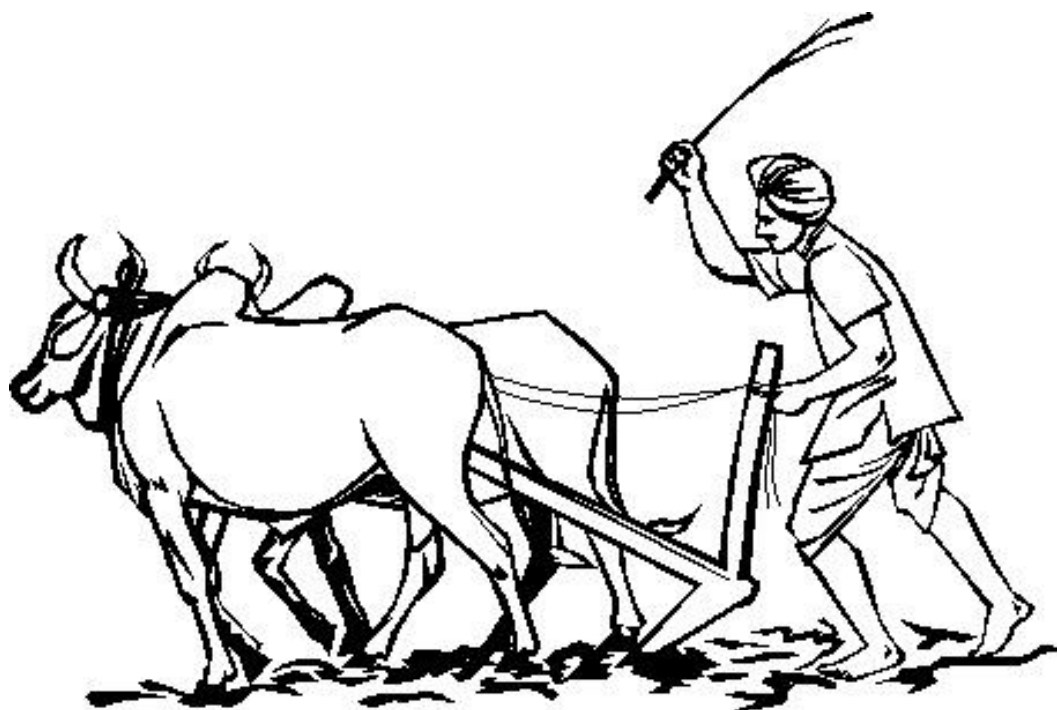


ASSEFA

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13



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Abbreviation

⇒ ANC	⇒ Ante Natal Care
⇒ ASSEFA	⇒ Association for Sarva Seva Farms
⇒ CBOs	⇒ Community Based Organisations
⇒ CBP	⇒ Community Building Phase
⇒ FIP	⇒ Full Implementation Phase
⇒ FRS	⇒ Farmers Renaissance Scheme
⇒ GOVT	⇒ Government
⇒ Ha	⇒ Hectare
⇒ 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

1. PREAMBLE

In the era of globalisation, India witnessed great challenges for food security and food price stability in 2012. Though, India ranks, second worldwide in farm output, agriculture and allied sectors accounted for only 15.7 of the GDP and employed 52.1 percent of the total workforce.

In 2008, a New York Times article claimed that with the right technology and policies, India could contribute to feeding not just itself but the world. However, agricultural output of India lags far behind its potential. On international comparisons, the average yield in India is generally 30% to 50% of the highest average yield in the world

The low productivity is the result of several factors. The average size of land holdings is very small, with 70% of holdings being less than one hectare. Adoption of modern agricultural practices and use of technology are inadequate, besides ignorance of farmers to such practices, high costs, inadequate or inefficient finance and marketing services for farm produce, particularly for small land holdings.

Further, water availability and its distribution are inefficient, unsustainable and inequitable. Irrigation facilities are inadequate,

as revealed by the fact that only 39% of the total cultivable land was irrigated as of 2010, resulting in farmers still dependent on rainfall, specifically the monsoon season, which is often inconsistent and unevenly distributed across the country.

ASSEFA, established, as the 2nd phase of the Bhoodan Movement, has strengthened its resolve to fight food insecurity and ensure food sovereignty. It has been working with the farming communities for holistic development for the last forty-five 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 holistic development 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 upliftment 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’

As on March 31, 2013, ASSEFA has initiated socio-economic welfare programs in 121 blocks across 24 districts in eight states of India – *Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu.*

The present report narrates the progress of the activities undertaken by ASSEFA during the reporting period.

2. FARMERS RENAISSANCE PROGRAM



This program has been implemented in 16 locations across 6 districts which are backward in nature. These districts include Sivagangai, Kancheepuram, Vilupuram, Virudhunagar, Madurai and Dindigul in Tamil Nadu. The purpose of this program is to address the local problems of the farmers and enhance farm productivity.

As on 31st March 2013, 5,405 farmers had been enrolled. They are mostly small and marginal farmers, owning agricultural lands of less than 2 hectares. These farmers cultivate food crops, cash crops, vegetable and other horticultural crops.

For participatory intervention, these farmers are formed into crop - based self help groups. These groups assess their challenges, alternative measures and areas of supports required. Based on these, ASSEFA arranged necessary services.

The salient features of the activities undertaken are as follows:

A. Development of Land & Water Resources:



The operational areas are mostly semi-arid in nature. Harvesting and storing rainwater are inevitable to carry intensive agriculture/ farming practices. In the event of inadequate water for irrigation, the farmers tend to keep the lands unused, which could lead these lands become wasteland in due course of time.

Watershed development programs have been implemented in those areas in collaboration with NABARD and TAWDEVA. As on 31st March 2013, this program has been implemented in 6 locations in Sivagangai and Madurai Districts covering 5,689 ha of land across 29 villages to benefit 3,575 families.

Watershed Development Committees formed with local villagers, are equipped to plan, execute and monitor the progress of the programs i.e., to develop suitable rainwater harvesting structure and promote horticultural and agro forestry plantations. As on 31st March 2013, the following plantations have been done.

- Agro horticulture plantation : 68,896 nos
- Agro Forestry plantation : 148,268 nos and
- Dry land Horticulture plantation : 43,278 nos

In addition, the farmers are educated to raise irrigated dry crops and use the water effectively and efficiently for irrigation purposes. Subsequently, they are supported with drip irrigation and pipeline systems. Further, farmers are assisted in deepening of wells, repairing of bore-wells, water pump motors, etc. for farming purpose. During the reporting period, 20 farmers were assisted with drip irrigation and 27 farmers with laying of distribution pipelines.

B. Integrated farming practice: Farmers are encouraged to adopt multi cropping system to enhance not only their income but also soil fertility. Assistances were provided mainly to prepare lands for cultivation, buying quality crop inputs and for sowing. As on 31 March 2013, 1,235 farmers were covered under this program.

C. Cattle wealth promotion: The farmers were also advised and supported with cattle wealth, preferably cows, heifer calves and goats. The waste from agriculture is given as feed to the animals and the animal waste is applied as manure for the crops. As on 31 March 2013, 1,023 farmers were arranged to have milch animals, goatery and heifer calves.

D. Improvement of hill plantation: ASSEFA has been working in the lower Palani Hills for the last three years. The main purpose is to enhance the income of the farmers through improving hill plantation. The main crops grown are coffee, banana, cardamom, orange, vegetables such as chow-chow and beans. The farmers are faced with challenges like a) timely financial services for farming operations b) shortage of labours during peak season and c) reasonable return for their produces.

These farmers are supported with a range of products, which include.

- Labour saving implements – weed cutter and sprayers
- Crop inputs
- Cattle wealth and
- Poultry birds

As on 31st March 2013, 409 farmers were enrolled. During the reporting period, 51 farmers were supported, of which 11 farmers were assisted to buy labour saving implements. A progressive farmer was assisted to start a poultry farm with 300 country chickens.

E. Agro-Rural Industrial Enclave: Marketing the produces, at competitive price, is one of the major concerns among the farmers. In many instances, farmers complain in getting low price for their produce, as they sell their produces through middlemen. The farmers get less when their produces pass through more middlemen before reaching the customers.

As part of addressing this problem, ASSEFA has promoted a “Food Processing Unit” at Vembarali to serve the farmers of Natham area. In the 1st phase, this unit processed mango to manufacture a) “bottled juice” and b) pickle.

The local people, especially rural women were trained and engaged in manufacturing these products. As on date, the unit engages 15, of which 3 are men and the remaining 12 are women.

As on date, 2,000 litres of mango juice in different packages – 100 ml, 250 ml, 300 ml, 500 ml, 1 litre and 1.5 litres are marketed throughout the existing outlets in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, mango pickles are being manufactured and marketed under “SEVA” brand name.

Similarly, another agro industrial unit is being established at Uchapatti to manufacture other value added products such as a) coffee powder b) spices powders and c) different varieties of pickles for which raw materials can be procured from the farmers in Thandikudi and Sivagangai areas.

F. Training and Exposure visit:



Progressive farmers are identified and brought under our fold. These farmers are mostly enterprising and experimenting with new ideas and technologies in farming. As on 31st March 2013, 285 progressive farmers were identified in all locations. We motivate and encourage these farmers to support others in their neighbourhood areas to do viable farming practices.

Exposure visits were arranged for selected 46 farmers of the Kariyapatti, Kalligudi and T.Kallupatti to Sivagangai and Chithamur areas respectively. They were facilitated to interact with progressive farmers on

- Application of drip irrigation
- System Rice Intensification
- Cultivation of medicinal plant, “Coleus” and Pandal supported vegetables.
- Preparation and application of organic manure, pesticide and nutritious tonic.

- Use of mulching sheet with drip irrigation for vegetable cultivation.

Based on the interest and willingness, these farmers were assisted to undertake the above mentioned activities in their field after their exposure visit.

In addition, trainings were arranged in the following topics to benefit 1,044 potential farmers.

- Integrated farming practices
- Application of Drip Irrigation
- Preparation of vermi compost
- Preparation and application of Asola
- Calf rearing
- Clean milk production
- Veterinary Care services

These trainings were conducted with resource persons including from government – agriculture and animal husbandry departments.

G. Community nurseries for tree crops: Quality saplings were supplied to the farmers from the community nurseries at Thonukal and Kandani. The tree saplings raised mainly are fruit bearing and timber valued ones. As on 31st March 2013, 15,780 tree saplings were distributed to the farmers.

H. Farmers Conference:

Three days farmers' conference was organized at Pooriyampakkam campus. The purpose was to assess the challenges in the farming sector and design mitigation measures on consensus basis.

- **1st day Theme:** To improve productivity of the agriculture land.
- **2nd day Theme:** Organic /ecological farming practices and
- **3rd day Theme:** Women and agriculture.

Each day, about 1,000 farmers participated in the deliberations and women had participated actively on the final day. About 30

stalls were put up by the entrepreneurs in respect of agri implements, crop inputs, rabbits, goats, fisheries, nurseries, agri value added products, etc, to link the farmers directly with these entrepreneurs.



At the end of the conference, 16 resolutions were passed, of which it is decided to take up the following in the immediate future.

- Prepare a directory of progressive farmers to strengthen farmer to farmer contact.
- Promote producer company for specific crops for indepth intervention and
- Design special package for women headed families for agriculture purposes.

3. EMANCIPATION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES



Women need encouragement and confidence to overcome their challenges in the society. Their ignorance coupled with limited social contacts, make them vulnerable and that leads to their exploitation.

ASSEFA addresses these challenges by establishing social platforms in the form of women self help groups exclusively to tackle women related issues. About 200 to 250 SHGs in the continuous locations are federated and registered under Mutual Benefit Trust, which are governed by the elected SHG members.

As on 31 March 2013, Mutual Benefit Trusts have been registered in 91 blocks. ASSEFA has been mentoring and guiding these Trusts to create opportunities for their members to overcome their challenges and enhance their socio-economic status.

ASSEFA has guided the Mutual Benefits Trusts to undertake the following welfare activities for the women from April to March 2013.

A. Livelihoods Initiatives for Women:



Awareness generation and encouragement by ASSEFA in the last three and half decades enabled the rural people to take up income generation activities. They are mainly involved in tailoring and petty business such as kirana store, refreshment center, street vending business, etc.

Women also preferred to take up animal husbandry, particularly cows and heifer calves, as many are involved in agriculture. For the purchase of hybrid cows and heifer calves, these Mutual Benefit Trusts help to raise credits from the mainstream financial institutions for the members for income generation activities.

For the disposal of the surplus milk, the SHG members are linked up with dairy factories, associated with ASSEFA, for processing and marketing the surplus milk. About 20,000 women were benefited under the dairy based initiatives.

During the reporting period, these Mutual Benefit Trusts had helped 189,241 members to raise Rs 1630.7 million as credit from the mainstream financial institutions for various income generation activities.

B. Creation of ASSETs: The ownership of the immovable assets such as houses, agriculture lands, generally, helps any woman to build up confidence and feel secured. Generally, in rural areas, the titles of such assets are in the name of the male members.

Believing that ownership of the immovable assets can contribute significantly to empower rural women, ASSEFA is involved in creating awareness and rendering necessary services for this cause. During the reporting period, ASSEFA was able to persuade and convince 110 families successfully to buy new housing plots with the title in the name of women members. This was carried out in S Kulathur and Rawuthanallur villages in Sankarapuram block.

All these 110 women are part of ASSEFA promoted SHGs and involved directly in economical programs. With the surplus income earned by these women and contribution from their husbands, they were able to purchase these plots.

C. Community Marriage is introduced to address the social problems of dowry and lavish spending, which put them to lifelong 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.

This year also, community marriages were received special significance with women groups in various projects which had successfully conducted community marriages earlier. As on March 31, 2013, a total 1645 couples from Hindus, Muslims and Christians, from economically weaker sections of the community had been benefited. During the reporting period alone, 208 couples were benefited.



D. Legal Aide Services Awareness is created among women on the existing LAWs available to protect the rights and safeguard women against exploitation. The members of the Lok Adalat including Judges, lawyers and members from police departments are invited to explain the prevalence of the existing “Law and Order” and procedures to take up necessary actions. During the reporting period, Legal Aide Camps were conducted at Thirumangalam and Kalligudi areas to benefit 412 members.

4. HEALTHY LIVING IS A WEALTHY LIVING



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 directly as well as in collaboration with like minded organisations.

A. Maternal Child Health Services: In Marakanam, Cuddalore, Pondicherry, Karaikal and Gingee, ASSEFA offers health care services with a team of 59 members headed by a qualified and experienced lady physician. Most of the areas were selected during the post tsunami operations.

The target families are mostly from fishermen communities and the status of the health among women and children was not satisfactory. Many of them suffer from anaemic problems and the pregnant ladies are ignorant of pre natal care services. Hence, these communities were offered the following services under

comprehensive Maternal Child Health (MCH) during the reporting period.

- Training to 320 women of SHGs on reproductive health
- ANC services were offered to 162 pregnant ladies and PNC services to 203 young mothers.
- To ensure maintenance of hygiene among new born, baby kits were given to 203 young mothers..
- Supplied nutritive mix to 1610 pregnant ladies, young mother & children and
- Blood and urine tests were conducted for 363 diabetic prone ladies, of which 127 persons were referred to the nearby doctors for treatment.
- Awareness camps conducted to benefit 167 adolescent girls
- Supported 680 families to promote kitchen gardening as supplementary nutrition.

In total, 3,632 persons¹ were benefited by direct intervention.

Awareness Creation: 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, 2013, 320 stakeholders were covered under this program.

B. School Health Services: ASSEFA runs regular schools benefiting more than 15,000 children. As part of protecting the children health, the following services were offered during the reporting period. The services include

- Personal Hygiene: 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, 2013, 593 students were trained as kutty doctors.

¹ Some persons received more than one service

- Supplementary Nutrition: As part of addressing malnourishment, mid-day meals are being supplied to the students. This is being offered in schools, especially approved by the govt for the supply of free meals. About 10,251 students were covered under supplementary nutrition.
- 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, they are referred to the nearest hospital for treatment. 12,482 students were covered under this check up. In addition, vitamin A is supplied for 436 children aged less than 6 years in schools located at Gingee and Marakanam areas.

C. Health Camps: The Mutual Benefit Trusts are encouraged to organise health camps in collaboration with nearby govt / charitable hospitals to benefit the families of SHG members. They are mostly conducted at free of cost.

During the reporting period, two kinds of health camps were conducted. .

- 1) General Health Camps are conducted with qualified physicians to check for any specific health problem. In case of minor problems, treatment is given there itself and other cases were referred to the nearest hospital for treatment. 12 Mutual Benefit Trusts conducted this camp, which benefited 3,760 members.
- 2) Eye Camps are conducted in collaboration with Aravind, Sankaranithralaya, Agarwal Eye hospitals at free of cost. The members with eye problems were brought to the camps and test undertaken by the qualified doctors. In case of Cataract,

the patients were operated at free of cost. During the reporting period, 12 camps were conducted to benefit 3,279 persons, of which 229 persons were operated for Cataract problem at free of cost.



D. 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. These supports were extended to 60 families in Sankarapuram and Arani regions.

5. ENLIGHTENING RURAL CHILDREN



ASSEFA has been into education sector for the last 35 years. Education, being a priority program of ASSEFA, is offering to the rural children by establishing schools in the safe and learning environment with necessary teaching and learning facilities.

A. Holistic Education: 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 mind to respect, love and share with the fellow beings.

The regular syllabus, as prescribed by the Tamil Nadu Government is followed in a 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 include

- 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.

As on March 31, 2013, 15,670 students benefited with the support of 629 teachers in 130 schools and Higher education Institutions.

Sl.No	School Type	Schools	Children	Teachers
1	Primary Schools	60	5,763	229
2	Middle Schools	5	985	42
3	High Schools	7	2,461	90
4	Higher Secondary Schools	1	1,244	36
5	Matriculation Schools	11	3,815	164
6	Higher Education	3	224	17
7	Special Schools*	43	1,178	51
	Total	130	15,670	629

Note: * School is meant for slow learners

B. Upgradation of School Buildings and Facilities: The following works were undertaken to ensure safety, hygiene of the campus and fulfil the norms of the Government.

- Construction of new classrooms to meet the additional students at schools in Iyyanarpuram, Chinnamulaiyur, Andipuram & Thandikudi.
- Renovation of buildings at Ettayampatti school
- Construction of Hostel for girls and teachers at Iyyanarpuram School.
- Drinking water facilities at Iyyanarpuram and K Pudur schools and
- Construction of Toilet block at Iyyanarpuram school

C. Teachers College for Training:



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.

This challenge is met by establishing College of Education at Silarpatti and ASSEFA Sarva Seva Teachers Education Institute at Pooriyampakkam to train new cadres of teachers. Both these institutions are recognised by the National Council of Teacher Education, Bangalore, and is part of mainstream institutions.

During the reporting period, these two Institutions trained 138 students on Education. In addition, five trained teachers from the ASSEFA College of Education were recruited for the school at Thandikudi. This school is promoted to provide quality and holistic education for the tribal children as well as to the children of indigenous community.

6. COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

ASSEFA's core approach is to mobilise and graduate local communities to manage their development programs. Accordingly, ASSEFA 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, 2013, 156 community organisations were established to serve the rural poor and vulnerable with needs based development programs.



ASSEFA Promoted Institutions as on March 31, 2013

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
	Total			156

7. HUMAN RESOURCE

The total manpower strength in ASSEFA development activities is 3,864. This includes both workers and volunteers involved at various levels. The participation of female workers/volunteers accounts for 70 percent of the total workforce in ASSEFA. For efficiency improvement, capacities building at various levels have been organized regularly. This includes class room training, handholding training, exposure visit and experience sharing. The present strength of Human Resources of ASSEFA classified cadre-wise is given below.

Sl.No	Programs	Senior Mgnt	Managers/ Program Incharge/ Team leaders	Program Associates/ Branch Incharge	Executive/ Field workers/ technical assistant/teachers	Accountant/ computer operator/cashier	Support Staffs	Partners / Volunteers	Total
1	Livelihood Promotion	5	9	36	40	21	194	1,292	1,597
2	Micro & Social Credit	2	18	78	322	191	18	455	1,084
3	Education	2	9	16	629	19	177	261	1,113
4	Community Health & Habitat	1	1	1	8	4	3	45	63
5	Coordination	1	1	1		2	2		7
	Total	11	38	132	999	237	394	2,053	3,864