

GRAMA VIKAS - PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

Grama Vikas (GV) is a rural development organisation operating in Mulbagal Taluk of Kolar District in the southern Indian State of Karnataka. Its goal is integrated rural development and it works with poor and marginal communities, particularly women and dalits.

Instituted in 1980, the initial intervention of GV was in child development, through a nutrition programme. Over the second decade of its work, GV incorporated women's development and NRM as other key components of its development policy. Dalit women form 75 per cent of the community that GV works with.

The staff of GV comprises 12 women and 10 men at both the administration and programme implementation. The programme implementation staff is located in 15 clusters consisting of 54 villages in Mulbagal, Bangarpet and Kolar Taluks of Kolar District and Raichur taluk of Raichur district in Karnataka.

Till recently we had worked in all the 164 villages in RAICHUR taluk and now are in the process of raising resources to work in Raichur taluk of Raichur district with an INTEGRATED APPROACH addressing children's integrated development (nutrition, health, education and rights of the children) and women.

The late Dr. N K A Iyer whose vision guides the organization even today founded grama Vikas. GV has a Governing Board comprising eminent persons including retired IAS officers and development professionals.

Grama Vikas is registered as a society under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960. Its Governing Board comprises eminent personalities who have contributed in various fields of endeavor.

GV is registered with the Union Ministry of Home under the FCRA rules (FCRA no.094570024). Donations to GV are exempt under Section 80G of Income Tax Act.

PHILOSOPHY

Grama Vikas firmly believes that the battle against poverty can be successfully fought only when people learn to work together and think and plan their own development through collective action.

GOAL

Grama Vikas goal is to facilitate sustainable development and empowerment of marginal rural communities with focus on children, people-centered natural resources management, institutional building of democratically elected grass-root people's organisations and food security of the poorest.

PROJECT AREA

The 54 villages of Grama Vikas works in are located in the interior part of Mulbagal, Bangarpet, and Kolar Taluks of Kolar District and Raichur taluk of Raichur district in Karnataka State of South India.

Till very recently, GV, has been implementing CHILD CENTERED projects in all the 164 villages in RAICHUR TALUK in RAAICHUR district for which DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION supported us. Also programmes to prepare 50 RURAL COMMUNITIES to harvest benefit of NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE PROJECT with the support of SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST (SDTT).

Kolar District where Grama Vikas is located, is chronically drought-prone. Most of the forest cover in the district has disappeared, resulting in erratic rains. Almost every alternative year brings a drought, with either very low rainfall or floods.

As much as 35 per cent of the population in the project area belongs to dalit and marginalized communities.

OBJECTIVES

- **Enable** children to secure their right to a happy, healthy and productive childhood
- **Enable** rural poor families to improve their natural resource base and generate income sufficient to meet their basic needs, with emphasis on Food Security;
- **Enable** communities to revive the natural environment for the benefit of small and marginal farmers;
- **Facilitate** the Federation of Women's SHGs to manage and sustain women's development activities;
- **Network** with other NGOs to impact at a wider level on common issues; and
- **Conduct** public education/advocacy campaigns on the need to restore traditional water harvesting structures.

POLICIES

- Work for all-round development of children from poor families;
- Working with rural poor, particularly dalit communities in semi-arid areas;
- Breaking dependency of communities and move them towards self-help in development;

- Networking with like-minded NGOs, institutions, Civil Society and the media for impacting on public policies and programmes;
- Advocating rejuvenation of tanks with people's participation;
- Collaborating with the government on natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods programmes for the poor; and
- To evolve replicable models of development.

GENERAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Integrated Child Development Programme;
- ✓ Integrated development programmes for the poor, especially women and dalits;
- ✓ Integrated natural resource management for environmental regeneration and household Food Security for the poor in semi-arid areas;
- ✓ Networking and alliance-building; and
- ✓ Capacity building of people's institutions to relate to markets, the State and other Civil Society actors.
- ✓ Last but not least is: **TRANSPERANCY**

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Child Development

Grama Vikas firmly believes that there is no better investment than the overall development of the children.

Health and Sanitation

- General Health check-ups of children 2 times a year – **with community contribution.**
- Environment Sanitation
- Community Health work project managed by 36 women from 34 villages
- Health awareness camps for both girls and women.
- Immunization programme in collaboration with Primary Health Centers.
- Promoting low-cost sanitation – i.e. bathrooms & toilets for poor families.

Early Childcare Development (ECD) & Nutrition

The Activities under Basic education programme are inclusive of:

- Child care center for children under 5 years in 18 villages – children are given two meals a day.
- Special food for pre and post natal mothers in 18 villages.
- Supply of teaching aids and play materials to ECD and anganawadis.
- Special nutrition for children under mal-nutrition.
- Convergence with anganwadis – in 30 villages.
- Training to ECD and Anganwadi teachers.
- Training and awareness to mothers in child care and nutrition.

- Monthly review meeting with child care center and anganawadi teachers and helpers.

Basic Education

The Activities under Basic education programme are inclusive of:

- Support for quality education in Primary Schools
- Learning camps for children
- Children's clubs
- Convergence with Government schools and Education department

Organizing Children

17 Children's Clubs have been formed at cluster level and are functioning. The clubs organize socially sensitive recreation and socially productive activities for children.

AN ORGANISATION OF CHILDREN IS FORMED AT DISTRICT LEVEL as well.

Organizing Adolescent Girls

In 54 villages, awareness –building and information dissemination is regularly imparted to teenaged girls about health, nutrition, environment, personal hygiene and good house management. **Cultural Activities**

Music, folk arts, sports meets and Drawing Competitions are regularly organised at Village, Cluster and Taluk level to encourage talents among rural children.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Grama Vikas believes that the future of rural India is secure only if the people's most precious resources - soil, water and vegetation are protected. With that perspective, GV activities in this area include:

- Enabling poor farmers for Soil and Water conservation by supporting forming of field bunds, biomass development, construction of farm ponds, cattle drinking ponds and check dams;
- Promoting organic agriculture; production and use of natural manures and pesticides;
- Promoting community seed banks for conservation and multiplication of native variety of seeds
- Forming and facilitating community-based tank management institutions under the Karnataka Community-Based Tank Management Project;

- Restoring community-owned mini water harvesting structures such as community wells and temple ponds;
- Promoting roof top rain water harvesting in villages;
- Collaborating with agriculture department at Taluk and District level;

RESULTS & IMPACTS OF INTERVENTIONS

Child development

- School enrolment is almost 100% among both boys and girls;
- School drop-out rate among children below 15 years of age is reduced to 28% among boys and 36% among girls in 105 villages in the project area, from 50% among boys and 75% among girls;
- Incidence of child labour has been reduced to about 10% among boys and 20% among girls from about 50% among boys and 75% among girls; and
- A Children's Federation has been formed and a savings programme involving children has been initiated and stabilized.

Natural Resources Management

- Public education/advocacy by GV has contributed to tank restoration becoming a priority on the State Government's policy agenda;
- GV has developed people-centered and replicable tank restoration strategies by partial desilting of 22 tanks in the project area;
- GV has helped a number of farmers arrest soil erosion through field bunding and planting saplings on the bunds in 2,000 hectares of dry lands; and
- GV has introduced replicable community need-based social forestry models in five villages.

VISION FOR FUTURE

GV's experiences in development work spanning more than two decades dictate the following:

- Children are the best investment opportunity.
- Wise management of natural resources is the key to life.
- Effective ownership by people is the key to success and sustainability of any development intervention.

The future of India is secure only if the children get equal opportunities. Providing every child with a happy, healthy and productive childhood will ensure realization of the true potential of the nation.

Water and soil management will hold the key to lives and livelihoods of the poor in future. Water harvesting and management and sustainable agriculture practices alone will ensure food security for the poor and prevent desertification in dry land districts of India.

Unless people are involved in policymaking, policies are doomed to fail. Genuine and active participation of people in decision-making is crucial to sustainability of India as a nation.

In that backdrop, GV's vision for the future comprises:

- Ensuring children's right to quality childhood;
- Ensuring a minimum education level of at least secondary school for all girl children;
- Promoting sustainable agriculture methods in order to strengthen livelihoods of rural poor families;
- Preventing desertification of dry land areas through educating communities on water & soil management;
- Ensuring food security in all poor families by strengthening their productive resources, income generation activities and access to public distribution system;
- Focusing attention of Civil Society, the media and policy makers on problems and issues affecting livelihoods of rural poor; and
- Strengthening grass roots women's institutions and facilitate their participation in development.

PAST DONORS FOR GV

- OXFAM – Bangalore
- NOVIB – The Netherlands
- INTER-COOPERATION, Switzerland
- JSYS – Karnataka (India)
- COMMUNITY AID ABROAD – Australia
- Raichur district Administration and Zilla Panchayat in Raichur
- SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST

PRESENT DONORS FOR GV

- ChildFund International (formerly known as CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND - U.S.A)
- ARGHYAM, Bangalore
- Rabobank Foundation

GRAMA VIKAS very firmly believes in the following:

THERE IS NO BETTER INVESTMENT THAN INVESTING CHILDREN

UNLESS WOMEN LEAD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS NO DEVELOPMENT IS POSSIBLE

UNLESS FARMER'S MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE – THE SOIL, THE WATER AND THE VEGETATION ARE PROTECTED THE FUTURE OF RURAL INDIA IS VERY BLEAK. THIS MEANS UNLESS FOOD SECURITY ACHIEVED NO DEVELOPMENT IS POSSIBLE.

NETWORKING WITH NGOs AND INDIVIDUALS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IS THE EFFECTIVE TOOL TO INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENT AID.

DEVELOPMENT IS COMPLETELY POSSIBLE PROVIDED PEOPLE, NGOs AND GRAMA PANCHAYATS COLLABORATE AND POOL THEIR LIMITED RESOURCES FOR CUMULATIVE EFFECT.

UNLESS MEDIA IS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS INFLUENCING POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST --- TRANSPERANCY

GRAMA VIKAS IS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT TO TAKE UP THE FOLLOWING TO CREATE IMPACT in the MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES in KOLAR AND RAICHUR DISTRICTS in KARNATAKA.

- To launch Children's Federation in TWO Districts which will cover 12 taluks and facilitate it to empower. **THIS IS TO INVOLVE CHILDREN IN SECURING THEIR RIGHTS.**
- To accomplish FOOD SECURITY among the 2400 rural communities in both Kolar and Raichur districts it is working with thru sustainable agricultural practices THRU A NETWORK of NGOs called COLLECTIVE ACTION NETWORK (CAN)
- To involve about 10000 High School Children and 50 Science Teachers from 50 schools run by Government and Private Institutions in the Project area to IMPART Environment Education. The objective of the Program is to pressurize the Government to include ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION as one of the full – fledged subjects for school children, which is the need of the hour.
- To support 100 schools with Hindi subject teachers for a period of 5 years in Kolar district.
- To support 10 media persons with a fellowship for a period of 5 years to do research and act on the issues related to Children, Water, HIV-AIDS, Local Governance, Right to Information Act and Conservation of water and soil to arrest Desertification.

- Promoting 25000 women organic farming extension workers in the next 5 years time in both Kolar and Raichur districts which will be accomplished with the involvement of COLLECTIVE ACTIONS NETWORK (CAN) in both Kolar and Raichur districts.
- Providing water to 2400 village communities in the district to accomplish FOOD SECURITY thru conservation of water and soil.
- Launching DRY LAND farmers association in the both Kolar and Raichur districts.
- To build the capacities of 100 GRAMA PANCHAYATS (democratically elected grass-root people's organizations) in both Kolar and Raichur districts so that these democratically elected political bodies can be models for sustain development.

ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

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CONTACT PERSON:

M. V. NARASIMHA RAO. (M.V.N. RAO)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BANK DETAILS OF GRAMA VIKAS

FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (Dollar account) ACCOUNT DETAILS. ONLY FOREIGN CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE RECEIVED AT THIS ACCOUNT NUMBER.

FC Account Name : Grama Vikas
Account Number : 0769101005199
Bank Name : Canara Bank,
Branch name : Mulbagal Branch, Kolar dt.
IFSC : CNRB0000769

LOCAL FUND (Rupee account): Donations from India can be remitted to the account mentioned BELOW:

Account Name : Grama Vikas LOCAL FUND
Account Number : 0769101010855
Bank Name : Canara Bank,
Branch name : Mulbagal Branch, Kolar dt.
IFSC : CNRB0000769