GRAMEENA
VIKAS KENDRAM

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2019-20

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development (GVK Society) strives for the upliftment of small and marginal farming communities, tribals and women in India while regenerating their environment. GVK Society designs and implements community driven initiatives that optimize value for peasant farmers and other downtrodden rural households by nurturing producer organisations, value addition, infrastructure, up marketing, and perpetual innovation. GVK Society's models propel collectivism, collaboration, and co-creation to build futuristic value chain communities.

2 ORGANISATION PROFILE

GVK Society strives for the upliftment of small and marginal farming communities, tribals and women in India by designing innovative models while regenerating their environment.

It is a non-governmental, non-political organisation, registered as a society bearing registration number: 207/1990 under the societies act XXI of 1860 in India and Foreign Contribution Act (FCRA) with registration number: 010120180. Grameena Vikas Kendram is based in Kadapa District and operating in multiple locations in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.

- Farmers are our partners, not beneficiaries
- Shared values and vision for unity beyond frontiers
- Aggregation of supply and demand
- Transparency and accountability usher learning and evolving value chain systems
- Continuous improvement at every integration level

Grameena Vikas Kendram works with the downtrodden sections of the society, women, indigenous people, children, farmers, and rural artisans. Our areas of focus include sustainable, regenerative farming, climate change, biodiversity, WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Health), education, empowerment of women and children, value chain relations, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for development.

Registration Details

Name of the organisation	Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development
Registration number	207/1990
Date of inception	1st August 1990
Legal status	Registered as a Society under Societies Act XXI of 1860 in India
Contact details	YSR Colony, Near C.P. Brown Library, YM Palli, Kadapa - 516004. Phone Number: +918489051484
FCRA number	010120180

Team

GVK Society provides outstanding learning opportunities for the working staff, identifying training needs and providing them right platform to learn and exchange necessities. Our strong international networks give us excellent opportunity to establish partnerships with think-tanks, research institutions and academia.

Geographical focus

Kadapa, Anantapur, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam districts in Andhra Pradesh are our existing areas of focus.

Our Vision

We envision a transformed world where self-reliant communities live in harmony with each other and nature.

Our Mission

We stimulate innovation and promote processes which are sustainable, socially inclusive and gender-sensitive to support critical masses of poor.

Our Core Values

- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Equitability
- Trust
- Integrity
- Co-Creation

Our Approach

We believe in self-sufficiency and our causes include social, environmental, and financial (triple bottom line) sustainability. Benefiting women is inclusive in all our work.

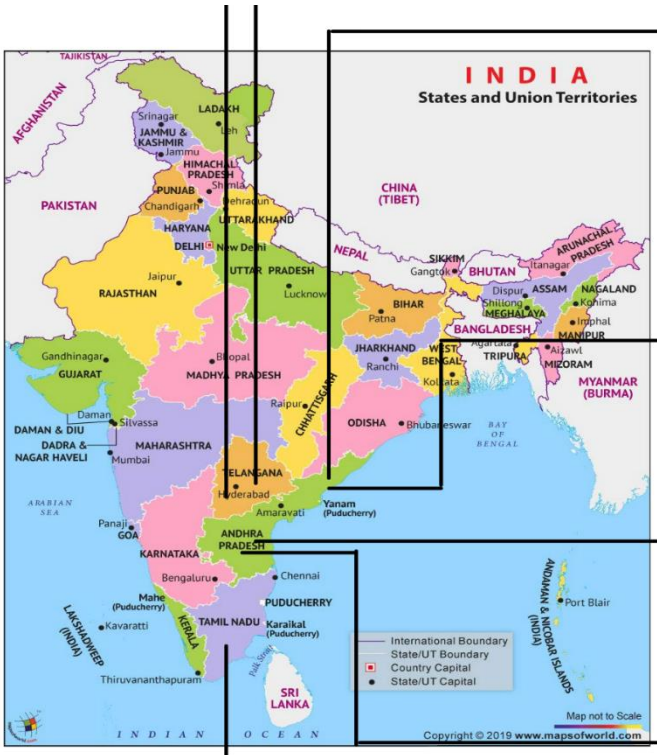
Our Focus

We focus on designing and implementation of sustainable agriculture models that create shared-value for all the stakeholders across the global supply chains.

Our Philosophy

We believe that institutional interventions can remove barriers and facilitate individuals, communities and ecosystems to attain their full potential.

3 Locations



Vizianagaram & Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh

RESET, world's first Regenerative Organic Cotton production site along with the tribal cotton farmers of Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts. We are working in 35 villages in 6 mandals and 358 farmer beneficiaries.

East & West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh

We conducted a feasibility study for the Waste 2 Worth program working on solution to valorise paddy straw into circular and affordable packaging, furniture and building materials

Prakasham, Nellore & Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh

We create opportunity for sweet orange farmers to improve livelihoods by collecting and processing aborted fruitlets that were going as waste

Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh

HQ. Along with aborted sweet oranges, in Kadapa, we run our Zero Budget Natural Farming project with 3000 farmers & Suraksha, our work against sexual violence

Tiruppur, Tamilnadu

Our textile supply chain activities are conducted in Tiruppur through our partner mills

4 PROJECTS

4.1 RESET

Problem

Cotton farmers in India are controlled by unreliable markets and lack of negotiating power. Over 300,000 debt-ridden Indian cotton farmers committed suicide in a decade.

Small farmers, especially tribal women cotton growers need attention as they are capital poor and chronically exploited by middlemen, pesticide dealers, and trade forces. These farmers are subjected to market and crop vulnerabilities while required to make high investments with high market risk. This in combination with being excluded from mainstream service systems like market information, crop storage and government infrastructure like warehousing.

On the other side, the current conventional agricultural systems are very unsustainable and there is a necessity to remove toxic chemicals from our system to not only protect the farmer but also protect the environment. The white fibre, once cherished as a natural and better than synthetics and admired by politicians as a tool for rural development, is now being looked at more closely because of possible adverse environmental effects of its production and consumption.

Solution

Regenerate the Environment Society and Economy through Textiles is a Regenerative Cotton Project working with small and marginal tribal women farmers of Vizianagaram district and small and marginal farmers of Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh, India.

In 2019, RESET worked with 358 tribal cotton farmers in 6 mandals of Vizianagaram and 81 farmers from 2 mandals in Kadapa district. RESET worked in a total of 41 villages in the year 2019-20. All the farmers involved with the project have been trained on regenerative farming principles and supported by the organisation in the form of inputs.

The farmers under the project were certified by Control Union and IMO Control certification bodies against NPOP standards.

RESET farmers in 2020 saw the following guests visit them: Bie – Belgium based sustainable fashion journalist, T. Vijar Kumar IAS – Executive Vice Chairman of Rythu Sadhikara Samstha, Tomorrowland Festival film crew the brands 4Ocean, We are HAH, Target, Cobalt, NorthMist, Infantium Victoria. Saurabh Sinha from IDH, Sandeep Kamat – Secretary BDAI and received great appreciation.

4.2 RESET- Biodynamic

ECOFashion Corp is a textile brand from USA with a main focus for sustainable fashion. Marci Zaroff, the founder of ECOFashion Corp has been visiting RESET villages for multiple years and signed a partnership agreement with Grameena Vikas Kendram on the 14th of October, 2018.

Under the RESET program, ECOFashion wanted to explore biodynamic organic cotton cultivation with Grameena Vikas Kendram. For that, a group of farmers was selected who would want to experiment with biodynamic cotton growing.

Biodynamic goes a bit further compared to organic agriculture. Biodynamic takes a holistic, ecological and ethical approach to farming, food and nutrition. Biodynamics is rooted in the work of the German philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner.

Farmers were selected in Warangal district in Telangana and Salem district in Tamil Nadu for the pilot of the bio-dynamic cotton. Farmers received training in the specific practises required for biodynamic farming such as making compost with specific inoculants.

In November, 2019, Marci visited the bio-dynamic cotton farmers in Warangal, Telangana for a field visit, where she interacted with the local farmers. The cotton crop was getting ready for harvest and Marci could see the quality of the cotton.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RESET
BIODYNAMIC
I made your fibre
marcizaroff • Following
Telangana
marcizaroff Like water for chocolate, I am in my energetic happy place. So proud and thrilled to be visiting our @drmercola #RESET #biodynamic #regenerative #organiccotton farm project in Telangana #India where I'm in love with these farmers—who are so connected to seed as the source of life. From farm to finished product, we have all joined hands to connect source to story, with value AND values. #nocompromise #yesand #farmtohome #farmtofashion #organic #foodtofiber #fieldtoshelf #thread #dirtshirt #renttherunway
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stella farentino You are
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Impact

Name of the farmer : Manchala Gangamma
Name of the Village : Pindrangivalasa

Manchala Gangamma is a rainfed farmer from the village of Pindrangivalasa in Pachipenta mandal. She is a very hardworking woman who hasn't had any formal education in her life. She enrolled herself into RESET in the crop year 2019-20.

Gangamma cultivated organic cotton in 1.5 Acre of land in 2019-20 and has shattered all the preconceived notions her friends had in the cultivation of organic cotton.

1. While her investment was below 5000 rupees per acre, her friends in the village growing conventional cotton invested upwards of INR 10,000 and in some cases even INR 18,000 per acre.
2. With a harvest of 922 KG of raw cotton per acre, Gangamma competed not only with conventional cotton farmers in her village that are rainfed but also with farmers with access to irrigation. She thinks that going organic has increased the moisture retention capacity of her farm and the resilience in general.
3. Gangamma has received a market price of INR 42 per kilo of cotton while her friends in the village only received INR 39 – 40 per kilo of cotton receiving a premium price of 5%
4. On an average, when calculated, Manchala Gangamma's income has increased by 40% compared to her conventional counterparts in the village which turned her into a model farmer for RESET in the village of Pindrangivalsa
5. Her impact story has led to the conversion of the entire village of Pindrangivalsa into organic and not a single cotton farmer in the village is growing conventional cotton using BT seeds.
6. Gangamma wishes to use her additional income to be saved in her SHG to be used during emergencies. She says she hasn't experienced this kind of growth previously and is looking forward to the next season.

She cultivated organic cotton in 2019-20 in 1.5 Acres of land and has harvested 922 KG of cotton per acre competing with irrigated farmers in harvest. While only investing a mere 5000 rupees per acre and hiring additional labour only during harvest, this model farmer has earned INR 58212 from the one and half acre of land. It is to be noted that her friends in the same village growing BT cotton in conventional method have invested almost 15000 rupees per acre

4.3 Zero Budget Natural Farming

Problem

Resource intensive chemical farming has resulted in losses, high debts, soil degradation, pollution of waterways, encroachment of forest land, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity in due course of time.

Solution

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a holistic alternative agriculture method that combines the twin goals of global food security and conservation of the environment. ZBNF principles are in sync with the principles of Agro-ecology and are aiming to achieve welfare of farmers` and consumers while striving for a larger social good.

ZBNF is pioneered by a Padma Sree Awardee called Mr. Subhash Palekar who believes in the cultivation of crops naturally without using Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), chemical fertilizers, and synthetic pesticides. This grassroots level peasant movement emphasizes on climate resilient farming methods that help farmers to reduce the cost of cultivation to zero. Hence, farmers have a better capacity to gain increased income. Locally available inputs like cow dung, cow urine, several plants-based extracts play a key role in ZBNF methodology.

Facilitation

Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), a not-for-profit company owned by Government of Andhra Pradesh, and Government of India are supporting the programme under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). Grameen Vikas Kendram is mandated to implement this prestigious program with 10,000 farmers and Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) is providing technical grants support

Innovation

- ZBNF`s uniqueness lies in its peer-to-peer learning model. Farmers are the protagonists.
- ZBNF is based on the latest scientific discoveries in agriculture, and, at the same time, it is rooted in Indian tradition.
- All the inputs in ZBNF are locally available. It means zero/extremely low cost and risks for farmers.
- Natural Farming techniques are climate smart.

Activities

Innovation: Innovations done with biochar, development of resource form and 100 acres dry sowing experiments

Framers Outreach: Reached 3000 farmers through to partial, dry sowing and kitchen gardens along with preparation and applying of ZBNF inputs and 400 seed to seed farmers in the year

Kitchen gardens and dry sowing: Promoted 800 kitchen gardens and 100 dry sowings

Convergence with SHGs: Motivated the SHG women to convert in to ZBNF practices by participating in SHG and VO meetings and creating the awareness on ZBNF through the PICO projections

Trainings to project team: Conducted the trainings to project staff on bookkeeping and professional skills, biodynamic farming, natural farming and organic certification. Staff travelled to Timbaktu project to learn about biodynamic farming as well

Capacity Building: Conducted the capacity building trainings to project staff, active farmers, lead farmers, SHG women and PoP families on ZBNF practices and botanical extracts.

Support to NPM shops: Provided the need-based support to NPM shop owners on the preparation of inputs and set up 6 NPM shops in the clusters

Initiation of resource farm: Initiated 5 resource farms in the clusters to conduct farmer field schools

Internal planning, review, and monitoring process: Conducting cluster level reviews on weekly basis with field staff on planning and review the progress and conducting the monitoring and supportive supervision visits by Project Manager, Cluster Coordinators and Cluster Activists

External reviews: Project Manager and cluster teams were participating in DPMU briefing and debriefing meetings

Unplanned Key Activities

1. Developed 600 lead farmers along with 44 ICRPs
2. Initiated the regenerative cotton farming in 70 acres
3. Facilitated 800 PoP families to take up kitchen gardens in their back yards to improve their food and nutrition security

Innovations/Strategies adopted

Adoption of biochar has increased the soil organic matter and the water retention capacity of the farms. The farmers after looking at the benefits of biochar started adapting it into their regular agricultural practices. 100 farmers saw the usage of biochar under ZBNF program.

4.4 Biomass Waste to Worth

Problem

Paddy cultivation guzzles water in the form of continuous irrigation this lowering the groundwater levels drastically. Rice is susceptible to pests and diseases and therefore a lot of pesticides and fungicides are used. These toxic products pollute the waterbodies and end up in paddy straw and grain. Paddy straw burning has been contentious topic in India for many years. But, unlike popular perception, is not an age-old practice. The practice of paddy straw burning at this magnitude and frequency, can be traced back to its origins.

Declining cattle population, mechanisation, changing perceptions and lifestyle, alternative use options, poor infrastructure and lack of encouragement in the last 5-10 years have created the concept of waste in paddy fields which in turn has led to burning. Burning of paddy straw releases greenhouse gasses (CO_2, N_2O, CH_4), air pollutants (CO, NH_3, NO_x, SO_2, NMHC, VOCs, SVOVs), particulate matter like elemental carbon and smoke.

Due to incomplete burning of the paddy crop residue, black carbon (BC) is also released. Black carbon is the sooty black material that has been found to reduce agricultural yields in India and even found blackening glaciers in the Himalayas, accelerating melting[i].

Solution

Noble Environmental Benelux B.V. (Noble Environmental), The Netherlands based livelihood model tackles both poverty alleviation and prevention of emission of Green House Gases (GHG) resulting from paddy straw burning. GVK Society's model

The proposed supply chain comprises 4 essential phases. 1) Collection, pre-treatment of biomass 2) Pulping 3) Panels and products making 4) Marketing.

Specific objectives are to;

- Prepare a new value chain creating wealth through value addition to underused raw materials and distributing this wealth and the power over it according to principles of equality, transparency and solidarity.

Paddy farmer interviews in East and West Godavari districts

- Build a solid knowledge foundation that underpins not just the intervention in the immediate future, but also its evaluation, and the design of future interventions in this same region.

Support from the state government

In September 2019, the Member of Parliament and the family member of Honble` Chief Minister, Mr. Avinash Reddy met with Noble Environmental and GVK Society to discuss on possibilities to collaborate and support the proposed Noble Environmental panels based livelihood model which is believed to be able to create massive rural transformation in the state. The follow up meeting took place in November 2019 with the Honble` Minister of Agriculture, the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh government, the Commissioners of Agriculture and Horticulture and secretaries of the Minister of Industries. The Dutch Embassy, NL Works, Noble Environmental and GVK Society represented the consortium, INDUS Forum.

Exploration of opportunities

Noble Environmental Benelux together with FMO (Dutch Development Bank) in the Netherlands has initiated a special project together with FMO (Dutch Development) with GVK Society as the implementing partner. The aim of the project was to explore the potential of livelihood upliftment of smallholder farmers from the valorisation of paddy straw by farmers in East and West Godavari and Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 493 farmers in total were interviewed with a semi-structured survey. The project has been concluded with a presentation on the 5th of February in the Netherlands with the donors. The next step is a Biomass Pilot that is aimed to be carried out in April 2021.

Organisations involved

ECOR, by Noble Environmental is an innovative composite panel formed from converting pressure, heat and cellulose fibres from waste streams such as Old Corrugated Cardboard (OCC), Old News Print (ONP) and agricultural fibres. No glue is being used, therefore no VOC's such as formaldehyde are released and the process of producing the panels is reversible. ECOR is specifically focused on enabling the conversion of waste materials, ordinarily burned or land filled, to strong, versatile structural composite panel with a multitude of different applications. Noble Environmental aims to establish ELF's (ECOR Living Factories) at multiple locations in the world where panels are being produced from locally available waste streams. At the moment, Noble Environmental is exploring the opportunity to establish ELF's in India with a focus on panel production from rice straw, which is commonly burned by farmers.

FMO is the Dutch Development Bank, founded in 1970 as a public-private partnership, with 51% of their shares held by the Dutch State and 49% held by commercial banks, trade unions and other members of the private sector. FMO's higher goal is to invest in local prosperity and believes in a world where, in 2050, more than nine billion people live well and within the means of the planet's resources. FMO invests in businesses, projects and financial institutions, by providing capital, knowledge and networks to support sustainable growth. Done with the ultimate goal of empowering people to apply their skills and improve their own quality of life. FMO is supporting Noble Environmental in their endeavour to set up panel-making facilities in India.

Facilitation

Dutch Embassy – INDUS Forum

The Indo-Dutch Sustainability Forum 'INDUS' is an initiative of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in India and MVO Nederland ('CSR Netherlands') that aims to make all trade and investments between India and the Netherlands sustainable. This initiative aims to reduce the negative environmental, health and social impacts in India while generating sustainable new business by upcycling residual biomass into new products. This new business will maximize value addition and will reduce air pollution, soil degradation and deforestation while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for farmers.

Mr. Aneel & Sanne from Grameena Vikas Kendram presenting to the feasibility study at Netherlands.
From left, Koos (NL Works), Svenja (FMO), Giulia (Noble Environmental), Mike (Noble Environmental), Jasper (FMO), Eric Logtens (Noble Environmental), Aneel (GVK), Sanne (GVK), Nancy (MVO Nederland)

MVO Nederland — CSR Netherlands — is a centre of excellence for Dutch businesses and organization that wants to move towards a sustainable future by incorporating CSR. MVO Nederland is a sustainability knowledge hub and networking organisation. Networking and alliance-forming makes it a strong catalyst for systematic change towards a circular and inclusive economy. MVO Nederland has developed sector-specific due diligence guidance tools. MVO Nederland supports the INDUS Forum Partnership on enabling the consortium of companies and associations consortium on collaborating at multi sectoral level as well as with relevant stakeholders throughout good governance, efficiency, and reporting frameworks in the due diligence process.

4.5 Hesperidin

Hesperidin is GVK Society's "first of its kind" model in India to create additional income opportunity for small, sweet orange farmers and women labourers from aborted fruits that otherwise go as waste. The project now can stand on its own feet and does not need any support from GVK Society anymore.

Revenue is created from waste by collecting, drying and selling aborted sweet oranges to provide additional income to rural women and farmers in Andhra Pradesh.

Problem

- Sweet orange cultivation demands high investments amid market uncertainties and has a short life span of 12 years
- Sweet orange trees take 4 years to start yielding
- Drought prone farmers with vulnerable livelihoods
- Seasonal availability of work effects the livelihoods of labour women

Raw material availability:

• The bioflavonoid Hesperidin' used in cannot be artificially synthesized in the lab and has to be naturally obtained

Item	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Districts	2 Kadapa & Anantapur	3 (Kadapa Ananthapur and Prakasham)	4 (Kadapa Ananthapur and Prakasham, Nellore)	4 (Kadapa Ananthapur and Prakasham, Nellore)	4 (Kadapa Ananthapur and Prakasham, Nellore)
Villages	10	82	200	280	500
Farmer base	200	500	2000	2500	3500

4.6 Garment industry future exploration project

In the FY 2019-20, Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development received a donation from Fair Wear foundation, The Netherlands. Fair wear foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation that works to improve conditions for workers in garment factories. Fair Wear Foundation's mission is to create a world where garment industry supports workers in realising their rights to safe, dignified and properly paid employment. Fair wear foundation has launched a program on the Garment Industry Future, GVK Society has conducted several activities amongst them stakeholder interviews to have a better understanding of what the future of textiles could look like.

4.7 Biodiversity Conservation

Problem

The loss in biodiversity in the environment is increasing at an alarming rate in Vizianagaram districts. Biodiversity loss and intensive monocropping patterns have increased the incidence of pest in this region.

Solution

In Vizianagaram district, a lot of tribal farmers that are practising slash and burn from of agriculture were trained on better land use patterns that are not causing loss of biodiversity. As agriculture is one of the most emissive industries in the planet, the farmers in east Godavari district were trained on the environmental problems of stubble burning and the impact it has on their land.

Stubble burning in East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh

4.8 Partnerships & Connections

Partnership agreement Biomass

Partnership agreement has been signed by Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development with Bio4Pack (the Netherlands), Free the seed (Malaysia), Noble Environmental (the Netherlands), Haryana Agriculture University, MVO Netherlands, Paperwise (The Netherlands), LT Foods (India), Mars Foods (Netherlands), Paperwise (Netherlands) in the presence of the Dutch Ambassador Marten van den Berg to jointly work on solution to valorise paddy straw and create additional income for rural households.

From left, Daniel (Dutch Embassy), Siebe Schuur (Dutch Embassy), Nancy (MVO Nederlands), Aneel Kumar (GVK), Sanne (GVK), Mike (MVO Nederlands)

Exploration Biomass valorisation

In July 2019, Grameena Vikas Kendram Society joined hands with Noble Environmental and FMO-Dutch Development Bank to valorise paddy straw and create additional income for rural households.

Partnership MVO Nederland

In February 2020, Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development signed a partnership agreement with MVO Netherlands (CSR Netherlands). Grameena Vikas Kendram officially became a partner of MVO Nederlands under their Netherlands textiles network.

From left, Michiel (Transition Manager, MVO Nederlands), Aneel Kumar (GVK Society), Fioen (Project Manager, Network Textile at MVO Nederlands)

Speaker at Cradle to Cradle World Congress

In February 2020, Grameena Vikas Kendram Society for Rural Development's Chief Functionary Mr. Aneel Kumar Ambavaram was invited to be the keynote speaker at the Cradle to Cradle World Congress held at Berlin.

Aneel Kumar – Keynote speaker at Cradle to Cradle world congress along with world renowned speakers like Professor Dr. Michael Braungart (Co-founder of Cradle to Cradle design philosophy at Berlin)