Association for Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA)-India
50 years of Sustainable Development

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?

Geneva, 24/06/2019

Yvon Poirier, with support of Kumar Loganathan
Who Are We?

- Vinobha Bhave, the spiritual heir of Gandhi, started “Land gift movement” to bridge the gap between landlords and landless as
  - Two out of three persons are dependent upon land for their livelihoods and
  - Majority are landless and small/marginal farmers, living below poverty line
- He undertook a mission, treking 14 years across the country in 1951 which enabled him to collect 4.38 million acres of land, as gift from the land holding peasants.
- ASSEFA, with the blessings of Vinoba Bhave, continued the followup of the Movement since 1968 in rehabilitating the landless farmers.
- Gradually, ASSEFA broadened its mission to bring in vulnerable under its fold for holistic development.
What is the Motto?

“Establishing Village Republic i.e., self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-managed communities based on the principles of freedom, non-economical parity with social justice”.
Mission

- To improve the economic, social and cultural status of the rural communities
- Enhance their skills and self-management capacity.
- Uniting the rural communities without any kind of discrimination.
- Work for the up-liftment of the social, cultural and economic life of all and
- Establish self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-managed communities based on the principles of freedom, economic equality and social justice
Who are the driving forces?

• WOMEN, who keep the culture of sharing and tradition of community living for many centuries
Towards Sustainable Livelihoods

- Major thrust given to Livelihood programs
- Priority to the vulnerable sections – *women, children, tribal, small, marginal and landless farmers*..
- Promoted livelihoods based on the following principals
  - *Create opportunities within the existing livelihoods*
  - *Promote activities that have local demand*
  - *Production by masses and not mass production*
  - *Appropriate technology for value addition*
  - *Employment opportunity to the local*
  - *Community structure based on trusteeship model to manage livelihoods on long term basis*
- Since the target families are rural communities, focused to land and dairy based livelihoods promotion
Why are they getting themselves organised?

- Forming small group with 15/20 members:
  - Identify their root
  - Trace the history of their community
  - Feel proud of their heritage
  - Mapping resources of:
    - Knowledge drawn from their history,
    - Strength of the culture, as a binding force for many centuries.
    - Heritage – temple, mosque, church, festivals, which keep them together.
    - Reasons for disparity
  - Plan to redress their agony
- Form participatory governing structure.
ASSEFA Operational Areas and Outreach

States - 8
Districts - 24
Block - 121
Villages - 10,198
Families - 9,02,843

Managed by CBOs
How do they realise?

- **Livelihoods** — Dairying (A to Z), Food security/sovereignty
- **Building Assets** — Owning habitat, control/owning productive assets
- **Social Security** — Wage & Life loss compensations
- **Knowledge Base** — Education: formal & Life skill through regular schools and community college respectively
- **Well-Being** — Mother and child health, stress mgnt, preserving health and sanitation.
- **Preserving Culture** — Community celebrations - folklore, classical & traditional music & dances
- **Looking Beyond All Barriers** — Community marriages
- Separate Team being built at group, federation and regional levels to promote, manage and owning the programs.
Rural Children
- Gandhian Education -

- Our Thrust:
  - Holistic Education: All round development – body, mind and spirit
  - Man making education
  - A strong binding with the local community
  - No discrimination on caste, religion or any other basis

- Promoted schools, where there are no school facilities.

- Regular curriculum followed so as to keep the children in mainstream educational system.

- In addition, focus given to life skill education. This includes
  - Yoga and meditation
  - Learning Non Violence
  - Curriculum on Rural Livelihoods – agriculture, dairying, tailoring, etc.

- Kutty doctors introduced to train students in health and hygiene.
Community Health
- Improve Quality of Life -

- Main focus to mother and child health (MCH) services.
- The services include
  - Ante Natal Care (ANC)
  - Delivery in hospital/attended by trained persons and
  - Post Natal Care (PNC)
- Proper orientation to the pregnant ladies and linkages with nearby hospital for regular ANC/PNC services.
- Engaged professional team in remote areas for direct services.
- Wage loss compensation provided to pregnant ladies for the last 3 months, as they cannot attend any work.
- Human loss compensation also provided mainly for better of their children
- Every year, register 1,00,000 women under this scheme.
ASSEFA and Sustainable Development

• To enhance knowledge of Sustainable Development (SD), in 1995, three years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, examined ALL activities through the SD lens and implemented thoroughly in all practices

• ASSEFA applies the principles of Sarvodaya (progress for all) and Trusteeship
ASSEFA and the SDG’s

• ASSEFA did not have to act to implement the 17 SDG Goals of Agenda 2030.
• ASSEFA was already working and implementing the SDGs before they were adopted by the UN!
• **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms** everywhere for the millions of villagers, they are self-sufficient and don’t live in poverty, even if cash income is low.

• **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture** There is no hunger in the villages. Food security and good nutrition (mainly vegetarian) are the norm. Agriculture is sustainable and there are constant efforts for better irrigation, more organic farming and other sustainable agriculture.

• **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages** Starting in schools, teaching for healthy lives. In the villages, well being of all people, including elderly people, is taken care of.

• **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.** Many villages are isolated from public schools. When this is the case, ASSEFA helps villages set up a school, at least for primary education. In regions with many villages, high school education is also provided.
• **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
  ASSEFA has prioritized this goal. The basic structure in the villages is women’s Self-Help-Groups (SHG). In 2012, there with 27,000 SHGs of 20 women each. They manage micro-finance activities in each village, organise collection of milk for the cooperative milk plants (they manage the coops). They also work to overcome patriarchy in personal relations.

• **Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all** • Since the main activity is water, this is a high priority for all villages. They improve irrigation infrastructure, they intensively plant trees to retake back barren land, etc. Sanitation in the villages is constantly improved, as well as in schools.

• **Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all** In many areas, introduction of Solar lanterns and other types of solar lighting. In another district of 60 households, with no conventional power supply, all households will be enabled to use only solar lighting. Energy efficient biomass cook stoves are also introduced in many villages.

• **Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all** • This vision is promoted since the inception of the villages. There is a constant increase in income by organising economic activity managed by the villages (of groups of villages). For example, the milk production is sold to hospitals and other public institutions.
Goal 9. **Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation** • There is no large industrialisation in the villages. However, there is industrialisation in agriculture such as milk plants. The ownership of these infrastructure in key. They belong to the people.

**Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries** • By helping millions of poor and very poor have good lives, this helps reduce inequality, ASSEFA preaches by example. The basic wage for employees in milk factories, in microfinance, teachers is calculated on the cost of living in the villages for a family. In 2012, it was 90 $USD a month.

**Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable** • In the case of ASSEFA, the human settlements are villages of about 1 to 2 thousand people. Since they embrace sustainability from the onset, the development cycle takes 15 years to become autonomous. They then can support development of other villages in the region.

**Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns** • There is much awareness raising about this. They have not fallen into the trap of consumerism and production patterns are production is oriented to satisfy needs of villagers and neighboring cities.
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts • They have a high consciousness of climate change. They no control of the mega economy (India produces more motor vehicles). However, in the villages the activities have limited impact since they organise to have less impact.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development • Before the 2004 Tsunami, all villages were in agriculture. After the international NGO’s left after relief was provided, some fishing villages asked ASSEFA for help in improving fishing methods and conservation of fresh fish. These villages have become more sustainable.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss • This has been a core activity. They have restored much land that was unfit for farming, they have planted trees, improved water saving methods, irrigation, etc.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels Building peace in communities in all aspects. Peace education has been added to the curriculum from grades 1 to 12. The UN adopted a proposal in 2001, initiated by ASSEFA, to declare the decade 2001 to
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development •
Over the years, recognizing the tremendous work of uplifting millions out of poverty, both States, and Union government departments have collaborated the ASSEFA efforts to implement sustainable development.
Illustrating the work

• A few photos
SARVA SEVA SCHOOL
INAUGURATED BY THE DELEGATES OF WORLD CONGRESS ON PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE ON 7TH AUGUST - 2002
Resouce Centre For Basic Education
IYANARPURAM.
KUTTUPATTY (P.O), DINDUGAL (D.T) Pin:624 401.
High Land Development Initiative Centre
Thandikudi
Inaugurated by
Mme. Itala Ricaldone
President, ASSEFA Genova
in the presence of delegation of ASSEFA Groups, Italy
on 5th February 2011
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<th>Duration</th>
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<td>Diploma in Computer Application (DCA)</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
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SARVODAYA MILK

PASTEURISED & HOMOGENISED
STANDARDISED MILK

99655 84027

TN39 P5475
ASSEFA DAIRY DEVELOPMENT FEDERATION-UCHAPATTY
EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANT

1. MANHOLE  2. SCREEN CHAMBER  3. FAT TRAP  4. EQUILIZATION TANK  5A. AERATION TANK  5B. AERATION TANK
6. PRIMARY SETTLING TANK  7. SECONDARY SETTLING TANK  8. SLUDGE THICKENING BERS  9. SAND FILTER  10. OUTLET.
Which Are the Challenges

- Govt policies
- Globalisation
- Urbanisation and
- Natural Calamities.
Future steps

Creation of Peace Zones