



Ensuring Livelihoods with Equity & Dignity



Working for rural development since 1996...



24th
Annual Report
2019-20

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Statutory Auditor : M/s S.L. Chajjad & Associates, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Internal Auditor : M/s L.K. Maheswari & Co. Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Bankers : Bank of Baroda, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

: State Bank of India, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

: AXIS Bank, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

: HDFC Bank, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh



Seasons' Greetings!

We have closed the year with little bit of disruption due to COVID-19 induced lockdown. Lots of operational adjustments, whether rescuing colleagues who got stranded while on travel or moving offices and readjustments of tasks and priorities, had to be accommodated. This was not a very happy situation for year closing.

After the initial shock we not only put things in order but also responded actively in relief operation for the Covid affected rural communities. We mobilized our Farmer Producers' Organisations (FPOs) to step up operation for procurement of wheat from their member farmers to save them from distress selling. Rang De, a peer to peer crowd funding source came forward to provide interest free loan to the FPOs for holding materials on behalf of the farmers. The price of wheat crashed due to supply chain break down. Our Jharkhand Team joined the district administration to manage large number of community kitchens. In all our field locations we joined hands with the Government for the mobilization of wage employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), generating over 23,99,632 employment days between April to June 2020 before the monsoon set in. One of our major interventions was to distribute quality seeds of Soybean, Paddy, Maize, Pulses and vegetables to 72494 farmers in Kharif 2020 season considering that farmers did not have enough money to buy quality seeds. Our sincere thanks to the organisations such as Axis Bank Foundation, HDFC Bank, Laudes Foundation, Bayer Science, Syngenta Foundation, Ernst & Young Foundation and others for their extraordinary support. The struggle to cope with Covid situation continues. The stress in the rural areas is quite visible. Disrupted income flow from migration has hit the families hard. The Public Distribution System and the MGNREGA have done a great service during these trying times.

2019-20 has otherwise been a productive year for ASA. We have completed most of our planned activities for the year. We have entered into an agreement with the Government of Madhya Pradesh for technical assistance to the MGNREGA implementation in eight districts especially for the natural resources development. The Organic farming programme got shot in the arm with export linkage for organic cotton. The FPOs are leading this new venture. There are many more developments during the year which I am happy to share in this 24th Annual Report and hope that you will enjoy reading our stories of change.

We, on behalf of our Board of Trustees, take the opportunity to thank our donors for their generous contribution to continue our work and to all our partners and stakeholders for their continued support and trust in our endeavour. My heartiest gratitude to my colleagues for their extraordinary courage and commitment in fulfilling their responsibilities at this hour of crisis.

Sincerely

Ashis Mondal
Director

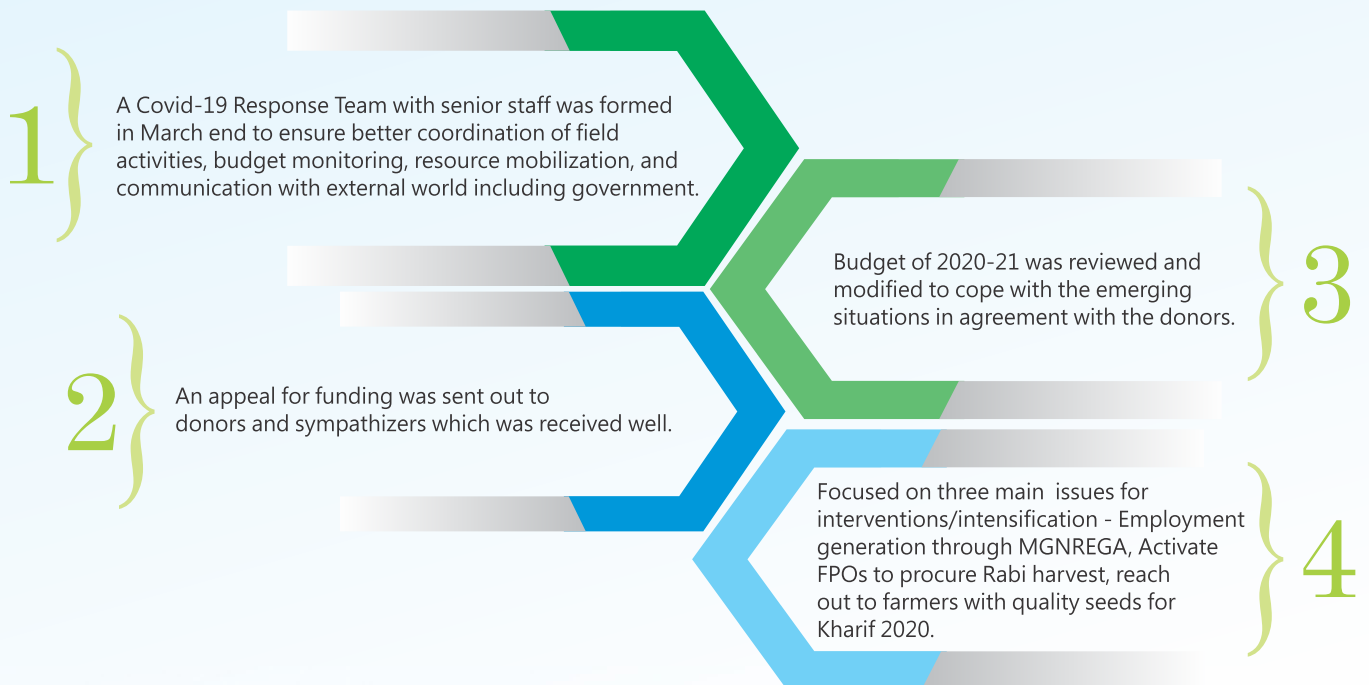
Special note

ASA's response to the emerging situations due to

Covid-19 pandemic

The unprecedented situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic has badly hit the vulnerable sections which includes the small farm holders. They are short on cash, savings, social security and get very little financial support from their own community members. They have been managing their livelihoods with a mix of income sources including income from their own farm, daily wages from casual employment locally, and income from seasonal migration to the big cities. About 50% of the rural income is from the non-agriculture sector, chiefly from the income of seasonal migration, explains the dependency of rural economy on remittances from the migration income. Further the economic lockdown where the markets were closed, purchase and sale of material was absent and no transportation to support business had literally closed all the options of livelihoods even for their meager sustenance.

Key Highlights



MNREGA for employment

- During April-June 2020 23,99,632 person days of employment created for 66,022 households, average 36 person days/households;
- More than 90% spent on NRM activities, in M.P, CG & Jharkhand.
- 20 Block level Teams were engaged in this collaborative projects with Govt.

FPOs to support farmers for marketing of Rabi harvest to save them from distress sale

- A Price Risk Mitigation Fund was created with donation from donors
- Through collaboration with Rang de, a peer to peer crowd funding source, INR 75 Lakh was mobilized as interest free loan by the FPOs for procurement and holding of farmers' materials for future sale.
- 2600 MT of onion procured by FPOs for NAFED under the price stabilization Scheme of Govt.
- 1500 MT of grains and seeds were procured by the FPOs for future sale.

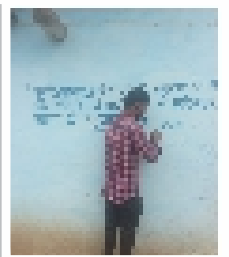
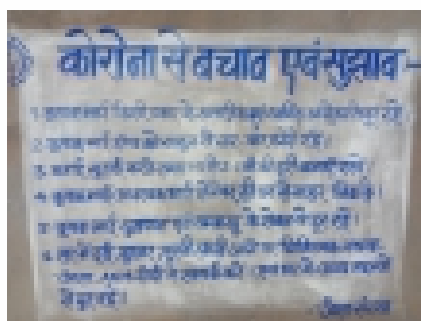
A good campaign to reach out to small farmers with quality seeds for Kharif 2020

- 72494 small and marginal farmers were provided with quality seeds of Soybean, Paddy, Non-GMO Cotton, Maize, Pigeon pea, Minor Millets
- Total investment of INR 5.31 Crore (53.1 Million) supported by eight organizations
- Seed was procured from reputed companies, State Agriculture University and FPOs

Other developments

- Collaborated with Vikas Anveshan Foundation, OXFAM, UNDP, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance for few national and regional level survey for rural areas mainly around the issues related to livelihoods, migration, stress, etc.
- The training methods were changed - making them conducive for digital platform, including changing the training materials

Glimpses of activities in response to Covid-19





Dr. Rita Sharma

Chairperson

Dr. Rita Sharma, a retired member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), served as Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Rural Development. Dr. Sharma was the Secretary to the National Advisory Council in the Prime Minister's Office. She has served in the Board of International Rice Research Institute, Manila, and the ICRAF, Nairobi. Her areas of specialization include development policy and planning, food and livelihoods security, climate-smart agriculture, skill development and empowerment of farm women.

Mr. Ashis Mondal

Director

Ashis Mondal is the founder Director of ASA. His major work experience spanning three decades includes the development of livelihoods for smallholders through natural resource management including sustainable agriculture and promotion of smallholders' organizations for agribusiness. He has significant consulting experience with the World Bank, FAO, Asian Development Bank, Planning Commissions of the Indian States and International NGOs. Ashis has served as member in several national and international advisory committees including the National Advisory Council, Government of India.



Mr. Binoy Acharya

Trustee

Binoy Acharya is the Founder Director of "UNNATI - Organization for Development Education". Binoy has been working as a researcher and public educator to promote social inclusion and democratic local governance. For more than two decades, he has been associated with movements, networks and government forums relating to Dalit rights, gender issues, and decentralized governance.



Ms. G. Jayanthi

Trustee & Program Director (HR)

Jayanthi is a post-graduate in forestry management from the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal. She has more than three decades of experience in the development work. Jayanthi is one of the founding members of ASA. She specializes in community organization, natural resource management, livelihoods promotion, and institutional development. She steers the human resources development activities, Training and communication portfolios in ASA.



Mr. Madan Mohan Upadhyay

Trustee

Madan Mohan Upadhyay, a retired member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) has experience of over thirty years in public service. Mr. Upadhyay served in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in diverse capacities in various departments such as agriculture, rural development, food and civil supplies, health and education. He has written several books on diverse topics. He retired as Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Madhya Pradesh.



Ms. Prema Gera Trustee

Prema Gera is a former Official from the United Nations where she served in different capacities from 2002 to 2013 with the last position being of the Assistant Country Director and Head of the Poverty Program at UNDP India. Prema has over twenty five years of experience in social mobilization, rural development, and women's empowerment. She has been involved in program design, program management, and policy advocacy.



Mr. Samir Ghosh Trustee

Samir Ghosh currently works as a senior consultant with the World Bank and UNDP. He has previously worked as a senior consultant with UNICEF India as Social Planning expert. Samir has also undertaken various projects and research studies for several national and international organizations in social inclusion especially for persons with physical and mental challenges. He has been advising many state governments on matters related to social inclusion policy.



Ms. Soma Dutta Trustee

Soma Dutta, a post-graduate in Rural Management from IRMA, Anand, has been working extensively for about thirty years for energy and sustainable development with a special focus on gender. Soma works as an independent consultant associated with reputed national and international organizations. Asia and Africa are the focus areas of her work.



Mr. Subhash Mittal Trustee

After working as a Chartered Accountant in the United Kingdom and India (with PwC), Subhash chose to work in the social development sector and has been associated with agencies such as UNICEF, World Bank and reputed CSR organisations. His experience includes public project and organization appraisals, financial management, accountability assurance, and public expenditure.



Mr. Subrata Dasgupta Trustee

An alumnus of Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Subrata has been in the financial sector of the IT industry for more than thirty years. He has managed organizations, software development groups, and large projects. Subrata has subject matter expertise in financial solutions, including Retail Banking, Micro-Finance, Stock Exchange, Securities Processing, Custodial Services, and Accounting. After retiring as Associate Director, India/South Asia region in IBM, he has been working as an independent consultant.



Dr. Yogesh Kumar Trustee

Yogesh is the founder Director of "Samarthan- Centre for Development Support", Bhopal, which primarily works for strengthening civil society efforts to promote participatory development and governance in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Samarthan also provides management support to NGOs, facilitates participatory and strategic planning in development programs and engages in research and policy analysis, besides working on strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies.





Mission

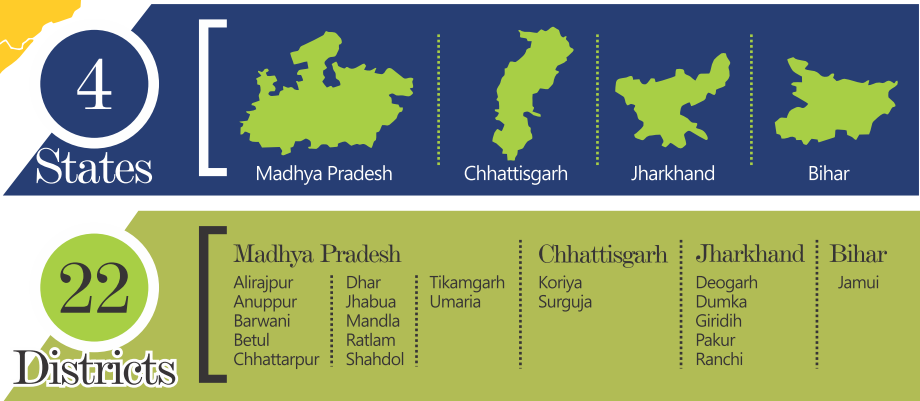
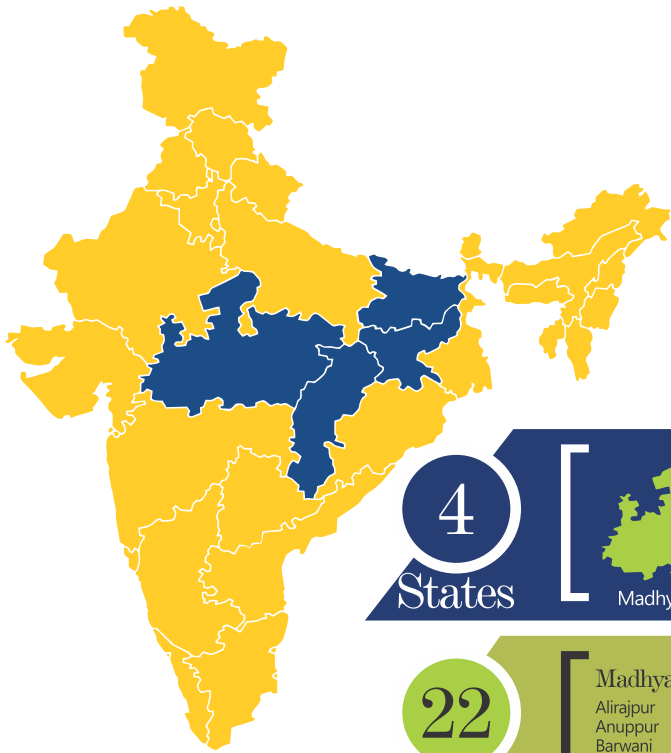
Ensure better living standard for smallholders through natural resources management

Core Values and Objectives

ASA's approach to development is firmly founded upon participatory action at the community level.

At the heart of the organization is the aim of developing livelihoods security, which is facilitated by an intensive participatory process of natural resources development and local institutional development. Particular emphasis is placed upon the poor and women

Outreach & Impact



Our Team is spread across



Comprising of **169** qualified development professional with a range of specializations and **131** barefoot professionals

Our Partners in development (Past & Present)

Acknowledgments for supporting our mission of ensuring livelihoods with equity and dignity for poor

Government

National Organisations

International Organisations

Financial Institutions

Statistical Overview

As on 31st March, 2020

Parameters	Units	Progress 2019-20	Progress (Cumulative)
Districts Covered by ASA's Operation	No.	0	22
Villages Covered by ASA's Operation*	No.	0	2208
Families under Program*	No.	21070	311200
Staff as on 31 March 2020	No.	169	169
Land & Water Resources Development			
○ Area Treated for Soil Conservation	Ha.	0	78545
Water Harvesting Structures			
○ Masonry Stop Dams	No.	13	293
○ Earthen Tanks	No.	4	113
○ Dugout Ponds/Farm Ponds	No.	20	530
○ Group Dug Wells	No.	296	3613
○ Canal Restoration	Running Mtr.	0	31137
○ Group Lift Irrigation	No.	13	170
○ Micro Sprinklers & Drip Irrigation Systems	No.	20	577
○ Shallow Bore wells	No.	407	1497
○ Doha (Sunken Pond)	No.	307	725
○ Irrigation Potential Created	No.	1583	34079
Agriculture Productivity Enhancement			
○ Varieties Tested for Participatory Selection (All Crops)	Ha.	113	380
○ On-farm Trials for Varietal Selection	Ha.	2485	9458
○ Farmers Field Trials on Good Agriculture Practices	No. o Farmers	2576	11385
○ Vegetable Gardens (in 0.1-0.2 Acre plot)	No. o Farmers	13000	35765
○ Farmers Practicing Certified Organic	No. o Farmers	16768	28833
○ Farmers Practicing Responsible Cropping	No.	128984	389058
○ Wadi (Horticulture plots)	No.	100	568
○ Trees on Farm planted	No.	373206	892535
○ Integrated Livestock Development Center	No.	02	22
○ Artificial insemination conducted	No.	2656	5208
○ Cross breed calves born	No.	399	665
Agribusiness Promotion for Small Farmers	No./Members	0/2143* *Members added this year	57/33360
○ Formation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO)			
Self Help Groups	No.	647	5834
Skilling Rural Youth			
○ Rural Youth Trained for Farm/ Non-Farm Employment	No.	454	1986
○ Placement of trained youth	No.	285	1001
○ Agriculture Entrepreneur trained for self-employment	No.	134	230
Credit linked for micro enterprise	No. of Families	1305	1305
○ (Diary, vegetable production, goat rearing, micro enterprise, etc.)			
Community Training			
ASA so far has trained over a million farmers and facilitated their adoption of Good Agriculture Practices, leadership and institution management.			

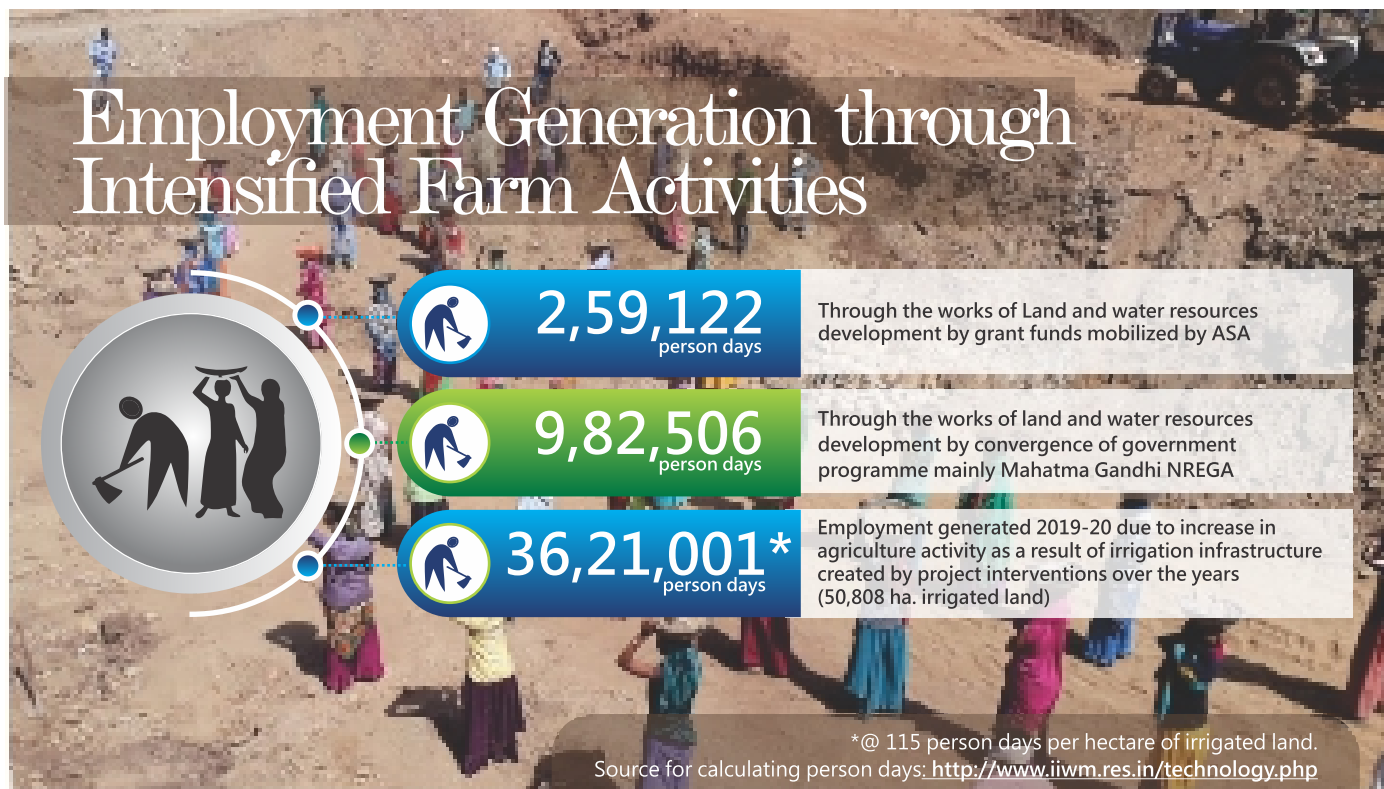
Program Area Profile



However there are certain changes in recent times as follows :

- Agriculture income is significantly supplemented by the non-agricultural income.
- Irrigation facility is also increasing; farmers are shifting to high value crops.
- Technology penetration (seeds of HYV, mulching, drip, vegetables/Horti, pesticides, farm machineries, etc.) is increasing at a faster rate.
- Interface between market & agriculture is more frequent and intensive.
- Mechanization is fast becoming a necessity.

Employment Generation through Intensified Farm Activities



Community Livelihoods Enhancement Model

Land & Water Resources Development
(Focus on Water Resources Development)



ASA is a firm proponent of the belief that natural resources are intrinsically linked to the livelihoods of rural people. The land, water, and vegetation resources are core to agricultural activity, which still supports 60 percent of the Indian population for employment and livelihoods. Hence, their effective preservation and management are of utmost significance. ASA's approach to livelihoods enhancement has evolved from the above scenario and comprises three strands, which are natural resources augmentation, promotion of sustainable agriculture practices for intensification and diversification of agriculture and market access to agriculture (credit, value chain linkages, insurance, etc.). The local community institutions formed by ASA are fundamental to administering this threefold effort. ASA places a special emphasis on the rural poor and the women in this model.

The issues associated with rural livelihoods are complex and interplay of multiple factors. Thus, a multifaceted approach needs to be adopted.

ASA's programs are multipronged and work on:

- Creating a long-lasting asset base at the family and community level as means of production,
- Ensuring institutional support through local community institutions at the primary and secondary level,
- Providing comprehensive solution packages (farm to market), and
- Offering continuous technical support.

We believe the wide-range of our programs and our perseverance in their implementation enables us to achieve livelihoods outcomes that we aim.



Empowering Communities and Building Community Institutions

ASA develops Community Based Organisations (CBOs) with intent to advance the lives of a group of people. CBOs comprising groups such as self help groups (SHGs), Users' groups, Farmer Producer Organizations form the bedrock of all the programs in ASA. These groups are focused on different activities spanning from savings and access to credit to livelihoods to other development activities. They perform an essential role in realizing the goals of various programs facilitated by ASA for securing their livelihoods.

Acknowledging and building on the central role of women in bringing about development in their communities, 98 percent of the SHGs promoted by ASA are women SHGs.

The SHGs are the fundamental platform for women to team up to reverse their position of marginalization at the household and community level to one that facilitates their evolution in confident individuals taking on greater roles within their family and community.

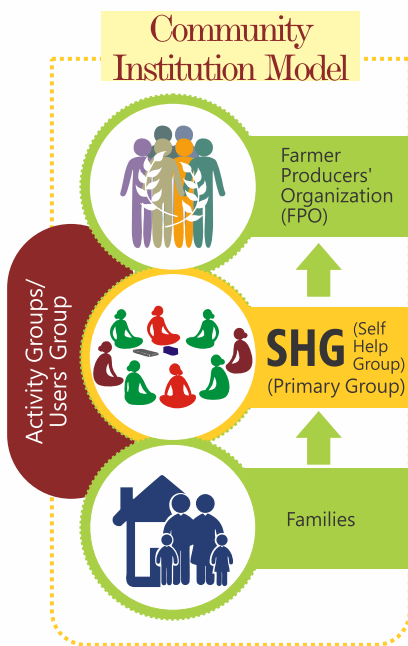
An SHG promoted by ASA is a small group, typically composed of 12-15 women from the same settlement. The activities of an SHG kick off with the members making small regular savings contribution and extending low-volume loans among themselves. As the SHGs mature, they are linked to banks to take care of their larger credit needs. Apart from enhancing their social standing, the SHGs make a vital contribution in providing financial independence to women members. For effective management and building capacities of the SHGs, ASA identifies barefoot professionals within the communities. The barefoot professionals are tasked with conducting regular SHG meetings, maintaining their books of accounts and are paid on an assignment basis. A software is used to store all the data on SHGs for easy access, analysis, and feedback on a real-time basis.

The concept of "**Samuh Didi**" was introduced where in one among the SHG members will take the reins of the SHG to manage the book keeping and other activities around the SHG. Identification and training of such cadres was undertaken during the year.



Self Help Groups	Progress 2018-19	PROGRESS 2019-20	Cumulative Progress
No. of Women SHGs Formed	1084	647	5834
Total Members	11,389	7180	66,684
Total Savings mobilized (₹)	1,38,38,760	1,30,24,513	7,93,10,562
Total Internal Loan Given (₹)	75,25,106	1,31,43,070	7,46,08,943
Bank Loan Received (No./₹)	591/4,09,07,763	678/6,52,35,000	1611/18,09,81,886

During the year 2019-20, 647 SHGs were formed/ revived. The accumulated savings of 5834 ASA promoted SHGs stands at INR 7,93,10,562 till March, 2020. During the reporting period, ASA also facilitated bank credit linkage for 678 SHGs for an amount of INR 6,52,35,000.



Another step in the direction of digitization of SHGs during the year was the ASA's partnership with the project E-Shakti, which is a pilot initiative of Micro Credit and Innovations Department of NABARD. The project aims to bring all SHG members under the fold of financial inclusion thereby helping them access wider range of financial services. Under this collaboration, for Mandla district, ASA facilitated digitization of the data of SHGs, which has been uploaded in NABARD's E-Shakti software. These SHGs have also been covered under Government of India's Social Security scheme.

Community Institutions	Progress 2018-19	Progress 2019-20	Cumulative Progress
Watershed Development Committee (Nos./ members)	1/8	0	150/1998
Water Users' Group (Nos./ members)*	4/223	31/870	681/7389
Water Users' Association (Nos./ members)	0	0	11/4200
Lift Irrigation Groups (Nos./ members)	17/306	13/222	170/2519

* Groups managing water bodies like stop dam and earthen tanks

Over the course of the reporting period, ASA organized **410 training programs** for **40960 SHG leaders** on savings, leadership development, documentation of records, credit linkage, livelihood activities, and to resolve social issues. Different Trainings of Trainers (TOT) on SHG development were also held across project locations.



A mega convention (Maha Sammelan) of FPO leaders was organized for three days in Kesla, Hosangabad, M.P. This was participated by more than 600 FPO leaders, mostly women, across the states of M.P, CG, Jharkhand and Bihar. The purpose was to promote cross learning, solidarity and vowing allegiance to the common charter. The event was named "**Bandhan**" to signify unification.

Local Youth Groomed as "Front Line Workers"

To ensure prolonged and efficient service delivery to the members, ASA has entwined its various CBOs with the Agriculture Entrepreneurs (AE), who are local youth identified and trained by ASA. ASA has devised a systematic on-boarding process for these professionals, who go through an intensive on the job training followed by a growth trajectory. Since they are from within the communities and go through a well-defined absorption program, their integration in their roles of technical experts and technology agent serving their community is seamless. Moreover, the strategy also ensures local-level job creation. Each AE is nurtured to cater to about 200-300 farmers. The AEs are paid based on the tasks performed and have been trained to try out various innovative approaches in service delivery. During the year, 134 AEs have worked in ASA programme.



Soft Skills Training for Rural Youth to Enhance their Employability

ASA launched a program focused on rural youth aged between 18 to 30 years under the flagship of "Skilling Rural Youth" with the assistance of the Ernst & Young Foundation (EYF) in year 2017. ASA delivers this project in Mandla and Anuppur districts in eastern M. P. and in Barwani and Jhabua districts in western M.P. The project endeavors to help employable young people establish themselves in an environment of competitive job scenario by equipping them with skills in different vocations coupled with soft skills in an interactive learning and mentoring environment. The project also works on providing access to employment opportunities to the youth.

The project in its final year has resulted in different positive outcomes. These include the pursuit of higher education by the employed candidates alongside their jobs unlike earlier, thus raising their aspirations and career goals. The project has more importantly encouraged a lot of female candidates to come forward and undertake training, thus, actualizing their professional aims. Providing a sense of purpose and means to achieve the same, the project has led to an environment of overall positivity among the youth.



Progress as on 31st March 2020

1986

Youth
Trained

1001

Youth
Employed

716

Youth
Retained

The skilled were placed in companies like :



Other Programmatic Interventions :

Not as core programme but as associated programmes ASA intervenes in the areas of community drinking water projects, micro enterprise development and sanitation projects. These are taken up as associated programmes depending upon the need of the area and demand by the donors. Following are the glimpses of such associated programmes carried out in 2019-20.

