



Inter-Agency Task Force on
Social and Solidarity Economy

Association for Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA) India

50 years of Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Association for Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA) – India -50 years of Sustainable Development
Since 1968, ASSEFA has helped create thousands of self-sufficient villages in Tamil Nadu (the majority), but also in 6 other states. Even if the association uses the expression Community Development, the similarities with Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) are striking. The ASSEFA leadership is aware of SSE and they are at ease with the concept. From its origins until today, the approach is to fulfill Gandhi's teaching that uplifting the situation of the hundreds of millions of poor people in India. To achieve this goal, the first task was having land for farming, under collective ownership, for the landless. This was possible with land given for this purpose, and later, by small farmers pooling together their land to create such villages. The SDG's were adopted in 2015.

Keywords

Community development, gender equality, ending poverty, rural, peace

Bio

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SECTION 1 Presenting ASSEFA

Origins

One of Gandhi's followers, Vinoba Bhave, devoted many years of his life to fulfill one of the visions Gandhi had for India, providing land for the landless, the poorest in India. In a 16-year period, he walked 50 000 km to meet landowners and asked them to give land. During this period, he obtained 4 million hectares of land which became known as Bhoodan (land gift) lands. In the following years, some villages were created. But, in general the land, often quite barren with no water supply, was left unoccupied.

In 1969, with the help of Giovanni Ermiglia, a retired Italian professor, in partnership with a civil servant in the agriculture ministry, S. Loganathan, convinced a group of farmworkers to set a first village. This first village was a success that inspired other landless families to create other villages. Over time, other villages were created outside Bhoodan lands. Since the ASSEFA villages were successful in organizing sustainable livelihoods for the villagers, neighbouring farmers asked for help. Since a law in India allowed grandham, literally land giving, if 75% of small farmers in a rural village accepted to give their land to the community, they were able to become an ASSEFA village. This allows investment such as an irrigation system for the village, something independent farmers cannot achieve. Today, there are about 10 000 ASSEFA villages, mostly in Tamil Nadu state. Altogether, about 1 million families, for a total population of about 5 million people. In Tamil Nadu, the ASSEFA villages represent over 5% of the state's population. Since ASSEFA villages are all rural, this means 10-12% of all rural population in the state. The ASSEFA villages in nine other states/regions have in recent years, following the principles of subsidiarity, organized independent NGO's created in regions outside Tamil Nadu.

Guiding Vision and Principles

ASSEFA has at its heart basic Gandhian principles of *Sarvodaya* and *Gramasraj*. *Sarvodaya means welfare of all implying the prevalence of truth, love, peace and social justice in the society. Gramasraj means self-rule in the villages with the pervasion of Sarvodaya ideals in vibrant economic and social cohesion.* The concept of Mother Earth is used in the same manner as indigenous peoples in the Americas. This means abandoning the vision of dominating nature since it gives life to all, including humankind.

Mission

*'To improve the economic, social and cultural status of the rural communities and enhance their skills and self-management capacity. ASSEFA also aims at uniting 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 freedom, economic equality and social justice'*ⁱ

Community-Based Organizations

The basic unit is the village. The assembly of villagers, called Gram Sabha, holds all powers. They decide how to plan and organize to uplift their lives. To achieve this, they understand that they need to collaborate and partner with other villages. The need of an apex organization, in this case ASSEFA, is considered essential. They delegate people to regional ASSEFA bodies to manage schools, microfinance activities, cooperative milk processing plants, etc.

Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are the basic organizing units in the villages. The groups, with a maximum of 20 women each, are formally grouped in Sarvodaya Mutual Benefit Trusts (SMBTs). This legal structure allows women to engage in larger scale activities, such as ownership of *Sarvodaya Nano Finance Ltd (SNFL)*, for microcredit institution that has the exclusive purpose of micro-lending to women in the SHGs.

In areas with an important number of ASSEFA villages, income-generating activities are organized. One important example is the five cooperative milk plants. The Board of directors are women from the SHGs in each area. Another example is a processing plant for mango juice.

The basic goal is *Ending poverty in all its forms*. In order to achieve this goal, *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, is at the forefront of the strategy.

ASSEFA has understood for a long time the following saying.

'There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women'
Kofi Annan, *Former UN Secretary General*

ASSEFA structure

Over time, ASSEFA has created legal entities in order to have management capacity, negotiate and sign contracts for financial purposes, with the state, and with private institutions. Some of the entities manage schools, health centers, microcredit activities, etc. The legal form varies. They can be co-operatives, Mutual Benefit Trusts, or other types, dependent on needs, and legal possibilities.

On March 31, 2018, ASSEFA had 160 community organizations (Annex 1), of which 113 are Mutual Benefit Trusts (MBT) made up of women SHGs, 9 Education Trusts (for managing schools per region), 5 milk processing organizations, etc. As of March 31, 2018, ASSEFA had 3 359 human resources, either full, part-time, consultants and volunteers. About 73% are women. They are within the 160 organizations. For example, there are 500 teachers in the schools. The community organizations are ASSEFA members and they delegate representatives to the Annual General Meetings and make up the ASSEFA Board of directors. ASSEFA itself, the apex body, has only three (3) staff. ASSEFA sees itself as a facilitator, a support role. The work and activities are within the 160 organizations.

Embracing Sustainable Development

Even if sustainable development practices were at the base of activities since the inception of a first village in 1969, in September 1995, just three years after the first Earth Summit of Rio, ASSEFA organized a Seminarⁱⁱ, with help of international experts, in order to deepen knowledge about sustainable development and adopt strategies and indicators to monitor progress on all activities. This was done on eight development sectors: agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, credit management, education, health, housing and women.

SECTION II – Linking the ASSEFA way to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. All countries adopted the Agenda which includes 17 Goals. All countries engaged to implement the 15-year Agenda within their own frontiers, as well as helping developing countries achieve the goals.

In this section, we will examine, using actual ASSEFA activities, how they relate to the SDG's.

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

From 1969 to today, this is by far the main goal pursued by ASSEFA. This is the *raison d'être*, the reason for its existence. ASSEFA is relentlessly following this path, set out by Mahatma Gandhi, the landless poor in India. Today, in the 10 000 villages, 1 million families are moving out of poverty. Since poverty has many forms, the ASSEFA holistic approach makes sure that villagers are not only self-sufficient in food, but also in health, education, access to water, adequate housing, etc. ASSEFA also works to promote this goal at all levels of intervention, including international bodies. A holistic community-based approach is used more and more as a strategy, with all tools developed in practice. Many other similar approaches, in all continents, make this approach indispensable to achieve Goal 1.

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. This is a very important achievement since most of the land where the villages came to existence was barren land, with no agriculture at all.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Health centers have been set up in different regions for basic health needs.

Starting in schools, teaching for healthy lives. In the villages, well-being of all people, including elderly people, is taken care of. Health touches many aspects of daily lives. This has led to different activities such as:

- Community drinking water – up to now, 30 000 to 40 000 families benefit from water purifier installations in villages. Over time, all villages will have safe drinking water.
- One Shop Stop, managed by MBTs (that belong to women's SHG), will be set up in rural regions (25 are planned for 2018-2019), with petrol pumps, safe drinking water, basic foods, including ASSEFA products and other services.

- Mother and Child Care services set up a program in fishing villages after the 2004 Tsunami. In another region of Tamil Nadu, Ante Natal Care was provided to 595 pregnant women as well as Post Natal Care to 532 women.
- Improving housing (roofs, flooring and electricity, toilet construction and sanitation).

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Many villages were set up in areas with no public schools. A first school was set up in 1979. As of March 31, 2018, 11 870 children benefited from primary, middle and high school education. A special program has been set up for slow learners. Altogether 497 teachers are on staff. The curriculum is the same as in state schools. Most teachers are people from the villages who attended University and came back to the villages to teach. College programs (6 or 12 months) have been set up with Indira Gandhi Open University of India in fields related to ASSEFA activities. Adult education is continuous. For example, there are training sessions in areas such as farming or health.

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 were 27 000 SHGs of 20 women each. They manage microfinance activities in each village, organize collection of milk for the cooperative milk plants (they manage the coops). ASSEFA works to overcome patriarchy at all levels, in personal relations.

ASSEFA has been addressing the core social issues such as dowry, high maternal mortality rate, prejudice to girl child, etc., to liberate women from the traditional social stigma. Suitable programs have been implemented to create positive impacts among the targeted female membersⁱⁱⁱ.

For over ten years now, ASSEFA has instituted the approach of Community Marriages in order to struggle against the ancient tradition of dowry and lavish spending debt creation. *The SHGs are encouraged to organize this practice. These marriages are organized in such a manner that the marriages of different religious faiths take place simultaneously – embodies mutual respect for other religions and ensures inter-religious amity and communal harmony^{iv}.*

In 2014, at the occasion of ASSEFA's 45th Anniversary, 20 000 people attended a Community Marriage event in Madurai where over 100 couples from Hindus, Muslims and Christians, benefited by this program. The women Self Help Groups, promoted by ASSEFA, have been instrumental in conducting these marriages. In 2016-2017, 165 couples were married in different events. Since the onset of this initiative 2,511 couples got married under ASSEFA community marriage initiative, as of December 31, 2018.

Maternal health is one of core areas of activity. Besides Ante Natal Care services, wage compensation has been organized so that women can stop hard work in agriculture.

Another tool to empower women is the Digital Literacy Program. Implemented in collaboration with Google India and TATA. In 2017-2018, 1057 women Saathis (friends) were trained and these in turn trained about 800 000 more women. Another 1, 5 million women will have received training since April 1, 2018.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Since the main activity is farming, this is a high priority for all villages. They improve irrigation infrastructure, they intensively plant trees to retake back barren land, etc. Irrigation facilities

have been developed in many villages as well as systems to capture and save rain water also exist.

Sanitation in the villages is constantly improved, as well as in schools. As mentioned above, community drinking water systems are built and managed by the villagers. There is also the availability of micro-water treating plants for household use.

Besides toilets in homes, toilets are installed in the schools. This is very important for girls, and for protection against insects or snake bites.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Even if electricity comes to most villages, many homes do not have electricity. Clean energy is being introduced in many villages. The program focuses on three types, a) Solar lantern, b) Home lighting, and c) Street lighting system. So far, 1783 households are using Solar lanterns. 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 organizing economic activity managed by the villages (of groups of villages). For example, the milk production is sold to hospitals and other public institutions. Five milk processing plants, package 100 000 liters per day. Women SHGs organize collecting and bringing the milk (with refrigerated trucks). Each of the units is organized as cooperatives. The Board of directors of the cooperatives are all women, except the manager of the plant. Some of the units produce side products, including bottled juice. The products are marketed through a distribution system organized by ASSEFA. Over the years, milk production has been increased with improvement in animal husbandry. The milk is tested when it arrives, and if not high quality (ex: not enough fat), training and counsel is given to concerned families to improve quality.

Farmers' weekly markets are regularly held in different regions. Another source for improving income is building manufacturing facilities. One of the agro-industrial units produces mango juice. Income is much higher than selling mangoes to middlemen who capture part of the income. Another plant produces flavored milk, spice powders and different varieties of pickles. Since farming is the basic production in the villages, many activities are organized to improve production. Besides irrigation and other land improvement, extensive training is organized, including organizing visits to farmers who are more advanced in farming methods such as organic farming.

Considering the scope of ASSEFA activities, it's not possible here to explain in detail other examples such as goat rearing or coffee production.

Microcredit has existed in the villages since the first years, even before the Grameen Bank started activities. The microcredit activities are totally managed at all levels. The apex body Sarvodaya Nano Finance Ltd is a financial institution recognized by the Bank of India. The ownership is 100% women since the MBTs owns the shares of the institution. This institution is one of the most successful microcredit institutions in the world. Unlike most microcredit institutions in the world that *come* to the poor, the success probably rests on the fact that the poor themselves manage the institution.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

There is no important industrialisation in the villages. However, there is industrialisation in agriculture such as milk plants. The ownership of these infrastructure in the key. They belong to the people. Over the years, ASSEFA has promoted many new ideas to improve basic infrastructure in the villages of water, housing, sanitation, electricity.

Innovation is a constant preoccupation. For example, Sarva Seva Samunnati Farms is being developed as a Research and Development Centre for introducing new crops and technology for improved farming practices

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

By helping millions of poor and very poor improve self-sufficiency and incomes, this helps reduce inequality in a country that has a few hundred million people living under the poverty line. Since this is in rural villages, this reduces exodus of the rural population to large metropolitan areas, often in slums.

ASSEFA preaches by example. The basic wage for employees in milk factories, in microfinance or teachers is calculated on the cost of living in the villages for a family. In 2012, it was 90 \$USD a month. The maximum wage was then 270\$, three times as much. This wage gap principle applied in all the 160 organizations.

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 thousand families each. They embraced sustainability from the onset. The development cycle aims to have autonomous and resilient settlements that manages all aspects of activity. The development cycle takes 12 to 15 years to become autonomous. They then can support development of other villages in the region.

The whole spectrum of Development and the Process is broadly covered by five phases^v.

- ❖ *Planning cum micro realization: Involves rapport building, conducting surveys, planning and searching for resource support.*
- ❖ *Pilot Project Implementation: Organizing mutuality groups to demonstrate future action in their area, prepare detailed plans for and securing financial resources.*
- ❖ *Advanced implementation: Starting and implementing various programs and building up linkages with various institutions having similar objectives for collaborative supports.*
- ❖ *Shedding off: Communities are able to stabilize and consolidate their activities and take up management of programs by themselves.*
- ❖ *Spiral Growth: Launching similar programs in the nearby areas where communities are prepared and eager to accept ASSEFA's assistance and withdrawal of ASSEFA from earlier projects.*

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

There is much awareness raised about this. They have not fallen into the trap of consumerism and production patterns satisfy the needs of villagers and neighbouring cities. The production patterns are very sustainable. As much as possible, a maximum of needs is met by local or regional consumption. Outside markets are seen as complementary to local production. It is seen as secondary. ASSEFA deliberately will not go to Fair Trade. Depending on income from international Fair Trade is considered too risky. This is the opposite of the principle of self-reliance.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

ASSEFA villages have a high consciousness of climate change. The impact of global warming is already felt in the local settlements. The ASSEFA activities have a very low carbon footprint. To mitigate the impacts of global warming, research and development in planting resilient trees and changes in crops is already underway.

ASSEFA has shown resilience in **disaster recovery** activities, both for the short term and longer-term resilience. The 2004 Tsunami impacted many fishing villages that are neighbours to ASSEFA villages which are in agriculture. ASSEFA offered immediate support to house people, provide food and other needs. The villages declined the offer since international NGOs were providing all that was necessary. After the NGOs left, fishing villages asked ASSEFA for help. Together with the communities, improving fishing methods and conservation of fresh fish were set up. These villages have become more sustainable.

Another important disaster, the November 16, 2018, Cyclone Gaya, hard hit 64 ASSEFA villages, with a total of 58 000 families. Immediately, ASSEFA sent 16 experienced field workers to provide emergency relief such as providing milk or safe drinking water and assess damages. Within weeks, work was already underway to replace roof tops, installing water plants for drinking water and planning for new crops since most were destroyed.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Since almost all ASSEFA villages are agricultural, there are no direct activities concerning Goal 14. However, after the 2004 Tsunami, developing sustainable livelihoods for fishing villages became an area of activity.

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. Since most Bhoodan lands were barren, the ASSEFA villages could be considered one very important example of reverse land degradation. Which we could also say land improvement. This is consistent with the vision of improving what we now have for future generations.

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

The ASSEFA approach in building peace in the communities permeates all aspects of work. Learning non-violence has been added to the curriculum from grades 1 to 12. Peaceful resolution of conflicts or disagreements is the norm. Working with children is key.

In the year 2000, ASSEFA, The UN adopted a resolution^{vi} in 1998, initiated by ASSEFA, to declare the decade 2001 to 2010, a decade to teach peace to the children of the world. To this end, many Nobel Peace prize laureates such as the Dalai Lama and Mairead Corrigan Maguire signed in support.

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 with the ASSEFA efforts to implement sustainable development. For this effort, ASSEFA has also mobilised global partnerships such as the Canadian International Development Agency-CIDA (now known as

Global Affairs Canada), the World Bank, the EU, different international development NGOs. One most noteworthy NGO is ASSEFA-Italia. Over the 50-year period, Italians, following on the steps of Giovanni Ermiglia, created this NGO to support ASSEFA. In the first years, this helped for core funding. Now that ASSEFA is financially autonomous for regular activities, funds are for developing new projects or activities.

Main Obstacles / Challenges / Difficulties

ASSEFA has identified three areas that they have faced over the years:

- Natural calamities – cyclone, storm, flooding, tsunami...
- Government policies
- Retention of potential human resources

Looking to the future

ASSEFA has identified a major issue brought about by changes in society.

An excerpt from the 2017-2018 Annual report^{vii}

Aspirations with rural youths have changed in recent years, due to the following reasons:

- *Increase in literacy rate in the rural areas*
- *Exposure through advanced communication system such as smart mobile, internet, television, transport facilities, etc.*
- *Increase in scope in other sectors especially in service with better packages.*

The farmers also encourage their children to shift to other jobs, as they feel agriculture is a hard job and the income is rather low.

Hence, the involvement of youth in farming and livestock rearing is decreasing. Only elderly people, who are above 40 years old, are engaged in agricultural activities.

This trend will pose a major challenge in our agricultural system in near future. Hence, the active involvement of rural youths in agriculture is necessary for sustainable agricultural systems.

ASSEFA is planning an intervention to create ideal villages where people will have a more comfortable life with their own families, farming better and more sustainably rather than seeking work in urban areas.

As an adaptation to social change, and to adapt to aspirations of people, ASSEFA is planning for the next decade the creation of «Peace Zones». *ASSEFA envisages the “Peace Zone” as the place where non-violent communities lead a happy and good quality of life with necessary primary/basic needs met in an eco-friendly environment. Annex 2*

Learning from the ASSEFA Experience

The primary author of this paper, which is an ASSEFA friend since 2002, and is involved in the Social Solidarity Economy movement since 2004, feels that the 50 years of community development is a great feat. It confirms that people-based development, development from below, is the path to change the world. Top-down development does not work. Outside institutions such as government departments, development agencies and international NGOs, need to be in a support role of what people undertake.

The ASSEFA practice also confirms the importance of organizing in federations, associations, large sectors. ASSEFA with 10 000 villages and 1 million families involved, with its 160 organizations, is in a capacity to learn, develop projects, and interface with public administrations.

There are few examples of such organizations that have the capacity to interact with governments. The examples this author knows best are the Federation of Community Forestry Users of Nepal (FECOFUN), the National SSE Network of Mali (RENAPESS), the Chantier de l'économie sociale (social economy network) in Quebec province in Canada and Bina Swadaya in Indonesia. In all cases, the organizations are networks or organizations linked to the grass roots, they have a long track record (20 years or more), they are very representative, and they are non-partisan politically. They all have influence.

However, ASSEFA is probably the only large-scale organization that includes all aspects of development within its regular work. In most other regions of the world, one finds organizations that promote women's empowerment, organizations that create cooperatives or similar businesses, environmental organizations, human rights, housing, food, etc. Often, all these separate organizations in a same territory collaborate, and sometimes not. In other words, ASSEFA has the characteristic of a holistic and integrated approach of all aspects of life.

On the other hand, it is very hard to imagine duplicating such an approach in large metropolitan areas. There is a limit to the size of meetings. However, the ASSEFA approach can in part inspire a developmental approach. It is possible to organize meetings in smaller neighbourhoods. Experience shows that it's also possible to create development organizations and activities in some neighbourhoods. For example, in some cities, like Seoul and Montreal, partnerships to develop social solidarity organizations (cooperatives and other types of non-profit entities) exist.

In order to achieve sustainable development, we need organizations in all countries and regions in the world to embrace as much as possible a holistic approach to sustainable development.

We can consider this vision a dream. There was such a dream in 1969 when the first ASSEFA village was created!

ANNEX 1^{viii}

ASSEFA PROMOTED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

S. No	Institutions	Legal Entity	Purposes	Units
1	Sarva Jana SevaKosh	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. Mobilize 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 & Trust	Financial and non-financial support to construct new houses and improve existing houses	3
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 ASSEFA project 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 organizations	1
13	Farmers' Producers Company	Producer Companies Act	Established to provide a platform for the producers to collectively act for betterment of them	3
	Total			160

Note: Total manpower including full-time workers, part-time workers, consultants, volunteers, etc. as on 31 March 2018 were 3,359, of which women force represents 73% of the total manpower.

ANNEX-2^{ix}

ASSEFA envisages the “Peace Zone” as the place where non-violent communities lead a happy and good quality of life with necessary primary/basic needs met in an eco-friendly environment. These zones are expected to have the following salient features.

- a. *Structural aspects:*
 - *Decentralized structure with people / stakeholders representation*
 - *Activity group-based structure at village level*
 - *Federation of these groups at block level for coordination and guidance*
 - *Oriented regulatory system and not control system*
- b. *Governance aspect:*
 - *Representation of active stakeholders at the governance level.*
 - *Members elected / selected for specific period. Process repeated to give others an opportunity to participate in governance.*
 - *Decisions on consensus basis.*
 - *Regular meeting to monitor the direction of the initiatives/programs as per the rules and regulations and*
 - *transparent operation*
- c. *Economic aspects:*
 - *People will attain food sovereignty / food security*
 - *Production to meet the local needs*
 - *Surplus sold to neighbouring communities*
 - *Distribution by co-operative system*
 - *Conversion of local produce to value added products to meet the local demand*
- d. *Environmental aspect:*
 - *Green to Greener – More trees / vegetation / fodder*
 - *Application of clean energy – solar light / smart stoves / bio-gas*
 - *Use of bio fertilizers / pest / insect repellants*
 - *Structures to harvest rainwater and preserve top soil*
 - *Social environment by welcoming people from different faiths and ensuring space for them*
- e. *Education aspect:*

Focus on developing children into good / responsible citizens through teaching:

 - *Ethical values*
 - *Respect for different faiths and gender*
 - *Local history*
 - *Skill development*
 - *Farming and livestock rearing*
 - *Environmental education to protect and promote natural wealth.*
 - *Preservation of traditional culture, wisdom and knowledge*
 - *Reverence for local initiatives*
- f. *Social aspect:*
 - *Simple living*
 - *Hygienic living environment*
 - *Use of toilets with proper sanitation facilities*
 - *Access to safe drinking water*
 - *Knowledge of first aid and traditional healing methods*
 - *Linkage to hospitals / health care centers*

Further, in all its operational areas, ASSEFA plans to implement Gandhian constructive programs such as supply of drinking water, improvement of dwellings, disposal of human waste, community organized marriages, wasteland development, reintroduction of traditional crops as well as trees, livestock promotion, etc., based on the need's assessment.

Seminars, workshops, exhibitions, etc., are also planned to educate the children, workers and beneficiaries of the relevance of Gandhian concepts even today and what ASSEFA has achieved

in the last five decades. All stakeholders including beneficiaries, supporters, workers, etc., will be invited to these programs and their contribution will be acknowledged.

ⁱ *Annual Report 2017-2018*, page 17

ⁱⁱ *Sustainable Development*, published by ASSEFA and Plan International, Regional Office South, August 1996, 106 pages

ⁱⁱⁱ *Annual Report 2016-2017*, page 13

^{iv} *Annual Report 2016-2017*, page 13

^v *Silent March of the Invisible Force*, Sarvodaya Action Research Center, September 2008, 248 pages, page 110

^{vi} UN Resolution A/RES/53/2519, November 1998

^{vii} *Annual Report 2017-2018*, Page 32

^{viii} *Annual Report 2017-2018*, 46

^{ix} *Annual Report 2017-2018*, pages 42-44