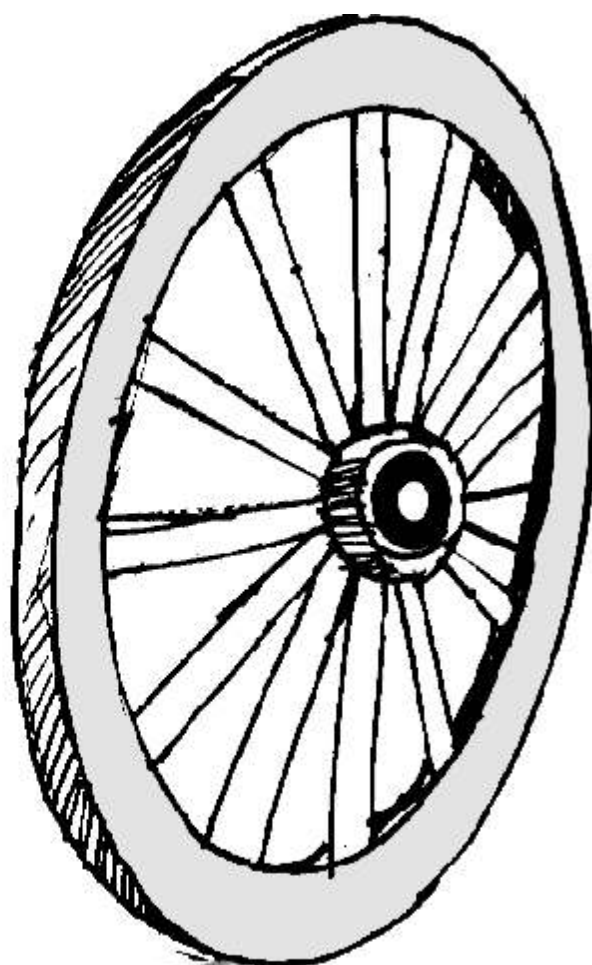


# The Moving Wheel



Since  
**1968**

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# ASSEFA , the Rainbow

1



Our main source of light on this planet is the sun. We are naturally driven by the energy of sunlight. It provides warmth, growth for food, ability to cook that food, and much more. The sun's energy is vital to our quality of life on a daily basis.

The other benefit we receive from the sun's rays is the energy produced when light waves become colourful. The light that we see coming from the sun appears to be clear and white. But it is really made up of bands of waves of colours.

The rainbow, the most admired natural phenomenon, appears when the light from the sun enters the drops of falling water and is reflected back to us from the other side of the water drop.

It consists of seven bands of waves of colours ranging from red at the top to orange to yellow to green to blue to indigo to violet at the bottom. These colour vibrations are considered to be a source of power, each one having general as well as specific functions and purpose.

Some people believe that each human being incarnates under a particular ray and is influenced by other subordinate rays, the focal point being an aura or radiation of light that surrounds all creatures. For instance, warm colours (reds & oranges) can stimulate and spur us into action while the cooler colours (blues & violets) serve to calm and relax us.

In the modern world, rainbow has been used as a sign of new era and a symbol of peace, love and freedom. In mythology too, rainbow is symbolically represented as promises, creation and bridges. The Bible in Genesis 9 records God's promise to Noah that He would never again destroy all flesh with a global flood.

The Australian Aborigine and American Indian legends link it to creation events, and the Chinese have a legend concerning the rainbow and the creation of their first emperor Fohni. Similarly the rainbow has also been used to represent a bridge from earth to a brighter, happier place.

ASSEFA, a grass root movement, working for the development of the rural poor, is just like a rainbow. It brings in the rural people into groups with promises to create non-violent, peace loving and harmonious communities. ASSEFA also acts as a bridge for the poor to crossover the hurdles of economic and social problems to lead a happy, peaceful and harmonious life with the mainstream society.

Having started in 1968 with the blessings of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the father of Bhoodan Movement<sup>1</sup>, ASSEFA has been working for the development of the rural communities for the last forty-four years.

Though, the initial mission of ASSEFA was to develop the barren and waste lands for the poor peasants, but gradually, it has diversified its approach from working with the Bhoodan allottees to the entire communities and from land development to multi-faceted welfare programs.

#### **Mission of ASSEFA**

'Improve the economic, social and cultural status of the rural communities and enhance their skills and self-management capacity. Unite the rural communities without any kind of discrimination and work for the up-liftment of the social, cultural and economic life of all and to establish self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-managed communities based on the principles of love, sharing and social justice'

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<sup>1</sup> A Land Gift Movement was started in 1952 collecting lands from landlord as donation and distributed the same to the landless peasants in the same village. Under this movement, collected 4.2 million hectares of land and distributed to the landless.



Like the seven colours of the rainbow, which is believed to influence emotions, actions and interactions of an individual, ASSEFA tries to bring in the following seven positive changes to enable the poor and vulnerable to lead a happy, dignified and secured life.

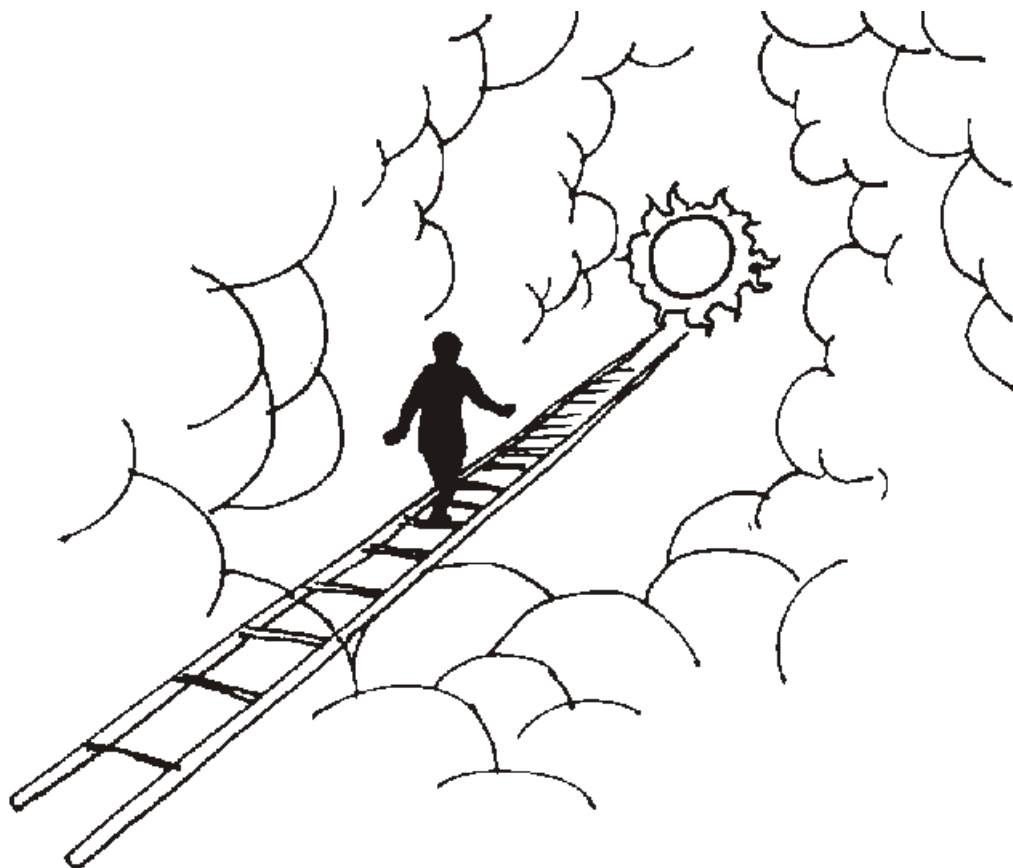
- Wealth and prosperity
- Knowledge and wisdom.
- Healthy body and sound mind
- Safety and security
- Building up human and social capital
- Protect and enhance natural resources and
- Ever growing progress

This report explains the various services of ASSEFA rendered during the financial year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The second chapter gives the coverage and outreach of ASSEFA. Various services of ASSEFA are narrated in the subsequent chapters. The audited financial statement of accounts and the plan of action for 2012-13 are enclosed separately.



## Ray of Hope : Growth for Prosperity

2



Each and every family desires to enjoy atleast the benefit of the basic needs i.e., food, shelter and clothing. This remains the distant dream for many, as they are struck down with the problems due to poverty.

This is prevalent in rural areas, particularly among the landless, small and marginal farmers, who constitute a majority among the farming communities. Their fortune is dependent on the prosperity of agriculture and cattle wealth sectors.

In many areas, agriculture is on the decline, as the farmers are not interested in cultivation. This is due to the fact that they are met with many challenges. With inadequate preferences to this sector by the Government, the farmers are not able to overcome these challenges to practice viable agriculture.

- Increase in price of raw materials: seeds, fertilizers, labour cost and pesticides.
- Inadequate access to credit
- Instability in market price for the agriculture produces
- Shortage of manpower and
- Fragmentation of landholding due to the law of inheritants

ASSEFA has been implementing the following programs to support the agriculture and dairy farmers.

## **2.1. Farmers Renaissance Scheme:**

The local problems of the farmers are addressed by promoting “Farmers Renaissance Scheme” in various parts of Tamil Nadu, covering different agro-climatic conditions.

The potential farmers are identified and brought them under activity based farmers groups. Through these groups, their common problems are identified and the need based assistances arranged as under:

- Training/exposure visit for the farmers
- Following advanced scientific cultivation practices
- Linkages for quality crop/tree sapling inputs
- Guidance to use labour saving agricultural implements
- Water resource management and
- Cattle wealth promotion

As on March 31, 2012, 4,297 farmers have been covered under this scheme in 20 locations.

The supports were provided to these farmers through external assistances. In addition, the farmers have been encouraged to build up revolving funds to use it for agriculture on rotation basis. This will ensure the continuity of the program, after the withdrawal ASSEFA supports.

For training and extension services, linkages were established with ASSEFA Community College. The college provided intensive one year training in ‘Integrated Farming System’.

The training includes classroom sessions, field exposure and practical works. On successful completion, students are awarded Diploma by IGNOU.

The first batch consisting of 41 farmers completed their training in July 2011. In August 2011, 57 new farmers were admitted and the training is in progress.

Region wise coverage of FRS Farmers		
Region	Units	Farmers
• Sivagangai region	4	1,035
• Chithamur region	2	1,085
• Kariyapatti region	3	577
• Kalligudi region	3	357
• Natham region	4	873
• Thandikudi region	4	370
• <b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4,297</b>

These students in turn provide the following services to the neighbourhood farmers:

- Training in integrated farming aspects
- Soil and water testing to provide guidance in selection of the crops and quantum of application of fertilisers and
- Extension services.

Fourteen farmers, who had completed the training in the first batch, have been recruited to deliver the extension services under FRS program. In addition, an approval has been received from the agriculture department to start an' "Agri Clinic" especially in Chithamur region.

ASSEFA proposes to establish this Agri Clinic at the earliest to do the following services:

- Soil and water testing
- Supply of crop inputs – seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, insecticides
- Supply of modern agriculture implements
- Extension services in respect of new crops, scientific cultivation practices and remedial measures for pest / insect attack.

## **2.2. Watershed Management:**

This program is implemented to improve the community infrastructure so as to conserve soil and water resources to undertake agriculture activities in a sustainable manner.

The watershed management is a long term process, in which the following processes have been undertaken before realising the benefits.

- Proper land-use planning – The use of land, based on the capabilities of the land and its limitations.
- Best agronomic practices – The choice of crop and the tillage practices, cropping sequences followed on scientific lines and
- Conservation and equitable distribution of water – The natural resource, water, properly distributed among the dwellers of the watershed.

Watershed management Committee is established with local people to do the detailed plan, implement and monitor the impacts of the programs, ASSEFA restricts its role to mobilise the community, form a community structure, arrange necessary training and guide to execute the plans.

As on March 31, 2012, ASSEFA had implemented six watershed projects in Tamil Nadu to treat 6,101 hectares of lands. This is carried out in collaboration with NABARD. The status of these six projects is as follows:

<b>Watershed project</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Villages</b>	<b>Lands in (ha)</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Status</b>
• Kanyankulam	Sivagangai	6	862	360	Completed
• Kandani	Sivagangai	5	1284	425	FIP
• Uruli	Sivagangai	5	886	364	FIP
• Peikulam	Madurai	2	962	629	FIP
• Chinnapoolampatti	Madurai	6	1267	675	FIP
• Chithalai	Madurai	5	840	871	CBP
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>6,101</b>	<b>3,324</b>	

**Note** FIP – Full implementation phase, CBP-Community building phase

Similarly, 16 watershed projects were undertaken in Bihar and Jharkhand and completed successfully in treating nearly 14,000 hectares of land with the support of NABARD and DRDA.

### **2.3. Rural Market Yards:**

ASSEFA established rural market yards to link the producers directly with the buyers. This is intended to benefit the producers as they earn additional income due to avoidance of the middlemen.

For managing these yards, community based marketing committees are established with local farmers as members. This Committee collects user fee as per the norms from the farmers to sell their products.

The revenue collected is used partly for maintenance and the remaining portion shared among the panchayat and local community.

At present market yards are in operations at Mudukankulam, Mallanginaru, Anaicut and Mandavai Kazhikuppam providing services to more than 40 villages.

#### **2. 4. Food Processing Units – A new initiative:**

ASSEFA proposes to establish food processing units to address the marketing problems of the farmers. The unit will purchase the produce from the members of FRS, manufacture the value added products and sell the products at the open market.

Initially, it is planned to establish a unit at Vembarali in Natham to manufacture mango by-products, mainly bottled mango juice and pickles. In Natham, mangoes are produced in large quantity, as the climate is suitable for this horticulture crop.

Moreover, ASSEFA has good rapport with the local communities for the last thirty years. It has also covered nearly 900 farmers under FRS, who are involved in cultivation of mango trees.

Similarly, ASSEFA has planned to promote a Coffee manufacturing unit at Thandikudi in Palani Hills. Here, the farmers mostly small and marginal land holders, involved in coffee, orange and spices cultivation. ASSEFA has been supporting these farmers under FRS to practice scientific cultivation.

In order to address their problems in marketing fresh coffee bean, coffee making unit is proposed. Since, there is strong network in retail selling of milk and by-products, marketing the coffee under the brand name of “SEVA” will not pose any major challenge.

#### **2. 5. Promotion of Dairy Sector:**

Agriculture is not an economically viable proposition for small and marginal farmers. The complimentary source of income derived from cattle wealth, particularly milch animals, has proved to have a great potential for rural development.

Moreover, there is a well knit relation between cattle and farming. Cattle consumes residue of crops and the muck of cattle is used as organic fertilizers for enhancing the fertility of the soil.

ASSEFA has continued with the promotion of the dairy sector with the objective of increasing income of the farmers from dairying. Accordingly, the interested farmers, mainly women, are brought under dairy groups. Depending upon the needs, the following assistances were provided through these groups.

- Training in animal husbandry and clean milk production.
- Arrange financial supports to buy hybrid animals as well as maintenance of existing animals.
- Extension services – veterinary care, Artificial insemination...
- Linkages to dispose the surplus milk at competitive price.

For coordination and guiding the group activities, the dairy groups in a continuous area are brought together to form a Federation of Dairy Groups. Each federation, generally, will consists of 30 to 50 dairy groups with members ranging from 750 to 1500 members.

Apart from coordinating and guiding the dairy groups, these federations have been trained to deliver the following services:

- Disposal of surplus milk. The federation collects the surplus from each group by arranging suitable vehicle and sell to the bulk buyers at competitive price.
- The federations are supported with bulk cooling units in seven areas. The surplus milk collected from the dairy groups is chilled here, before disposal.
- In case of linkages for credit assistance, the federation takes the responsibility of collection and repayment to the concerned micro-finance companies.
- Arrange extension services as and when required. Recently, the federations were linked with ASSEFA community college, to train the farmers in dairy farm management and provide extension services to other farmers.
- In June 2011, 36 farmers had been successfully trained and involved in supporting the dairy federations. In addition, 52 farmers are further being trained in the college.

As on March 31, 2012, about 21,000 dairy farmers are covered and benefited with the support of 17 federations of dairy groups. During the reporting period, these federations had disposed milk worth Rs 547.8 million, i.e., a sum of Rs 547.8 million has gone into the villages due to ASSEFA intervention.

## Putting the Child First

3



*“The main aim of education is the building of character. Education that helps to build a sound character and promotes self-development is True Education”*

*- Mahatma Gandhi -*

ASSEFA has been into education sector for the last 34 years. Education, one of the priority programs of ASSEFA, is offered to the rural children by establishing schools in the safe and learning environment with necessary teaching and learning facilities.

### 3.1. Nurturing the Young Buds

Unlike other schools, importance is given for holistic development of the children. The students are trained in not only upgrading the knowledge, skills and healthy body, but also their heart to respect, love and share with the fellow beings.

The regular syllabus, as prescribed by the Tamil Nadu Government is followed in this holistic approach. This enables the students to continue higher education in other institutions after completing their studies in ASSEFA schools.



In addition, other areas covered under the holistic approach includes

- Life skill education: Rural based income generation activities such as agriculture, goatery, dairying, tailoring...
- Yoga and meditation to sharpen concentration
- Learning non-violence to practice love, caring and sharing with fellow-beings.
- Arts and crafts
- Kutty doctors to train in basic health care including first aid
- Extra curricular activities such as dance, singing, acting, drawing, painting, etc and
- Sports and games

Talented teachers are recruited from the local areas and given regular training to provide quality services. In addition, these teachers stay in the school campus, which help them to dedicate their time, mind and heart for this noble cause.

At present, education is offered to the children of all age groups irrespective of caste, religion and gender. The services include balwadi, primary education, middle school education, high school education and higher secondary education. English medium is also offered in some schools based on the demand from the locals.

As on March 31, 2012, 15,722 children are benefited with the support of 641 teachers in 132 schools.

S.No	School Type	Schools	Children	Teachers
1	Primary Schools	64	5,230	227
2	Middle Schools	5	1,021	50
3	High Schools	7	2,580	94
4	Higher Secondary Schools	1	1,233	46
5	Matriculation Schools	14	4,397	170
6	Special Schools*	41	1,261	54

Note: \* School is meant for slow learners

### **3.2. Initiative at Thandikudi:**

ASSEFA has started a school, a year ago, at Thandikudi in Palani Hills. The main purpose is to provide comprehensive education to the tribal children and other indigenous children. Within few months, the school was able to enroll 250 students from the surrounding villages.

This dramatic increase of strength was possible due to the services of the school last year as well as educating the parents to send their wards to schools.

Unlike in the plain, the settlements are scattered in the hills. The inhabitants, particularly tribal live in groups in the isolated area. Hence to pick up their children, school bus and vans are arranged.

Qualified teachers have been recruited from the local areas and given regular training and guidance to provide quality services. This school got, recently, recognition from the govt, which enable the students to continue higher education from other mainstream institutions.

### 3.3. Breeding Ground for Quality Teachers:

The teachers require special skills to offer teaching in the ASSEFA schools, as they need to teach comprehensive education. The new recruits, generally, need lots of training to deliver these services. Some teachers set in and others leave the job.

In order to overcome these challenges, ASSEFA promoted College of Education at Silarpatti to train new cadres of teachers. The College is recognised by the National Council of Teacher Education, Bangalore, and is part of mainstream institutions.

Each year, the college train 100 students. On successful completion, the students are honoured with Bachelor of Education degree from Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University. This year , five bright students were recruited to teach in Thandikudi School.

Similarly, ASSEFA Sarva Seva Teacher Education Institute has been functional at Pooriyampakkam in Chithamur block. The Institute offered two years training program. On successful completion, the students are honoured with Diploma. Each year, this institute enrolls 50 students.

S.No	Higher Education	Place	Students	Faculties
1	Bachelor of Education*	Silarpatti	100	07
2	Diploma in Teachers Training Institute	Pooriyampakkam	77	06
	<b>Total</b>		<b>177</b>	<b>13</b>

**Note:** \* Recognised by National Council of Teachers Education, Bangalore

### 3.4. Community College – Life Skill Education for Practitioners:

ASSEFA started the community college in 2010 in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. In the first batch 189 students were enrolled in the following five diploma courses.

- Integrated Farming System
- Dairy Farm Management
- Women empowerment and Development
- Non violence and Peace making skills and
- Computer applications.

These students were able to successfully complete the training in June 2011. Later, ASSEFA undertook a study to evaluate the impacts of these courses at the student level and at the community level.

Based on the feedback, foundation courses were included for the subsequent batches to provide work based skills in computer applications, basic accountancy and English, in addition to the main subjects.

As on date, 193 students enrolled for July 2011 cycle and January 2012 cycle, the academic sessions are in progress.

S. No.	Course	Enrolment
1	Dairy Farm Management	52
2	Integrated Farming System	57
3	Non-Violence and Peace Making Skills	19
4	Women Empowerment and Development	37
5	Computer Application	28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>

## Health and Hygiene for a Healthy Community

4



*" Healthy living is Wealthy living"*

- Proverb in Tamil

The health conditions of the women and children are vulnerable in rural India. Though, various reasons are cited, the foremost cause is the lack of awareness.

In the integrated services, the health care services are provided to the women and children by ASSEFA. The major thrust is given to the preventive and promotive measures, as given under.

### **4. 1. School Health Program**

The main purpose is to preserve and protect the health of the child. In ASSEFA schools, where more than 15,000 children study, are covered under the following health program.

- a) Personal Hygiene: In all schools, children are ensured to maintain personal hygiene. This includes brushing of teeth, bathing, nail cutting, hair cut and clean hair combing, wearing of shoes/chappels, etc.

The concept of Kutty doctor is introduced to create awareness on personal hygiene among children. The selected children are trained in personal hygiene and basic health care. They are honoured with title, "Kutty doctor, after the training, and assigned the task to maintain personal hygiene among their classmates. As on March 31, 2012, 579 students were trained as kutty doctors.

- b) Supplementary Nutrition: As part of addressing malnourishment, mid-day meals are supplied to the students. This is offered in schools, especially approved by the govt for the supply of free meals. About 10,750 students were covered under supplementary nutrition. In addition, through PTA (Parents Teachers Association), the parents are advised regularly on the importance of providing nutritive food for their wards.

- c) Health Checkup: This is carried out every year with the support of qualified and experienced physicians. In case of minor problem, the children are treated directly and the parents are advised to take care of their wards accordingly. For other problems, nearest hospital is referred for treatment.

11,999 students were covered under this check up. In addition, vitamin A is supplied for all children aged less than 6 years in collaboration with the health department.

#### **4.2. Maternal Child Health (MCH):**

Generally, women are vulnerable during pregnancy, especially rural women, as they do not follow ANC (ante natal care) services. This, of course, not only keeps the mother health at risk, but also the foetus in the womb.

In order to avoid this risk, awareness on ante natal care is created among its self help group members. The pregnant ladies are linked up with the nearest hospital for regular ANC services and delivery.

As incentive to the pregnant ladies to follow ANC services, wage loss compensation is provided for the last three months period. ASSEFA has covered 1,238 women under this program. These women were also advised to follow PNC (post natal care) including regular vaccination for the new born as per the schedule.

The comparison of data collected from these women against the national level data on key health indicators, as given below, shows improved performance.

S.No	Indicators	National value	Beneficiaries value
1	Underweight new born	30%	47
2	Maternal Mortality Rate	254 per lakh	161.5 per lakh
3	Infant Mortality Rate	53 per 1000	04 per 1000

In case of Gingee, Marakanam, Cuddalore and Pondicherry areas, the following comprehensive MCH services are provided by the trained team under the guidance of the qualified physician across 124 villages.

- Training to women SHGs on reproductive sex
- Awareness for adolescent girls
- Ante natal care services
- Delivery
- Supply of Baby kits to maintain hygiene among new born and young mothers.
- Supply of nutritive mix for pregnant ladies, young mother & children and promotion of kitchen gardening.

As on March 31, 2012, 11,496 persons<sup>2</sup> were benefited under these services.

In Rajasthan, ASSEFA in collaboration with Chetna is involved in creating awareness among the ladies, health workers, doctors and other stakeholders to have easy access to quality health services, especially Maternal and Child health, from the public health system. As on March 31, 2012, 320 stakeholders were covered under this program.

#### 4.3. Hygienic Living Environment:

Women and children spend most of their time at home. Hence, hygienic environment is necessary to prevent them from becoming sick. As part of this, assistances were extended to improve sanitation facilities, construction of toilets, cross ventilation, improved chullas, flooring and roof of the dwelling places, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Some persons received more than one services

These supports were extended to 1,228 families, mainly in collaboration with Seva Habitat Company.

#### **4.4. Health Camps:**

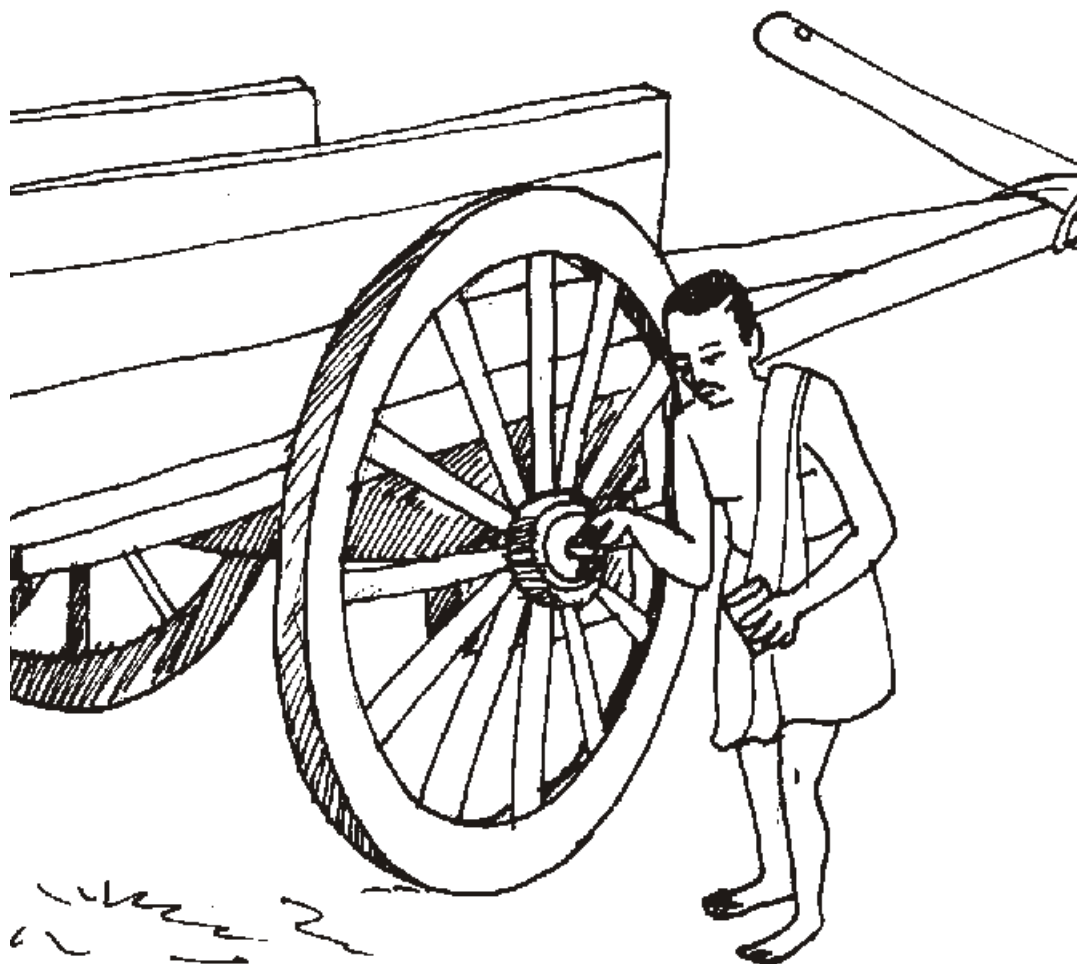
There are people in the villages, who do not know the cause for the sudden death of their kith and kin. Although, their kith and kin might have suffered health problems, but without knowing what it was, they die without taking any treatment.

These problems are addressed by organising general and specific health camps with the support of federation of women self help groups to benefit the families of the SHG members. In the camps, the minor problems are treated there itself and for complicated case, it is referred to the nearest hospital for treatment.



## Greasing the Wheel

5



While building up an ideal society with new social orders, it is essential to address the core issues that affect the society. In such instances, vulnerable are more prone to become the victim and they need necessary protection and safety against such issues.

ASSEFA has been providing community based security and protection against vulnerability for the weaker section, which are explained below.



### **5.1. Community Marriages**

The Community Marriage is a shining example of addressing the social problems of dowry and lavish spending, which put them life long loan burden. The simple and inexpensive, but a dignified marriage brings the blessings and goodwill of the whole community.

Thus, ASSEFA encourages women self help groups to organize Community Marriages to promote communal harmony and inter-religious amity in rural areas. Community marriages are organised in such a manner that the marriages of different religious faiths take place simultaneously – embodies mutual respect for other religion and to ensure inter-religious amity and communal harmony.

In areas, where communal violence is prevalent, the community marriages help to bring people closer to each other for a better understanding of various issues.

ASSEFA feels in the true Gandhian spirit that the process of the Community Marriages is not an end in itself but it is a new beginning for a newly married couple towards peaceful coexistence within the community.

The new bride is welcome in the Self Help Groups as a married woman that takes care to improve her social status, economic power, communication skills, understanding various social issues and easy access to the right place for redressing any grievances, which will shape her family and children.

Similarly the man also can join the Assefa mainstream activities for training and support for various activities. These facilities are available to the husband and wife not as a charity but as a matter of right to every responsible member of the community, in the Gandhian spirit.

This year also, community marriages have received special significance with women groups in various projects which had successfully conducted community marriages earlier. As on March 31, 2012, a total 1437 couples from Hindus, Muslims and Christians, from economically weaker sections of the community has been benefited.

### **5.2. Social Security**

Women and children are highly vulnerable and lack social security, as they can be easily exploited by the external forces. In order to provide community based protection, ASSEFA established a platform in the form of women self help groups.

The members of the SHGs are mostly poor and engaged in agriculture related labour works for their daily income. The children are, mostly, taken care of by them and many work hard to educate their wards.

ASSEFA has designed and implement the following community based schemes to provide security to these women against unforeseen risk.

a) Wage Loss Compensation: This is provided to the pregnant ladies, who are advised not to work during the last three months of delivery. The doctors also advise them to take healthy foods during these periods.

In addition, they are advised to take regular Ante Natal Care services and delivery by the trained local thais/doctors. This helps both mother and young ones keep healthy, which is reflected in terms of underweight new born, maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate.

As on March 31, 2012, 1238 members were provided with wage loss compensation of out 48,292 enrolments.

b) Life Loss Compensation: A lumpsum amount is given to the children when their mother passes away. The compensation is for the children education or any other purpose related to the investment for the children. In many instance, when children become orphaned, their future, particularly girl child, become vulnerable. Hence, this scheme is introduced to address this issue.

As on March 31, 2012, 153 families were provided with wage loss compensation worth Rs. 1.69 million.

### **5.3. Investment in Asset Creation:**

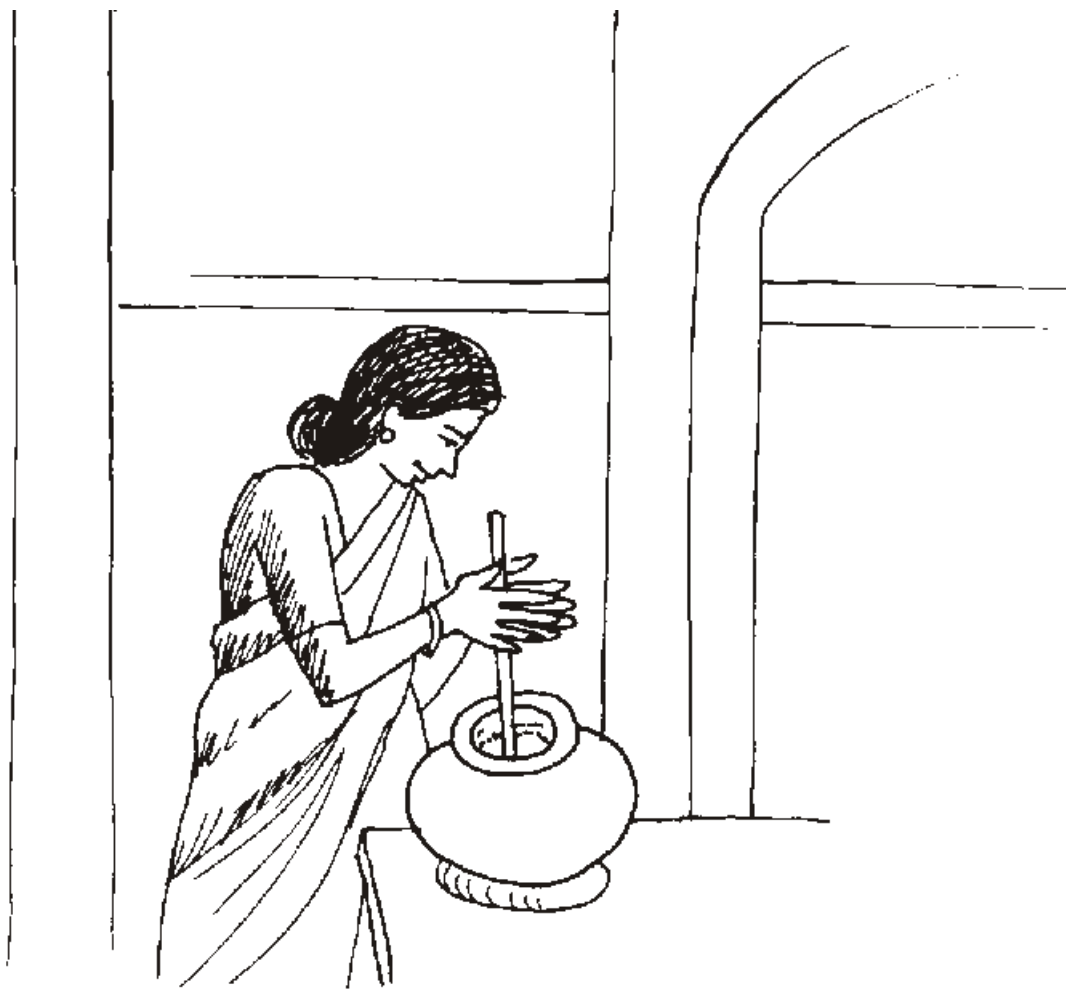
As part of empowering as well in managing the unexpected risks, the rural women are guided to invest their family surplus in immovable asset creation, particularly in dwelling places or plots. This is carried out by registering the title of the plot in the name of the woman.

This helps them in many instances, to participate in the family decision making. Further, it enables them to manage under any unexpected risks to overcome any financial crisis, as the value of this investment increases regularly due to appreciation.

As on March 31, 2012, 50 rural women were guided to buy plots for constructing houses under “Sevagram” program. Each plot with the total area of 1850 sq ft is registered with the title in the woman name in Sankarapuram Project. This is carried out in collaboration with Seva Habitat Company.

## Churning the Cream

6



Relationship is important to bring out the goodness in human being. In the globalisation era, this is in great danger, particularly, in rural areas, where the prevalence of the joint family system is getting disintegrated.

ASSEFA has been giving a major thrust to the human relationship since the beginning. It has promoted people forum to not only implement the development initiatives but also to improve human contacts to create a congenial environment for a peaceful, happy and secured life.

In this respect, ASSEFA adopts a process in which it creates an atmosphere, wherein the people come together, develop a cordial relationship, provides mutual help and work jointly for the common benefits.

### **6. 1. Mutual Support Groups**

Participation of the local people in any of the development initiatives is an essential factor in ASSEFA programs. Initially, common interest groups are promoted with individual involved in same activities like dairying, vegetable growing, groundnut cultivation, water resource management, etc, as members.

These groups are restricted with minimum membership<sup>3</sup>, to enable everyone to participate and interact freely for meaningful dialogue. They are suggested to meet as and when required or at-least once in a month. In the meeting, their discussion is not only confined to the activity related subjects but also other matters such as temple festival, marriage functions, social events, etc.,

This process helps them to build a cohesive and cordial relationship among each other. This, gradually, helps the group from not only providing mutual support for developing the respective activity, but also for the common causes such as community festival, putting up road facility, improve school facility, etc.

Similarly, women self help groups, promoted for the welfare of the women, are grown, at present, as a strong force in the villages in not only addressing the issues of the women, but also work for the development of the villages.

The SHGs are instrument in bringing common facilities such as provision of drinking water, sanitation facility, road facility, community building, etc., in many villages, with the support of local bodies.

In this process, ASSEFA also promote local leadership by identifying and training members with leadership quality for successful intervention. As on March 31, 2012, more than 7,00,000 members had been brought under various mutual support groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the activity groups are kept with members less than 10.

## 6.2. Building up Human Qualities

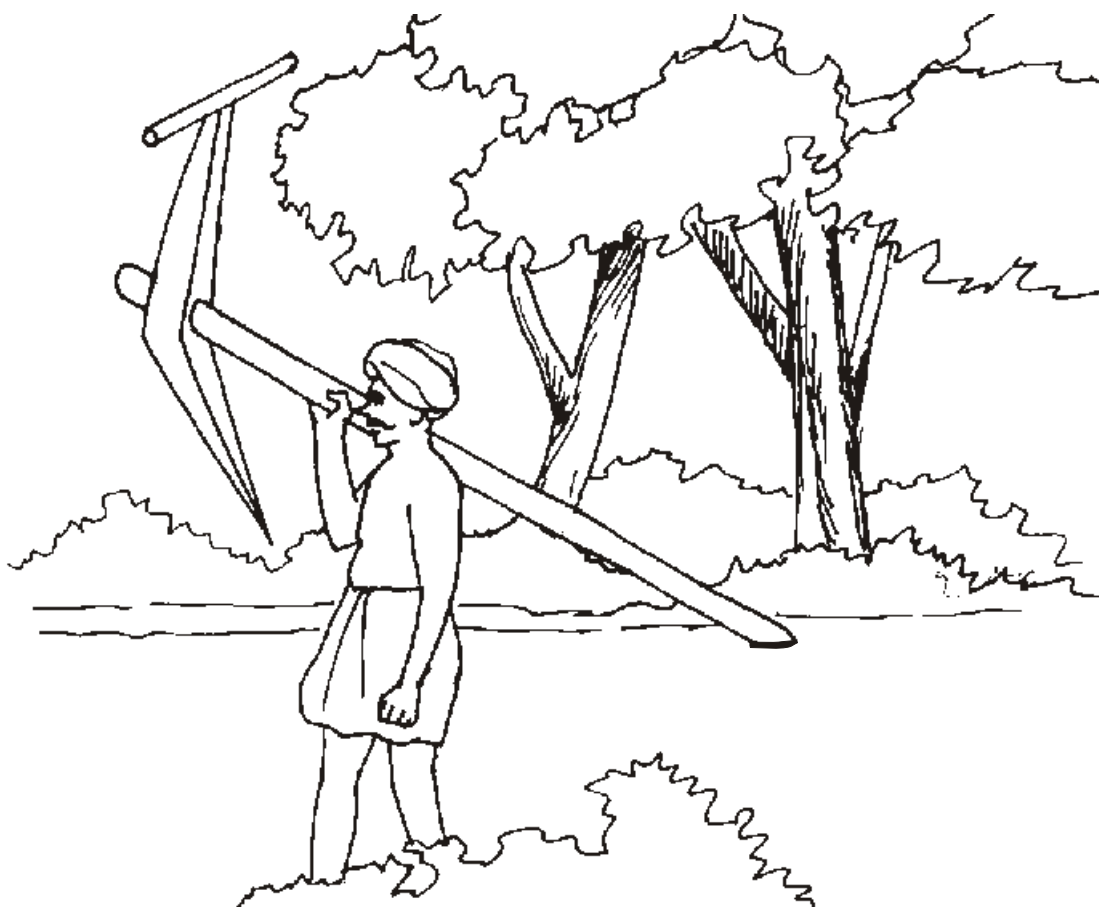
Apart from creating a forum for the people to come together, the groups are guided to implement programs, as given under, out of their own resources, to develop goodness in them.

- **Community Marriages:** Organised by the federation of women self help groups to support socio-economically weaker couples including physically challenged and orphaned couples to get married. The cost is entirely met by collecting contribution from women SHGs and social well wishers.
- **Social Security for Vulnerable:** Wage loss compensation for pregnant ladies and life loss compensation to the children of the poor families are provided by the women groups. The purpose is to share the burden of the sufferings of the poor neighbourhoods.
- **Pailagam for Weaker Students:** The student's who find it difficult to concentrate in studies, need special attention. However, in many rural schools, special attentions are not provided. This leads to suffering of the student with disgrace and dropout gradually. The self help groups support these slow learners by organising special coaching through Pailagam. The group appoints educated teacher exclusively for this purpose.
- **Health Awareness:** The groups are guided to organise health camps to create awareness on health related issues. In the recent in-house survey, it was revealed that more than 60 percent death is caused due to health problems. The failure to get proper treatment, due to lack of awareness, is the main cause for these demises.

## 6.3. Manifestation in Local Bodies

The capacity built through ASSEFA intervention enabled members, particularly women to provide better services through local bodies. These women were once confined to household activities and serving only their families.

When ASSEFA provided an opportunity, they served eagerly to benefit their kith and kin in their villages. Later, with their self confidence and interest to serve many, they contested in local body election and won. In ASSEFA operational areas, nearly 10 to 15 percent of the elected local body members are trained in the ASSEFA programs.



Preserving and enhancing natural resources is an essential strategy to protect our environment. Towards this, ASSEFA has been involved in implementing the following programs.

### **7. 1. Wasteland Development**

Irrigation facility is essential to keep the agricultural lands under use. In many areas, the lack of adequate water resources forces the farmers to leave the agriculture land without any use. These lands become gradually wasteland in the long run.

There are many such unused barren lands. ASSEFA has been bringing these lands under agricultural use by implementing watershed development programs. With the support of the villagers, infrastructure for soil and water conservation is strengthened.

This enables the increase of groundwater level gradually through harvesting the rainwater. Later, the farmers are guided to cultivate suitable crops, including tree crops to upturn the barren land into greenery.

As on March 31, 2012, ASSEFA has been able to treat 17,736 hectares of barren lands and bring back for agricultural use in 22 locations across Bihar, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.

## **7.2. Promotion of Tree Crops**

Farmers are encouraged to cultivate tree crops both in their farm as well as backyard. The trees not only benefit us with fruits and shades but also help to bring in rain.

With community nurseries, promoted by ASSEFA, quality tree saplings are produced for the supply. Depending upon the local demand, the following fruit tree saplings are supplied through nurseries a) Coconut, b) Papaya, c) Drumstick, e) Guava and f) Mango. In Bihar, the tree crops cultivation is promoted under WADI program. About 7,500 families were covered under this program.

## **7.3. Organic Farming**

In the recent decades, farmers apply chemical inputs (fertilisers and pesticides) to increase productivity. However, these have adverse impacts on both soil healths as well as for human being.

The application of these inputs, in the long run, eliminates soil micro-organisms which are essential for crop cultivation. Similarly, intake of these produces also creates health problems in human being.

ASSEFA has been involved in promoting organic farming to address this issue. The interested farmers are formed into groups and arranged the following supports based on the needs of the farmers.

- Training in various aspects of organic farming
- Manufacture and supply of vermin compost, organic manure
- Demonstration and support in manufacturing “PANCHAKAVYA”, an organic health tonic for the crops.
- Arranging certification for organic products from authorised Institutions and
- Linkages for marketing the finished organic products.

This program is actively implemented in Sivagangai project. Moreover, the interested farmers are arranged one year training program in 'Integrated Farming System' through ASSEFA Community College. At the end of the training, the successful students are awarded with diploma from Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

#### **7. 4. Renewal Energy**

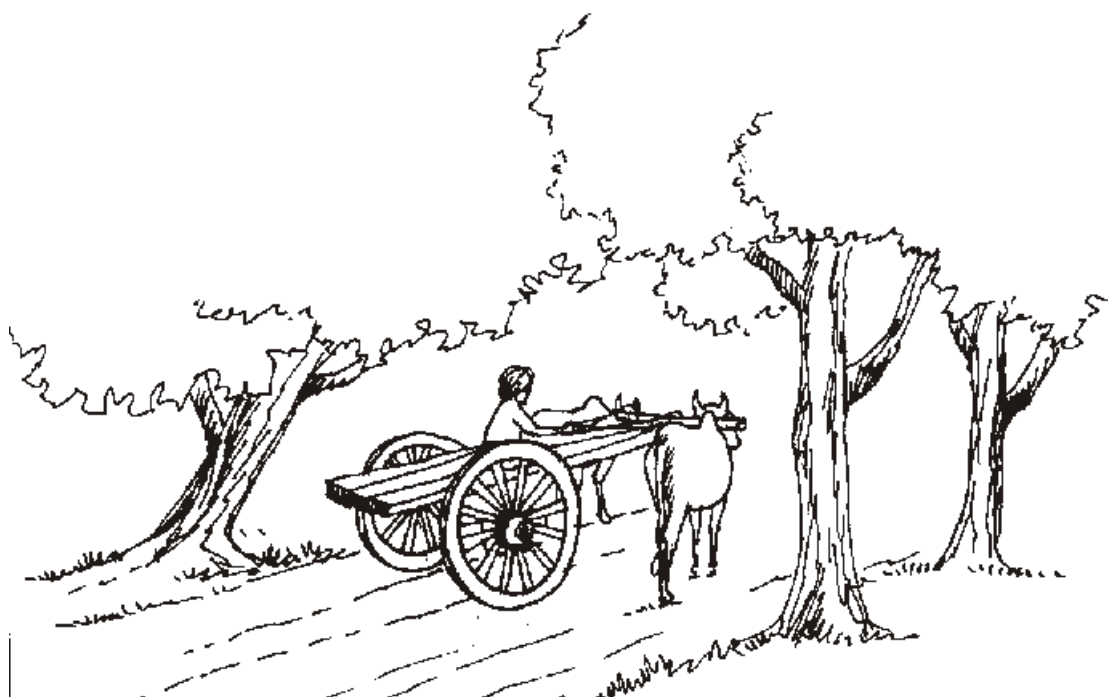
The world is faced with serious environmental problems such as global warming, due to the intensive usage of the conventional energy such as electricity. Hence, there is an urge world wide to use alternative clean and pollution free energy.

Towards this, ASSEFA has been involved in promoting the use of the renewal energy. Depending upon the needs of the local communities and availability of the technologies, the following is promoted.

- Solar Lantern. It is promoted in Bihar, where many villages are without electricity. The use of the solar lantern is demonstrated and the interested villagers are supported with lantern. More than 250 families were assisted with lantern.
- Solar PVC backed power charger is introduced in selective villages in Bihar. The villagers use this mainly for charging the mobile phone. A community based structure is formed in the villages to manage this unit. A nominal fee is collected for maintenance purpose and
- Bio-Gas plant is promoted mainly for community cooking purposes. As on March 31, 2012, a large number of units were established in Tamil Nadu and Bihar with the support of Government.







ASSEFA is a movement, which initiate development programs in the deserving areas. Gradually, it develops the local communities to manage the welfare programs on its own. Community organisations with local representatives as members are established with suitable legal entity to manage the various programs to enable ever green progress of the target members.

ASSEFA withdraws, once the local organisations are graduated to manage their programs. However, ASSEFA provides any assistance, in case of necessity. It moves on to another deserving area and start development initiatives.

Prior to withdrawal, the local communities are strengthened in terms of the following.

- Develop human resource to manage the development initiatives with clear vision and mission.
- Build up adequate capitals for development initiatives.
- Establish local organisation with suitable legal entity to implement programs under the purview of the Indian law and
- Linkages with similar organisations to avail necessary support as and when required.

As on March 31, 2012, 156 community organisations were established to serve the rural poor and vulnerable with needs based development programs.

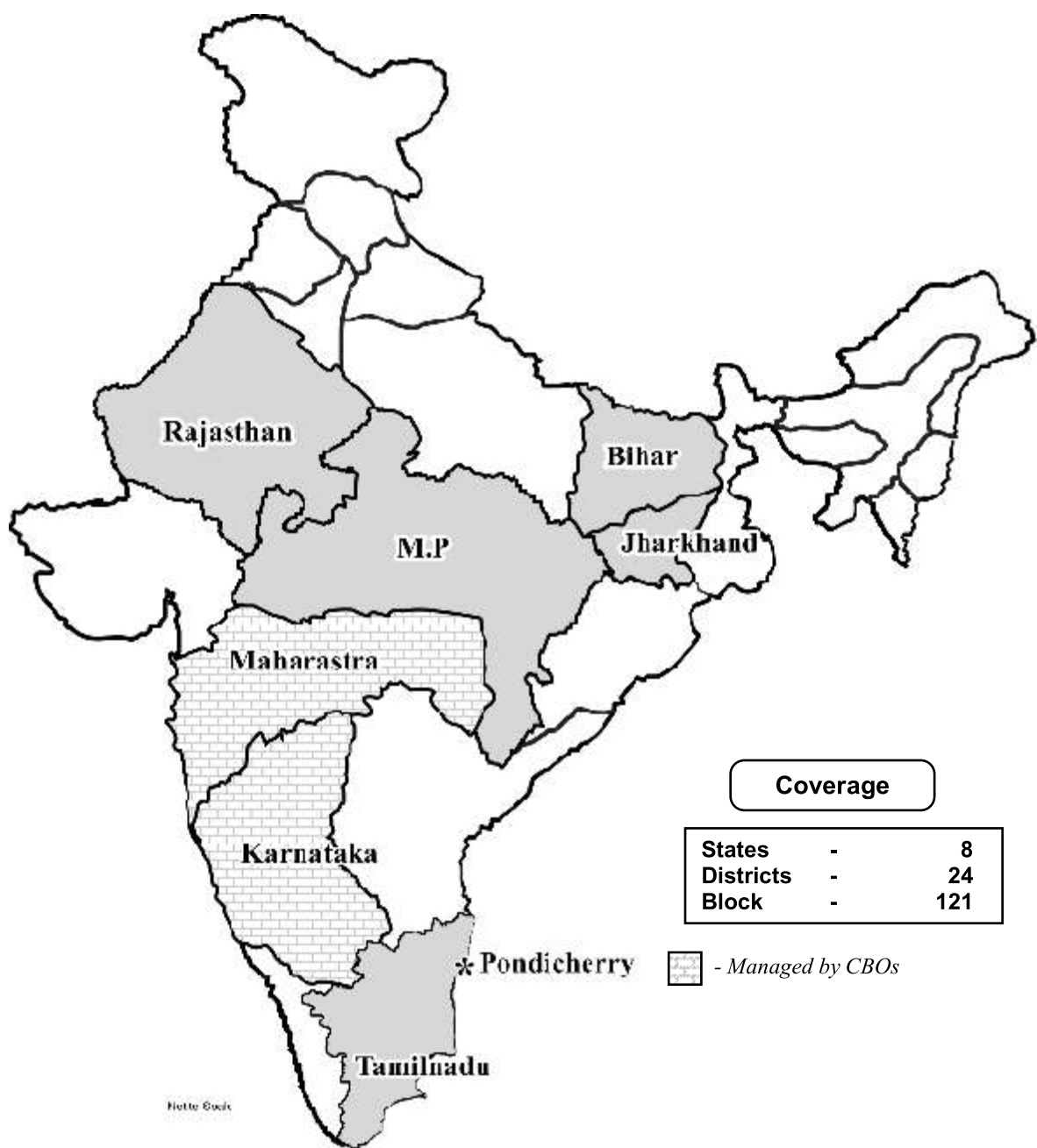


S. No	Institutions	Legal Entity	Purposes	Units
1	Sarva Jana Seva Kosh	Companies Act	Development Finance Company for Livelihood activities	1
2	Sarvodaya Livelihoods Mutual Benefit Trusts	MBT	Federated body of Livelihoods Ensuring Groups. Avail credit support from Kosh	18
3	Sarvodaya Mutual Benefit Trust	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	Sarva Seva Habitat Promotion Ltd	Section 25 Company	Financial and non financial support to construct new houses and improve existing houses	2
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
	<b>Total</b>			<b>156</b>

# Coverage and Outreach

10

As on March 31, 2012, ASSEFA and its affiliated organizations have been working in 121 blocks across 24 districts in eight states of India.



## Abbreviation

⇒ ANC	⇒ Ante Natal Care
⇒ ASSEFA	⇒ Association for Sarva Seva Farms
⇒ CBOs	⇒ Community Based Organisations
⇒ CBP	⇒ Community Building Phase
⇒ DPIP	⇒ District Poverty Initiative Program
⇒ FIP	⇒ Full Implementation Phase
⇒ FRS	⇒ Farmers Renaissance Scheme
⇒ GOVT	⇒ Government
⇒ Ha	⇒ Hectare
⇒ IGNOU	⇒ Indira Gandhi National Open University
⇒ LPD	⇒ Litres Per Day
⇒ MCH	⇒ Mother and Child Health Care
⇒ NABARD	⇒ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
⇒ NBFC	⇒ Non Banking Financial Company
⇒ PNC	⇒ Post Natal Care
⇒ PTA	⇒ Parents Teachers Association
⇒ SHG	⇒ Self Help Group
⇒ SMBT	⇒ Sarvodaya Mutual Benefit Trust