

Executive Summary

Watershed Plus Programme – Kathwadi

LTTS and NAF has ensured water availability for the farming community in Kathwadi through the Integrated watershed Development Programme from 2018-2021. As an extension of this programme, the watershed plus initiative has been launched by LTTS and NAF to benefit the rural households– in the areas of water, sanitation and livelihoods.

Kathwadi village had been facing several problems like lack of safe drinking water, poor health facilities, very poor sanitation facilities, interrupted electricity and poor knowledge/alternative source of income. To ensure the wellbeing of the people of Kathwadi village and improve their living conditions, Water and Sanitation activities along with the watershed development programmes was found to be crucial. This led LTTS and NAF to implement a Comprehensive Village Development Project – Watershed Plus programme in Kathwadi village.

The Comprehensive Village Development Project - Watershed plus programme in Kathwadi– focuses on providing initial stage support to uplift the socio-economic status of the communities living in Kathwadi watershed area, Velhe Taluk, Pune district, Maharashtra. The total budget for this programme is Rs. 2,70,50,096/-.

Key focus areas:

- **Social** – water, sanitation, and renewable energy
- **Economic**– agricultural and allied activities, livelihood development and value addition centre

A need-based approach and with community participation was ensured during programme implementation.

The components of a watershed plus development programme includes:

1. **Water:** Providing safe drinking water – well, solar pump, and storage tank, water purification system
2. **Sanitation:** Restructuring the sewage drainage line. Constructing sanitation facilities (toilets) in individual households
3. **Renewable energy:** Smokeless Chulhas, solar street lights, biomass stoves
4. **Income generation activities:** Value addition unit
5. **Capacity building:** Technical trainings for farmers, awareness and orientation camps, etc.
6. **Agricultural production system:** Promoting Agro forestry and Agro horticulture, intercropping

The main objective of the assessment for SAN India, is to provide LTTS with sufficient information about Comprehensive Village Development Project - Watershed Plus Kathwadi in terms of its Relevance, Efficiency & Effectiveness, Sustainability and Social Impact (REESS), and to recommend effective and sustainable strategies for future implementation.

Relevance

The Integrated Watershed Development Programme implemented by LTTS and NAF in Kathwadi village has been very successful. It has led to rain water harvesting, increase in ground water levels and improved agricultural income. However, the villagers were facing many problems related to safe drinking water, improper health facilities, poor sanitation facilities, and unavailability of secondary income generation source.

The poor hygiene resulted in spread of diseases affecting the health of villagers. All the villages in this area faced the problem of non-availability of water during the summer. There was no other source of income for farmers. The farmers were not exposed or trained in techniques to improve their agricultural income. Hence, Implementation of watershed plus programme was very essential and had a great impact on the villagers.

The above issues led LTTS- NAF launch the watershed plus programme in Kathwadi to ensure holistic development of the communities living in this village.

40% of the beneficiaries are in the age-group 41 to 50 years. 19% are above 60 years of age. 21% are uneducated. 44% have attended primary school. 45% of the beneficiaries earn a monthly income in the range of 5000 to 10000 rupees. 19% earn less than 5000 rupees a month.

Effectiveness

The Watershed Plus programme tackles severe drinking water and sanitation issues. The main aim of this programme is to provide access to clean drinking water and improve sanitation and hygiene levels of the communities living at Kathwadi.

Construction of drinking water well, renovation of old well, water purification system, drainage systems, individual household toilets, solar powered street lights and value addition units have reduced water & sanitation issues in this village. These efforts have resulted in availability of clean drinking water and improved hygienic conditions thereby leading to good health.

The role of MPS is in selection of beneficiaries for watershed plus activities and in maintaining the NRM structures along with VWC. The awareness programmes conducted by LTTS and NAF has been effective and has motivated the farmers to improve crop management practices and set up tree-based farming.

98% were aware that the water ATM is providing income to maintain the infrastructure and provide funds to the VWC to maintain the NRM structures provided by LTTS-NAF.

Efficiency

NAF has expertise in Watershed Plus Development Programme. Providing drainage channels in undulated terrains is a challenge. NAF being an experienced organisation in providing NRM structures, their expertise in this area has led to successful implementation of drainage channels.

NAF has engaged in several solar projects across the country and has worked with multiple donors in this area. NAF ensured utilisation of monolithic solar panels – which is more efficient than polyolithic

panels, lithium polymer batteries and LED lights for the solar street lights. NAF designed and fabricated the smokeless chulha with an air drift and a solar light so that the women can use them even during night.

The farmers who were consulted for the study stated that they now have access to clean drinking water and increased awareness on agricultural techniques, improved sanitation and intercropping farming system. The women were appreciative of the individual toilets and the smokeless chulhas.

Sustainability

The people's participation in the Watershed plus programme has added value to the LTTS-NAF intervention at Kathwadi. All farmers who were consulted for the study stated that the drinking water supply and the drainage channels have made their villagers lead a healthy life.

The farmers who are part of the Village Watershed Committee and Mahila Pani Samitis have been oriented on their roles and responsibilities in maintaining the wells, drainage systems, water purification system & value addition unit.

Farmers were oriented on employing modern and sustainable crop production technologies for better yield. The revenue gained from the value addition unit is being utilised by the VWC to maintain the unit as well as the NRM structures provided by LTTS-NAF.

Social Impact

The watershed plus project has improved the hygienic conditions of the village. The overall health of the villages has improved due to better sanitation and hygienic practises. The success of this pilot watershed plus project in this region has resulted in increase in awareness among the surrounding villages to improve their sanitation & hygienic conditions.

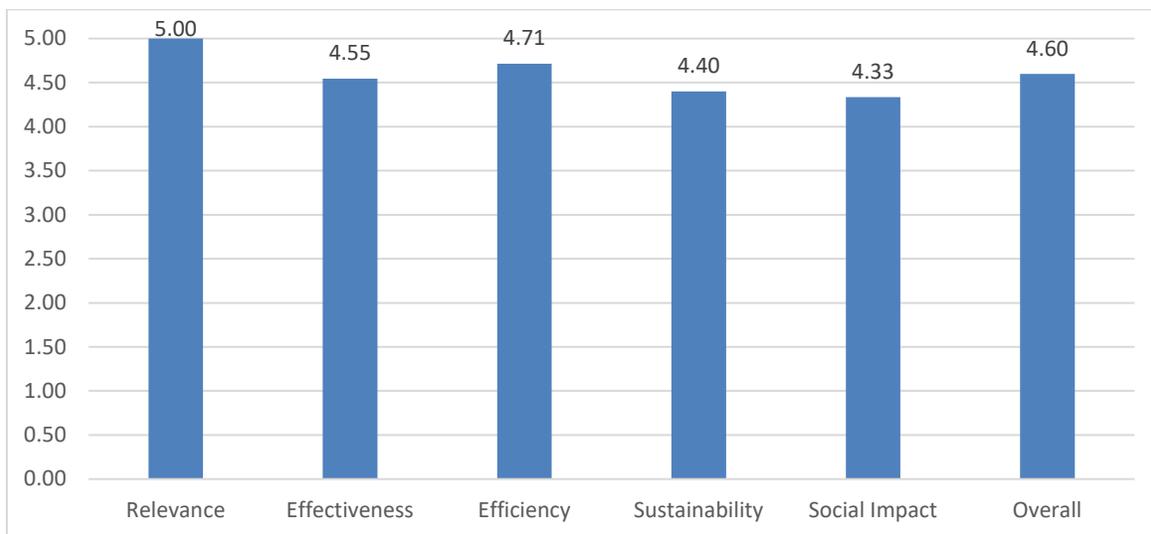
The villagers have got basic access to clean drinking water all the time. It has increased the availability of water in the drinking water well within the habitation. The people participation for the sustainability of the programme has resulted in increase in income generation for the community. The sense of responsibility among the villagers has increased for sustainability of the project.

The village community has been introduced to new technologies and agricultural practices which has overall improved the development of the village from social, environmental and economic aspects. The tree-based farming concept has helped farmers to generate additional income apart from farming

91% of the stakeholders consulted stated that the networking of drainage line throughout the village has improved the waste water conveyance and reduce in the waste water stagnation. 94% mentioned that they strongly agree to the fact that the drainage channels prevented the entry of unwanted solid containments.

93% of the stakeholders reported increase in self-confidence and 90% stated that they have increased household income after LTTS-NAF intervention. 86% are able to lead a secured life.

REESS Scorecard



Recommendations

- Continued mentoring and awareness sessions at regular intervals on sanitation and hygiene needs to be carried out among women.
- Livestock Health camps could be conducted on quarterly basis to benefit MPS members who are engaged in raising milch animals.
- Watershed Plus activity could be launched in other villages as well. This programme with potential outcomes has scope for wider replicability in other states.

Executive Summary

LTTS & NAF –Sujal Integrated Watershed Development Programme - Kokkaranthangal

LTTS partnered with NAF in 2017 to engage in several water conservation and retention efforts in Kokkaranthangal, Zamin Budur, Amainthakaranai, and Arcadu villages in Chengalpattu District (formerly Kanchipuram district).

LTTS and NAF engaged in natural resource management (NRM) efforts such as construction of field bunds and channel clearance work, check dams, farm ponds, village ponds, and water absorption trenches (to increase the ground water table for domestic and agricultural use). The aim of the project is to improve water security and agricultural practices, equipping farmers to withstand irregular and delayed monsoons and increase their agricultural yields.

During 2020-21, socio-economic initiatives such as distribution of horticulture plants, plantation of forestry saplings to farmers whose fields were along the water absorption trenches, and field demonstration for paddy, watermelon, vegetable, groundnut, and black gram was carried out. Besides, agricultural trainings, watershed trainings for Village Watershed Committee (VWC) and IGP support for women members were provided. The total budget for this programme is Rs. 1,98,00,000/-.

As part of LTTS-NAF Income Generation Programme, 57 women were provided a seed grant to support alternate livelihood activities such as purchase of milch animals, poultry, goat rearing, tailoring, etc.

The main objective of the assessment for SAN India, was to provide LTTS with sufficient information about the above-mentioned Integrated Watershed Development Programme in terms of its Relevance, Efficiency & Effectiveness, Sustainability and Social Impact (REESS), and to recommend effective and sustainable strategies for future implementation.

The methodology used for the social impact assessment was a blend of primary and secondary data analysis. The SAN India team visited the 4 project villages and gathered information from the community members and the field staff of National Agro Foundation. The information presented in this report is based on the observations made by the SAN India team during the field visits to the projects and the interactions they had with the stakeholders. The report also includes an analysis data gathered used survey tools.

Relevance

The Kokkaranthangal watershed area receives high intensity rainfall during North East Monsoon Season, however, runoff is high as there is no proper water harvesting structures in the area. Earlier, the farmers were unaware of the techniques to harvest rainwater and faced difficulties during summer and dry spell conditions. All the villages in this area faced the problem of non-availability of water during the summer seasons for farming activities which directly impacted the earnings of the farmers. The number of small holding farmers was much higher in the four villages and the watershed interventions helped these farmers to improve their agricultural income.

77% farmers owned less than 3 acres of land. 17% owned 3 to 5 acres of land. 98% stated that they were not aware of watershed development activities before LTTS-NAF intervention.94% of the NRM

structures were implemented in areas close to the small farmers lands, in order to directly improve the water table around their farm areas.

The total geographical area of Kokkaranthangal watershed is 1578 hectares. The total cultivable area in Kokkaranthangal watershed prior to LTTS-NAF was 868.14 hectares. It is 1143.72 hectares now. The NRM structures placed near the agricultural fields in the four villages has led to increase in agricultural production.

Effectiveness

LTTS and NAF have been working in the Kokkaranthangal to implement Integrated Watershed Development programme and tackle severe water scarcity since 2017. The main aim is to improve water accessibility and availability to agrarian rural communities. Construction of check dams, farm ponds, water absorption trenches, gabion structures, and drinking water wells have reduced water scarcity in the programme villages. These efforts have resulted in rise in groundwater tables thereby leading to increase in agricultural productivity.

The awareness programmes conducted by NAF has been effective and the exposure visit to LTTS-NAF Kolwadi watershed programme in Maharashtra has motivated the farmers to adopt sustained agricultural practices. The demonstration plots established by LTTS-NAF has made farmers explore different cropping patterns and also engage in vegetable cultivation. As most of the farmers are dependent on rain-fed agriculture, the alternative livelihood opportunities provided through the women SHGs add to their household income.

Also, from mono-cropping patterns, to diversification of crops, the farmers are able to earn more agricultural income. With more land available for cultivation, more agricultural labourers are required. The farmers are engaged in intercropping as well as changed the cropping patterns due to availability of more water for cultivation.

Efficiency

NAF has expertise in Watershed Development Programme and has completed several comprehensive watershed development projects. The farmers who were consulted for the study stated that they observed increase in agricultural yield thereby enhanced income. 94.87% reported increased awareness on water conservation techniques.

All farmers stated the NRM activities has led to increase in ground water levels. 99% agreed for the field bunds and check dam interventions to have an impact on the ground water levels. 96% of farmers stated that they are prepared to manage heavy rainfall and know which crop to cultivate in case of monsoon vagaries. 66% of farmers stated that they would encourage their children to engage in agriculture as an occupation.

All farmers assured that they would continue to engage in agriculture for the rest of their lives.

Sustainability

All farmers who were consulted for the study stated that the LTTS-NAF project has ensured sustainable water supply in their village.

The structures provided by LTTS-NAF are in good condition. The Check Dams, Canals, and LBS will require maintenance only after 5 years. The farm ponds will require desilting only during monsoon which can be managed by the farmers themselves. Few farmers requested for continued technical support for management of these structures.

Village Watershed Committees: A total of 73 farmers (57 men and 16 women) are members of the Village Watershed Committees at Kokkaranthangal. The farmers are oriented on their roles and responsibilities in maintaining the NRM structures – like weeding the trenches, desilting of farm ponds and sunken ponds; and attending to repairs in the Check dams, Canals, and GCD whenever required.

Field Demonstration Plots: As agriculture consumes more water, effective use of water, efficiency in cropping patterns, and economic sustainability of farming activities assumes significance. This leads to productivity of crops per unit area indirectly resulting in saving of water. LTTS-NAF demonstrated the benefits of technology adopted at the farmers' fields as participatory trials. Farmers were oriented on employing modern and sustainable crop production technologies for better yield.

Income Generation Programme: The funds for the IGP programme being utilised by the SHGs as revolving fund has reached out to more beneficiaries than envisaged. This has led to creation sustainable livelihood opportunities for them.

Social Impact

The impact of the Watershed programme is to augment the surface water and sub surface water storage to improve water accessibility and availability to agrarian rural communities. Construction of check dams, farm ponds, water absorption trenches, gabion check dam, and drinking water wells have reduced water scarcity in the villages. These efforts have resulted an increase in agricultural productivity.

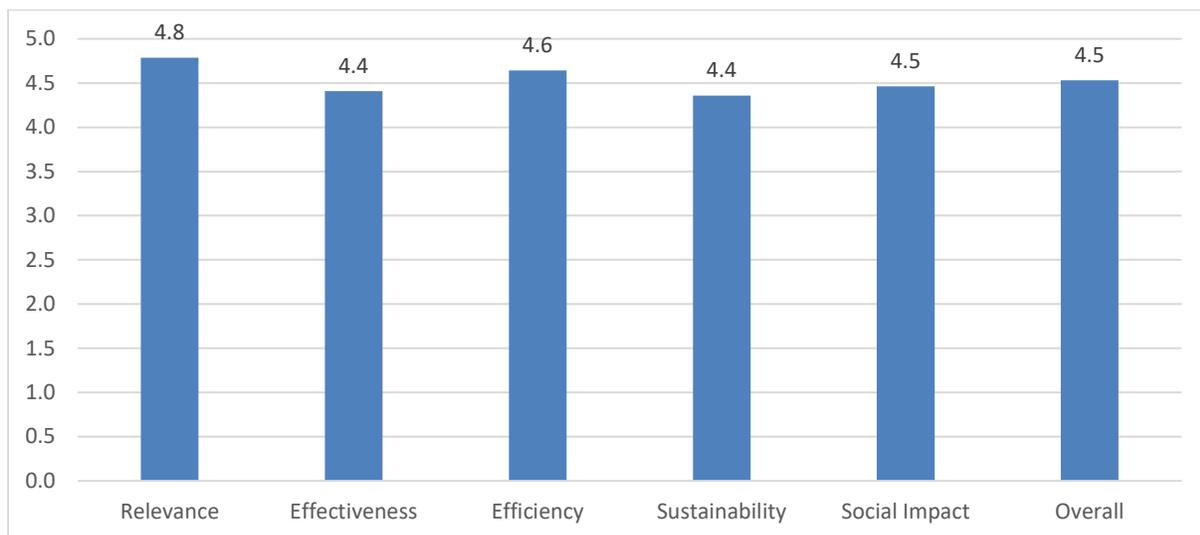
Sustainable development is synonymous to maintenance of productivity of natural resources and maintenance of ecological equilibrium. Watershed Development being a land-based activity affects all categories of farmers. Mostly it has seen to benefit the large and medium farmers more than that of small and marginal farmers. This could be attributed to the fact that large and medium farmers have more land in terms of quantity as well as quality and can make investment towards irrigation equipment, etc.

The United Nations has emphasized the need for strengthening the three pillars of sustainable development, viz. economy, society and the environment. The watershed forms an appropriate unit which links all these three components and has a direct bearing on human lives. The objective of LTTS-NAF programme is to transform the villages in Kokkaranthangal watershed into a self-sustaining area in terms of water security, fortifying farmers' ability to withstand delayed and irregular monsoons, reducing farmer migration, improving agricultural practices to increase yield and income, and increasing other sources of income and quality of life for the community through water conservation.

Various continuing natural resource management efforts, complemented by socio-economic programs such as agricultural training workshops, exposure visits, distribution of horticultural plants for commercial cultivation and improving school facilities and infrastructure has delivered a significant impact for the community.

The LTTS-NAF Integrated Watershed Development Programme has systematically addressed the issue of rural development by facilitating the holistic growth of agriculture, forestry and allied activities in the watershed areas of Kokkaranthangal. Allied activities such as demonstration plots, capacity building and IGP has led to empowerment and improved income levels of the rural communities..

REESS Scorecard



The rating of above 4 for all the above parameters indicates that the LTTS-NAF programme has been implemented excellently and been accepted by the communities as well.

Recommendations

- **Watershed:** For effective management of a watershed, the VWC could be registered as a formal SHG (with both men and women members). A fund could be established out of the contributions from the farmers (based on land holding) who own land adjoining the NRM structures.
- This fund could be set aside for maintenance of NRM structures that has been created by LTTS and NAF. This effort would lead to creating a sense of ownership among the community members and involve them in ensuring that the NRM structures are maintained well.
- **Income Generation Programme:** More women than envisaged have benefited from the IGP programmes. These women could be trained in more IGP activities like artificial jewellery making, making of palmyrah products. Marketing linkages could be provided to women.
- Digital monitoring devices can be provided to the village for the milch beneficiaries to constantly monitor the milk quality. NAF could tie-up with Animal Husbandry department and provide additional support to the beneficiaries.

- Orientation on business strategy, options, networking, marketing could improve the knowledge about alternate livelihood opportunities. Group enterprises could be formed by SHGs leading to more participation from women and more types of enterprises being launched.

Project Neelachala- Executive Summary

The extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani was the strongest tropical cyclone to strike Odisha in 2019. It unleashed copious rain and windstorm that gusted up to 205 kmph, leading to fatalities, destruction of homes, and swamping of towns and villages in coastal Odisha, with the seaside pilgrim town of Puri and the villages around it being the worst hit. The gusty winds destroyed several thousands of kutchha houses and hundreds of temporary structures completely. Based on this LTTS along with Habitat for Humanity (HfH) evolved a plan to support 150 marginalised families in severely cyclone affected in Puri Sadar Block of Puri district with new disaster resilient houses and to educate and promote the Community Based Disaster Risk Management practices for disaster preparedness. These families hailed from three villages - *Bada Bhoisahi, Uttar Bhoisahi and Adiwasi Colony*. These locations were in the low-lying areas near the Puri Coast, and all the kuchha houses in these villages were submerged during the floods caused by Cyclone Fani. A budget of Rs. **7,82,86,935/-** was allocated for **Project Neelachala**, the Housing Project, which commenced on - 10th December 2019 after signing a tripartite partnership with L&T Technology Services Limited, the District Collector's Office of Puri (Government of Odisha) and HFH India. The beneficiaries were identified based on the following criteria. - families having a Patta land and belonging to the BPL category and SC/ST community with kuchha houses. Special preference was given to - Single women, Women Headed Families, Differently abled House owners / family members and people Affected by Terminal Illness . The houses built in each village were:

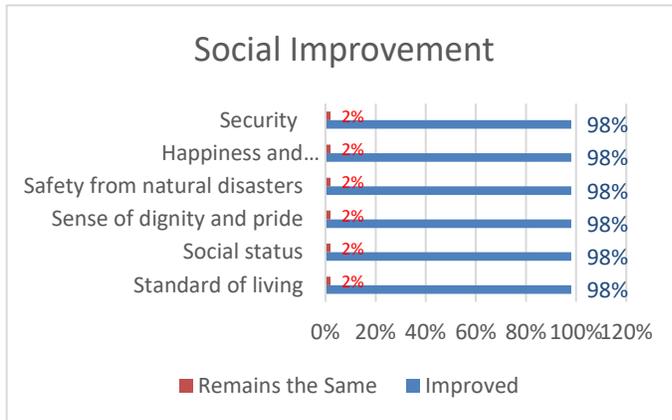
S.no	Name of the Village	Number of Houses
1	Uttar Bhoi Sahi	70
2	Bada Bhoi Sahi	51
3	Adiwasi Colony	29

About the Houses

The constructed area of each house was 300 sq feet which is adequate for a family of 4. The building was built in frame structure with columns. The plinth height was 2.5 feet from ground level which ensured that water would not enter the houses during floods/cyclones. Each house had 2 rooms, a kitchen, bathroom and toilet and had a three feet pathway around the house which connected the bathroom and the other rooms. The floors are cemented with red oxide and were slip resistant floors. The houses were provided with iron doors and windows and was well ventilated. The kitchen had a platform for keeping the gas stove and a steel sink. The bathrooms and kitchen were provided with taps that were connected to the concrete overhead tanks built in the terrace. An iron staircase was provided to all houses for going to the terrace.

The average utilization rate of the kitchen was found to be 50% as most of the families had refurbished their old huts for cooking purposes and were used to cooking outside the house only. The families which did not use the kitchen space, used it as a storeroom to dump their firewood, unused vessels and other things There were around 21% of the families at Uttar Bohi Sahi, 7% in Adibasi colony and 3% in Bada Bohi Sahi who had never used their kitchen for cooking.

The usage of toilets was high at the Adibasi colony and Bada Bohi sahi, but was around 86% for Uttar Bohi Sahi. Most of the men were still practicing Open Defecation or using the old toilets that they had. The families that did not use the toilets, used the toilets as a storeroom and had it permanently locked.



When enquired about how the housing had brought in a change in their social conditions, 98% of the beneficiaries opined that their standard of living, social status and happiness levels had improved. Most importantly their security and safety levels also saw a great improvement. 2% of the respondents, who hailed from Uttar Bohi Sahi felt that all these parameters did not change and remained the same as before getting the new house.

In addition to the disaster resilient homes, the families in all the 3 villages of *Bada Bhoisahi, Uttar Bhoisahi and Adiwasi Colony* underwent community-based disaster risk management training to help them mitigate the impact of disasters through collective action and preparedness

Relevance: Project Neelachala aims to build adequate physical and social infrastructure by providing all weather housing units with spacious rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. HFH India had done a thorough needs assessment to identify the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people who were affected by Fani. They also had the concurrence of the State government in selecting the villages and the beneficiaries

Effectiveness: All the beneficiaries consulted were very happy to live in a more safe, secure and Disaster resilient houses. There was adequate space for all the family members. The families were less stressed as the houses minimized their future risks and vulnerabilities due to natural disasters as there was a permanent roof above their heads

Efficiency: The construction was cost- effective as each house costed 4.3 lakh. The houses were built on frame structure with good quality building materials. The Quality of materials were uniform. All homes had grills for windows and granite slabs and stainless-steel sinks were provided in the kitchen area. Taps, closets were provided in the bathrooms.

Social Impact: Project Neelachala has helped in bringing about a socio-economic transformation in the lives of the villagers living in the three villages of Bada Bhoisahi, Uttar Bhoisahi and Adiwasi Colony. Due to lack of a house with basic amenities, the beneficiaries faced socioeconomic, physical and psychological concerns. It was observed that due to the newly constructed house, the sense of dignity among the beneficiaries had risen substantially. The house has acted as a means to enhance their standard of living. Further, it has had a psychological impact on the overall wellbeing of the household. When beneficiaries were questioned whether they felt safe in their new homes, the response was overwhelming. All (100%) of them said that they are safe in their new houses. The safety comprised of both the physical structure and psychological security arising from ownership of the house.

Executive Summary Project Neelacahala

Housing is one of the biggest investments undertaken by any person or family. Project Neelachala has provided a forum, platform to boost the self-esteem of the villagers and their dignity, It has provided privacy and safety, and enhanced their sense of belongingness.

Relevance	BB	AC	UB	Avg
Need assessment conducted in the project areas	10	10	10	10.0
Partner is aware of hazards and settlement risks and vulnerabilities	10	8	10	9.3
Involvement of local authorities, panchayat in beneficiary selection	10	10	10	10.0
Programme caters to beneficiaries who are directly affected by floods	10	10	10	10.0
Beneficiaries are poorest and most vulnerable households	10	10	10	10.0
Representation from different communities in beneficiary selection	10	10	10	10.0
Living conditions of the previous homes of beneficiaries are uninhabitable	9	9	9	9.0
Program adherence to SDGs	10	10	10	10.0
Any other organisation offering similar support in the region?	10	10	10	10.0
Programme aligns with LTTS mission	10	10	10	10.0
Average	9.9	9.7	9.9	9.8
Effectiveness	BB	AC	UB	Average
Well-defined implementation plan	10	10	10	10.0
House constructed in the earlier place of beneficiary or in a different location?	10	10	10	10.0
Electricity connection available	10	10	8	9.3
Drinking water access	8	7	9	8.0
Well-ventilated houses (kitchen)	10	10	10	10.0
Water for household provided through pipelines	7	6	7	6.7
Road access	9	9	9	9.0
Weather resistant houses	9	9	9	9.0
High plinth level	9	8	9	9.0
Convenience, adequate space available in house for a family of 4 (minimum)	9	9	9	9.0

Effectiveness	BB	AC	UB	Average
House prevents rodents/pests/animals	8	8	8	8.0
House is disabled / geriatric friendly?	9	7	9	8.3
Spacing between houses available	10	8	9	9.0
Possibility for expansion in constructed house	9	9	9	9.0

Executive Summary Project Neelacahala

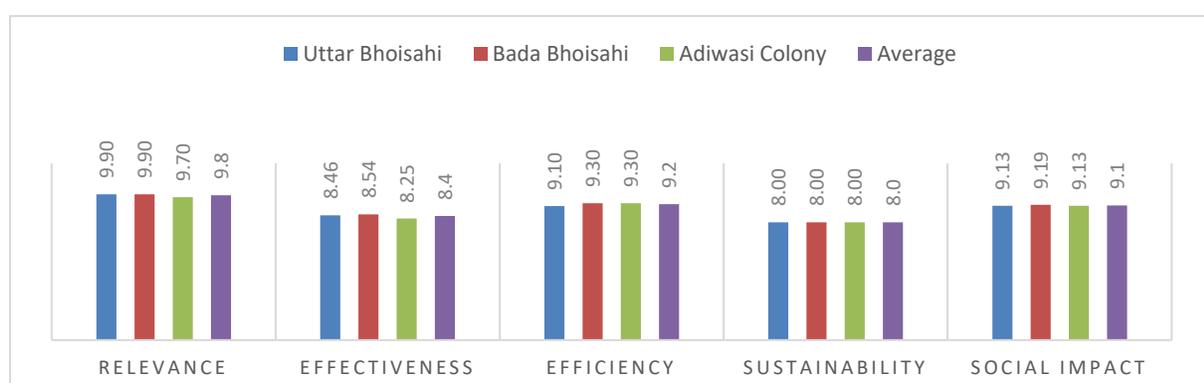
Identified shelter solutions minimizes future risks and vulnerabilities	10	10	10	10.0
Alternative design or materials used for houses are acceptable to the affected people	9	9	9	9.0
Construction materials procured locally	8	8	8	8.0
Escape gateway available in houses	8	8	8	8.0
Storm water drains available	5	5	5	5.0
Drainage lines available	9	9	9	9.0
DRR mock trainings done	7	7	7	7.0
DRR committees formed	9	9	9	9.0
Awareness and training on personal hygiene, development	8	8	8	8.0
Usage of constructed toilets by beneficiaries - behaviour change	7	7	7	7.0
Child safety measures (grills/ terrace side wall height 3 ft, staircase has side railings)	7	7	7	7.0
LTTTS name appears in plaque placed in construction site	10	9	10	9.7
Are all beneficiaries living in the constructed house?	10	10	10	10.0
Rain water harvesting done	5	5	5	5.0
Average	8.5	8.3	8.5	8.4
Efficiency	BB	AC	UB	Average
Progress of the project as per time line	9	9	9	9.0
Communities informed about construction progress	10	10	10	10.0
Regular progress of construction informed to LTTTS	10	10	10	10.0
Cost-effectiveness of the project	10	10	10	10.0
Beneficiaries consulted for design of shelters	10	10	10	10.0
Beneficiaries assisted as labour in the building of their own shelters	5	5	5	5.0
Skilled labour (carpenters/mason) employed from affected communities - indirect beneficiaries	10	10	10	10.0
Disaster resilient houses - safe from floods	10	10	10	10.0
Expected lifespan of constructed house	10	10	10	10.0
Quality of building materials used (granite slab in kitchen, grills, wood for windows, etc)	9	9	7	8.3
Average	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.2

Sustainability	BB	AC	UB	Average
Beneficiary's financial capacity for repairs and maintenance of the house	6	6	6	6.0
Beneficiary capacity for expansion in constructed house	8	8	8	8.0
House patta/ownership available for all beneficiaries	10	10	10	10.0

Executive Summary Project Neelacahala

Average	8	8	8	8.0
Social Impact	BB	AC	UB	Average
Prevention of migration	10	10	10	10.0
Clean environment	8	7	7	7.3
Community following safe hygiene practices - behavior change	7	7	7	7.0
Improved standard of living	10	10	10	10.0
Debts incurred for house construction purpose	10	10	10	10.0
Savings on opportunity cost of the house	10	10	10	10.0
Financial value creation	10	10	10	10.0
Addresses disparities caused due to disasters	10	10	10	10.0
Increase in social status	10	10	10	10.0
Increase in sense of dignity, civic pride, sense of worth	10	10	10	10.0
Reduced risk from future natural disasters (floods/earthquake)	10	10	10	10.0
Improved happiness and contentment levels of beneficiary	10	10	10	10.0
Harmonious community living in the same area	10	10	10	10.0
Reduction in open defecation	7	7	7	7.0
Security and dignity especially to women, girl children and the elderly	10	10	10	10.0
Visibility of LTTs among affected communities	5	5	5	5.0

Consolidated REESS ratings



From the graph it is evident that Project Neelachala is highly relevant and has created a lot of social impact on the beneficiaries through its cost-effective mechanisms and effective measures.

Executive Summary

Samarthanam - Covid Relief Program

While the number of COVID-19 cases in India per day remained relatively stable at roughly 200,000 (after spiking twice in late April/early May 2021), a considerable increase in disease-related started burdening emergency transport services and hospitals. Due to a dearth of ambulances, several local private operators started demanding outrageous prices to transfer COVID-19 patients. In addition, treatment at many emergency hospitals costs hundreds of thousands of rupees. Further there was a disproportionate difference in the uptake of Covid vaccines amongst this vulnerable group- primarily due to lack of awareness. The ramifications of this were aplenty. All the problems had a negative impact on those with PWDs. The State of Karnataka was particularly affected because of the pandemic.

The collaboration between LTTS and Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled was therefore an urgent response to minimize the health consequences of Covid-19 on PWDs whilst optimizing their quality of life and social participation with respect to their own health and safety. The LTTS and Samarthanam NGO partnered on the "Covid-Relief Project" as part of their efforts to improve the accessibility of healthcare for people with disabilities during the Covid Epidemic.

Samarthanam was supported with Rs. 99,12,180 for operating a 24/7 ICU ambulance services to cater to the immediate medical emergency needs of COVID patients. An Additional support of Rs. 40,00,000 was provided to conduct the awareness program and vaccinating children above 15 years from marginalized communities and providing accessories to PHCs.

Around 80% of the beneficiaries rated the overall services provided by Samarthanam as 5/5 as the services were found to be exemplary. The responsiveness of the staff and their behavior were rated the highest. More than 70% termed their experience in dealing with Samarthanam as excellent. 24% mentioned that their overall experience was good.

Relevance

The Covid Relief program created a level playing field for those with disabilities by increasing their access to timely healthcare. This program is pertinent because it supports PWDs from lower socio-economic backgrounds and accessing government infrastructure.

Effectiveness

This project has helped in significantly reducing the morbidities and spread of Covid. By enabling patients to reach hospitals on time and receive the care they needed, the ambulance saved 1,169 lives hailing from disadvantaged backgrounds. By providing the necessary assistance via infrastructure and support to the PHCs and its workers, Samarthanam has helped address the needs of the locals at the grassroots levels itself. This further reduced the burden on tertiary hospitals. The project beneficiaries have received either their first, second, or both doses of the vaccination and have acquired protection against COVID-19 infection as a result of the vaccination campaign's significant contribution to raising beneficiary awareness and improving their knowledge of the importance of vaccination.

Efficiency

The services were provided free to all the beneficiaries who cited that accessing healthcare during Covid would have been extremely difficult if not for the free treatment. **The ambulance team were trained to deal**

with emergency situations and were reachable via the hotline number. The hospitals connected to were happy with timeliness of the services provided extended by Samarthanam. The awareness programs on vaccine uptake and upgrading PHCs significantly reduced the waiting time spent by patients, aiding positive health seeking behaviors. All SOPs are being followed and the equipment are in functional condition.

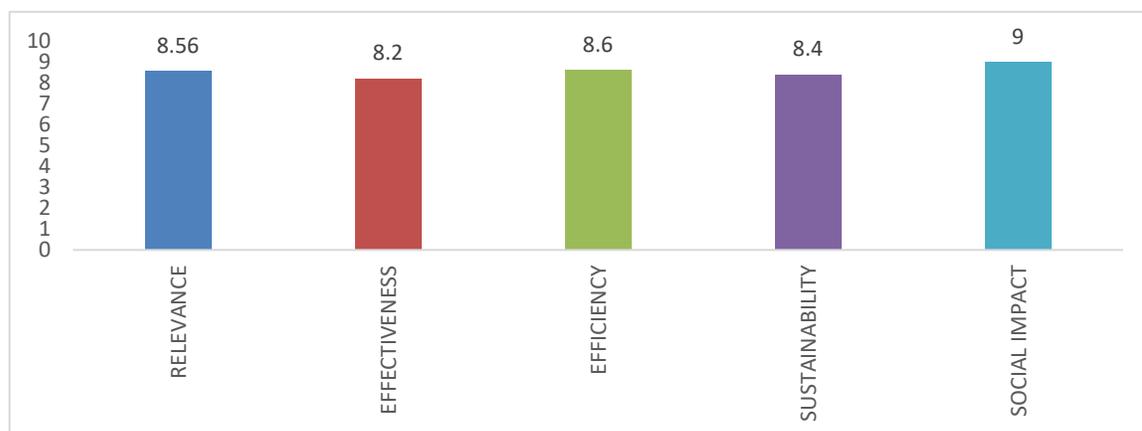
Sustainability

Samarthanam has a good network and have tie-ups with a couple of hospitals, primary health centers and village communities. The organization has also formed a band of frontline workers who engage with PWD on a regular basis. This ensures that their needs are identified on time and the support is given on a timely basis. The program has adapted to the needs of the beneficiaries particularly during Covid. Once the number of emergency transport calls reduced, the organization took an informed decision to support vaccine awareness drives that would benefit the PWDs.

Social Impact

People with disabilities cannot make required decisions, live freely, isolate or quarantine securely, or access health and public services on an equal footing with others if public health information, transport, communications, technology, commodities, and services are not accessible in a timely manner. Samarthanam has rightly identified the disadvantages that people with disabilities suffer and has taken proactive steps to guarantee that they equally benefit from COVID-19 response measures and has helped contribute to improved health infrastructure for PWDs. The key to establishing an inclusive response is close engagement and active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations at all phases, from planning and design to implementation and monitoring. By improving their awareness of the Govt's Covid Vaccine response, Samarthanam has increased their participation in health-decision making. Close to 48% of those who were supported through this program are women. In a country where barriers of PWDs to services are already high, women who are PWDs at a higher risk of being ignored and miss out on their rights. Samarthanam has helped deliver their right to their doorstep, thereby reducing gender barriers.

REESS Rating Scorecard



People with disabilities are less likely to have access to health care, education, employment, and community participation even in the best of conditions. This situation has been made worse by COVID-19, which has a disproportionately negative direct and indirect impact on people with disabilities. The initiative has been successful in meeting the requirements of PWD and making the system more inclusive by establishing links between hospitals, government health units, and making minor alterations to current health delivery systems.