations	Other Organizations having similar Objectives	<p>Program wise major Collaborators such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NABARD <i>for Land development</i> Samunnati <i>for Agri related technology..</i> TATA <i>for purified drinking water</i> SLI Auroville <i>for Environment</i> Corporate Companies <i>for Dairy marketing</i> USHA International <i>for Livelihoods</i> HLC International <i>for Education</i> Tagore medical college and hospital <i>for total health</i> Greenways Company <i>for Promotive health</i> 	Tamilnadu Major programmes in other states were entrusted to local Organisation

ASSEFA PROMOTED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

S. No	Institutions	Legal Entity	Purposes	Units
1	Sarva Jana SevaKosh	Companies Act	Development Finance Company for Livelihood activities	1
2	Sarvodaya Livelihoods Mutual Benefit Trusts	MBT	Federated body of Livelihoods Ensuring Groups. Avail credit support from Kosh	18
3	Sarvodaya Mutual Benefit Trust	MBT	Federated body of women SHGs. Mobilise resources from SNFL to meet credit demand of SHGs	113
4	Sarvodaya Nano Finance Ltd	NBFC	Micro Finance Institution owned by women SHGs. Raises external loans to meet the credit needs of SHGs via SMBT.	1
5	Institutions for Micro Enterprises	Trusts & Society	Apex bodies to promote micro enterprise based livelihoods.	3
6	SarvaSeva Habitat Promotion Ltd	Section 25 Company & Trust	Financial and non-financial support to construct new houses and improve existing houses	3
7	Milk Processing Companies	Section 25 Company	Women owned Companies to process, homogenise and pocket surplus milk to market	5
8	Education Trusts	Trust Act	Established to provide professional support to community managed Schools in ensuring quality education	9
9	SHARE	Trust Act	To promote community health and school health programs in ASSEFAproject areas	1
10	SARC	Trust Act	Action research, documentation, disseminating successful initiatives in development sector	1
11	ASSEFA Chits	Companies Act	Savings and Investment	1
12	Seva Tech Solutions Ltd	Companies Act	Introduce software applications in ASSEFA promoted organisations	1
13	Farmers Producers Company	Producer Companies Act	Established to provide a platform for the producers to collectively act for betterment of them	3
	Total			160

Note:Total manpower including full time workers, part time workers, consultants, volunteers, etc, as on 31 March 2018 were 3,359, of which women force represent 73% of the total manpower.

ASSEFA – THE GLOBAL LINK AND SUPPORT

Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba are the torch bearers to establish just social order based on love, co-existence and reverence for life on the principal of “Vasudev Kudumbam” (All belong to one family).

ASSEFA’s mission is not a mere development oriented, it is a never ending pilgrimage in which many individuals and organizations have participated. Our profound gratitude to them remains forever.

We list below some of them...

S. No	Organizations	S. No	Individuals
1	Action Aide, UK	1	Arunachalam K, <i>Formerly Chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Madurai</i>
2	Action Village India, UK	2	Bernand Faure, <i>Philanthropist, Switzerland</i>
3	Aide et Action, France	3	Carlo Zunin Ermiglia, <i>Founder, Livia Rubino Foundation, Italy</i>
4	ASSEFA Italy	4	Chris Wilde, <i>Co-founder of Action Village India, UK</i>
5	Bosque Government, Spain	5	Deep Joshi, <i>Recipient, Magasaysay Award</i>
6	Caritas, India	6	Devandra Kumar Gupta, <i>Formerly Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram University</i>
7	CARPART	7	Franco Giordano & Rosanna, <i>President ASSEFA Alessandria, Italy</i>
8	CCFD, France	8	Franco Lovisolo & Elena Camino, <i>Coordinator, ASSEFA Orus, Italy</i>
9	Christian Aide, UK	9	Giovanni Ermiglia, <i>Co-founder of ASSEFA</i>
10	CIDA, Canada	10	Itala Ricaldane, <i>President, ASSEFA Genova</i>
11	ILO, United Nations	11	Ivan Nutborn & Jennie Kitteringham, <i>Coordinator, AVI, UK</i>
12	Inter Pares, Canada	12	Jaganathan & Krishnamal, <i>Gandhian & Alternative Nobel Prize Winner</i>
13	IREC, Switzerland	13	Jeyaprakasam, <i>Formerly Prof & Head, Gandhian Studies, MK University</i>
14	Mani Tese, Italy	14	Marco Nikiferos, <i>Formerly President, ASSEFA Italy</i>
15	MSP, Italy	15	Mathew T K, <i>Founder Deepalaya, New Delhi</i>
16	NABARD	16	Paul Born, <i>President, Tam araky Community, Canada</i>
17	PARTAGE, France	17	Peter Remejous Fr., <i>Bishop, Nagarcoil</i>
18	Plan International	18	Piere Bernand Lauba, <i>Senior Executive UNICEF, Switzerland</i>
19	Rastriya Mahila Kosh	19	Poojya Nirmala Deshpande, <i>Formerly President, Akhil Bharati Rachanatmak Samaj</i>
20	Save the Children, Canada	20	Ralph Richard Keithan, <i>Co-founder, Gandhigram, Dindigul</i>
21	Save the Children, Finland	21	S Pandian, <i>Member, All India Harjan Seva Sangh</i>
22	SDC, Switzerland	22	Solai, <i>Senior Journalist</i>
23	SFTN, France,	23	Sundaresan R, <i>Veteran Gandhian / Consultant</i>
24	Sight and Life, Switzerland	24	Swamy Vidhyanand Saraswathy, <i>Formerly Chairman State Bhoodan Board</i>
25	State Bhoodan Board	25	Tim Broadhead, <i>Formerly President Inter Pares, Canada</i>
26	State Education Department	26	Tony Mortlock, <i>Philanthropist, France</i>
27	Stichting Gilles, Belgium	27	Vijay Mahajan, <i>Chairman, Basix Group, Hyderabad</i>
28	TATA Trust	28	Yves Poirier, <i>Member, Global Solidarity Forum, Canada</i>

Note: If someone is missed we regret for it

ASSEFA PROGRAMS & COVERAGE

TAMILNADU

