

# Profile and Mandate of ASSEFA

Association for Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA)  
279, Avvai shanmugam Road, Royapettah, Chennai – 600  
014, Tamil Nadu  
E-Mail: [assefa@md2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:assefa@md2.vsnl.net.in)

## ASSEFA Operational Areas and Outreach



### Coverage

States	-	8
Districts	-	24
Block	-	120
Villages	-	7,920
Families	-	6,06,050





# 1. Genesis

ASSEFA, a Sarvodaya Organisation, has completed thirty-four years in serving the rural poor. Having started as an offshoot of Bhoodan movement with the holy mission of developing Bhoodan lands in 1969 in a small village in Tamil Nadu, ASSEFA has expanded its operations to other areas in Tamil Nadu as well as other states in India. Simultaneously it also changed the approach from working exclusively with Bhoodan allottees to the total local rural communities.

## 1.1. Mission

Improve the economic, social and cultural status of the rural communities and enhance their skills and self-management capacity. ASSEFA also wants the rural communities to unite without any kind of discrimination, and work for the upliftment of the social, cultural and economic life of all, and establish self sufficient, self reliant and self managed communities based on principles of freedom, economic equality and social justice.

## 1.2. Development Programs

As a strategy to achieve its mission, ASSEFA has been implementing multi facet development programs in an integrated manner. Based on the need assessment, the communities are supported with suitable programs. This included:

### Income Generating/Economic Programs

- } *Agriculture Development:* Supply of quality inputs, irrigation facilities and wasteland and watershed developments.
- } *Dairy Promotion:* Support to purchase hybrid cows, collect, process and market the surplus milk.
- } *Micro-Enterprise Development:* Input supply, training and market linkages for the produces. Support mainly rural artisans and unemployed rural youths
- } *Social Credit:* Designed products to support economic and consumption purposes, as well as to meet immediate needs.

### Socio Welfare Programs

- } *Comprehensive Rural Education:* through balwadi, primary, middle, high, higher secondary schools and technical training institute.
- } *Rural Habitat Promotion:* Construction of new houses and upgradation of existing houses for hygienic environment.
- } *Community Health Care:* Preventive and Curative Health care through direct intervention as well as linkages with Govt programs.
- } *Social Protection:* Provision of insurance coverage for the cattle by self and for life through Insurance Companies.

## 1.3. Development Strategy

In order to achieve the sustainability of the development initiatives in realising the building up of self-reliant community, ASSEFA believes that the following factors are important to strengthen it. This includes:

- } Formation and Strengthening of the Community Based Organisations (CBOs)
- } Building up of Adequate Resources
- } External Linkages and

## } Development of Congenial Environment

As part of working towards this, ASSEFA adopts various strategies. The local community in the operational area is encouraged to participate in the development process. This includes identifying local issues, their problems; developing suitable programs and implementation strategies. This is followed by the assessment and monitoring the results achieved.

Gram Sabha, formed in the villages, is involved in identifying village issues mostly social and strategies in mitigating the issues. It also acts, as a mediator for negotiating with the Govt and public organisations in developmental progress. The Women SHGs are made to address women related issues. Activity groups for each program to develop strategies and action to get maximum benefits from these programs. These activity groups are federated at the area level for efficient action and building up external linkages. An Apex body with professional is promoted for each program to coordinate and provide professional supports in a run long. The resources are built up at the community level in the form of savings and revolving funds, which are managed with proper legal entity.

ASSEFA has been realising the development process in five phases, which includes

- } *Planning cum micro realisation*: Involves rapport building, conducting surveys, planning and searching for resource support.
- } *Pilot Project Implementation*: Organising local groups to demonstrate future action in their area, preparing detailed plans for and securing financial resources.
- } *Advanced Implementation*: Starting and implementing various programs and building up linkages with various government and private agencies for collaborative support programs and
- } *Shedding off*, the final phase, in which communities are enabled to stabilise and consolidate their activities and take up management of programs by themselves.
- } *Spiral Growth*, launching similar programs in the nearby areas where communities are prepared and eager to accept ASSEFA's assistance and withdrawal of ASSEFA from earlier projects.

ASSEFA withdraws from the area once the community graduate to take over the management of development programs. This process of development cycle takes about 12 to 15 years depending upon the socio-economic status of the area, capacity of the local community, etc. ASSEFA continues to provide support these communities as and when required.

In the last three decades of working with the community, ASSEFA has been able to broadly cover these phases in many projects, which have attained a fairly good level of sustainability and self-management. At the same time, ASSEFA is enabling the other projects that are in initial phases to strengthen their village level organisations and their capacity for self-management.

*Regional Development Approach*: As the thrust to promoting rural livelihoods is provided in the recent years, ASSEFA started adopting regional development instead of project approaches for efficient operation. In the project approach, the development programs are implemented within the project area. This approach has been effective, particularly it enables the staff to concentrate on the development works within the specified area and the impact on the socio-economic status on the communities has been positive and encouraging.

However there are shortcomings foreseen in this approach while intensifying livelihood promotional activities with the selected sub-sectors such as dairy, vegetables. The intervention in such activities requires looking for opportunity beyond the project

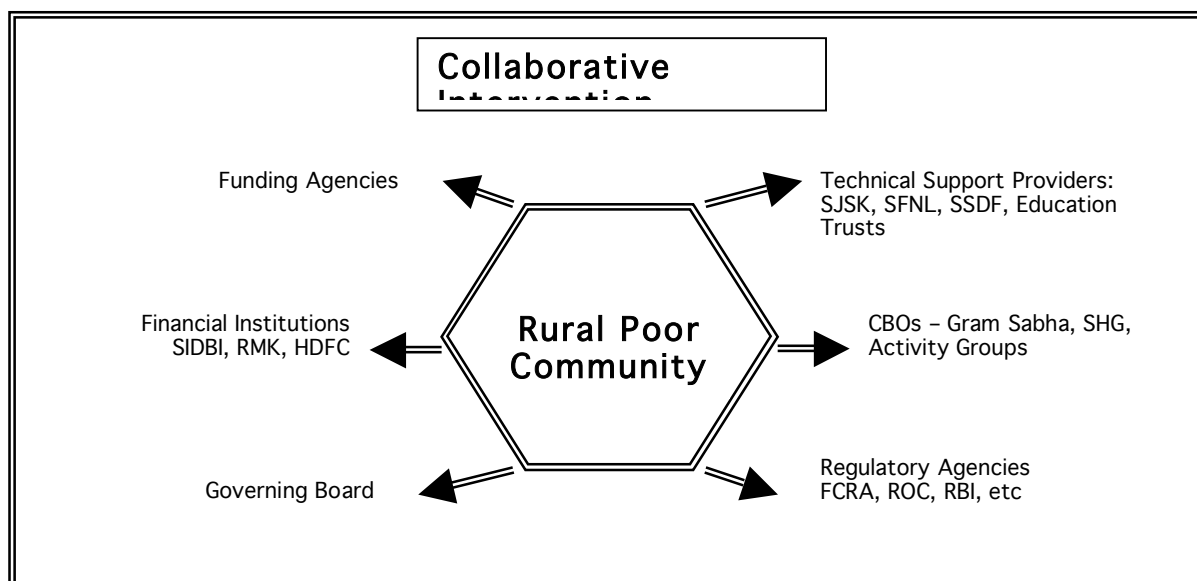
boundary line. For instance, market linkage is an important factor in promoting any livelihood. It is not possible to avail expected market linkage within the project area. Therefore, there is a need to look beyond the area for better opportunities.

Hence Regional Development Approach is introduced to provide better opportunities while promoting livelihoods. In addition, this approach is expected to provide more inputs, guidance and co-ordination of the smaller units operational within the region. For instance, ASSEFA projects in Tamil Nadu have been bifurcated into five regions. Similar division has been carried out in other states, where ASSEFA operates.

### 1.4. Intervention Approach

Community Development is a complex matrix, requires collaborative intervention of experts in various discipline. To eradicate the issues of poverty, support is needed from funding agencies, financial institutions, subject specialists, managerial professionals, government officials and off course the local community. Unless the issues are tackled with collaborative approach, intervention may not be effective and yield expected impacts.

ASSEFA in its development approach adopts intervention through collaborative polygon. A typical collaborative approach of ASSEFA is shown in the figure. Depending upon the intervention nature, collaboration is formed with the concerned stakeholders.



## 2. Progress of ASSEFA Movement

S.No	Period	Objective	Focus	Strategy	Program Area	Area Coverage
1	1969 - 1977	Bhoodan land development	Bhoodan allottees	Working for the people	Land development	Tamil Nadu
2	1978 - 1983	Bhoodan and Gramdhan development	Bhoodan allottees & Gramdhanees	Working with the people	Farm & allied economic programs	Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharastra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
3	1984 - 1994	Integrated area development	Rural community	Working by the people	Integrated socio-economic programs	Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharastra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
4	Since 1995	Program sustainability	Rural community	Working by the people under various apex organisations	Integrated socio-economic programs	Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Karnataka Maharastra, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Pondicherry







### 3. Milestones of ASSEFA

- } **1969** : ASSEFA launching of Bhoodan land development in Tamil Nadu
- } **1978** : Bhoodan and Gramdan Development Program in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan states  
ASSEFA organized two international consortiums in London and Brussels in collaboration with EEC to discuss the agenda for development in the Third World Countries
- } **1980** : ASSEFA was elected one among the best hundred development practitioners globally by IRED to exchange experiences and train other NGOs in the development field.
- } **1984** : Integrated area development program in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan
- } **1985** : ASSEFA celebrates 15 years working with rural communities with a mass rally of 25,000 farmers in Madurai
- } **1990** : ASSEFA formed an international community based movement in Costa Rica with other International partners for exchange of views on Development
- } **1994** : ASSEFA celebrates Silver Jubilee, 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Centenary of Vinoba Bhave at Madurai – Seminars, exhibitions on Bhoodan and Gramdan, mass peace marches, representation from International NGOs. Programs presided over by the President of India
- } **1995** : ASSEFA organized International Seminar on Community Based Organisations and Sustainable development. Participation from International agencies, National level & Govt Departments. Besides Gram Sabha leaders from ASSEFA projects.
- } **1999** : ASSEFA co-opted to established an international Trust “Nobel Peace Laureates Appeal Foundation in Paris to promote the culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World  
ASSEFA along with the International Community successfully appealed to the UN to pass

resolution to declare 2001-2010 as “The International Decade for the Culture of Non Violence and Peace for the Children of the World”

- | **2002** : Organised World Congress on Global vision and Strategies for Peace, Non violence and Harmony at Aliyar in collaboration with other World Congress Organising Committee.

#### 4. ASSEFA Organisation Structure

