

ASSEFA



BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

2021-22



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1. INTRODUCTION

It was a checkered year that began in hope and shuddered to a halt. COVID-19 has wrought havoc not only to India but globally. The devastating pandemic has caused deep inequalities and still off track towards the vision embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and the measures taken to limit its spread – *as countries shut down their economies, households lose their livelihoods, and social services* are curtailed and jeopardize the accelerated progress now needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. And the road ahead will continue to be challenging, for several reasons

In India, the workers in the informal sector, which constitute about 90% of total workforce have been hit hard as their wages disappear. The International Labour Organization estimates that 400 million people in India are at risk of sinking deeper into poverty.

However, there are resilience everywhere. Government, Development Organizations, Service providers and other stakeholders have been involved in developing sustainable road map for recovery of the socio-economic conditions of the people from the impacts of global pandemic and climatic changes.

ASSEFA, one of the pioneering Development Organizations in India, has been impacting the lives of over million families in rural India, positively, for the last fifty three years giving priority to vulnerable section of women, children, tribal and small and marginal farmers.

In the era of post transition Covid, ASSEFA has been focusing on rebuilding resilient communities through social solidarity economy. The pandemic has affected the rural people economically and socially.

This report explains the new initiatives taken up in addressing the challenges faced by the local communities in the post transition period. The status of the on-going programs and ASSEFA participation in the global events are also explained in the subsequent chapters and the impending plan is covered in the concluding chapter.

2. REBUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

ASSEFA has undertaken the following initiatives as part of rebuilding resilient communities.

2.1 Congenial Community Building through Mass Wedding:

ASSEFA started a “Mass Wedding” program to realize the twin objective of addressing the issue of dowry as well as strengthening the bondage among the local communities to work for the common cause.



Generally, the selection of couples are from socio-economically vulnerable families, practicing different faiths as well as widows, single parent, no parent, physically challenged... categories.

The entire process of wedding including selection of the couples, getting the concurrence from the couples' families, medical certificate for the couples, local resource mobilization for marriage expenses, etc., are carried out by the women self-help groups

One such mass wedding event was organized for 72 couples after the gap of two years. Besides supporting the poor and vulnerable couples getting them married without involving any expenses at their end, the event was aimed at rejuvenating the active participation of the local communities for common cause and overcome the havoc created by the global pandemic.

There were couples of Hindus, Christians and Muslims faiths. Leaders from all these religions, dignitaries, philanthropists, local leaders, relatives of couples and also about 2,000 SHGs members had graced this function and blessed the couples.

As on date, 2,839 couples were covered under this noble initiative in different parts of Tamil Nadu.

2.2 Distribution of free meals

Free meals are distributed to the most vulnerable women. The food is prepared in the community kitchen and distributed to 120 aged people and physically challenged persons at their doorstep for more than 150 days.

This initiative was carried out in three villages in Thonugal area. However, there are demands for such support in the surrounding villages, which would be covered gradually in the subsequent years.



The support of Dr. Saral Thangam, CEO & Managing Director, Norwich Clinical Services, Bangalore for this initiative was greatly appreciated.

2.3 Solidarity Support for vulnerable women:

It is provided to the widows and deserted women, who are self-employed. With the restriction being relaxed, people have gradually started their business. These vulnerable women have also started their businesses who are mostly engaged in petty trade, small eatery centre, street vendors, grocery shop...

However, they are constrained by the working capital. ASSEFA identified such women through SMBTs and supported them with working capital upto Rs 20,000. Assisted 57 women in Kariyapatti and Kalligudi areas. Special thanks to Sri. Tim and Sri. Paul Born of Canada for supporting this initiative.

The interest income earned was set aside to support most vulnerable with distribution of free meals.

2.4 Take now...Give Later..

Thousands of women headed families are facing with uncertainty of their job in the post transition Covid. They have difficulty in assessing quality food at-least once a day due to cash flow problem.

ASSEFA has designed a program “Freedom from Hunger” to provide food security to these families. Agricultural produces procured from the farmers, adding value would be distributed in accordance with the monthly needs of each family with the friendly approach of, “GET NOW ...PAY LATER”. About 32 items including rice, wheat, pulses, oil and masala powder, that are being used for cooking be delivered on regular basis.

This initiative is planned to be introduced in three areas – Thonugal, Kalligudi and Natham on pilot basis. Based on the responses, the program will be expanded in other areas.

ASSEFA would like to thank Karuna Shechen of Paris and Cardinali Lea of Italy for supporting this initiative.

2.5 Developing Wasteland through Agro-forestry:

Tamil Nadu has vast extent of unused / waste lands. These lands are not in use for various reasons like lack of manpower, investment, etc. ASSEFA is planning to bring these lands under use through agro-forestry / industrial forestry and provide income generation opportunities for farmers as well as enabling the environment to recoup for sustainable development.

It is proposed to work along the value chain by bringing the concerned stakeholders under a common platform, for collective intervention. As part of this, a memorandum of agreement has been signed with Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore, to provide technical and technological support.



In the first phase, it is proposed to work in two dry belt areas of T Kallupatti and Kariyapatti in southern Tamil Nadu.

2.6 Livestock Based Livelihoods in Sivagangai:

Sivagangai is one of the dry belts, wherein ASSEFA in collaboration with NABARD has been working for two decades in promoting watershed based livelihoods. Livestock is one of the major income sources for the local people. In order to aggregate for collective action, ASSEFA has promoted Farmers Producers Organization for animal husbandry promotion with the support of NABARD. The organization has proposed to bring in 600 farmers under its fold and provide comprehensive services in livestock promotion.



2.7 Dairy Based Livelihoods in Warappur:

A new bulk milk cooling unit was established in Warappur area in Sivagangai district. The capacity of the unit is 2,000 litres. This unit will offer comprehensive services to the surrounding dairy farmers and the milk collected will be sent to the dairy plant at Natham for processing and marketing. It is expected to support 400 to 500 farmers. Similarly, 4,000 litres capacity BMC was established last year in Avarampatti in Madurai district with the support of ASSEFA Torino. Presently, it supports 457 women in collecting and disposing surplus milk production.

2.8 Skill Training for adult Girls:

Training in Stitching garments: As on vocational training to the adult girls/ladies, established the training centre in tailoring at Thonugal and Mykudi villages. In both locations, basic sewing machines and a commercial sewing machine along with accessories such as cutting table, chairs, scissors, etc., were provided. Presently, 15

students are attending classes in each location. The training is for 3 months. Thanks to Ms. Lea Cardinali of Italy and ASSEFA Torino for their supports.

Training in Aari and Embroidery works: Aari is a type of embroidery work that is done by stretching the fabric tightly over a wooden frame. A pen like needle that resembles a crochet needle is used to do the intrinsic Aari work. This work is popular for its fine and delicate thread work. Training on Aari work was given to 90 ladies who are already involved in tailoring works. The training was for 15 days. After completing, these women were taken to Trichy and Madurai for exposure in Aari works done for commercial purposes. Presently, about 70% of the trainees, have started doing Aari works, which fetches them additionally Rs 5,000 to 7,000 per month. Thanks to NABARD for encouraging and supporting ASSEFA Sivagangai team to take up this initiative.



2.9 Cultural Development Enclave:

Culture, in all its dimensions, is a fundamental component of sustainable development. Culture is a powerful contributor to economic development, social stability and environmental protection. As a repository of knowledge, meanings and values that permeate all aspects of our lives, culture also defines the way human beings live and interact both at local and global scales.

ASSEFA has been experimenting in supporting vulnerable women by establishing Cultural Development Enclave in Thonugal of Virudhunagar district. Cohesiveness and the identity among the locals are strengthened through promoting local culture. It is also by supporting widows, destitute, deserted and aged women with needs based services and counselling mentally disturbed ladies and through yoga and meditation.

3. FARMERS RENAISSANCE INITIATIVES

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in rural Tamil Nadu. Majority of the landholders are small and marginal farmers. Their production is critical in determining the gross domestic product (GDP). However, many farmers are faced with the challenge of doing farming on viable basis.

Many reasons are cited for their problems. These include constraints in supply of input, timely access to credit facility, non-apply of technology and fluctuation of prices in the market.

ASSEFA has been addressing these issues with suitable actions under “Farmers Renaissance Scheme” in 15 areas across six districts in Tamil Nadu. It has enrolled 12,304 farmers as on March 31, 2022.



Although, the intervention was slowed down due to global pandemic, but has accelerated during the reporting period. The main thrust has been in integrating soil, water and livestock for agriculture production.

Based on the needs, farmers have been provided with support in terms of capacity building through progressive farmers, financial services, establishing irrigation facility and alternative marketing of their produces.

As on March 2022, 4,777 farmers were supported for the following activities.

- Agriculture farming : 772 farmers
- Milch animals : 300 farmers
- Goat rearing : 1,666 farmers
- Heifer Calves rearing : 232 girl children
- Agri products retailers: 1,807 women

A Farmers Producers Company was promoted exclusively for goat based livelihoods in Kariyapatti region. Financial support worth 139.34 million was arranged for these activities.

Community nurseries, established in two areas – *Thonugal and Kalligudi*, have continued to support the local farmers with the supply of tree crops saplings including fruit bearing, timbre value, fodder and ornamental tree crops. Both these nurseries serve farmers inhabited in 13 surrounding villages.

As a strategy to support farmers with alternative marketing source for their produce, ASSEFA has been using Mutual Benefit Trusts, the federated body of women SHGs, to sell the value added food materials. The intervention was aimed at benefiting both farmers and consumers. In Tamil Nadu, there are 83 SMBT offices, which are partially used for marketing the farmers' products.

A special project was launched in Thandikudi of Kodaikanal hills to support the local people including indigenous people in value adding and marketing their produces mainly coffee, pepper, honey and oil from eucalyptus leaves.



A range of quality products including cereals, pulses, minor millets, coffee, tea, honey....were procured, added value and marketed...

4. REVIVING DAIRY ENTERPRISES.

Introduced dairy program, twenty six years ago, to support the rural women. Holistic services including training, buying of cows, supply of feed, veterinary service and marketing surplus milk have been implemented. Milk, being a perishable commodity, technological intervention was introduced to preserve and produce milk by-products.



Though, the dairy sector comes under essential commodity, but it was also affected during the global pandemic. The commercial sector which consume about 58% of the total market, was shut down during covid due to imposition of lockdown. Alternative marketing of these milk in a short period had become a challenge.

During this period, the surplus milk was converted into by-products, mainly milk powder, as it has long lifespan. The working capital for this was raised from mainstream financial institutions. Subsequently, when the lockdown was lifted, the sale increased and the milk powder was also disposed subsequently.

In addition, milk producers were given “Corona Preventive Kits”, consisting of soap, masks, immunity boosters from Siddha medicine and hand gloves. For aged milk producers, a sum of Rs 1,000 per month was given as social pension during the lockdown period. It was appreciated by all section of the people. In Natham, the dairy company is planning to give pension to all milk producers based on the supply of milk in the near future.

A new bulk milk cooling unit was established at Warappur in Sivagangai district as part of expanding the coverage of women farmers. As on date, this BMC supports



510 women in collecting their surplus milk, transport to dairy plant at Natham for further processing, packaging and marketing..

For quality assurance, farmers were given regular training on feed management, as the price is fixed based on the quality of milk. Supplied 172 tonnes of quality concentrated feed to the farmers during the reporting period.

Status of dairy program as on March 2022, through ASSEFA promoted companies and collaborators.

- Coverage : 1,015 *villages*
- Dairy farmers : 14,199 *farmers*
- Milk handled per day : 67,700 *litres*
- Inflow of cash into villages
due to dairy program : in Rs. 988 *million*
in Euros 12.35 *million*.

5. STRENGTHENING VOCATIONAL SKILLS FOR ADULT GIRLS

Tailoring is the preferred choice among the adult girls and ladies. It gives flexibility to them to work independently and also prevalence of high demand for the service of the tailors.

ASSEFA identifies girls, who cannot continue higher education, but interested in earning such ladies get training for three months in stitching garments for children and women under the guidance of the trained masters.



These trainees after the training are supplied with sewing machines by linking them directly with reputed home appliances companies like “USHA International” and “Singer” at competitive price

In our rapid survey, 60% of the trained persons work independently. While the remaining get employed in garment companies, especially in Virudhunagar and Thirupur, the garment clusters.

This program could not be continued during covid 19 due to lockdown. However, it was started again this year. 174 girls were trained from five training centers in Madurai and Virudhunagar districts. Subsequently, 472 adult girls were supported in buying sewing machines from Usha International and Singer Companies.

Training in Aari and Embroidery works: The lady tailors were identified and given training on Aari and Embroidery works for 15 days. This was initiated in Sivagangai area. The works of aari /embroidery in ladies blouse fetch an income of Rs 500 to Rs. 2,000 per piece. Thanks to NABARD for encouraging and supporting this initiative. Under this initiative, the team had trained 90 ladies.



6. DEVELOPMENT FINANCE FOR ACCELERATING LIVELIHOODS

Credit has become an important tool in development sector. Recognizing this, micro-credit has been promoted globally through various actors including banks, financial institutions, Governments NBFCs, NGOs, etc.

ASSEFA has been involved in practice of blending finance with development for the last forty years. The concept of promoting, “Gram Kosh”, i.e., Village funds to use it for the development of individual/community on revolving basis was in practice in the 1970’s.

Subsequently, to operate under the purview of government norms, two Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) were promoted.

- Sarva Jana Seva Kosh for livelihood / development finance and
- Sarvodaya Nano Finance Limited for credit facilities to rural women.

During Covid 19, the credit operations of both NBFCs were slowed down and involved in supporting relief works to their clients.

In the post Covid transition period, the demand for credit has increased across all section of people. Based on the assessment, both these NBFCs have started providing credit to their clients for livelihood activities including agriculture, livestock rearing, tiny and micro enterprises in rural Tamil Nadu.

Status as on March 2022:

S. No	Particulars	SJSK	SNFL	Total
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coverage<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Districts– Blocks– Villages	6 27 624	10 53 1,592	16 80 2,216
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disbursement of credit in Rs million	153.58	178.4	331.98
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members Benefited	7,745	6,203	13,948

7. HEALTH AND HYGIENE

In the era of global pandemic, health and hygiene has become an important aspect. The fear of Covid 19 particularly vaccination among the rural people has made ASSEFA to intervene with awareness and other health programs, as given under.

7.1 Awareness Program on Covid 19:

Awareness camps were organized in collaboration with local government hospital through Mutual Benefit Trusts and Dairy Companies. The focus was to create awareness on the preventive measures against Covid 19. Distribution of masks, soaps and health immunity boosters like “kapasurakudineer” recommended by the government were also undertaken.



Similarly, arranged mass vaccination drive in collaboration with local government. Accordingly, vaccination programs were arranged separately for the members of the SHGs and dairy groups. A separate medical team from the local hospitals were involved in the vaccination program..

As on March 31, 2022, **Seventy four** camps were organized to benefit **54,290** persons.

7.2 Health Camps

Health camps could not be organized in many places due to government restrictions. However in the coastal area, three general health camps were organized with ASSEFA health team covering 804 persons. The chronically ill patients, who are in need of long-term medical attention, were referred to nearby government hospitals for free treatment.

In Thimiri area, organized two eye camps in collaboration with Aravind Eye Hospital. Out of the 140 persons, 50 had cataract eye problem, which was solved subsequently by doing cataract operation at free of cost.



7.3 Mother and Child Health:

ASSEFA has continued to provide comprehensive Mother and Child Health services in the coastal areas of Marakanam, Pondicherry, Cuddalore and in Gingee areas. A team of 8 members headed by an experienced lady physician had provided the following services during the reporting period.

- ANC services to 32 pregnant ladies and PNC to 64 young mothers.
- Awareness camps on personal hygiene, human anatomy, anaemia, food nutrition, child rights and physiology all together benefited 948 adolescent girls.
- Attended 342 out-patients through our mini clinics at Gingee and Marakanam.



7.4 Toilet construction:

As part of promoting hygienic living, rural families were supported with low cost toilet and sanitation facilities. This helps adult girls and ladies to attend their nature's calls without any fear of exploitation or bites from poisonous insects/snake. In addition, support was extended to improve dwelling places. During the year, 2021-22, 325 families were covered under toilet construction and 79 families under improvement of dwelling places. In addition, three community

toilets were constructed in Thandikudi area and the management of the toilets were left to the local panchayat.

7.5 Community Drinking Water:

This has been implemented in collaboration with TATA Projects Limited. As on date, 92 Reverse Osmosis water purifiers have been installed to benefit 31500 to 35,000 families. SMBTs identify the potential vendors having borewell, shed for housing RO plant and willing to invest.



Subsequently, the technical team visit the site, collect the water sample for testing and design layout for erecting RO plants. Based on the outcome of the test, the plant is designed and erected at the site. The vendor would be trained in operating the plant including “Dos” and Don’ts”. The technical team attends as and when needed. As on March 31, 2022, 53 plants were managed by ASSEFA affiliated organizations and the remaining by the entrepreneurs.

7.6 Supply of Quality food Materials:

There is a quote in Tamil, “Food is a medicine”. Eating pure and healthy foods keeps human body fit and healthy. ASSEFA is working with this concept of supplying quality food materials. ASSEFA works with the farmers under FRS in procuring quality agro products and sell it to women SHGs through SMBTs.

This arrangement has helped farmers with better prices for their produces and consumers with quality products. The team has reached out to 11,674 families with dhoor dhal, pepper, coffee, tea and ghee.

8. EDUCATION IN THE POST PANDEMIC TRANSITION..

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a lot of challenges in the Indian education system. All schools, colleges and education institutions were closed down for nearly eighteen months since March 2020.

The sudden outbreak of the pandemic did not allow the concerned stakeholders in education sector to introduce alternative system. Though, the government came up with the suggestion of on-line education, but it was too late for the academic year, as many in rural areas lacked internet and device facilities.

8.1 On-line Education for Rural Students

The schools of ASSEFA too faced the same problem. When the curriculum was developed for on-line, many students did not possess smart phone or laptop with internet facilities. However, the parents of the students possessed smartphone. They were invited and assisted them to register under whatsapp. The syllabus teaching was recorded and sent to the whatsapp number of their parents.

Instead of regular curriculum, the classes focused on basic mathematics, English and Social Emotional Learning. However, for higher education, the government prescribed curriculum was followed.

Simultaneously, this team also raised funds locally through crowd funding and supported the teachers and parents, who had economic problems, with the supply of rice and groceries ration.

8.2 Reopening of Schools:

The reopening of schools in February this year was a cause for celebration for many students and teachers. As schools reopened, the following precautions were taken both inside and outside the classroom to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Maintenance of physical distancing among children at schools.
- Washing of hands with soap / sanitizers to maintain health and hygiene.
- Compulsory wearing of mask in the school campuses.
- Cleaning and infecting of surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, taps, phones and toys.

Teachers were given adequate awareness training on understanding the precautions they should take to protect themselves and children from COVID 19 and it is important that they should lead by example in the classroom. In addition, trainings were given on the actions to be taken in case of children appear to be sick.



8.3 Documentation on Education program:

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi made a complete video documentation on ASSEFA Education Program titled, “Beyond Education”. The documents explain the holistic approach of ASSEFA in education for rural children. ASSEFA would like to thank the team of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation for this wonderful documentation done free of cost.

Coverage under Education

S. No	Region	Schools	Students	Teachers	Students - Teachers ratio
1	Madurai	22	4031	243	16.6
2	Uthiramerur	10	2221	81	27.4
3	Coastal	4	937	46	20.4
4	Gingee	2	319	16	19.9
5	Madurantagam	2	514	25	20.6
	Total	40	8022	411	19.5

9. PARTICIPATION WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

With the relaxation of restriction of Covid-19 on International passengers, friends and well-wishers from the overseas made their visit to ASSEFA projects. ASSEFA too had participated in the International events through e-platform.

9.1 Researchers from Australia:

Prof. Israr Qureshi and his team from Australian University had spent a week visiting different projects of ASSEFA. They had come to understand the approach and programs of ASSEFA which had the flavor of Gandhian development approach for Villages.

9.2 Development Promoters from Karuna Shechen:

A senior management team from Karuna Shechen under the leadership of Sri. Tarek Touble had visited ASSEFA Projects to understand its approach and programs aimed at holistic development of the community. Karuna Shechen is an international development organization, founded by Mattieu Ricard in 2000, provides health care, education and social services for the under-served people of India, Nepal and Tibet.



The two organizations, subsequently introduced a new “MODEL PROJECT” aimed at holistic development of the community at cluster level in Thonugal area for mutual learning and sharing.

9.3 Executive Director from Action Village India, UK:

After a gap of almost three years, due to covid 19, Ms. Esther Trienekens, the Executive Director of Action Village India of UK paid a four days visit to ASSEFA. She had visited the projects on community health in Marakanam area, dairy based livelihoods support in Natham and credit operation for women in Kariyapatti areas. The team had a good discussion with her in respect of ASSEFA plans to provide food and financial security for vulnerable women.

9.4 ASSEFA in UN Encyclopaedia:

The researchers and think-tank from around the world are emphasizing to promote Social Solidarity Economy as an alternate to capitalism and socialism. Development models working with the concept of social solidarity economy are documented and disseminated for wider policy advocacy. The United Nations engaged a panel of experts to prepare an Encyclopedia on “Social Solidarity Economy”. The approach of ASSEFA has been highlighted as the holistic development model adopting social solidarity economy...ASSEFA would like to thank the panel of experts, especially Prof. Denison Jayasooriya for publishing ASSEFA approach..

9.5 Participation in Action Village India Partners Forum:

Action Village India, UK had organized online partners forum on four thematic areas such as a) Impact of Covid on health and education, b) Livelihood and migration c) Climate adaptation and d) Gender. ASSEFA has actively participated and presented its intervention in these thematic areas.

 <p>Migration & Livelihoods Saturday 10th April 15:00 - 17:00 Ramesh, Ekta Parishad S. Jothiramalingam, CRUSADE R. Mahendran, ASSEFA Nisha Subramaniam, ASSEFA Join via: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89724511970</p>	 <p>Gender & Access to Justice Saturday 24th April 15:00 - 17:00 Bimla Chandrasekaran, Ekta Anindita Majumdar, EquiDiversity Pooja Rajiv, Srijan Join via: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81531415070</p>
 <p>COVID Health & Education Friday 9th April 15:00 - 17:00 Nikky Soren, NBJK Dr. Rani, ASSEFA Rajeev Singh, NBJK Gowtham Reddy, ASSEFA Join via: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85448877718</p>	 <p>Climate Adaptation Friday 23rd April 15:00 - 17:00 Kailash Chandra Dash, RCDC L. Kumar, ASSEFA Sudarshan Chhotaray, Focus Odisha Join via: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86448687847</p>

9.6 Global Social Economic Forum

GSEF, an international network, organized a workshop on “Social investment for community empowerment” ASSEFA was invited as a reactor to give a critical feedback on solar powered cold storage unit of Ecofrost, an international company aimed at providing solutions to the farmers, fisherman communities and market vendors. The event was co-hosted by Asian Solidarity Economic Council, Malaysia.

9.7 ASEC – Philippines

ASSEFA invited to serve in the panel of reactors in the workshop organized ASEC-Philippines. The workshop had various themes for discussion, in which ASSEFA had actively participated in, “Roadmap for the convergence of social enterprise for Philippines.

10. A WAY FORWARD

In the era of uncertainty due to global pandemic, the on-going programs will be continued as planned. In addition, ASSEFA is planning to focus on the following areas.

10.1 Cluster Development Approach:

ASSEFA is planning to adopt a new cluster development approach. Accordingly, 10 villages would be selected in the same area targeting 5000 families. The main intervention focus will be to bring peace and harmony in the community by supporting women and farmers with livelihood, food security, health and hygiene, special education for slow learners and environment promotion through promoting community organizations on sustainable basis.

ASSEFA has selected two clusters a) Thonugal and b) T Kallupatti for experimentation. Karuna Shechen has agreed to support this experimentation for Thonugal Cluster and ASSEFA Genova for T. Kallupatti cluster.

10.2 Social Security for the vulnerable

ASSEFA has been working mainly with the families working in the unorganized sector. They don't enjoy the security as people working in the organized sector. Based on the need assessment, it is proposed to provide food and financial security for the vulnerable. In case of food security, the target group especially women headed families, will get the family monthly ration of food materials with the conditions that they will pay when they have money. This will be piloted in four areas - Kariyapatti, Kalligudi, T Kallupatti and Natham.

Similarly, it is planned to provide social pension to the women milk producers based on the supply of their milk. A portion of the value of milk supply will be set aside. This along with matching grant from the milk company will be invested so that the women will get monthly pension of Rs 1,000 every month after 5 years. Initial work has been started in Natham area to cover 4,000 milk producers.

10.3 Promotion of organic cotton

ASSEFA – Syncom Agritech – SEEDS of Mallanginaru are planning to have joint collaboration in promoting organic cultivation. Syncom Agritech is a Japanese Company working globally to increase the agriculture production using the

advanced agricultural technology that does not destroy the environment. The company has been working in many countries promoting organic cultivation, supply of ecofriendly technology and market linkages.

ASSEFA will work with Syncom Agritech in promoting cultivation of organic cotton in 1,000 acres of land using FPOs of SEEDS as a field level organization to reach out to the deserving farmers.

10.4 Promoting Agroforestry:

ASSEFA is planning to promote agroforestry in 500 acres of lands as part of cluster development approach. This will be piloted in Thonugal and T Kallupatti areas. Lands not under use will be identified in the same locality, negotiate with concerned farmers, build up common facility for irrigation and cultivate tree crops. Forestry College of Mettupalayam will provide plantations, technical supports and manpower, especially B.Sc (Hons) Forestry graduates for execution.

10.5 Development Project with Badagas Community

The Badagas are an ethno-linguistic community living in the Nilgiri district in Tamil Nadu, India. Throughout the district the Badagas live in nearly 400 villages, called Hattis. Their occupation is plucking of tea leaves, collection and selling of Non-timber forest produces. ASSEFA is planning to work with this community. A preliminary study of this area was undertaken by the senior management team. A well-wisher of ASSEFA from Italy has agreed in principle to support this initiative.