



Farm – India

Annual Report 2003 – 2004

Preface:

Farm – India (*Federation for Agricultural Research Methodologies*) was founded by a group of enterprising women to play a crucial role in uplifting the rural economy. We have been induced to start this Organization by a very famous say “ Never ask what the nation did give you but what you gave her.....” We here at Farm –India envisaged to work on the following area:

School Children:

1. Ensure a quality education for the rural school children.
2. Educate these young children with environmental concerns.
3. Support rural schoolteachers in terms of teaching aids & systems.
4. Provide these children with job-oriented training.
5. Conducting Annual meet, gathering students – teachers – parents from villages.

Rural Farmers & Women:

1. Educate these farmers with organic way of cultivation.
2. Creating awareness among farmers on water management.
3. Making consortium sort of forums to bring all these farmers under one roof.
4. Bridging the local farmers and international buyers.
5. Creating employment opportunities to rural women.

Senior Citizens & Social Harmony:

1. To support abandoned senior citizens for their food and shelter.
2. To bring all parts of society together to bring social harmony.

Farm – India’s activities during 2003 – 2004:

School Children:

1. Quality Education:

The Government of India had launched a great program called **SSA “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan”** to bring education to every child of India. This program ensures education for all poor children who could not attend school due to economic reasons. There are dropouts in villages either because of poor living condition or due to illiteracy among village people. It’s nevertheless to mention that without local support and involvement, no government program will succeed.



We at Farm – India decided to take this opportunity to make our goal come through. Even though we are not involved with any financial support from Government of India, we offer ourselves to this program both physically and financially. We have identified Naduppatti CRC Center as our base and started working for 10 schools come under this center. The following schools are coming under Farm – India’s service network.

- a. Naduppati Primary School
- b. Kalpatti Middle School
- c. Karaiyampatti Primary School
- d. Pudukkottai Middle School
- e. Pudevadi Middle School
- f. Pudevadi – Pudur Primary School
- g. Seekampatti Primary School
- h. Naduppatti Higher Secondary School
- i. Kalliankattupatti Model School
- j. Keeranur Primary School

Our service to these schools varies from supporting on enrolment of children to any specific financial assistance. We can list the following activities done during this year.

- a. Conducted an awareness program for villagers to enroll their children (at the age of 5) to the nearest school.
- b. Conducted a door-to-door campaign along with the schoolteachers and old students to educate the poor villagers the importance of schooling.
- c. Farm – India arranged to buy all required furniture for the first standard students of Naduppatti Primary School to attract these young children to attend school. Otherwise most of the public school children sit on the ground. We wanted to make the first time school goes little comfortable so that they like their classroom environment. And we plan to do similar arrangements for other schools in coming years.
- d. Provided monetary support to Naduppatti Balvadi, a Pre-KG school run by Government of Tamilnadu to paint the inner walls of the classroom with animated pictures and national leaders.
- e. Extended financial assistance to couple of schools to arrange school uniform cloths for the economically under-privileged students. And we expect this assistance to be extended to other schools too in coming years.



2.Environment Education:

We are interested not only in regular academic schooling but also greatly on the environment education to the young children. Farm – India clearly realizes that the Earth Globe should be handed over to the next generation without much degradation. And it is imperative to make the owners of the next generation understand the seriousness of environmental issues like global warming, excessive pesticide - fertilizer usage, role of plastics in the degradation of soil, etc.

We conduct field visits to nearby forest area, renowned Organic Farms and Environment Friendly NGOs for the school children. A group of 40 – 50 young students are taken to the above sites along with their class teachers. The following issues are emphasized to these young minds so that they are grown with these very important environmental concerns.

- a. Importance of trees and vegetation to control the global warming.
- b. How the plastics are playing a (negative) role in degrading the soil condition.
- c. How important is Organic farming.
- d. Role of earth worms in maintaining the soil aeration and fertility.
- e. Educating these young minds on public health care issues like keeping public places neat and clean.

We have successfully conducted few tour programs like this and we found it works a lot with these children. We are preparing to launch a novel idea called GBM, Green Bag Movement with the school children in the coming years. Our aim is to minimize the usage of plastics in the rural villages. By providing a cloth bag (we selected a green color to symbolically express our environmental concern) to each one of these students and train them to use it when they go for daily shopping at the village petty-shops. (Most of the villagers use their children to purchase their daily needs). They will insist the shopkeeper to use used newspapers to wrap the goods (instead of plastic bags) and will put all these small packets into their “Green Bag.”

3.Teaching aids & systems:

Farm – India supplied few teaching aids to some of the schools to make teaching easier. We try to involve the system “ Seeing is Learning.....”

So we arrange small teaching hand tools like models, maps, sports goods, etc for the teachers, which are very much useful in explaining the children. We also arrange computer-training programs for these children to give a preliminary exposure in this emerging technology. We are not doing great in this area but intend to expand our activities to a large extent for the benefit of village students. Our near future plan is to have a Computer fitted car, which will be taken to each school in periodic intervals and teach them with a pre-modeled computer syllabus.



4. Job Oriented Training Program:

The very basic issue in Indian villages is poverty and it's attributed totally by un-employment. Just studying a graduation or computer diploma cannot fetch a job for these young people. So, we at Farm – India designed a tailor made program to train them and find a suitable placement in reasonably good companies.

Our target is the up-coming BPOs and Call Centers. We train +2 students in the following areas:

- a. Typing skill development
- b. Basic Computer Knowledge
- c. A fairly good spoken English

We already started working on this program and negotiating with couple of offshore companies (with some social cause) for placements. If everything goes well we should be able to place the first batch of our students by 2007.

5. Annual Meet (Kalvi Thiruvizha):

Our aim is to bring out the skills of young minds to a public platform. Whether it is literary, artistic, academic and scientific or sport, the rural children are second to none in their capabilities. So we decided to organize a one-day meet at one of the network schools. This year we had this “Kalvi Thiruvizha” (in Tamil it means Educational Festival) at Naduppatti Primary School during November 2004. The festival coincided with the birth anniversary of the Great Indian Leader Jawaharlal Nehru who is very famous for his attachment towards children. All 10 schools in our network were invited to participate in this great festival. Young children from all these 10 schools participated in the following events.

- a. Science Exhibition
- b. Sports and games
- c. Drama and folk dances
- d. Literary competitions like Poetry, Speech, Singing, Drawing, etc

Various departments of education & SSA officers attended this festival and made a good note on this. More over our program has been the first kind of event in our state. So the SSA officers took videos & photographs of the events and presented to the Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi. We at Farm – India were very proud to play an important role in creating such a novel program, which was highly appreciated by not only the

government officials but also a cross section of our society. We plan to conduct similar festivals in coming years spreading the venue to each school from our network.



Rural Farmers & Women:

1. Organic Farming:

Farm – India first tries to establish its members with a comprehensive knowledge in Organic farming. Members of Farm - India had been sponsored to attend various seminars and workshops conducted by leading organizations in Organic farming such as KVK Gandhigram, Uzhavar Thizhil Nutpa Kahagam, Ahimsa, etc. We also send our members to market oriented programs like the one organized by Indian Chamber of Commerce at Trichy, to get exposure in the market scenario of Organic products and Medicinal Herbs.

We also organized couple of local programs to educate the farmers in Organic technologies like, Vermi Composting, Herbal Extract, Panchakawya, etc. The biggest advantage with Farm – India is it's own model farm at Sakkampatti. The Managing Trustee's farm “ Manitham Organics” is considered to be a well known model farm in the locality which consists of almost every component of Organic farming.

2. Water Management:

Farm – India strongly believes the important of water management. If not taken care, Tamilnadu will become a desert within next 10-15 years, due to over exploitation of ground water. Instead of deepening the bore-wells below 500 – 800 feet, we need to use water scarcely. The local farmers are to be educated in this area seriously. Farm – India conducted few programs on water management with following points:

- a. Ground Water is not going to be available forever.
- b. The rainwater to be made to percolate as much as possible into our farmland to improve the Water Table Level.
- c. Plants really do not need the amount of water we irrigate to them. So a limited quantity of water is enough for better plant growth.
- d. The importance of Drip Irrigation & Sprinkler Irrigation.
- e. Low Cost High-Tech Irrigation Systems.

A magazine named “Thalaanmai” published a Cover story on Manitham Organics' Water Management and it was welcomed by a greater section of the farming community.

3. Farmers' Consortium:

In the changing global scenario of agriculture and economy, we need to adopt certain modern management techniques to cope ourselves with the globalization. Even though we are basically in disagreement with globalization of farming sector, we cannot afford to be isolated when the

rest of the world is in a mad race. We here in Farm – India trust in “getting united will get the things done”.



So we plan to form a Consortium of Farmers who will make their own groups and plan their planting schedule, marketing strategy, financial assistance from banks, etc. We will provide them with latest information like technology, government assistance, weather forecast, etc. These groups will produce a planned quantity of produces with a specific volume, which can be sold to an agribusiness company with good pricing terms. This would certainly improve the financial stability of the farmers. But we need a lot of government supports in this program and we are working on this.

4. Bridging Local farmers and International buyers:

Another way to improve the financial balance sheet of these poor villagers is to get better prices for their produces. Since there is a good demand for Organic produces in the International market, we intend to find export markets for our rural products. We know, it will take some time to get materialized but we wish to have some beginning in this.

As a first step, we are negotiating with an Indian company who exports vegetables, tamarind, coconuts, etc to Europe, for business co-operation. Once we gain more experience on International Quality Standards, packing details and freight cost, we can directly find International buyers. We will use our members' international contacts to develop business proposals.

5. Employment for Rural Women:

Most of the young girls after schooling stay idle at home. Only very few come forward to be agricultural laborers. Farm – India sees this segment as one of the most potential work force, which can play an important role in rural economy. We plan to train these girls in the following area:

1. Bamboo mats weaving
2. Making handicrafts
3. Electronic components assembly

To begin with, we have made arrangement for the training of 20 women in making bamboo mats. We expect to expand this to at least 200 girls in coming year. We negotiate with Chennai and Bangalore based Electronic industries to help us for training our girls in electronic components assembly. If everything goes well, the new project may start in 2007.

Senior Citizens & Social Harmony:

1. Senior Citizens:

Farm – India tries to do a little contribution to the senior citizens. We believe whatever we have today is out of the hard work from our seniors. Due to various socio-economic reasons, most of the elders are left unattended in their old age. Farm – India is not in a position to give every support needed by them. But we are trying our level best to give them at least a good meal and a shelter. To begin with, we will start arranging community dinner system at



Sakkampatti or Naduppatti very soon. But our long-term project is to start a home for the elders with all minimum facilities.

2. Social Harmony:

In countries like India, still there is an imbalance in social status. Cast and religion are still playing a crucial role in separating people. In our region, Farm – India sees Villages festivals as a potential tool to bring various segments of the society together. We have been sponsoring various village festivals like “Kaaman Pandigai”. During these festivals, cutting across the society people participate and enjoy. This way, we in Farm – India think, a social harmony can be created. And for good reasons, it works very well. Keeping aside their differences, people join together and celebrate these festivals.

Conclusion:

Farm – India had started a small beginning in this year to bring smile on the faces of our villagers. And we can say, “ Yes. We are successful in a small way.” We hope to expand our activities through other Organizations including some International and Government functionaries in coming years to make our presence not only in the villages but also in the hearts of our villagers.

We Love Nature & God"