

# Annual Report – 2011-12

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**AME FOUNDATION  
BELIEVES IN  
“HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES”**

**AMEF is a resource organization.** It seeks to empower dry land farmers in degraded ecological situations on the Deccan Plateau, in improving their own livelihoods, along with a sensitivity to gender and equity concerns. Pursuing this goal, it works with farming communities, like-minded NGOs and concerned government agencies in creating and testing technological options, for wider application. In the process, it strives to forge institutional synergy among the interacting bio mass actors, playing a catalytic and facilitative role.

**AMEF is motivated by a deep-going concern.** The initial transformation in Indian agriculture became possible through the Green Revolution technology, which benefited the better-endowed regions and resource-rich farmers, using expensive purchased farm inputs. But, it bypassed the vast dry farming tracts. Trapped in these areas are a large number of small and marginal farmers struggling to make a living, with their depleted environmental assets, eroded soils and rapidly sinking ground water resources. Therefore, a second transformation has become necessary. Working with these families, searching for alternative farming options is a matter of great socio-economic and strategic concern, today.

**Does AMEF create something out of nothing?** Hardly the case. Adopting the PTD and FFS approaches, AMEF teams up with responsive farmers groups, interested NGOs and development agencies to locally explore new ways of managing the available natural resources more efficiently. In the process, new perceptions are generated, new insights are gained and new approaches are devised, combining the traditional knowledge with scientific findings. Thus, farmers are enabled to progress one step beyond the present.

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## 1. AME FOUNDATION – GENESIS and FOCUS

Agriculture sector, the primary source of livelihoods for nearly 67% of the population in India is displaying a sluggish growth. Small holders constitute the farming majority (around 70%). More than 60% of them are rain fed farmers. It is reckoned that in future, bulk of the food needs of the nation has to come from rain fed areas, as the irrigated areas have almost neared their peak, while the scope for further increase of irrigation is negligible.

Today, we are left with depleted farmlands, degraded farm environment and demotivated farm population who have nowhere else to go. Farmlands, under cultivation for generations, are getting depleted of their finer soil fractions, fertility and water holding capacity. Further, the degradation of the farm environment is aggravating the situation. Farming in regions like Deccan Plateau of Southern India with low and uncertain rainfall conditions is increasingly becoming unviable with inappropriate land-use practices and depleted vegetation. Challenges to feed and to fulfill the needs of a growing population in a sustainable way require a better and more comprehensive insight into ecologically sound crop production processes, especially in fragile environments of resource-poor areas of the Deccan Plateau.

While the development programmes focus on a small section of elite, frontline farmers who are able to cope with the changes around them, the majority of small holders who are risk shy have nowhere else to go. AMEF focuses on building the capacities of these farming majority to deal with their own situations better.

AME Foundation (AMEF), over the years, with its deep-rooted interest in sustainable agriculture (SA), has been seeking ways to fulfill its mission of empowering the dry land farmers in degraded ecological situations on the Deccan Plateau, in improving their own livelihoods, along with gender and social equity concerns. Born as a training agency in 1982, in a temperate climate in The Netherlands, AME has moved into a tropical region in 1986. Going beyond the training of agricultural environmentalists, AMEF has entered into field situations to forge innovative farming practices combining the traditional and the modern methods.

Presently, AMEF is working as a development-oriented, non-government organization, devoted to promoting ecological farming alternatives among small and marginal farmers engaged in dry land farming. The twin objectives of AMEF are: improving the livelihoods of the farm families in dry lands and addressing the environmental concerns. The focus, thus, includes improvement and promotion of alternative farming practices to bolster food security, strengthen livelihoods, address environment issues and promote more sustainable agricultural practices. It adopts participatory approaches that recognise local knowledge systems and involves local farmers' groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), government departments and other biomass actors in the development process.

The **focal activities** of the organization are given below:

1. **Generating alternative farming practices:** Beginning with on-farm crop improvements by means of Farmer Field School (FFS) and Participatory Technology Development (PTD) processes, technologies related to natural resource conservation and utilisation (NRC and NRU) get generated leading to alternative land use practices. This, in turn, helps to conserve and

develop the farm resources and rebuild the environmental support to farming. In the process, the farmers' innovating capacities get enhanced.

2. **Forging gender equity social processes:** AMEF seeks to mitigate and ameliorate the inequality based on gender, caste and economic status. Thus, AMEF addresses these issues while planning and implementing its activities.
3. **Capacity building of farming groups through experiential learning methods:** AMEF has a firm conviction and believes that farming is what a farmer does. Therefore, if durable changes in farming are intended, it is necessary that, the farmers' perception is widened, insights deepened, attitudes modified and managerial abilities are upgraded. Therefore **human resource development** is the key. AMEF specializes in participatory and empowering education processes like Farmer Field Schools to guide farming communities.
4. **Focus on building capacities of Rural Youth as Sustainable Agriculture Promoters:** For the large and still growing rural population, agriculture still remains a major means of livelihood. For sustainable rural development, building the capacities of the rural youth to gainfully practice farming as well as guide their own farming communities is crucial. It enables **rural youth** to gain confidence in handling their resources better, get better returns as well as help them to get better social recognition which is so necessary for them to remain in villages.
5. **Building NGO network:** For scaling up of eco-friendly initiatives, AMEF interacts and strengthens the NGO networks involved in the land-based activities. By using training situations created in the cluster villages, capacity building of partner NGOs forms the major portion of AMEF's work.
6. **Developing institutional linkages:** AMEF seeks to build linkages with state, national, international research and development organizations to harness the technologies and methodologies for accessing information and involve such agencies to move towards participatory research and development approaches.
7. **Information sharing strategies:** Documentation and dissemination on technology and methodology of ecological agriculture form an important responsibility of AMEF. It brings out manuals, guidelines, workshop proceedings, working papers, case studies etc.
8. **LEISA India publication:** AMEF intends to develop LEISA as a preferred platform for promoting eco-farming alternatives and reach more persons and institutions interested in sustainable agriculture. AMEF in collaboration with ILEIA works to enhance the capacities of NGOs and others in documenting and disseminating experiences on sustainable agriculture.

In attaining the twin objectives of improving livelihoods and addressing environmental concerns, AMEF builds its operational strategies based on the fact that the farmer is the primary user of the land resources. Therefore, AMEF begins working with the farm families, farm resources and farming systems. A start is made in village clusters with groups of farmers, using LEISA technologies. This is used as a springboard for scaling up LEISA practices and as a training base for development agencies and practicing farmers.



So far, AMEF had been using combination of methodologies in implementing the focal activities. Empowering learning processes like Farmer Field Schools and Participatory Technology Development are used. While the primary objective remains promoting SA in the dry lands of Deccan Plateau, AMEF is making earnest efforts to address the issue of natural resource management in some pockets of rainfed and irrigated rice areas through the “System of Rice Intensification” principles. Also, the principles of SRI are being tried out in Ragi and Red gram. On a modest scale, has been promoting revival of farmer preferred local varieties and promotion of home gardens with urban citizens.

## **2. AREAS OF OPERATION**

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During 2010-11, the previous year, Tiruchi was restarted and Dharmapuri office was closed. However, in 2011-12 with a major programme of WWF abruptly closing in Tiruchi and another relatively long term programme beginning in Dharmapuri with Srivats Ram Foundation support, office was shifted from Tiruchi to Dharmapuri in the month of March 2012. A low key field support continued for the field programmes in Tiruchi, primarily DST supported programme.

## **3. THE PROGRAMMES**

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The major projects implemented included

- 3.1. Pilot project on augmenting the productivity of lead crops / activities through adoption of sustainable agriculture practices in Kolar District – supported by NABARD
- 3.2. SRI Programme in the sandbox – supported by Deshpande Foundation
- 3.3 LEISA-FFS programme supported by NABARD
- 3.4 Improving dry farming situations through ecological agriculture (Dharmapuri Farm Initiative) – supported by SRFI
- 3.5. Introducing forage innovations to improve farm income of woman dairy farmers of Tamil Nadu – supported by Department of Science and Technology
- 3.6. LEISA India programme – supported by Misereor and ILEIA
- 3.7 Promoting agrobiodiversity – supported by GEF
- 3.8 The Growing Connection – supported by FAO
- 3.9 Educational consultancies supported by AMEF

### 3.1 Pilot project on augmenting the productivity of lead crops/ activities through adoption of sustainable agriculture practices in Kolar District

A three year pilot project on augmenting the productivity of lead crops/ activities through adoption of sustainable agriculture practices was initiated in collaboration with NABARD during the year 2010. The main focus of the project was to reduce the yield gap in the major crops in the area, reduce the use of chemicals and cost of production and facilitate seed production among farmers. The three year project was implemented on a pilot basis in 5 villages in Bangarpet, Karnataka



*Observing mulberry plot*

The project on augmenting the productivity of lead crops / activities through adoption of sustainable agriculture practices was initiated in collaboration with NABARD during the year 2010. The three year project was implemented on a pilot basis in 5 villages in Bangarpet, Karnataka (Balamande, Bodapatti, Boyilur, D.P.Halli and Gullahalli villages) with the following objectives.

- To improve and stabilize the yields and reduce the yield gap in the lead crops
- To enable the local production of quality seeds
- To reduce the usage of chemicals and thereby the cost of production
- Build a cadre of rural youth trained in promotion of sustainable agriculture.

## Processes

Baseline surveys and analysis of data of all the 2000 target farmers of the programme has been completed. As part of project mandate, soil samples (2000) have been submitted to DoA and KVK for analysis. Subsequently, soil health cards were distributed to farmers with recommendations.

Five season long FFS events on Tomato were organised in 5 villages. A total of 68 sessions were conducted. To start with a six days STOF on FFS was organised for the SAPs. The trained SAPs conducted the FFS in five project villages. Baselines indicated that 91% farmers depended on commercial nurseries which costed them more. They reported that they spray chemicals which contribute to 50% of the cost of cultivation. All were unaware of IPM methods. The curriculum included sequentially planned sessions, including small group studies that enable experiential learning; and group dynamics that enable learning through games. Some of the practices learnt and adopted during the FFS include: Formation of raised bed nursery; Seed treatment with *Trichoderma*; Two lines of Bajra as border crop; Seedling dipping in Panchagavya and soil application of Panchagavya; Cowpea used as trap crop (inside the bajra); Marigold as trap crop (10 lines of tomato: 1 line of marigold); Sticks used as bird perches; Application of Enriched FYM; Reduction in fertilizer dosage; No use of pesticides and using the botanicals

The farmers realized reduction in cost of cultivation up to Rs.12680/acre in Tomato FFS in SA plot in comparison with their traditional practice. Around 27% more yield is obtained in SA plot in comparison with Farmers practice. The reduction in cost of cultivation is Rs.3170. The additional returns owing to improved yields is Rs.7200. Thus, the net gain is Rs10370 for 10 guntas i.e. around Rs. 41480 per acre.

Farmers experienced access to good quality seedlings when own nurseries were maintained; understood the various components of the ecosystem; pest and predator relationships; control of diseases by using panchagavya and lantana extract.

Also, five FFS events have been organized in Ragi which concluded during December 2011. Around 385 farmers in 287 acres have adopted SA practices in Ragi.

In addition, 121 modular training events were organised with over 1200 farmers on the following aspects: *Weed management in SRI paddy and Red gram crop; Pest and Diseases management in SRI paddy and Red gram crops; Advantages of Bud Nipping in Red gram; Importance of Border crop in one Hectare model plots; Promoting Azolla and Vermi compost; Pre and post-Harvest techniques in Groundnut and Red gram.*

SRI paddy was promoted with 78 farmers from all the villages. In DPHalli, out of 53 paddy growing farmers, 48 farmers have taken up SRI methods of cultivation.



However, the rainfall has been an area of concern. We have received only 397mm of rainfall against normal 613 mm upto September 2011, also unevenly distributed. The Groundnut crop has been severely affected.

## Results

During the kharif 2011, in total, 848 farmers in 645 acres followed SA practices in lead crops like Ragi, Paddy, Tomato, Red gram and Groundnut in ten villages. The yield data has been collected and analysed and is presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1: Yield data**

Crops	Baseline q/ac 2010-11	Yield in FP - q/ac 2011-12	Project yield q/ac 2011-12	Yield increase %
1. Ragi	8.5	6.3	9.5	50
2. G.nut	2.5	1.36	2.89	112
3. Paddy	24	18.8	30	59
4. Red gram	2.5	1.25	2.75	120
5. Same	1.5	1.5	2.15	43

Sixty one farmers took up **seed production activities** in 27 acres in Ragi, Groundnut, Red gram and Rajaalu. The details are presented in the Table 2.

**Table 2: Seed production activities**

Crop / Variety	Area (acre)	No. of farmers	Proj Yield (qtls/ac)	Qty available for distribution (qtls)	Farmers listed for seed distribution
<b>Ragi</b> MR.1	15	39	9.5	5	100
<b>Groundnut</b> TMV-2	5	10	2.98	5	15
<b>Red gram</b> BRG-1&2	5	8	1.25	5	25
<b>Same</b> OLM 203	2	4	3.5	1	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Study Tours and Field days: Eight study tours were organised during the period for SAPs and farmers. Four field days (ragi-1, paddy -1, tomato 2) and five farmer to farmer sharing events were organised.

Four groups were registered as **Farmer's Clubs** with NABARD

## Innovative activities

Beyond mandated programme activities, innovative initiatives were taken up.

One of them was guiding farmers to practice **mixed farming on a one hectare** area. The purpose of this model was to demonstrate that through mixed cropping systems, a farmer's family of five members could strive for food and income security at the household level. Five farmers have taken up

mixed cropping systems, trying out a combination of groundnut, redgram and vegetables with plans to integrate fodder and tree component. The farmers are enthusiastic about trying out this model.

To encourage on farm harvesting of rain water towards better performance of their borewells, three farmers in Gullahalli have successfully installed farm mechanisms for harvesting and channelling the rain water towards **recharge of bore wells**.

The *chakova* variety of paddy seed provided by BAIF, has been tried out in one gunta in Dharwad and DP Halli of Bangarpet. In Bangarpet, around 6 kg paddy has been harvested and available for further multiplication. The grain, which is purple in colour, has a unique fragrance. The special dishes that can be prepared with it have to be tried out still by the farmers.

### **Sericulture**

The baseline data with respect to mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing has been collected. Two study tours were organized during the period for SAPs and farmers. Farmers visited progressive farmers' plots near Hoskote and another study tour to Sericulture Research and Training Institute, Mysore, was organised in collaboration with Central Silk Board. Three days training programme was organised at MYRADA, Kamasamudram training centre for the sericulture farmers from the project area villages. Resource persons from Department of Sericulture were invited to facilitate the sessions. Four field days, five sharing sessions were successfully completed during the period. Three FFS events are being planned on Sericulture. During April 2012, curriculum and session plans for the FFS will be developed.

### **Animal Health Camps**

As part of livestock promotion activity, training on improved varieties of fodder, azolla cultivation, study tours were conducted besides organizing five animal health camps in five project villages. The camps were located in a convenient place for the farmers to bring different types of livestock. Well qualified and committed Doctors assisted by Animal Husbandry Department staff, provided the necessary medical support. In total, **826 farmers brought 3238 livestock** to the camps organized in all five villages. Village leaders, Taluk and Grampanchayat members attended the camps. The farming communities openly expressed that the camp was unique in many respects which include treating diverse livestock under one roof, addressing multiple needs, providing quality attention and good quality drugs and lastly, identification and timely treatment of fatal diseases in few cases. DDM, NABARD and the village community leaders highly appreciated the way AMEF has organized the camps.

### **Review meetings**

Three District Level Monitoring Review Committee (DLMRC) meetings were organized. Officials from the Department and NABARD observed the progress as well as approved the expenditure and action plans.

Three Cluster Development Committee meetings were also conducted.

A progress review meeting was organized on 14.09.11 by NABARD at their Regional Office in Bangalore. Besides other officials, CGM and GM attended the meeting, appreciated the progress and AMEF strategies, especially involving rural youth in the programme. A review team from NABARD visited the project area, interacted with FFS farmers, observed positive changes on the FFS plots, and also made useful suggestions.

### 3.2 SRI Programme in the Sandbox

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To address the issue of water use, which is a scarce resource in our working areas, AMEF started promoting SRI in a small way during 2004-05. This was upscaled with the support of Deshpande Foundation in the sandbox area (Dharwad) from 2008 onwards. SRI has been promoted both in the irrigated as well as in the rainfed areas.



*Preparation of tomato nursery bed*

The project was implemented in Dharwad & Kalaghatagi Taluk of Dharwad district in 27 villages. Initially, Gram Sabhas and village meetings were organized to create awareness about SRI among the farmers. Farmers who were already guided in the previous seasons shared their experience during the meetings. Also, wall paintings and banners were exhibited and pamphlets were distributed to farmers to build awareness on advantages of SRI method of paddy cultivation. Two days' training on SRI principles was conducted to SRI volunteers and SRI-Lead farmers to prepare them to guide the farming communities during the year.

**SRI**

Erratic and incessant rains affected the progress and yield of paddy during the season. In rain fed areas, continuous rainfall affected the sowing operations as fields were flooded and at times seeds got drained out. Farmers were guided to take up SRI methods based on water availability. Where the moisture was inadequate, sowing by using seed drills (1987 farmers in 1906 acres) was taken up. Transplanting operations were taken up by 1015 farmers in 708 acres. In total, 3002 farmers in 2614 acres have taken up SRI against a target of 5000 for the year.

Special trainings were organised for SRI volunteers and SAPs on SRI data collection process. Data sets collected included, farmer's profile, crop growth parameters, yield parameters and cost of cultivation. Data was collected thrice during different stages for a sample size of 200 farmers.

Yield improvements have been reported in rainfed and transplanted paddy. In rainfed paddy, the yields were 11 q. per acre in SRI method of cultivation, while it was 10 q. per acre in farmers practice. In transplanted paddy, the reported yields were 17 q. per acre in SRI method, while it was 14 q. per acre in farmers practice.

**FFS in Paddy and Vegetables**

In ten new villages identified for the programme, PRAs were conducted in four villages. In Dharwad and Kalghatagi taluks, ten FFS events were organized on paddy and vegetables. Curriculum Development workshop was organized to develop the need based curriculum for FFS for both Paddy & vegetable cropping system involving farmer's representatives, agriculture department, scientists, horticulture department. To strongly orient SAPs and APOs, a ToT on FFS was organized during September 2011.

Five FFS events on SRI-Paddy were organized in which farmers participated in the season long learning programme. Incidence of Diamond Back Moth (DBM) affected the crop. During AESA, farmers made a decision to control the pest through mechanical measures, by rolling of bamboo sticks and pulling certain thorny plants.

Five FFS events on Tomato were organized. As part of promoting eco-friendly vegetable cultivation, a total of 48 sessions were conducted in Tomato crop in five villages. Because of excess rainfall, nursery operations got delayed. Some farmers have taken up raising seedlings in nurseries twice. Farmers could save Rs.1200 by raising their own seedlings in raised beds and Rs.3000 by using botanicals for controlling pests instead of chemicals per acre. Several IPM methods such as use of yellow sticky trap, pheromone trap, pitfall trap, release of Trichogramma egg parasitoids, Chrysoperla predators, spraying of chilli-garlic extract, Lantana leaf extract, Panchagavya, NPV, Pseudomonas fluorescens were the practices followed in plant protection. Farmers obtained yields of 13 q. per acre in SA plot while they got 12 q. per acre in farmers practice.

**Modular trainings**

Gram sabha, Group meetings and some entry point activities were conducted to educate the farmers on the low cost alternatives and to adopt a minimum 10 LEISA practices.

The groups have undergone training through the following modules: a) Insitu soil & moisture conservation b) Upgrading soil fertility status c) Crops & cropping systems d) Off farm support of Biomass production and azolla, kitchen gardens etc.

The LEISA group farmers were linked to the Departments to get support for taking up vermicomposting, procuring seeds, bio agents as well as equipment such as bio digester under various schemes. Around 800 farmers organized into 40 groups (20 farmers per group) got systematically trained through modular trainings and put into practice at least 10 LEISA practices.

Trials on Chakova paddy variety with seeds provided by BAIF were initiated with one farmer in 2 guntas. After 60 days, good plant growth is being observed.

As a preparatory part for the “SRI workshop”, FGDs were conducted with farmer groups to understand the main reasons to adopt SRI & not to adopt SRI. The study was through FGDs with farmers of the SRI adopted villages of Dharwad & Kalaghatagi taluk. This was a study done to feed into a proposed workshop involving the SRI farmers, various stake holders, donors etc. However, owing to very busy schedule of some important invitees, the workshop was postponed. However, one of the internationally renowned invitee, Dr. Willem Stoop from Netherlands, who agreed to be the Chief Guest, visited project sites. He was taken around to DF as well as farmer groups to apprise him of the good work done. Mr. Prasad, ED & Mr. Joshi, CPO accompanied him with the Dharwad team. Dr. Willem Stoop deeply appreciated the unique work being done by AMEF with the support of DF. Also, a video supported by DF was made through interviews of SRI farmers.

Around 200 FFS Group farmers from 10 project villages along with SAPs were taken to Krishi Mela 2011 at UAS Dharwad.

A two-day sharing workshop on SRI programmes was organized in Fireflies Ashram at Bangalore on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Farmer representatives, Sustainable Agriculture Promoters, AME staff from three States shared their experience by organising exhibits, presenting street play, displayed charts and posters depicting the progress. Officials and NGO partners from the three areas, Trustees of AME Foundation were invited. During the interactive workshop, efforts for strengthening the SRI movement were discussed. Farmers shared their efforts in enabling farmer-to-farmer spread of SRI and also were keen to strengthen the movement.

## **Other supporting programme under DF project:**

- Mr. Joshi & Ms. Sangeeta facilitated a training programme on FFS to the Deshpande foundation Field staff working in Gadag Cotton project of DF.
- Ms. Sangeeta facilitated "Agriculture Module" for the DF fellows for 3 days for 3 batches.
- Organized 1 day training programme on "Improved Tomato cultivation" with the support of KVK to the farmers & SAPs.
- A two day State Seminar on “Organic vegetable terrace gardening” was organised on 8th and 9th July at DF, BVB campus, Hubli. AMEF Dharwad co facilitated the event.
- One day study tour has been organized for the SAPs to visit progressive farmer of the Kanninayakankoppa village.
- DF programme review meeting was organized by AMEF at Dharwad office followed by field visit to SRI villages. Mr. Ravindra, Mr. Prasad, Mr. Joshi & other programme staff of AMEF participated in the meeting to discuss the progress, plan & strategies for effective implementation.



- Agriculture Partners meet was organized by DF on 26th Dec 2011, where all Agriculture partners shared their progress & experience in implementing the project in the sandbox.
- AMEF Dharwad team along with representatives from Head office participated in the Annual Development Dialogue (DD). During the DD, the Area Unit, Dharwad exhibited their work in stalls by displaying different charts, banners, models etc. to the delegates. The displays were highly appreciated.
- A team of 25 delegates from Merrimack Valley Sandbox team visited AMEF working villages & had interaction with the FFS groups & SRI farmers.
- Team leader & APO facilitated training on FFS to the SKC fellows followed by field visit to practice FFS session with the FFS group farmers.
- Mr. Khadir from E - FARM briefed the farmers about the facilities they are providing to the farmers to get better price for their produce
- Mr. William Stoop, world renowned consultant from Netherlands visited the SRI working villages. He was deeply appreciative of SRI farmers who have adopted SRI principles in rainfed conditions and got higher yields.
- Fourteen Hubli Champions visited Kalaghatgi village & interacted with the FFS group farmers & visited the fields to see the LEISA practices adopted by the farmers.

### 3.3 LEISA – FFS PROJECT

The LEISA-FFS project supported by NABARD project was taken up in Dharwad area with the purpose of making the farmers understand the basic principles of LEISA, adopt them for yield improvements. To enable this, farmers were guided through an empowering educational process - FFS (Farmer Field School), so that they not only become capable of managing their farm situations, but also be able to apply the same learnings in other situations

The project had the following objectives

- Strengthening & supporting the existing FFS groups for better adoption & dissemination of LEISA technologies in Dry farming.
- Supporting & encouraging Participatory Technology Development (PTD) process
- Reducing chemicals in vegetable cultivation & improving yields cropping system

During Kharif, three FFS events on Soyabean crop and during Rabi, three FFS events on tomato and one on sorghum crops were organised. The FFS group farmers have adopted at least 8 to 10 alternative SA practices in combination which include in-situ rainwater management, soil fertility upgradation and improved agronomic practices. In soyabean, The average yields recorded in the Sustainable Agriculture (SA) plot is 8 q/ac whereas in Farmer's practice (FP), it is 6 q/acre. In Rabi season, FFS was initiated in Sorghum cropping system. The average yield recorded in the SA plot is 8.8 q/acre whereas in FP, it is 6.4 q/acre. Farmers have taken up varietal trials in Tomato. Results of varietal trials conducted in tomato revealed that DMT-2 performed well with average yield of 12 q/ac, followed by DMT-1 (10 q/ac) and Mahyco (8 q/ac) with net income of Rs.12,000, Rs.10,000 and Rs.8,000 respectively. DMT-1 and DMT-2 are the varieties preferred liked farmer groups. DMT-1 variety has performed better with respect to yield than the other two varieties in the trial. The fruit yield per plant was found to be more in case of DMT 1. Data on reducing use of chemicals in vegetable cultivation with adoption of eco-friendly

cultivation practices was presented before the committee. The practices followed were:

EFYM application, raised bed nursery, use of bio fertilizers, vermicompost, growing marigold as trap crop.

#### **Exposure visits**

Group farmers were taken on an exposure visit to Shri Narayana Reddy's farm, a Progressive farmer in Doddaballpura. Purpose was to interact with him on Integrated Farming system & organic farming.

#### **Support activities**

- 5 days Training of Trainers (TOT) on FFS & Sustainable Agriculture for the volunteers & farmers representatives was organized.
- Linkages include exploring with KMF the possibility of organizing training programme on Diary management to farmer groups

- Under NABARD guidance, one ToT was organized to farmers and volunteers on formation of farmer clubs and JLGs.

Subsequently, these groups have been registered as farmers clubs with NABARD. They were enabled to form JLG groups. In *Shri Basaweshwar Susthir Krishikar Koota, Inamveerapur*, 5 Members have formed a JLG & availed loan from bank of Rs. 75,000/- @ Rs.15,000/- per member. They have purchased milch animals. In *Shri Basaveshwar Susthir Krishikar Koota, Kurdikeri*, 3 JLG subgroups consisting 4 members per group have availed loan of Rs 75,000/- per sub group from the bank, for the purchase of buffaloes as well as constructed Vermicompost pits

NABARD officials visited the project villages & interacted with the FFS group farmers. Farmers shared their experience in the form of models, charts, handout etc.

### Meetings

The Project Monitoring Committee meeting was organized. Mr. Y.N Mahadevayya (AGM, NABARD) and Mr. G.S Basavarajappa, Lead Bank Manager, Krishna Vikas Grameen Bank participated in the meeting. Linkages have been facilitated with KVG Bank for availing loans.

Chairman of the committee, Shri. Y.N. Mahadeviah, AGM NABARD interacted individually with each group of farmers about the benefits they got being part of the FFS group, especially regarding the adoption rate of the farmers outside the group. DDM advised the farmers to carry on the practices found useful and share with other farmers in the village. Farmers responded by sharing that In *Kuradikeri*, farmers have adopted raised bed nursery, use of bio fertilizers, optimum spacing and growing marigold as trap crop in tomato, resulting in better crop stand and higher yields of varieties. Non FFS group farmers visited the plots too. FFS group farmers shared the benefits of low cost technologies, motivating the others to adopt the same practices in their fields.

**All the DDMs** of Karnataka, GM and CGM from Regional Office at Bangalore of NABARD visited Dharwad area on 22nd November 2011. The DDM, Dharwad provided this unique opportunity to enable AMEF to show its good work to all the officials of NABARD. As the time was short, a detailed exhibition was organized which was handled by SAPs and farmer facilitators. The officials were highly impressed with the exhibition. The SAPs and farmer representatives explained the activities and shared the benefits in terms of improved yields and reduced costs besides better understanding of the alternatives. The DDMs of other areas expressed interest in potential collaboration with AMEF in the way possible.

### 3.4 Improving dry farming situations through ecological agriculture

Farmers in rainfed areas in Dharmapuri are still practicing high external input agriculture including chemicals. Dharmapuri Farm Initiative is a new initiative in Pennagaram block of Dharmapuri district, to help farmers look at alternative options for improving productivity, reducing costs and better use of scarce natural resources like water.



Preliminary meetings were conducted in ten villages to interact with the communities and explain the purpose of the intervention. Interested farmers were identified through Gramsabhas and organised into eco farmer groups. Each group consisted of 20 farmers. Discussed with groups on aspects like group management, regularity of meetings,. PRAs were conducted in 5 villages. Usually, the meetings are conducted around savings and credit. For the first time, these groups of farmers analysed cropping practices, status and access to natural resources and how they are utilizing them for crop production. The tools used include, resource mapping, seasonality calendar, crop specific problem besides transect walk to the village and cultivation area. The baselines were completed with 100 farmers from 5 villages.

As a preparatory activity, **Training of Trainers** was organized for a duration of one week, involving 26 rural youth, to prepare them as FFS facilitators. It was difficult to mobilise rural youth for the programme

as many of them have migrated. Also, the groups being predominantly, women, logistics and timing had to be suitable. The training focused on the 'facilitation skills' needed for conducting season long FFS as they tended to be leaning towards instruction based training.

Five Eco farming Groups (EFGs) were formed. Five season long FFS events were organized in five project villages. The rains were delayed inordinately in some of the project areas. The farmer groups prepared contingency plans. They were interested in taking up Groundnut and Cotton as the main crops. (two FFS in Groundnut and three in cotton crops). The trained rural youth facilitated the FFS sessions. In Groundnut, the FFS farmers took up black gram as sequential crop after harvesting the Groundnut, having decided to make use of residual moisture. They chose Cotton, as it could be grown after prolonged delay in rains.

The AESA kept as routine activity, pheromone trap, mulching, leaf cutting experiments were important topics covered in cotton FFS in 3 villages. Non-chemical way of pest control measures such as pheromone traps, yellow sticky traps, light traps installed at field level in all the 5 villages especially in FFS plots. The yellow sticky trap prepared using old mud pot, used water bottles, plastic mugs etc were installed in FFS field that not only trapped sucking pest but attracted other farmers attention too. They got inspired seeing thousands of sucking pests trapped. LEISA practices are adopted in 5 villages by 100 farmers beyond focused crops such as Tomato, chillies etc.

### **Outcomes**

The outcomes of the project include: Emergence of 25 rural woman youth facilitators to conduct FFS with 100 farmers practicing alternative eco friendly farming practices in Cotton and Groundnut; heightened awareness and adoption of NPM methods in Cotton FFS; reduced costs to an extent of Rs.1500 to 3500 by not using pesticides (with additional cost of Rs. 150/ for pheromone traps) and Rs.4400 to 5500 reducing the chemical fertilizer usage in FFS plots ( with additional cost of Rs. 320/ for biofertilisers). Cotton plants in Mulched plots with LEISA practices yielded 20-30% higher yield of 30-75 bolls per plant in FFS plot and whereas it is only 5-15 bolls/plant in farmer plot. Though scanty rain received, the border crop, intercrop establishment are better. Changed farmer's attitudes in terms of inter crop choice is noteworthy. Earlier, they used to go far vegetables as intercrop which depleted soil nutrients indiscriminately but now adding pulses to enhance soil fertility, cumbu as barrier crop to stop movement of insect pests especially white flies and other sucking insects enlightened the importance among participants. Also, growing of black gram through broadcasting helped them realize additional yields and incomes.

### **Field days and scaling up**

Two field days on groundnut were conducted at Germalampatti and Rangapuram villages where 65 and 120 farmers attended respectively. Another field day for cotton FFS was conducted at B.Agraharam on cotton by combining 3 groups. Non FFS farmers from the same & nearby villages Panchayat leader, village key leaders, important persons participated. There were 300 farm women who participated in the Cotton field day conducted on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011. The event was spectacular as trained women youth facilitators, who are also members of the CMRCs, held centre stage, organized field visit, conducted the event, explained the activities and the benefits of non-pesticidal methods of growing Cotton. JDA, Dharmapuri and Mr. Jayanth of Srivatsram Foundation appreciated the progress as well as knowledge and confidence levels of women farmers. There was an extensive media coverage, who visited the field, interviewed AMEF staff as well as telecasted the programme on Jaya TV.



The process and results of all the FFS events, LEISA practices implemented in FFS plots were up scaled to 65 farmers at Germalampatti and 120 farmers at Rangapuram and 400 farmers in B.Agraharam villages. Conscious efforts to scale it up further. up the outcome to wider farming community. Thus, 25 Board of Directors of MYRADA groups trained 120 women animators who in turn trained 210 women groups that comprised of 2100 members in 25 villages in 7 pachayats. 5 cotton farmers of non-members on exposure to FFS field purchased Pheromone traps and installed in their cotton field

Conscious efforts were taken to scale up the learning outcome on LEISA practices to wider farming community. Thus, 25 Board of Directors of MYRADA groups trained 120 women Animators, they in turn trained 210 women groups that comprised of 2100 members in 25 villages in 7 panchayats

## Lean season activities

While the harvest of Seasonal crops in dry lands is completed during January 2012, the 'lean season' generally starts by December and extends upto May. In this period, production of a crop is not possible due to moisture stress. However, this period can be creatively used to help the farmers to improve their soils and get additional income. AME Foundation Dharmapuri planned all the necessary steps well in advance to reduce the impact of the 'lean season' by **extending production** period. After the harvest of the seasonal crop, planned meticulously to utilize the **residual soil moisture available after the crop harvest**.

In FFS lands, farmers were guided to cultivate **black gram** which resulted in additional yield and income. Thus, the production period was *extended* by another 40 days. Besides blackgram, farmers were guided to grow kitchen gardens, grow fodder, grow azolla which is a nutrient supplement to livestock, cultivate sun hemp cultivation in FFS lands, compost pit preparation etc. These are all activities to broaden alternative sources of income and focus on activities which would help in improving soils in drylands.

Kitchen Garden initiative:: In order to provide strong nutritional support to the farm families of operational villages, kitchen gardens were promoted by providing seeds of various vegetables such as radish, beetroot, carrot, tomato, bhendi, snake gourd, ribbed gourd etc.. Initially, young women who facilitated FFS were guided to establish kitchen gardens in their backyards. Thus, they practiced as well as inspired others. As the produce was consumed at the household level, the nutritional security improved, their consumption patterns changed, while expenditures were reduced on purchasing **vegetables by Rs.10-20/day**.

The non - availability of green fodder in the village is always a well known limiting factor. Crop residues are one important source. Also, there is lack of conscious effort to devote exclusive spaces for fodder production. This in turn affects milk output and quality/quantity of Farm Yard Manure. To address the issue, fodder species, carefully selected were introduced to create household fodder banks along with azolla cultivation. Azolla, an aquatic fern, rich in proteins, vitamins and minerals. **serves as alternative** feed supplement to the livestock, positively influencing milk yields and quality..

### 3.5 Introducing forage innovations to improve farm income of woman dairy farmers of Tamil Nadu

Lack of knowledge on various kinds of fodder varieties, access and farming skills are some of the major limiting factors. Farm women regularly are forced to depend on external sources like private retailer, green fodder seller and local market for knowledge as well as supplies of feed including roughages and concentrates. The project supported by DST was implemented in 6 villages in Tiruchi and Perambalur district in Tami Nadu to address this situation.

Farm women belonging to disadvantaged groups from 6 villages in Musiri and Veppur blocks of Tiruchi and Perambalur districts were identified for the project intervention.

PRAs were conducted in all the 6 villages to analyse the ground realities with regard to animal holdings, milk yield potential, existing fodder potential, fodder availability from existing cropping patterns and systems. Data collected included family details; animals per family and their breeds; fodder availability at farm level; daily feed purchases including concentrates; green fodder ratio maintained to feed animals; milk yield, sources of green fodder; varieties of green fodder fed to animals. The difficulties faced by farmers in terms of access and expenses were studied.

The prevalent farm level fodder availability in village was from few sources like sorghum stalks, paddy straw and groundnut haulms. Lack of awareness on various fodder varieties, access to varieties and farming skills, dependence on private retailers for knowledge as well as supplies of feed including roughages and concentrates. raising daily expenses on fodder and feed were some of the issues discussed. Regarding quantities and costs, farmers shared their experience as follows. The quantity of dry fodder given per milch animal/month was 2000 to 3000kgs. The quantity of concentrate feed given per milch animal /month was around 200 to 300 kgs. The milk yield/month was 200 to 350 liters and expenditure incurred per animal/month was found to be Rs.2000 to 3000 based on breed. The income gained by selling the milk varied from Rs. 4000 to 5000/month. Most of the farmers purchased concentrates from outside shop by spending an amount of Rs. 2000-3000/month/animal. Owing to scarcity of green fodder, they were spending indiscriminately in procuring concentrates to feed animals.



*Mrs. Malarkodi harvests Azolla from pit lined with silpaulin*

Sl. No.	Name of villages	Block	Total area covered	
			Irrigated (in acre)	Dry land (in acre)
1	Santhanapatti	Musiri	2.50	6.25
2	Singalanthapuram	Musiri	2.75	8.00
3	Nallavanipatti	Musiri	3.25	7.20
4	Vadakkumadevi	Veppur	3.50	6.50
5	Somandaputhur	Veppur	3.10	5.50
6	Esanai	Veppur	2.65	5.25

The farm women were organized into 6 groups of 25 farmers each. The technological options tried out by the farmers included promotion of fodder species which included Cumbu Napier Hybrid (Co-4 slips), multi cut forage sorghum CoFSH-29, Sudan grass, Desmanthus, Stylosanthes hamata\_grass, Azolla cultivation, tree fodder from Glyricidea, Sesbania as leaf meal, paddy straw enrichment with salt and urea, as well as use of Chaff cutter etc. Trainings were organized in a highly participatory way where farmers tried out options to get convinced. Demonstrations were organized too. Training topics included, fodder seed treatment with biofertilizers, planting of fodder slips of Cumbu Napier (Co-4slips), Azolla production, mixing of harvested azolla with concentrates to feed animals, low cost feed mixture preparation, Chaff cutter operation etc. The trainings conducted focused on cultivation methods, knowledge on nutritional components and importance to feed animals, feeding pattern to animals, balanced nutrition to animals, preservation and utilization techniques of biomass obtained from trees such as glyricidea, Acacia sps. and crops like paddy, groundnut etc.

During the project, 150 fodder banks were established in 6 villages consisting of fodder varieties which included Cumbu Napier (Co-4), CoFs-29, Sudan Sorghum (multi cut fodder sorghum), Desmanthus, Stylosanthes hamata grass besides Azolla production for supporting as feed for 2500 milch cows in 6 villages (25 to 50kgs/day/animal). Besides enhanced milk yield (300to 750ml/animal/day), reduction in feed costs, (15-25/day/animal), farmers gained knowledge in cultivating and stocking them on their farm, even during lean season. Out of 150 farmers, 132 farmers have adopted azolla cultivation in pit method lined with Silpauline sheets, feed their animals daily with harvested azola of 300-500 grams/day and realize 250-500ml of enhanced milk yield per animal/day. Apart from this, the stylo grasses established over bunds in fodder plots acted as good source of fodder to feed their goats. Good quality fodder seed stored at farm household level is about 249kgs (CoFS-29) from 6 villages. Preparing low cost concentrate feed mixture enabled 15 farmers to prepare feed mixture on their own (Cumbu, sesamum cake, rice bran and salt). At the rate of 50kg per head, totally 750kgs of concentrate feed mixture was prepared and used. This enabled them to avoid purchasing concentrates from outside resulting in savings of Rs.13500/- (@900/head/month). In one village, women organized themselves into a dairy collective.

Veterinary University Training and Research Center (VUTRC), Tiruchi was the organization consulted for conducting in-house training on importance of green fodder to dairy animals, cultivation aspects of various fodder crops, its advantages and importance of feeding to dairy animals. The officials from district cooperative milk society were also involved in farmer interactions, meetings at village level and sourced few fodder seeds and slips from them to develop fodder bank in the village.

### Analysing outcomes

In Tiruchi, group meetings were organized in six villages to analyze the progress made in terms of tangible outcomes. The yield data of fodder varieties with 120 farmers in six villages has been collected for analysis. The group members are harvesting daily 20 to 25 kg of CO-4 and COFS green grass which is sufficient to feed their milch cows. The stylo grass, which the farmers are growing on bunds, is being fed to small ruminants. Farmers are now trained on preparing concentrate feed mix by using by-products like Cumbu, Sesamum cake, Rice bran and Salt. Four farmers have prepared 200 kg of feed-mixture on their own, thus making it readily available. They would have incurred a cost of Rs.3600 if they had purchased the same from the market (at Rs.18/kg excluding travel costs).

Several group meetings and training events on Azolla and fodder cultivation were also organized. The problem of fodder availability and the steps to be taken to face the crisis were discussed with group members. Farmers were trained on seed production and maintaining seed at individual level. It was noticed that farmers who have their own fodder banks could feed their livestock and manage sustainable milk production.

### Review meeting

A review meeting in Hyderabad was organized by DST where all partners presented their progress. The workshop was organized by DST at National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The expert committee members were, Dr. Balakrishna Nair from Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, Dr. Shobhana Bhaskaran, Dr. Sudha Nair (former director of MSSRF). The presentation by Mr. J. Krishnan, AUC, AMEF, Dharmapuri, was highly appreciated both in terms of activities and outcomes. The audience included scientists as well as NIN and DST officials.

*Some of the farmer's experiences captured as cases are as follows.*

**Preparation of feed:** The farmers observed that azolla (300-500gms) when mixed with concentrates like rice bran (500gms) is fed to milch cows, enhanced milking capacity, general health as well as addressed infertility problem. This is attributed to composition of feed rich in proteins, essential amino acids, vitamin (A, B12, Beta Carotene), growth promoter and minerals like calcium, phosphorous, potassium, ferrous, copper, magnesium etc. Farm woman, Mrs. Malarkodi happily expressed that her animal having infertility problem was addressed by feeding 300-500gm azolla daily. She started advising others too and plans for making azolla-concentrate mix as product.

**Joint action:** In Singalanthapuram village, 5 women SHG groups came together for cooperative action in purchase of 45 milch cows availing bank loan and reared them in common shed. They could not stand against the expenditure incurred in purchase of concentrates outside, hence, reduced it to 15 animals in 2009 and maintained fodder purchase from external source. AME's intervention through fodder bank establishment supported them a lot in meeting their green fodder requirements and gradually reduced outside purchase. Now, they gained confidence that they can again purchase some more animals with expansion of fodder resources concurrently.

**Varietal preferences:** Ms. Valarmathi, farmer shared their preference for Co4 as follows. Earlier, we struggled to get labour to harvest Co3 Cumbu Napier grass as it contained thorns over leaves and injured the harvesters. But, now Co4 is ideal as it is devoid of thorns as well as preferred by animals for its palatability.

Farmers realized that CoFS-29 fodder sorghum gives more tillers (30-35) which enables repeated cutting/harvest in staggered manner to feed their animals continuously even in lean season in contrast to traditional sorghum crop tillering. One of the farmers said "the green fodder availability is ensured round the year"



### 3.6 LEISA India

LEISA magazine is recognized as the leading magazine for sharing field based experiences in Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture. LEISA India is the regional Indian edition of Agricultures Network of the global LEISA magazines. LEISA India, is being published in English, in collaboration with ILEIA, Netherlands, 4 times in an year. To enlarge the outreach to the grassroots, in 2009, special translated editions were launched in Kannada, Hindi and Tamil. In 2010, two more language editions - Oriya and Telugu were launched.



#### Magazine Production

During this period, four issues of LEISA India magazine were produced

- a) Vol 13, No.2, June 2011 - Trees and Farming
- b) Vol 13, No.3, September 2011 - Regional Food Systems
- c) Vol. 13, No.4, December 2011 – Securing Land Rights
- d) Vol 14, no.1, March 2012 – Insects as allies



The total number of subscribers as of September 2011 is **9628**. Of the total, 97.3% belong to the Indian subcontinent while 2.7% belong to countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Japan, Pakistan, Bhutan etc.

Across various categories, NGOs formed the major chunk with 28%, followed by individuals, and academics with 16% and research institutions with 14% of the total readers. Around 7% of the readers are farmers. Around 3% of the readers are students.

### **English Edition – Print and electronic versions**

For the period April – September 2011, there was support for the programme from ILEIA (budget neutral extension). At the same time, MISEREOR (New funding support) has agreed to support the LEISA India programme with a focus on language editions with limited printed copies of English edition to those groups who cannot afford. Therefore, while till September 2011, the print production was around 9500 copies, for the December 2011 issue, based on support from MISEREOR, the number of printed copies had to be reduced to 2500 copies. Printed copies were provided in addition to those who have voluntarily contributed. Also, importantly were made to provide an electronic version to all those who are interested, but not in a position to contribute for the distribution of the paper edition. Thus, an additional 1200 readers are being reached through an electronic copy. Meanwhile, through additional grant, “Securing Land Rights Issue” was distributed to 3000 readers.

### **Special language editions**

Special language editions are produced two times a year – June and December. These editions include translations of selected articles from the LEISA India English edition. These special editions are primarily being targeted to reach grass root organisations like Farmer associations, CBOs and village level resource centers. The December 2011 issue of the special translated editions in Tamil, Kannada and Hindi, Telugu and Oriya have been produced during this period.

These are brought out in partnership with LEISA India consortium partners and a LEISA enthusiast, Mr. Poornaprajna. Different arrangements have been made for the five language editions. For **Hindi edition**, our consortium partner GEAG has the responsibility of selection of articles, translations, layout, printing and distribution. In case of **Tamil edition**, LEISA Network (Suresh Kanna) is responsible for selection, translation and type setting while layout and production is being taken up by LEISA India team. With **Kannada edition**, translation and proof reading are done by Mr. Poornaprajna, and all other activities are being taken up LEISA India team. The **Telugu edition** is being produced in collaboration with CDAC-Hyderabad. CDAC is a government institution working on dissemination of information on various development sectors (health, education, agriculture, livelihoods etc) in various languages through its website “India Development Gateway”. While the translation support is being provided by CDAC, layout, printing and distribution are being carried out by LEISA India team. The **Oriya edition** is being brought out in collaboration with an NGO called ORRISSA based in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa. ORRISSA is a partner of **MISEREOR**. ORRISSA has taken the responsibility of translation, layout and printing and distribution of the magazine.

The language editions were distributed primarily to grassroots institutions which depend heavily on the local language. The December 2011 issue of all the language editions reached around 4275 readers.

We received a very good and encouraging feedback for all the editions

We had half yearly **Core group meeting** with our consortium partners in a video-conferencing mode during February. In the meeting, the progress was reviewed and joint plans discussed. We also invited a new partner from Andhra Pradesh – Action Fraterna which works for the improvement of farmers livelihoods in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

## **Database management**

Databases are maintained in ACCESS for English edition and language editions separately. By March 2012, the database included 4275 number of readers across various language editions.

## **Website**

All the English language issues have been uploaded on the LEISA India website ([www.leisaindia.org](http://www.leisaindia.org)) and also on the global website of Agricultures Network ([www.theagriculturesnetwork.org](http://www.theagriculturesnetwork.org)). The language editions (Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Oriya) are also uploaded on the LEISA India website.

## **Funding Support**

ILEIA supported the production of three issues of LEISA India for the year 2011, under the budget-neutral extension.

MISEREOR signed an agreement to support LEISA India programme for a 3-year (2011-2013) period with a budget of Rs.90 lakhs. This project support is for the production of 5 language editions and part production of English edition of LEISA India.(2500 copies only).

Support from readers as well as other donors was pursued. NABARD, Hyderabad agreed to provide partial support (Rs.50000 per issue) for the production of two issues of Telugu edition of LEISA India – December 2011 and June 2012.

## **Voluntary contributions reaches 4.25 lakh Indian Rupee mark**

There has been a very good response from the readers for our request to voluntary contributions. We have received more than 4.5 lakh Rupees as contributions from our readers till March 2012. Systems were designed and are being maintained for receiving the contributions. All the contributors are being sent official receipts. A separate account has been created for these contributions.

## **Lessons Learnt**

- The spirit of working in a consortium for producing language editions is working well and has been rewarded with support from MISEREOR. Increased ownership of partners was reflected in the recently concluded video conference and the quality of the production of the editions.
- English edition is being highly respected, language editions are slowly gaining popularity.
- Voluntary contributions trickle down whenever a fresh strategy of appealing is introduced. Thanking readers personally and issuing them receipts has really helped though increasing the work load for the secretary.
- A cautious approach is being used to increase the outreach of English edition as funding is uncertain, while keeping the readers aware of the funding constraints to support free issues.

- LEISA India team is relentlessly pursuing efforts with donors of different backgrounds to support the movement.

Overall, the present period started with lot of uncertainty but improved as we moved along. Commitment and motivation levels of LEISA India team was very high in seeing through several processes and activities. The period was hectic as we got involved in timely production of a) regular magazine, b) special editions, c) coordination of consortium d) preparing proposals e) meeting potential donors f) participating in workshops highlighting relevance of LEISA approaches.

### 3.7 Promoting Agrobiodiversity



Supported by UNDP-GEF programme on the theme biodiversity, AMEF implemented a two year project in Magadi, Karnataka in guiding farming communities to generate and access local seed varieties of major crops of the region by conserving local seeds and establishing a seed bank. The focus was not only on seed conservation but also on promotion of sustainable agriculture practices for improved yields and reduced costs and enlarging the basket of farm related livelihood options.

Under the programme, the activity has been extended budget neutrally till December 2011. Six traditional varieties (Karikaddi ragi, Bonda ragi, Pichhakaddi ragi, Sharvathi ragi Ragalli-Shivalli ragi, Kempu ragi) have been conserved by the project area farmers. Out of all the traditional varieties, Sharvathi Ragi has given good yield (14.5 q/acre). Around 49 farmers are conserving these varieties. The samples have been submitted to the National Institute of Animal Nutrition and Physiology for analysis of nutritive value.

A community owned seed bank building construction has been initiated in November 2011. Farmers have organized themselves as Savandurga Seed Savers Association, opened a separate bank account, mobilized support from the Panchayat to allot land. Gram Panchayat allotted the site for construction of seed bank. The Association is prepared to share the cost of the construction along with GEF funds. Engineering drawings are completed and the construction is going on under the guidance of local engineer and contractor with suggestions from AMEF. An amount of Rs.2.5 lakhs has been allotted so far by GEF. The seed bank building and premises is expected to serve as a place for storing good quality seeds, display information on the performance of each variety as well as to hold group meetings.

Farmers have taken up three traditional Paddy and seven Ragi varieties for cultivation. 54 farmers are practicing SA practices in Ragi. 13 farmers have taken up sun hemp as green manure crop in dry lands. During early showers, 7 farmers took up Cowpea cultivation and also incorporated crop residues into the field. Finances were mobilized from ATMA programme to enable farmers to take up Vermicompost pits.

Shri Sudhir along with Dr. Eshwar Poojar of GEF visited the project area in the month of Nov 2011, interacted with the farmer groups and AMEF team. The evaluation team was highly impressed by the progress made in the project. The Final report has been submitted during January first week. A strong co-financing initiative is a unique feature of the project. Good links have been established with the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Horticulture Departments. The farmer groups have been guided in availing various departmental schemes, consistent with the objectives of the programme. An amount worth Rs.16.8 lakhs has been co-financed from various sources.

The extension plan for the project has been submitted to GEF, four new villages identified and formation of farmer groups completed.

### 3.8 The Growing Connection



In June 2010 'The Growing Connection' (TGC), a project promoting urban home gardens was initiated by AMEF with the support of FAO, Washington. The Growing Connection links people and cultures in a revolutionary campaign that introduces low-cost water efficient and sustainable food growing innovations based on Earth Boxes. Earth Box is highly water efficient gardening system which uses 60% less water as compared to drip system. These boxes can be used virtually in any setting.

Under the The Growing Connection programme for promoting roof top gardens, the second phase of the programme was approved by FAO. While the focus of the first phase was on suitability of Earth Boxes for their utility, the second phase was on popularizing them, if found useful in different locations with diverse user groups.

Thus, earth boxes with growing media have been placed in three new sites - B M English School (students in the age group of 6-15 yrs), Loyola College (Students age group – 6-20 years) and a J P Nagar Residents Association (citizens) JP Nagar, Bangalore. These institutions have volunteered to popularize the concept in their area under their supervision. Gardeners and few staff have been trained to maintain the boxes and monitor the progress. In each site, 20 Earth Boxes have been placed for growing French Beans and Greens. The students were organised as green club members have been growing vegetables, medicinal plants, fruit trees, flowering plants etc. and the citizens (age groups ranging from 20 to 60) are involved in organizing public awareness events on healthy habits which included celebrating Plantations day on 18.11.2011.

The activity was also extended to new site (Ramana Maharshi Academy of Blind School) from January, 2012, where the produce grown was consumed by the children belonging to age group of 6-16.

Final report indicating the popularization efforts was sent to FAO, which was well appreciated.

AMEF continued promotion of urban horticulture interests through conducting training events for citizens of Bangalore on 'Organic Home gardens'. In total 5 trainings (2.4.2011, 4.6.2011, 20.08.2011, 15.10.2011, 17.12.2011) were conducted which were attended by 94 participants which included 39 men and 55 women. AMEF participated in the world environment day, which was organized by ATREE foundation at Bangalore. AMEF also participated in public events - OOTA from your Thota (Food from your own Garden) organised by Garden City Farmers Group on 28.08.2011 and 27.11.2011 where AMEF's initiatives were presented to over 1000 citizens who visited the event.



### 3.9 Educational guidance assignments

#### **SKDRDP**

AMEF has been requested to be a resource organization to **SKDRDP** for a period of two years to provide field guidance as well as documentation guidance in their NABARD supported SRI programme. AMEF Dharwad team and Mr. Joshi from Central Unit were the primary resource persons.

During June 2011, Ms.Sangeeta and Mr.Mayachari visited the fields in 6 villages of Kalaghatagi taluk and interacted with Sevaniratharu regarding implementing SRI. Subsequently, Mr. Pavan Kulkarni, incharge AO of SKDRDP attended the planning meeting at AME Dharwad office on 5th June. A decision was taken to organize one day planning meeting to **Sevaniratharu** of Dharwad region on 6th June. Around 45 farmers of Hulakoppa village of Kalaghatagi taluk were oriented on SRI giving emphasis on integrated nutrient management along with the other principles. Mr.Mayachari and Mr.Noor from AME Foundation facilitated the sessions. Another planning meeting was organised with Sevaniratharu and Agricultural officers of Dharwad region on orientation on SRI principles.

In July 2011, Mr. Vinod and Ms. Lalitha of SKDRDP along with 40 farmers participated in the training on SRI weed and water management at G,Basavanakoppa village. Mr.Veeranagoud facilitated the session. Mr.Mayachari and Mr.Harish from AMEF visited Shiggatti cluster villages and interacted with farmers and demonstrated the use of conoweeder.

During August 2011, a training on water and weed management was given to SRI adopted farmers from SHG groups at Muttagi village by Jagadish of AMEF.

During November 2011, a field day was organized by AMEF at Hulakoppa in which staff and farmers of SKDRDP participated. The SRI farmers shared the benefits of adopting SRI to other farmers.

During December, 2011, Mr. Joshi and Ms.Sangeeta made field visits for two days to villages viz, Indiranagar, Mulkeri in the Shimoga district.

It was observed during the field visits that SRI adoption is receiving positive response by the farming communities in most of the areas. Based on the discussion with SKDRDP team during review on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb.2011 at Belthangadi, the following suggestions are being made for better results – 1) Following proper spacing 2) Use of 5to 8kg seeds per acre 3) Focusing on creating better awareness on pest and disease management 4) Focusing on better conoweeder operations

#### **SDTT**

On request by SDTT for a training to its partners, a three-day training on FFS methodology was organized to the staff of partner NGOs of SDTT partners from North India in Dharwad between 3-5th May 2011.

Subsequently, another three-day training on FFS methodology was organized to the staff of Rural Communes (partner NGOs of SDTT) in August 2011 at Rayagad district of Maharashtra.

## 1. STAFF

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Date of Relief
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3	Joshi B V	CPO-Program Coordn	-
4	Asha R	Secretary - General	-
5	Shobha Maiya	Secretary - Information & Doc.	-
6	Vijayalakshmi S	Secretary - Accounts	31.01.2012
7	Gopalakrishnan R	Driver	-
8	Chikkanna	Attendant	-
<b>Dharwad</b>			
9	Sangeeta R Patil	SA Team Leader	-
10	Prasanna V	Secretary cum Accountant	-
11	Dyapur	Attendant	-

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2	Karibasappa A K	CU	29.02.2012
3	Poornima	CU	-
4	Dr Krishne Gowda K T	CU	30.06.2012
5	Murthy N	CU	-
6	Dr Vishwanath B N	CU	31.12.2011
7	Arunkumar V	CU	-
8	Shivappa	CU	-
9	Lavanya Lakshmi M P	CU	-
10	Savithri Ramakrishna	CU	-
11	Manohar Badiger	Dharwad	30.06.2011
12	Mayachari A	Dharwad	-
13	Mahesh S Hanchinamani	Dharwad	13.06.2011
14	Noor Nawaz A S	Dharwad	30.06.2011
15	Manjunath B	Dharwad	-
16	Karibasamma	Dharwad	31.07.2011
17	Harish H Deshpande	Dharwad	29.02.2012
18	Mustaq H. Nadaf	Dharwad	01.10.2012
19	Dattatreya R. Kalamashetti	Dharwad	21.09.2011

20	Shankarappa K Swamy	Dharwad	-
21	Hanamantha K Akkeri	Dharwad	-
22	Mahesh M Sajjan	Dharwad	-
23	Krishnan J	Dharmapuri	-
24	Prasath K	Dharmapuri	-
25	Charles V A	Dharmapuri	-
26	Balaraman G	Dharmapuri	31.08.2011
27	Jawahar Krishnaraj	Dharmapuri	15.04.2011
28	Venkatesan K	Dharmapuri	-
29	Munirasu M	Dharmapuri	-
30	Narendra P	Anantapur	-
31	Ramesh Kumar B V	Chintamani	-
32	Balakrishna Murthy M R	Bangarpet	-
33	Krishnamurthy B M	Bangarpet	-
34	Lakshman Rao V	Bangarpet	-
35	Venkateshappa C	Bangarpet	-
36	Prasanna Kumar B P	Bangarpet	-
37	Narayana Rao P M	Bangarpet	-

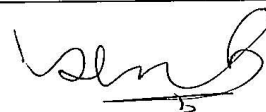
## 2. FINANCE MATTERS

### AME FOUNDATION : BANGALORE

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2012

LIABILITIES	SCHEDULE	Rs.	ASSETS	SCHEDULE	Rs.
FUNDS	1	24,583,685	FIXED ASSETS	3	11,016,105
CURRENT LIABILITIES & PROVISIONS	2		CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS & ADVANCES	4	
<b><u>Sundry Creditors</u></b>					
For Expenses		53,809	Cash at Banks		15,297,929
For Others		260,025	Deposits		125,066
Unutilised Grants		3,519,515	Advances		2,281,628
<b><u>Provisions</u></b>		303,693			
		<u>28,720,727</u>			<u>28,720,727</u>

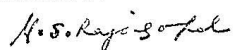
  
CHAIRMAN

  
TREASURER

As per our report of Even Date  
For RAJAGOPAL & BADRI NARAYANAN  
Chartered Accountants

PLACE : BANGALORE  
DATE : 04.07.2012



  
M.S. RAJAGOPAL  
Partner  
M.No.020244  
Firm No.003024S

## AME FOUNDATION : BANGALORE

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2012

EXPENDITURE	Rs.	INCOME	Rs.
To FFS Coordination & Field Guidance	158,382	By Grants Utilised	12,745,334
" Seed Villages Forming	579,023	" Donations	169,960
" Support Cost to NGO's & Others	253,905	" Sale of Books	2,733
" Capacity Building of Farmers	2,706,028	" Educational Training / Resource Fee	
" Distribution Costs	431,061	/ Institutional costs recovered	399,831
" Core Group Meetings	24,818	" Rent Received	417,866
" Magazine Expenses	1,545,401	" Interest from Bank	1,085,593
" Salaries & Provident Fund	3,937,434	" Interest from Income Tax Refund	7,693
" Travelling Expenses	708,090	" Depreciation	588,927
" Postage & Courier	97,552		
" Rent, Electricity, Insurance & Water Charges	383,336		
" Advertisement	2,250		
" Printing & stationery	66,193		
" Telephone / Internet Expenses	124,382		
" Consultancy Fee	1,217,593		
" Public Relations - PR Products	11,030		
" Meeting Expenses	133,258		
" Payment to Auditors	60,944		
" Security Charges	130,093		
" Repairs & Maintenance			
- Vehicles	209,994		
- Equipment, Computer & other Assets	132,535		
	<u>12,913,302</u>	<i>Carried forward</i>	<u>15,417,937</u>






EXPENDITURE	Rs.	INCOME	Rs.
<i>Brought forward</i>	12,913,302	<i>Brought forward</i>	15,417,937
To Office Expenses	226,081		
" Bank Charges	7,963		
" Rates & Taxes	5,815		
" Depreciation	588,927		
" Excess of Income Over Expenditure for the year transferred to General Fund	1,675,849		
	<u>15,417,937</u>		<u>15,417,937</u>

  
CHAIRMAN

  
TREASURER

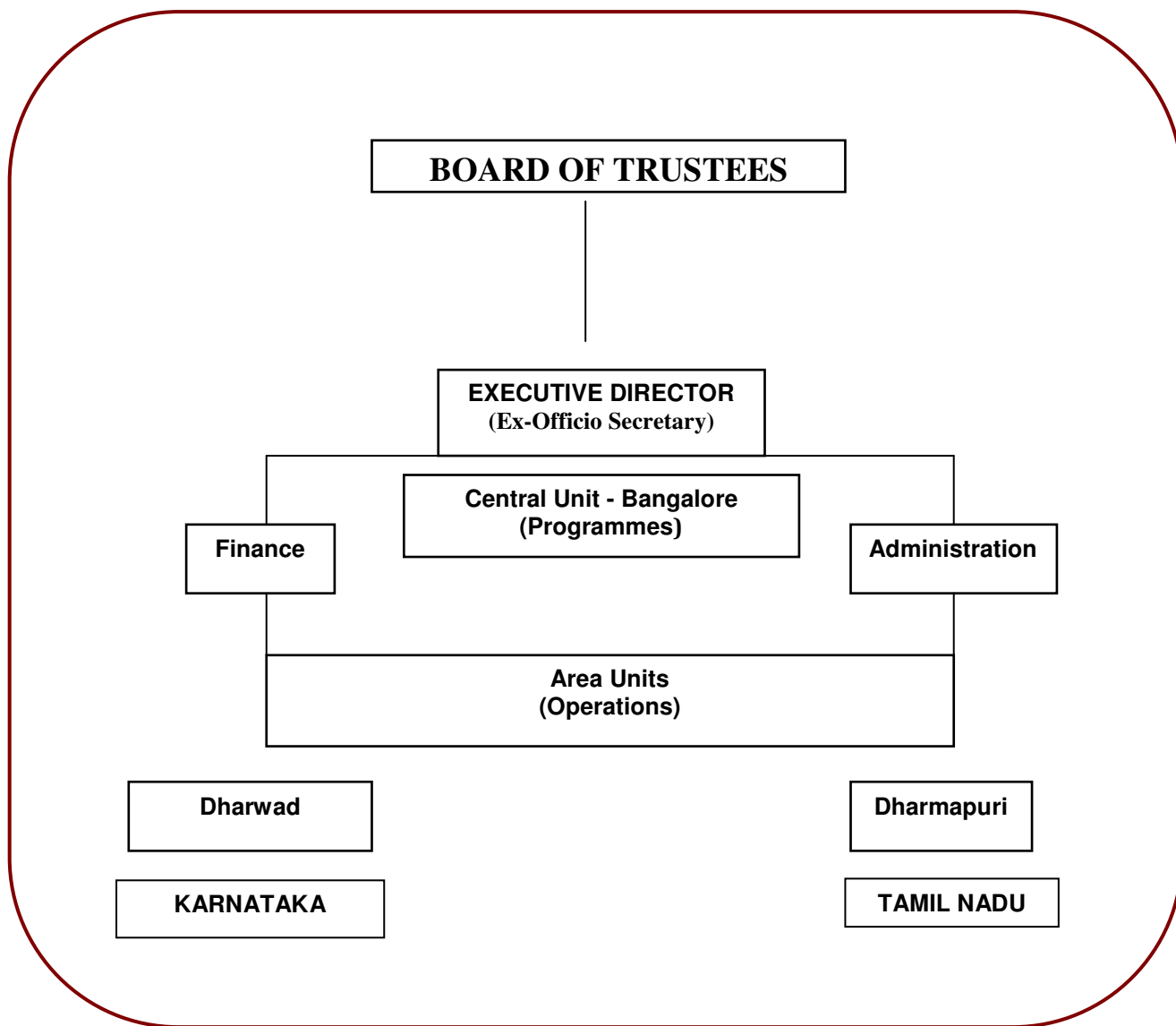
As per our report of Even Date  
For RAJAGOPAL & BADRI NARAYANAN  
Chartered Accountants

  
M.S. RAJAGOPAL  
Partner  
M.No.020244  
Firm No.003024S

PLACE : BANGALORE  
DATE : 04.07.2012



3. ORGANOGRAM OF AME FOUNDATION



#### 4. AMEF OPERATIONAL AREAS

##### Central Unit

No. 204, 100 Feet Ring Road, 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase, Banashankari 2<sup>nd</sup> Block, 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, Bangalore – 560 085

Ph: 080-26699512, 26699522, 26794922, Fax: 080-26699410

Email: amebang@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in; amefbang@amefound.org / [amefbang@yahoo.co.in](mailto:amefbang@yahoo.co.in);  
leisaindia@yahoo.co.in

Website: [www.amefound.org](http://www.amefound.org); [www.leisaindia.org](http://www.leisaindia.org)

##### Area Units

##### **DHARMAPURI**

5/1445, VP Singh Street,  
Elakkiyampatti, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu

Ph: 09842963832

[Josephkrish6383@rediffmail.com](mailto:Josephkrish6383@rediffmail.com)

##### **DHARWAD**

No.39, 1st Main, 2nd Cross  
Behind Shri Ramakrishna Ashram  
Channabasaveswar Nagar (C.B.Nagar)

Dharwad 580 007

Ph: 0836 –2472822

[ame\\_foundation@yahoo.com](mailto:ame_foundation@yahoo.com)

Other operational areas: **Bangarpet, Magadi**

## 5. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Dr. R. Dwarakinath**, Chairman

Former Chairman, Karnataka Agriculture Commission,  
Former Vice Chancellor, UAS, Bangalore

**Shri S. L. Srinivas**, Treasurer

Former Financial Controller, CARE -India

**Dr. Vithal Rajan**

Chairman, Governing Body, Confederation of Voluntary Associations, Hyderabad

**Padmashri Dr. M. Mahadevappa**

Advisor, JSS Rural Development Foundation, Mysore,  
Member, ICAR Governing Body, New Delhi, Former Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad and Former  
Chairman, ASRB

**Dr. N. K. Sanghi**

Adviser - Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN)

**Dr. N. G. Hegde**

Trustee and Principal Adviser  
BAIF Development Research Foundation

**Dr. T. M. Thiagarajan**

Former Director / Dean, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

**Prof. V. Veerabhadraiah**

Former Director of Extension  
University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore

**Sri Chiranjiv Singh**

Former Development Commissioner of Karnataka and Additional Chief Secretary  
Government of Karnataka

**Shri Prasad K V S**, Secretary

Executive Director