**Prologue: Villages are considered as the heart of India. Villages are definitely our strength.** **70 % of India’s population lives in Villages and 47% of the Village population are living Below Poverty Line (BPL) status. Several welfare programmes are designed by the Government for the up-liftment of the rural poor, but they are not reaching the deserving poor in Villages due to politicization. Our idea is to promote Better Villages through Cluster approach with 4 Es.**

**Better Villages for a Better World / Better Life / Better Future through Empowerment, Enlightenment, Environment & Enjoyment through “Cluster” approach.**

**The VILLAGE CLUSTER Approach for Better Villages for Better Future:**

1. **“Cluster” is circle of habitations in a radius of 20 Kms – comprising Villages of same / similar Socio-economic profile and Community Groups**
2. **Each Cluster will comprise 10 – 15 Villages / Habitations from local Gram Panchayaths**
3. **Each Cluster will be facilitated with a Village Cluster Resource Centre (VRC) at the mandal / geographical level**
4. **Each Cluster resource centre will have a team of Community Organizers, headed by a Cluster Coordinator**
5. **The functionaries will organize / conduct Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises**
6. **Felt needs / identified needs will be prioritized to prepare development action plans**
7. **The envisaged objective is making village “self – reliant” and independent .**

* **Child Care**
* **Education**
* **Gender Equity**
* **Community Based / Civil Society Organisations (SHGs / YAs)**
* **Career Guidance**
* **Income Generation Programmes**
* **Co-Operative Units**
* **Raise in Income Levels**
* **Accessing Government Welfare Measures - Entitlements**
* **Local Resource Developement**

**EMPOWERMENT**

* **Water & sanitation**
* **Housing**
* **Individual Sanitary Latrines**
* **Tree Plantation**
* **Avenue Plantations**
* **Kitchen / Herbal Gardens**
* **Solar Energy / Cooking Fuel**
* **Promoting School Eco-Clubs**

**ENVIRONMENT**

* **Reading Rooms / Com. Halls**
* **Training Sessions**
* **Concretization**
* **Preventive / Curative Health**
* **Psycho – Social support to aged**
* **Capacity Building**
* **Awareness Generation**
* **Community Halls**
* **Vulnerable sections (PWDs)**
* **Spiritual Awakening**
* **Book Lending**
* **Documentation**

**ENLIGHTENMENT**

* **Promoting / Protecting Village Culture**
* **Sports & games**
* **Cultural Action – Play lets**
* **Formation & Strengthening of Choir Teams**
* **Music / Dance**

**ENJOYMENT**

**The strategy “Better Villages for Better Future” is under practical implementation process in five Coastal Clusters of SFIRD with the support and partnership of local Government departments and donor agencies.**

**Major Goals – Empowerment, Environment, Enlightenment & Enjoyment**

**Present clusters – Kuchinapudi and Nagaram in Guntur District of A.P.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goals** | **Tasks under Implementation** | **Reference communities**  **Target Villages / Clusters** |
| **EMPOWERMENT** | **Sustainable Dalit Women Empowerment**   1. **Capacity Building** 2. **Entitlements** 3. **Income generation Programs** | **20 Dalit and Tribal Villages in Kuchinapudi and Nagaram clusters** |
| **ENVIRONMENT** | 1. **Tree plantation** 2. **Kitchen Garden promotion** 3. **Vegetable seeds distribution** 4. **Low cost Sanitary Latrines** 5. **Discourage plastic bags / save earth** | **Villages in Kuchinapudi cluster. Villages of trainees in Nagaram Selected Villages in Nagaram and Kuchinapudi clusters**  **Both Nagaram and Kuchinapudi clusters.** |
| **ENLIGHTENMENT** | 1. **Skill Training Center for Youth (STC)** 2. **Child Care Centers (CCCs)** 3. **Counseling and career guidance** | **20 Villages – Nagaram cluster**  **25 Villages – Kuchinapudi cluster**  **15 – Nagaram cluster** |
| **ENJOYMENT** | **To be initiated (activities under appraisal)** | **Planned for implementation in reference communities of the Coastal region of the Bay of Bengal.** |

* **The target groups comprise Dalits, Tribes, Traditional Marine Fisher-folk and Backward Class communities located in the coastal zone of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh.**
* **SFIRD has been implementing the above activities with the partnership and financial support from the local Government departments and donor agencies Abroad. These activities are likely to be extended in other neighboring clusters of BoB.**
* **SFIRD wish to have the feedback from the participants and dignitaries of this National seminar for appropriate modifications, directions and way forward.**

** April - 2013**