

**ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN INTEGRATED
MASSIVE SOCIAL ACTION**

AHIMSA

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



DEDICATED TO OUR BELOVED FOUNDER LATE MR. P. A. IGNACY

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From the Director's Desk



It is my immense pleasure in presenting the Annual Report for the first time after taking the responsibility as Executive Director of AHIMSA after the demise of Mr. P. A. Ignacy, the Founder of AHIMSA who passed away on 10.06.2019. We dedicate this report to our beloved founder. We are confident that his blessings from the heaven will give us newer strength, commitment and dedication to continue our work for the most disadvantaged section in the society and show us the right path to fulfil the vision of AHIMSA that he dreamt.

Building upon three decades of AHIMSA's engagement with rural people, especially the marginalized farmers, underprivileged women and children, grassroot volunteers, we are pleased to present this Annual Report for the year 2019-20. We present this report at times of an unprecedented global health crisis in the form of Covid 19 pandemic, economic crisis fuelled by current unsustainable policies and paradigms and their implications for rural residents, livelihoods, ecologies and geographies. These developments, particularly in the rural and agrarian sectors, which have been reinforced in the past few years by changes in the non-farm sector of the rural economy, have given rise to unprecedented rural distress.

Rural distress has several other manifestations like rising numbers of suicides, pervasive under-nutrition among women and children, growing disease burden and rising healthcare costs. The flows of finance, people, resources, technologies and waste are reshaping the rural-urban relationship with serious implications for ecology, health and society. It is necessary to understand that the rural economy is an integral part of a larger ecosystem. The economy of rural and agrarian India has been based on extractive relationships with the environment and natural resources and unfortunately the modern industrial agriculture has refused to acknowledge the true value of these resources.

In the above context, AHIMSA is trying reshaping the pattern of production and consumptions through an understanding of the framework of co-existence or interdependence. AHIMSA is trying to address these issues with the perspective centred around agro-ecology and agriculture knowledge systems and practices of local communities with insights from the science. This has led to the increase in the range of activities that AHIMSA has undertaken in the recent past. Our interventions on the ground with the communities during the year has created concrete models which inspires others for replication.

Apart from identifying ways and means of sustainable livelihoods, the organization has focused its efforts in identifying the root causes of ecological imbalance in the area. Water management and sustainable farming practices have also been in focus, leading to the emergence of a more confident farming community in the region. It has certainly not been an easy task to get the buy-in of farmers who have been dependent on more invasive farming techniques – now they are beginning to realize that a back-to-the-basics approach is designed to make them more self-sufficient and environmentally conscious at the same time. Our efforts in the last three decades are in strengthening farmers and women capacities in establishing socially just, self-sufficient pesticide free villages.

This report narrates our interventions and the impacts created and learning gained during the year April 2019 to March 2020. We take this opportunity to thank the people, especially farmers, women, children, community leaders, local panchayat leaders, government officials of various departments for their solid support on their respective part in achieving the desirable goal. We also thank all our funding agencies for their confidence on our work, generous financial support and above all for their guidance, support and cooperation. We thank all the team members of AHIMSA, volunteers in villages and the Board for their commitment and hard work. We look forward your continuous support in our journey in building sustainable food societies.

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Executive Director,

AHIMSA

The AHIMSA Philosophy

AHIMSA envisions the creation & sustainability of self-reliant communities, where food security is a workable reality, climate change impact is mitigated, education & employability are guaranteed, and people lead empowered lives, free from exploitation, social evils and discrimination.

To achieve this vision, AHIMSA encourages its members to imbibe and sustain these core values:

- Dedication – applying knowledge and skill in a concerted effort to achieve set targets
- Responsibility – implementing assigned duties with a deep sense of accountability
- Empathy – stepping into the shoes of every beneficiary to fully understand and address challenges faced
- Resourcefulness – creatively utilizing available resources with the vision of the organization and the needs of the project in mind

Project Activities

All funded project activities of AHIMSA have been in line with the philosophy of the organization and its developmental goals. Funding has been generated from two important sources: - Institutional – Collaborative. In the year being reported, funding was mainly from institutions; operational expenses were met from the Corpus fund that AHIMSA has striven to maintain, with every passing year. During the reporting year, AHIMSA has got 2 important institutional funding support. One is from KNCY, JAPAN and the other is from Salvatorian Relief Action, Germany.

Institutional Funding Support 1:

Resilience to Drought through Biodiversity and Greening – Supported by KNCF Japan

KNCF – Japan is one of the valued development partners for AHIMSA for the last couple of years. During 2019-2020, they continued to extend their support to AHIMSA to the project titled "Resilience to Drought through Biodiversity and Greening". The prime objective of this project is creating conditions conducive for small and marginal farmers to enhance their agriculture productivity and livelihood

security in addition to sensitizing communities in conservation of village natural resources around Manapaaparai Taluk of Trichy District, Tamil Nadu.

The followings are specific objectives of the project:

- To improve and increase the production of timbers, fodder and wild life resource
- To enhance the ground water recharge through micro water-shed projects in the farmers' fields.
- To mitigate the adverse effects of drought on crops and livestock of small and marginal farmers.

To fulfill the prime and specific objectives of the project, AHIMSA has implemented the following activities on ground.

Training farmers in Rain water harvesting:

Rainwater harvesting in crop field is an essential and sustainable process that helps in preserving rain water for different agricultural and domestic purposes like drinking and for the future needs. Digging of farm pond in a specific area of the crop field is extremely useful for



collecting and storing of rainwater from the land surface during rainy days. Farm ponds helps in recharge of ground water and enhance the upward trend of ground water level.

In order to explain the importance of rain water harvesting and the effectiveness of digging farm ponds, AHIMSA organized 2 sensitization trainings for 2 batches of farmers belonging to 2 villages namely Thoppanayakkanpatti and Kumaravadi. Around 44 participants from the above village have participated in the training.

Training on Ground water replenishing Techniques:



Groundwater recharge or deep drainage or deep percolation is a hydrologic process, where water moves downward from surface water to groundwater. Recharge is the primary method through which water enters an aquifer. Replenishment of infiltrating groundwater is known as recharge.

Discharge of groundwater occurs when water emerges from the ground. Properly identifying the recharge area is critical in groundwater protection because the introduction of contaminants within the recharge area can cause aquifer contamination. In the above context, we organized a one day workshop for 2 batches in Lakshampatti and Thulukkampatti villages benefiting 42 farmers in the month of August 2019.

Digging of Farm Ponds on individual farmer's field:



"Water, the most crucial resource for sustainable agricultural production in the dry land/rain fed areas, is not being used fully. Much of the rainfall runs off the ground. The runoff does not only causes loss of water but it also washes away precious top soil," The success led to huge demand from all farmers in the region for more such big ponds

and two other farmers from the neighbouring fields came forward to dig similar ponds in their own farm land.

AHIMSA invited applications from farmers who are members of Farmers Groups. Of the 7 farmers groups, 60 applications were received. AHIMSA made a feasibility study and short listed 40 eligible farmers. During the first six-month 20 farm ponds

were excavated and the remaining 20 farm ponds have been excavated. Totally 40 farmers belonging to 8 villages have benefited from this activity. The farmers have been supported in marking the right place on their farm lands with the help of technical experts and digging was done by engaging private Earth movers. The entire work was carried out with the supervision of a 5-member committee from the beneficiaries. The work commenced on 15th January and was completed on 10th February 2020. The farmers too paid a nominal amount up to 20% to meet out the extra hours of work by the earth movers. They too rendered their labour partially to complete the work to their satisfaction. In the month of February 2020, we have organized a follow up training to these beneficiaries on rain water harvesting and its utility values. In this training 25 participants from 7 villages were participated.

Impacts:

This training on water harvesting has sensitized the target people on the importance of rain water harvesting on the field through farm ponds. A total of 40 farm ponds with the size of 15 feet breath x 20 feet length and 5 feet depth has been excavated benefiting 40 farmers. The farmers observed that the farm ponds have helped them in multiple



ways. Apart from the long-term effect in recharge of ground water level in the field. Few farmers started fish culture as an additional income from the farm, few of them planted trees with fodder and timber value around the bunds of farm ponds.

The availability of water for longer period in the farm ponds not only makes the farmers happy but also the farm animals and cattle as it fulfills their drinking water needs. The harvest of rainwater in the farm ponds has helped few farmers to go with short term vegetable crops and greens which has helped for the farm family nutritional security. The farmers are happy that they could cultivate crops even in summer.

Farmers in the neighborhoods also visiting the farm ponds and they got interested in digging farm ponds on their field also. AHIMSA is taking these examples and sharing

it with local Political parties and pressurized the party leaders to give priority to desilting of water bodies to get the support of farming communities.

Now the government has announced desilting of water bodies in the rural areas. In the recent rain, many farm ponds collected and stored water for a few days. Being the new ones, the small amount of rain water was quickly discharged. Farmers believe that in the next time, the farm ponds would hold more water which they could use for cultivation. Overall, the impacts created by the project has increased the visibility of AHIMSA as an organization in promoting sustainable practices in addressing the issues related with rural water crisis.

Institutional Funding Support 2:

Restoration of cultivation in rain fed lands thru organic indigenous millets, pulses and oil seeds cultivation in 5 villages by marginal women farmers – Funded by Salvatorian Relief Action.

The aim of the project was to restore the confidence, hopes of the marginal farmers in 5 villages in agriculture as a means of livelihood through the cultivation of indigenous millets, pulses and oil seeds in their lands for sustainable development.

Key activities implemented:

The project was implemented in the following 5 villages, namely Kambalathupatti, Karungulam, Kumaravadi, Lakshampatti and Purathakudi in Vaiyampatti Block of Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu, India. In each of the above villages, we have selected 10 women farmers who are willing to cultivate small and minor millets, pulses and oil seeds under rainfed condition. The project beneficiaries were supported on 4 key areas.

1. On production side – Support for seed



On the production side, the support has been provided for the purchase of required seed of millets, pulses and oil seeds. Through this project, AHIMSA supported these 50 farmers for the purchase seeds of 5 Kgs of Kodo Millet and 5 Kgs of Barnyard millet seeds to each

farmer for the cultivation in their lands covering an area of 1 acre. The seeds are purchased from farmers cultivating millets and pulses through the network NGOs with whom AHIMSA is associated. Before purchasing the seeds, samples have been collected and they were tested for its germination capacity. Seeds with 80% germination rate have been purchased for the distribution. Each of the 50 farmers were also supported to cultivate 2 Kgs of Red gram and Cowpea as intercrop along with the 2 millets. They were also supported with 2 kgs of Castor on the boundaries as Oil seeds.

2. On production side – Support for bio-input

Apart from seed cost support, each of the 50 farmers were also supported for the purchase of 100 Kgs of vermicompost and use it for their crop land as basal fertilizer. We provided this support to farmers as an encouragement and motivation to adopt ecological and soil regenerative action in the farm lands



through the application of vermicompost. While providing the vermi-compost, we also demonstrated the methods on how they could use the crop and animal waste and convert it into vermi-compost.

3. Material support with containers, hand sprayer.

One of the constrains for farmers in adopting sustainable agriculture practices, especially in bio-manure and herbal pest repellent mixtures is the non-availability of



containers. To make that facility available for the project beneficiaries, through this project, AHIMSA supported all beneficiaries with 3 different plastic drums for the production of Fish Amino Acid (Fish Mixture), panchakaviya and herbal pest repellent mixtures to the worth of Rs. 1500 per farmers. They were also explained how these bio

manures are supporting the increase of microbial action in the soil and thereby bring soil health and how the bio-manures like Panchakaviya playing the role of plant growth promoter and the herbal pest repellent mixtures is keep the pest away from affecting/damaging the crop.

After the preparation of bio-manure by the farmers themselves, there are in need of sprayer which is very much required to avoid the wastage of herbal pest repellent mixtures as well as spraying the solution all the infected parts of the plant. Hence, in each village 2 hand sprayers were purchased for the use of 5 farmers to share among themselves. In total, 10 hand sprayers with battery backup were purchased and each worth of Rs. 1800/-

4. Machinery support for processing and value addition:

As the facilities for processing of millets are not available in the vicinity of the project villages, we have also included a component for the setting up of a processing unit for millets and pulses. To meet out the processing needs of the products, AHIMSA supported the project beneficiaries by providing a machinery unit comprised with the provision of one-de huller and de-stoner and a grader machine to do process and value addition of millets with the worth of around Rs. 1,20,000/-. This unit was erected in Vaiyampatti village which is easily accessible and reachable by all the 50 farmers from 5 villages of the project.



Impacts:



The participating farmers have an increased their knowledge and understanding on the benefits of millets cultivation and the advantages of cultivating it with intercrops and also experienced the benefits of intercrops and oil seeds as additional source for their food and nutritional security.

The farmers also understand the role of intercrops and the benefits of multi-cropping in one field with a combination and its effectiveness in managing the pest in an eco-friendly way.

They have also learnt to prepare their own bio manures like panchakaviya, fish amino acids, herbal pest repellent mixtures using the locally available plant and animal resources. They also realized the importance of integrated agriculture system in combating climate crisis. They farmers found that containers that distributed in the project for bio manure production have been extremely useful as it has reduced their external dependency and expenses.



Similarly, the provision of hand sprayer was also useful to spray the liquid manures and herbal pest repellent mixtures without much wastage. There is a collective action and collective sharing of resources and collective sharing of knowledge among farmers. Women farmers initiatives in this project has increase their respect among their

male counterparts in their family, not only for their choice of eco-friendly agriculture practices, but also their focus on producing for their family food and nutritional needs through millet cultivation.

The setting up of machinery to process the millets was extremely useful for the farmers to process the millets. Otherwise, it will be a major challenge for them to continue with millet cultivation. Now, they have assured with the support of processing facilities and the women also learnt the skills of its operation, maintenance and they themselves fix the responsibility and collective ownership of the machinery for the benefits of more and more farmers in the villages.



With the cultivation of millets, the children in the farm family are able to get nutritious and fibre-based diet through millet consumption. Similarly, the livestock of the farm family also enjoyed the alternate and nutritious source of fodder from the stalk of millets and pulses.

AHIMSA-GENERAL FUND PROGRAMME FOR 2019-2020

1. MICROGRAAM- Micro Credit Activities

Together with the partnership of MICROGRAAM, AHIMSA has been facilitating Micro Credit Activities in its target panchayats in Trichy and Karur District. Being an organization involved in promotion of sustainable agriculture, AHIMSA is very particular that the micro credit activities should enhance the livelihood options and income generation of its target people in the above 2 districts. Hence, the borrowers have been well oriented before the distribution of loan that they should invest the loan amount on productive purposes. Through MICROGRAAM, around 53 beneficiaries have availed the loan and around 34 beneficiaries have invested in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry related activities and the rest of them availed for educational, tailoring and small businesses like petty shops. A total worth of Rs. 20,00,000 loan has been distributed to 53 beneficiaries and the details are given below. The entire loan lending and prepayment processes are directly between the respective borrower's bank account and MICROGRAAM and the role of AHIMSA is confined with identification of beneficiaries, ensuring the credibility of the borrowers, preparation of documents for submission of loans, follow up on the loan recovery and remittance to MICROGRAAM. In addition, AHIMSA playing a major role in orientation of JLGs and its members on the investment of loan on productive purposes.

S.LNO	DISTRICTS	PANCHAYATS	JLG	BORROWERS	TOTAL LOAN (Rs)
1	TRICHY	K. PUDUKOTTAI	1	7	2,00,000.00
2	TRICHY	VAIYAMPATTY	1	5	1,50,000.00
3	TRICHY	PALAYAKOPTTAI	2	10	5,00,000.00
4	TRICHY	NADU PATTY	1	5	1,50,000.00
5	KARUR	KADAVOOR	2	10	5,00,000.00
6	KARUR	D. EDIAYA PATTY	3	16	5,00,000.00
			10	53	20,00,000.00

Awareness on Health and Sanitation for Scavengers:

Sanitation workers provide an essential public service but often at the cost of their dignity, safety, health, and living conditions. They are some of the most vulnerable workers. They are far too often invisible, unquantified, and ostracized, and many of the challenges they face stem from this fundamental lack of acknowledgment. Sanitation workers are exposed to serious occupational and environmental health hazards risking illness, injury, and death. In order to enhance their knowledge on maintaining their own health and hygiene, AHIMSA organized a one-day awareness program on Health and Sanitation for them.

Formation of Youth Farmers Groups (YFG)

AHIMSA is always believing the power of youth and hence it has a very good rapport with youth in its working areas of around 10 panchayats in Vaiyampatti block of Trichy district, Tamil Nadu. In an effort to organize them as vibrant Youth Farmers Groups, AHIMSA organized few green initiatives to advance agro-ecology in the target villages. They have been oriented on their role in greening the villages, management of village commons, preparation of bio inputs and demonstration of sustainable practices in their villages and conservations of traditional seeds and setting up of community seed banks. As a result of this, youth farmers have organized in 10 villages and started activities like tree plantations and engaging people in water resource mapping exercises.

Orientation on Farmers Producers Company (FPC)

AHIMSA is predominantly working with resource poor small farmers in promoting sustainable agriculture practices. This has helped them in reducing their external input needs which led to reduction of cultivation cost. However, they are not happy as their profits in agriculture goes down and one of the reasons for that is the exploitation they faced in the market by the middleman. AHIMSA has been discussing with farmers on the need for collective approaches among themselves. Government is also encouraging farmers to come together and start Farmers Producers Company in a big way through NABARD and other institutions. Considering this, AHIMSA organized a one-day orientation program with key leaders of farmers groups. During the orientation, they were explained in detail on the supply chain, different actors in the supply chain and where the farmers are exploited in the supply chain, why they need an organization like FPO and how it

offers opportunity for them to enhance their skills of bargaining power and to compete and collaborate with other business organizations.

Summer coaching for School Going Children

250 school going children of Vaiyampatti block were given the opportunity to attend summer camps in the month of May 2018. These monthlong summer camps were organized on daily schedule in 10 villages. 20-25 children turned up and benefitted at each centre; a total of 250 children benefitted. Children were given writing materials such as, crayons, colour pencils, charts, notebooks, drawing notebooks. Children were given guidance on how to draw and paint using the available materials. In addition to the writing and painting that was encouraged, a few



story books, motivational books and also some books that helped children brainstorm on various topics were given to the children. They were able to go through the books and gain knowledge and exposure, thereby relating their experiences to the real world. Initially, most of the children were reluctant to attend the summer camp – as they thought they would be missing out on their summer vacation. After coming to the camp and participating in the various activities, they realized that in addition to having a lot of fun, they got to learn quite a few skills as well.

Training & Development

As a developmental organization, AHIMSA has, over the years, managed to put in place need-based training and development programs that are meant for specific groups of people. In line with this, training has been carried out for the following people: (a) Volunteers for various project activities (b) Staff belonging to AHIMSA (c) Leadership & Progression training for the core team

Resource Mobilisation & Management

Infra As there was no specific need for adding to the existing infra, there was not expenditure in this area. However, maintenance work was undertaken to ensure

that the available physical infra presented a clean, sturdy and professional appearance.

Human Resources:

Apart from the staff who carry out the various operations of AHIMSA, the organization has always prided itself on being able to mobilize volunteers for various projects. Given below is the count of volunteers mobilized for specific purposes:

Networking

Networking is the key to developmental activity, irrespective of the geographical location and target group. AHIMSA has always maintained this in all project activities. In its long years of existence, this organization has formed lasting relationships with other leading NGOs and forums. This has led to AHIMSA being recognized as a dependable partner, always eager to contribute to the uplift and development of marginalized communities.

These are the organizations with whom AHIMSA has ongoing collaborations: 1. BERAS International - <http://beras.eu/> 2. LEISA Network - <https://leisaindia.org/> 3. SAGE – (Southern Action on Genetic Engineering) 4. SAM – (Social Action Movement) 5. JASuL – (Joint Action for Sustainable Livelihood) 6. TNEC – (Tamil Nadu Environment Council) 6.0 Documentation,

News & Publications

Apart from routine documentation of all activities, budgets and resource mobilization, AHIMSA has not presented any of its achievements in the local media. The organization has been well represented at various forums and associations to support worthy causes and be of tangible support to collaborators & associates.

The way forward and future plans:

- AHIMSA is planning to organize training for women farmers by introducing millet-based health recipes to address the issues around hidden hunger in rural area. AHIMSA is also looking for partnership in setting up a seed conservation centre for millets and pulses for wider sharing and replication of many more farmers who are depended on rainfed agriculture.

- COVID-19 Pandemic situation demands the need for immunity building through proper, nutritionally rich diet system. AHIMSA believes that the revival of cultivation and consumption of small and minor millets and pulses can combat the humanity from this current health crisis and can be one of the farming solutions to the crisis.
- Considering the immense and multiple benefits of farm ponds, AHIMSA is planning to motivate the farmers on how they could strengthen the bunds of farm ponds by planting grass varieties like Vettiver which helps as soil binders and preventing the soil erosion.
- Exploring and tapping digital media solutions to support the growth & popularity of the organization
- Introducing projects that touch a chord with the youth so that volunteering becomes a part of their everyday lives
- Work In partnership with likeminded organizations, to widen the scope of operations. Put in place a research and development facility that incorporates study with real-life experiences – this would be the field of agriculture, farming and use of indigenous materials
- Prioritize skill enhancement at multiple levels (in schools, colleges and training institutes) so that higher order thinking leads to innovative and breakthrough ideas in various fields and sectors
- Formation of Farmer Producer Company and approaching NABARD for a project on a series of training, exposures and other capacity building programs.

Conclusion

The NGO sector in India is currently in a state of flux, coping with mandatory regulations and funding crunches. It has always been the objective of AHIMSA to think ahead and redefine its stance, so that there is perceptible and long-lasting change that is brought about through its activities. There has been a great deal of reflection, which has in turn led to more result-oriented planning and resource management. With this as a background the core team of AHIMSA is looking at evolving a strategy that helps them change with the times and develop a SMART plan that could take the organization to the next level.