

Annual Report 2002-03

GRAM VIKAS

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From the Chairman

The significance of Gram Vikas' work struck me on my recent visit when I saw adivasi women from the neighbouring villages come for work at Gram Vikas, astride their 'new' bicycles. Some even had men sitting at the back. I found out later that some of the women worked as masons, others in the nursery and farm. I also heard from the staff that with piped drinking water and toilets at their homes, women were insisting that they be married into villages with similar facilities. I know many cities and towns where such facilities are not available to large sections of the poor. Seeing the changes here, in a remote part of Orissa, makes me proud.

There have been many positive changes since the days the volunteers of the Young Students Movement for Development started work with these communities in 1975. Over the years the group developed a more local character and a long-term development focus, and Gram Vikas was born on January 22, 1979. Since then the organisation has been committed to bringing improvements in the quality of life of rural communities in Orissa. Under the dynamic leadership of Joe, and with the committed workforce, Gram Vikas has grown into one of the most significant organisations in Orissa, recognised nationally and internationally.

There have been many successes in this journey, reflected in the lives of the people Gram Vikas works with. There have been failures as well, and Gram Vikas has had the courage to acknowledge them and learn from them. There are continuing challenges, especially in making the shift from a grant driven welfare approach to a partnership driven service approach.

Gram Vikas has been a responsive organisation, responding often through a process of apparent intuitive deduction rather than documented scientific analysis. This attribute has been both a strength and a weakness for the organisation. The biggest disadvantage I feel is that a lot of learning has been restricted to the realm of the organisation. As it approaches completion of twenty-five years in development action, it is appropriate that the organisation take stock of its experiences – success and failures, and shares them with the world outside. Development and research organisations and indeed the government will benefit from such information on lessons learnt in doing development.

Gram Vikas has deliberately located itself in a rural area. The advantages are evident, as they experience on a regular basis, problems that rural communities face – access, communication, etc. The disadvantages manifest especially when Gram Vikas struggles to recruit and retain professionals. The locational aspect apart, it is also a challenge for young professionals, bursting with ideals and new ideas to grapple with the age and wisdom of the organisation. Yet there are young professionals and volunteers who have made Gram Vikas their home, for short and long durations, and contributed to its growth and development.

The bulwark of the organisation, however, is provided by men and women from the local area, who have grown with the organisation, and committed themselves to engineering positive change in the lives of the rural poor. These foot soldiers work dedicatedly, often in challenging physical conditions, leading the communities in a battle to secure their rights.

I have known Gram Vikas and Joe Madiath for over two decades. Yet, every year I learn something new about the organisation, some aspect that was not so defined before. What I find inspiring at this time is the effort to evolve the development models and approaches and synergise with mainstream government interventions. This is evidenced particularly in the rural drinking water supply and watershed programmes. Gram Vikas engages with communities to demonstrate innovative ways of sustainably using development resources.

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As write this, I have heard that Gram Vikas has been selected for the World Habitat Award 2002. I cannot think of a more befitting recognition at this time. On behalf of the members of the Governing Board, I wish Gram Vikas many more laurels in the time to come.

J B Singh,

Chairman

Executive Director's note

The next year brings up a significant milestone in Gram Vikas' development journey. Gram Vikas completes twenty-five years in development action.

In 1998 we made a statement of a 'Millennium Mission'. This articulation was triggered by our desire to be relevant and innovative in the changing context, and necessary for reiterating our statement of purpose. That done we invited four experienced development practitioners to critically assess Gram Vikas in light of our new position, together with the staff and the communities we work with. The evaluation concluded early last year with significant feedback and inputs on our areas of strength and where we need to improve. One of the early follow up steps was formalisation of a Management Team, which took responsibility for necessary follow-up action to the recommendations of the evaluation.

We launched a series of learning events, starting in November 2002, a process facilitated by the HID team of SDC New Delhi. A fourteen-member team constituted by the Management Team of Gram Vikas and a few senior staff members came together to define a road map. In March 2003 we developed a strategy framework upto the year 2015 under Movement for Action Network to Transform Rural Areas (MANTRA). This is now to be presented to the Governing Board for their inputs and approval. The process still has some way to go, as we detail the specific strategic thrusts in the different geographic areas and contexts we work in.

We strive to demonstrate, as a development priority, alternative models and approaches for improvement of people's quality of life in different contexts. These interventions are rooted in social and gender equity, economic and environmental sustainability, and strong people's institutions. Accountability, transparency and inclusion are areas where we hope to serve as beacons of good practices. We strive to realise, through our work, Mahatma Gandhi's vision of sustainable "village republics", by developing institutional capabilities and harnessing resources to augment the economic strength of villages.

We work towards handing over controls to the people we work with through a continuous process of human and institutional development. Our achievement is when communities are able to garner development resources and manage them effectively. In this, our effort is to catalyse this process to coalesce critical masses of communities, people's institutions, and other local partnerships. This reflects in our strategy to work with Panchayats to build capacities and demonstrate good practices in mobilisation and utilisation of development resources.

Our work has been aided by long-term commitment of support from the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. Support from ICCO, Netherlands and Christian Aid, UK has entered a new phase, in a co-funding arrangement with the European Union through the programme in 'Sustainable Livelihoods Security', which brings together five leading grassroots development agencies under a common umbrella. We look forward to the sharing and learning opportunity this provides. We have continued to receive funds from EZE, Germany through the Orissa Development Action Forum. Catholic Relief Services provides food support to our schools in tribal areas.

We continue to facilitate communities to leverage funds from government schemes and agencies. The Swajaldhara scheme for rural drinking water supply under the Rajiv Gandhi drinking water mission, Government of India, is an opportunity for us to mainstream our intervention and experience in community managed water supply and sanitation. It is also a challenge for us, for the scheme addresses the issue of drinking water without taking the ground realities of sanitation into consideration.

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As Project Implementation Agency in the Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods programme, as well as the Drought Prone Area Programmes, our interventions in watershed development in Bolangir district are taking shape. We have been invited by the District Administration, Bolangir to initiate "entry point activities" in a range of villages, through community based water supply and sanitation.

The mandate from the District Administration, Ganjam, to construct 19 High Schools under the Prime Minister's Relief Fund High School Programme was extended to include nine schools under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund Programme and one school funded by the National Highway Authority. This has been an opportunity for us to demonstrate cost effective and environment friendly construction techniques and processes.

Gram Vikas has continued to receive support and strategic guidance from the members of the Governing Board. I would like to place on record our sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and been with us in our efforts. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and untiring efforts made by the field staff and volunteers of Gram Vikas.

As we inch towards completing twenty-five years I would like to acknowledge the initiatives of the communities we work with, and salute their efforts to emerge out of poverty and lead a dignified life in an increasingly challenging environment.

I am proud to present to you the Annual Report of Gram Vikas for 2002-03.

Joe Madiath

Executive Director

July 2003

1 Overview

Gram Vikas is a development organisation working with poor and marginalised rural communities in Orissa. The organisation was formed in the mid '70s and registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in January 1979. We are presently working across twelve districts through twelve field offices. Over the past year we have extended our work to two new districts – Keonjhar and Nayagarh. The work in Keonjhar is an extension of the work in Raruan block of Mayurbhanj, while, the work in Nayagarh has been initiated in partnership with Seva Sadan, a local NGO.

Gram Vikas works through two main programme interventions – Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) and Rural Health and Environment Programme (RHEP). In the past year direct outreach of Gram Vikas was enhanced through the watershed development projects in Bolangir district. The total direct coverage under these three interventions extends to 302 villages with a population of 90,121 from 17,230 families (15% *dalit* and 41% *adivasi*). The influence of Gram Vikas' work extends to villages within the same region/panchayat. Selection of new villages is predicated on the level of poverty, but also location in terms of energising local critical masses within the region/panchayat where we already work.

The interventions amongst *adivasi* communities in remote parts of Ganjam, Gajapati and Kalahandi districts were initiated under the Integrated Tribal Development Programme in the early '80s. We have been working with the *Khonds* of Ganjam and Kalahandi and the *Sauras* of Gajapati and parts of Ganjam. The interventions have been oriented at building awareness, education and developing capacities among *adivasi* to effectively negotiate with and have strong bargaining positions vis-à-vis the mainstream. Gram Vikas' contact period in these regions ranges between 8 to 20 years. In 1997 we revised our strategy to work intensively in selected Core villages to develop demonstration models in concentrated areas. We therefore work intensively with 5,016 families (86% *adivasi*) in 170 villages across these three districts, which would serve as demonstration models for the region. We have a range of experiences in working in these villages, and have seen a gradual process of role transformation over the years, with villagers assuming greater responsibilities in managing the development processes. The profile of these villages is as below:

1. Coverage under ITDP								
District	Villages	Households				Population		
		Dalit	Adivasi	Other	Total	Male	Female	Total
Gajapati	61	10	1,753	-	1,763	4,217	4,483	8,700
Ganjam	75	153	1,690	28	1,871	4,490	4,386	8,876
Kalahandi	34	273	890	219	1,382	3,164	3,304	6,468
Total	170	436	4,333	247	5,016	11,871	12,173	24,044

The Rural Health and Environment Programme, initiated in the early '90s grew out of the various experiences in development over a decade in the *adivasi* regions mentioned above as well as other areas we had covered through the promotion of biogas through the '80s. The intervention aimed at community development using community based drinking water supply and sanitation as the entry point, has now become the spearhead of Gram Vikas' expansion

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to new villages, within clusters. The focus is on villages, which have a majority of poor families. The selection of villages under RHEP is based on the initiative and interest of the people and their willingness to work together for collective and individual gains. RHEP is contingent upon the whole community working together – 100% consensus is essential not just from the view of effective sanitation, but also for sustainability of systems established and development processes initiated. RHEP processes have strong components promoting social inclusion and gender parity. RHEP has been operationalised in a variety of socio-economic and geographic contexts. We have so far covered 8,089 families in 105 villages - 25% of the population are adivasis, 14% are dalits and 61% are from other communities. Last year, the intervention extended to 3,005 families in 38 villages. The profile of villages under RHEP is as follows:

2. Coverage under RHEP								
District	Villages	Households				Population		
		Dalit	Adivasi	Others	Total	Male	Female	Total
Gajapati	12	19	498	243	760	2,103	2,008	4,111
Ganjam	23	332	215	2,000	2,547	7,513	6,753	14,266
Bargarh	17	141	218	816	1,175	3,364	3,219	6,583
Bolangir	13	203	164	497	864	2,542	2,495	5,037
Boudh	4	71	16	169	256	755	758	1,513
Sambalpur	3	45	6	116	167	513	457	970
Surbarnapur	3	33	29	127	189	578	488	1,066
Mayurbhanj	24	162	783	804	1,749	5,377	5,096	10,473
Nawarangpur	2	115	47	13	175	608	527	1,135
Rayagada	1	7	6	37	50	100	100	200
Koraput	2	32	46	37	115	287	291	578
Kalahandi	1	0	42	0	42	110	108	218
Total	105	1,160	2,070	4,859	8,089	23,850	22,300	46,150

The newly initiated watershed projects in Bolangir district are implemented as per the Government of India guidelines, which define to a great extent approaches as well as activities. Gram Vikas through its involvement in this intervention, is attempting to demonstrate effective and efficient implementation within the framework of the guidelines. Coverage under the watershed projects is as follows:

3. Coverage under watershed projects								
District	Villages	Households				Population		
		Dalit	Adivasi	Others	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bolangir	27	1,047	698	2,380	4,125	10,113	9,810	19,923

2 Gram Vikas' development interventions

Gram Vikas provides support to the communities through building skills and capacities, finances and technical assistance. The specific nature of intervention in each of the sectors is decided based on the local context, people's ability and willingness to participate, resources mobilised by the communities through their own contributions and accessed from local government institutions and external resources mobilised by Gram Vikas. In an effort to involve communities more directly in the development process, Gram Vikas undertakes formal annual planning with each village with which it is involved. The Village Executive Committees and Gram Vikas staff/village volunteers develop village plans in consultation with adult men and women in each village. This process is supported by the PMED (Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Documentation) team, and staff are continually reviewing and gaining experience in participatory planning processes. Priority activities are determined and annual activity plans are drawn up, which are implemented and monitored by the village committees

The most significant aspect of Gram Vikas' work with communities is ensuring the sustainability of development interventions initiated. Enabling creation of community level institutions, mechanisms and capacity building of the people are vital elements in the process of human and institutional development.

Efforts have been directed towards revitalisation of panchayats under the rubric of Panchayati Raj Act and Rules and establishing links with village level institutions. This is done by ensuring regular and effective conduct of *palli sabhas* and *gram sabhas*. We have focussed on developing capacities of panchayat leaders, helping panchayats mobilise resources locally and from the government, and instil effectiveness and transparency in functioning. One of the continuing themes of our intervention is the fight against corruption.

Gram Vikas' interventions are rooted in an integrated approach to improve the quality of life of poor and marginalised rural communities, in the sectors discussed below. We have defined the scope of work in each sector from an assessment of needs in the contexts that we work in.

Education	Village based pre-schools, primary schools, residential schools for adivasi children and resource centres
Livelihood and Food Security	Diversification of livelihood options through skill and capacity building based on locally available natural and human resources, formation of Self Help Groups for micro-credit, micro-enterprises and market linkages
Natural Resource Management	Drought proofing of villages and watershed management, involving conservation and development of land, water and forests
Infrastructure	Individual disaster proof housing and sanitation; Community infrastructure including water supply systems, schools, grain banks, roads and drainage, and alternative sources of energy
Health	Promotive, preventive and curative health services imbibing traditional knowledge in medicines and health practices

3 Access to Primary Education

Gram Vikas' work in the education sector encompasses pre-school centres, village level primary education centres, residential schools and adult education. Education has continued to be a focus of Gram Vikas' interventions since the early 80s. Gram Vikas runs village level schools where the government has failed to do so because the areas are remote and inaccessible. This is mostly in areas where *adivasi* communities live. In other areas, we motivate communities to ensure effective functioning of government schools.

Gram Vikas' initial efforts in village based education, followed the concepts of non-formal education. Reviewing almost two decades of education work in the villages, Gram Vikas realised that the focus on non-formal education had limited and unsustainable impact. This led to Gram Vikas restructuring the programme to follow the formal syllabus with innovations in teaching methods and learning materials, at the same time retaining the flexibility with regard to class timing to suit the needs of the communities.

3.1 Balwadis – Pre-school Education Centres

The pre-school centres, called *balwadis* are the instruments for preparing children up to the age of five for formal schooling and influencing people's perception of childcare, nutrition, hygiene, etc. Children in the age group of six months to five years attend the pre-school centres, which are run by *balwadi didis* - young women, mostly from within the village, identified by the villagers and trained by Gram Vikas. The Village Committee employs them, with some financial support from Gram Vikas. The project level education teams conduct periodic training and capacity building programmes for the *didis*. The number of centres run during the year reduced from 143 to 123, due to turnover of *balwadi didis*. Concurrently the number of villages covered has reduced from 156 to 153, with contiguous villages sharing the same centre. Table 3 details the current status of *balwadis* in ITDP areas.

4. Status of <i>balwadi</i> centres					
District	# of Villages	# of Centres	Enrolled Children		
			Boys	Girls	Total
Ganjam	63	54	383	375	758
Gajapati	59	48	339	356	695
Kalahandi	31	21	328	360	688
Total	153	123	1,050	1,091	2,141

It is noteworthy that there is near 100% enrolment of eligible children in villages where the centres run. Attendance at *Balwadi* centres is generally quite good owing to provision for nutrition, healthcare and day care. Parents directly benefit from *balwadis* and they also allow older children to attend day schools, as they are not required to look after their siblings while their parents work. In all centres mothers prepare mid-day meals by turn and health-staff carry out periodic growth monitoring of children and give necessary advise to parents on childcare.

Where facilities exist and function, Gram Vikas collaborates with Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) centres and the Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM) appointed by the government in these areas. In areas where the ICDS centres are not regular, villagers pressurise the local administration to ensure proper functioning of the centres, which has had some impact on the functioning of these centres.

Balwadis are also functioning in 14 RHEP villages, where 273 children (134 boys and 139 girls) are enrolled. Established out of the initiative of the community, especially women, the running expenses of the school are met by them. Gram Vikas provides necessary training to the facilitators at these centres.

3.2 Gram Vikas Education Centres – Village based primary education

Formal education at the primary level is imparted through Gram Vikas Education Centres (GVEC) in *adivasi* villages. The following table presents the coverage of these centres.

5. Status of GVECs					
District	# of Villages	# of Centres	Enrolled		
			Boys	Girls	Total
Ganjam	75	63	441	409	850
Gajapati	57	45	437	453	890
Kalahandi	34	24	369	287	656
Total	166	132	1,247	1,149	2,396

Of the eligible children in the 6 -14 age group over 80% boys and girls are enrolled at GVECs. A *gaon sathi* appointed by the village committee imparts education to children in classes 1, 2, and 3. The *gaon sathis* are accountable to the village committees. Periodic oral and written examinations are conducted at the schools by project level education teams. Annual examinations are conducted in April-May, each year. Last year, of the 519 children enrolled in Class-3, 375 children appeared at the annual examination, of which 163 children passed (118 boys and 40 girls). Of these, 148 children have enrolled in Gram Vikas' residential schools or local government schools for higher education.

Gram Vikas has adopted "joyful learning" as the guiding principle in designing teaching-learning methods for the GVECs. A pleasant learning environment characterised by colourful classrooms, educational posters and murals, learning aids created by the teachers themselves from local materials, innovations like 'nature class' and class picnics, help in creating and maintaining the momentum for meaningful education.

Many GVECs have a children's savings fund, which encourages the habit of thrift among the children. Currently 116 centres across 131 villages have 1,621 members (846 boys and 775 girls) saving regularly. Their collective funds amount to Rs. 117,116. In addition 148 centres across 169 villages have a school fund, to which parents contribute an amount in the range of Rs. 3-5 each month towards regular expenses of the school. The current balance of the school fund is Rs. 192,063.

This intervention in education needs a high level of inputs in the form of training and development of teaching and learning materials to make education as relevant and contextualised as possible. Training of *balwadi didis*, education facilitators, and members of village education committees is also organised. In several projects, teachers from government schools are also involved in training programmes and other events. This has helped improve relations between teachers and the village communities as well.

Education resource centres have a critical role in nurturing and training *gaon sathis* to be effective teachers. Each Resource Centre caters to over 50 villages in its area. Parents and children from the villages are periodically brought to visit the education centres, where there are many use -and -learn objects on display. The interactive mode of learning generates a lot

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of interest. The location of these resource centres is such that they are easily accessible by most villages in the area. The centres also play a key role in liaising with government schools and involving the teachers in quality education.

In areas where government schools function, efforts are primarily towards ensuring that the schools function regularly and effectively and dropout children are motivated to enrol. Currently in 34 villages under RHEP, where the student-teacher ratio is high, the village committees have engaged additional facilitators who are also trained by Gram Vikas. These facilitators also conduct tuition classes in the evenings.

Village education committees are constituted in all the villages where the education programme is implemented. These committees with equal participation of men and women have created a favourable environment for education in the villages. The committees actively collaborate with Gram Vikas staff members in conducting activities like *melas* (fairs), picnics, and sports events for the children. Most of these events are held in a cluster of villages, and the participation of the larger community promotes healthy competition between the villages and helps in influencing parents' attitude to education.

3.3 Residential schools

In the early 80's we realised that the efforts in education would not reach children from many isolated and inaccessible *adivasi* hamlets with five to ten families. Gram Vikas set up four residential schools for *adivasi* children, primarily to cater to such families. 694 children (463 boys and 231 girls) were enrolled in and are attending the schools at Konkia (Ganjam), Koinpur (Gajapati) and Thuamul Rampur (Kalahandi) and Rudhapadar (Ganjam).

6. Status of residential schools					
District	Name/ Location of the School	Class	Boys	Girls	Total
Ganjam	Kerandimal Middle Education School, Konkia	II to VII	134	74	208
	Gram Vikas High School, Konkia	VIII to X	68	40	108
Gajapati	Mahendratanaya Ashram School, Koinpur	II to VII	130	60	190
Kalahandi	Gram Vikas Shikhya Niketan, Kumudabahal	II to VI	101	39	140
Ganjam	Gram Vikas Vidya Vihar, Rudhapadar	III to IV	30	18	48
	TOTAL		463	231	694

The children attending these schools have been achieving results that are comparable and often better than the performance of district government schools. The performance of students in public examinations in the past two years is as follows:

7. Examination details (Class 7)									
Name of the School	Year	Class 7 Appeared		Class 7 Passed					
				1st div		2nd div		Third div	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
KME School, Konkia	2000-01	21	5	12	5	6	0	3	0
	2001-02	18	13	17	13	1	0	0	0
Mahendratanaya Ashram School, Koinpur	2000-01	16	6	11	6	4	0	1	0
	2001-02	20	4	1	0	16	0	3	4

8. Examination details (Class 10)									
Name of the School	Year	Std 10		Std 10 Passed					
		Appeared		First div		Second div		Third div	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Gram Vikas High School, Konkia	2000-01	9	3	1	0	3	1	5	1
	2001-02	17	12	1	0	6	2	3	3

Children passing out of Class 7 are enrolled into Gram Vikas High School at Konkia or government high schools. As for the fifteen children passing out of High School last year, all have enrolled for higher education.

Gram Vikas is also running a school in Tumba project area, Patrapur block, Ganjam, under the National Child Labour Project since 2001. 44 children (33 boys and 11 girls) are enrolled in this school, which has classes from one to four.

Apart from academics the children in the residential schools have shown promise in areas like sports, recitation, quiz competitions, etc. They have won prizes in district and state level competitions.

The residential schools have generated demand amongst *adivasi* communities for education. The schools require funding to expand existing facilities, which will enable them to become available for more *adivasi* children and provide quality education. Gram Vikas believes that these schools will generate a support network to enhance the development processes in villages. Children educated through the schools have already started filtering back into the community and the presence of these educated minds is beginning to create an awareness of education in the minds of the people.

4 Interventions for sustainable livelihoods and food security

Gram Vikas' interventions in the livelihoods sector assumed greater significance in view of the continued occurrence of natural disasters during the past few years.

In the non-farm livelihoods sector, Gram Vikas' efforts are focused on promotion of self-help groups, skill building, community enterprise promotion in minor forest products and local agricultural produce and technological application for livelihood promotion

Intensive work is also carried out in enhancing food security and developing resistance to droughts through effective land and water management practices. Land, water and forests are the three most important resources for the people Gram Vikas works with. The communities recognise the fact that sustainability of the natural resources will also determine food security and sustainable livelihoods for themselves. Gram Vikas supports village communities in undertaking sustainable management of natural resources through a variety of interventions in promoting community forestry and horticulture, land and water conservation and development. Development of small and micro watersheds are a core area of intervention especially in the districts of Bolangir and Kalahandi.

4.1 Self Help Groups

In all the villages Gram Vikas supports the formation and strengthening of self help groups. The basic premise is to encourage thrift among the women and provide readily accessible

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funds at reasonable rates in times of need. These groups provide a platform for bringing women together to discuss issues of common concern. Over time women gain confidence to articulate their concerns even in the larger village meetings. The status of self-help groups promoted and supported by Gram Vikas is as follows:

9. Status of Self Help Groups (own funds)			
	Details	RHEP	ITDP
Profile	Villages	91	169
	Groups	319	366
Members	Male	683	1,093
	Female	4,261	3,536
	Total	4,944	4,651
Funds status as on March 31, 2002	Cash in Hand and Bank	968,587	1,451,342
	Loan Outstanding	1,112,543	411,587
Transactions in Current Year	Saving	653,397	419,234
	Loan Repayment	1,116,961	116,691
	Interest collected	245,500	75,205
	Loan disbursed	1,487,149	334,899
	Withdrawal	18,442	101,840
Funds status as on March 31, 2003	Cash in Hand and Bank	1,547,361	1,625,733
	Loan o/s	1,482,731	629,795

Gram Vikas also helps link these groups to institutional credit through banks for enhancing their productive activities. Credit is disbursed for both individual and group based activities and is determined and monitored by the groups. Under RHEP funds worth Rs. 917,769 accessed under DWCRA/SGSY are being transacted by the groups (31 groups with 454 members). In addition, funds amounting to Rs. 1,330,703 accessed from banks under the Self Help Group linkage are being utilised by 114 groups with 1,587 members. In ITDP areas 152 groups have outstanding loans worth Rs. 709,225 accessed from banks.

Activities undertaken by the groups include goat rearing, processing of Minor Forest Produce (making leaf plates, binding brooms, processing tamarind, etc). Some groups have also taken up trading in cashew, tamarind, paddy, etc, to ensure better returns. They also make a fair profit in the process.

Gram Vikas also supports individual enterprises based on agricultural products like paddy, turmeric; forest products like tamarind, hill brooms; goatery, poultry and cattle rearing. While promoting these enterprises, Gram Vikas works on the premise that for viable, sustainable rural enterprises to flourish community level capacity building is the most vital issue. Periodic training programmes for the members are conducted.

4.2 Livelihoods in construction sector

Skill development - training men and women in masonry, stone cutting, wire bending, carpentry, etc. is integrated with the process of infrastructure development in all villages, through on-the-job training. In the reporting period 246 masons were trained comprising of

170 men and 76 women. There is gradual acceptance of women masons, as this reflection by Kylie McEvoy, a volunteer from Australian Volunteers International (AVI), illustrates:

A bloodless revolution, but with lots of guts!

Was it really just one and a half years ago?

It does not seem even that long since I was interviewing one of the first groups of trainee women masons. I remember being impressed with Shashi Nahak's statement about how she and the other women braved ridicule, to be the first in their village to join the training programme. I was impressed, but I still had reservations. As they talked doubts began to form in the back of my mind... was this really going to work? What was worrying me most were statements like 'things are better for us now, but what we are doing is still not fully accepted'. Where was this programme going when the women were adamant "we will not have an opportunity to take up work outside our village if it requires us to be absent overnight... this would not be acceptable to our families or the community". Gram Vikas could not supply work locally forever, so what was going to happen then? I tried raising this point with the women, but they did not seem to want to face it, and replied with great certainty that Gram Vikas would just have to keep employing them at Mohuda and that was all there was to it.

I went away reminding myself that change does not happen all at once and something like this would take time. In this area there are many women who remain behind closed doors, not able to mix in public places for fear this will bring shame on their families. The first positive step was the women agreeing to join the programme...the next sign that change was really on the way, came soon after, when the women used their income to buy bicycles and learned how to ride. One day you passed a group of women scurrying along the road on foot so as not to be late for work, their tiffin carries in hand or on head, while men swished by on bicycles. Then the next thing you knew you could see bunches of women brightly clad in their sari's hurtling confidently towards you on their new bicycles, sometimes even giving the men a lift on the back. The effects of this development impacted other women in their villages, women who had worked as labourers for Gram Vikas for many years, saw these young masons and their cycles and the next thing you knew, they too had bought bikes and rode to work. A precedent had been set and the wheels were turning.

Then last night I learned something that made me really smile. A group of women from Tamana had agreed to go and work 15 km away on a site in Berhampur. Gram Vikas organised accommodation for four of them and they worked away from home for almost two months. Now these same women, who are much in demand for their fine pointing work, have moved further afield and are working on site in the neighbouring district of Gajapati, some 100km away from their village. It made me stop and think; an amazing thing has happened here and we have hardly noticed... it has been a bloodless revolution! I wait now to see how long it will be before these women forge the final frontier and are engaged for equal wages for work outside Gram Vikas.

The Building Support Team (BST) co-ordinates all skill building activities in the construction sector. The BST also runs a "barefoot engineers" training programme. The concept of "barefoot engineers" is to develop a cadre of trained persons, capable of carrying out basic engineering tasks at the village level. This was necessitated by the fact that it is difficult to motivate and retain trained engineers to live and work in remote rural areas. Each training cycle involves a 150 day-course curriculum with 90 days theory-practical sessions and 60 days on-site training. The first batch consisted of 12 men while the second batch has 21 male trainees.

4.3 Technology for livelihoods

Gram Vikas believes that appropriate technology can be useful only when it can contribute to enhancing income and employment of the poor. Gram Vikas' participation in technology action research projects like the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln, has been to adapt the technology for use by poor village communities.

4.3.1 Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln

In the past year, operations were stabilised at the community owned brick kiln in Asuramunda village, Bolangir. This is the first time that the technology is being used by a community of green brick moulders who used to migrate every year for six to eight months to kiln sites in various parts of India, where conditions for work and living are subhuman. These brick moulders have now become shareholders of the kiln, and have been trained in other aspects of kiln operations and management as well. Since its commissioning the unit has produced 11 lakh bricks, and sold 10 lakh at an average price of Rs. 960 per 1000 bricks. During this period, Rs.5.70 lakh were paid to villagers as wages for work contributed to the unit. This forms about 70% of income generated by the project. Gram Vikas continues to provide backstopping to the project, but villagers have taken charge of operations and marketing.

During the year, Gram Vikas completed the initial documentation of the processes undertaken in the village. Village leaders from Asuramunda participated in different fora organized by the India Brick Project to share their experiences. In addition to ongoing technical support, Gram Vikas has provided support to the VSBK committee in planning, accounting and other aspects related to management of the kiln. Motivated by the success of Asuramunda, two more villages have approached Gram Vikas to help them build similar kilns.

A pilot downscaled two-shaft kiln has been constructed at Mohuda with a capacity of 1.2 million bricks per year. In the first season of operation 468,000 bricks were produced of which 325,000 were sold. Performance has now been stabilized and the kiln is ready to operate to capacity. A brick extruder is also being installed at the kiln site. The downscaled kiln serves as a demonstration unit for small-scale brick makers as well as interested communities. In the past year, Gram Vikas also assisted a private entrepreneur in Asureswar village, Cuttack district to set up a downscaled kiln.

4.3.2 Interventions in renewable energy

Gram Vikas plans to renew with enhanced vigour its efforts at promoting renewable energy technologies in rural areas. We realise that increased energy consumption is required for a quantum improvement in livelihoods and overall quality of life of the rural poor. The most user-friendly form of energy today is electricity. Hence efforts are directed towards decentralised generation of electricity for direct benefits in livelihoods for poor people deprived of access to grid electricity. Two renewable technologies for electricity generation Gram Vikas is focussing on are biomass-gasifier and micro-hydro. During the year, steps were taken to link with technology providers – TERI, New Delhi and Sorane Sa, Switzerland for biomass-gasifiers and Mr Yogesh Kumar, New Delhi for micro-hydro systems. While biomass gasifier will be experimented in Ganjam district, Kuang and Amthaguda villages of Thuamul Rampur block in Kalahandi have been identified for the micro-hydro project.

4.4 Community forestry and horticulture

Gram Vikas motivates communities to collectively manage community forests. The process of management and sharing benefits enhances cohesiveness of the communities, and also yields

substantial incomes if managed well. In several villages, communities have also been motivated to regenerate common and private wastelands. These have been developed through horticulture promotion, including a variety of species – cashew, mango, guava, jackfruit, etc. These community forests and horticultural plots (community owned and individual) help to protect the local environment as well as provide incomes to the community.

Gram Vikas had developed over 10,000 acres under social forestry programme (1985-95) in Ganjam, Gajapati and Kalahandi districts. Management of forests got a boost in the years after the super cyclone in 1999, with replanting in areas affected by the cyclone and development of new areas. In the past year we continued to support and strengthen community efforts to manage forests.

In many areas of Ganjam and Gajapati districts, horticultural plantations developed on private wastelands, have led to significant augmentation of incomes. The returns are earning dividends now, as this case from Jhulasahi in Gajapati district written by Deepasri Baul volunteer from National Foundation of India (NFI), illustrates:

Horticulture in Jhulasahi

The village Jhulasahi, part of the Koinpur project in Gajapati, is inhabited by people from the Saura tribe. A small village with 37 tribal families, it has a day school and a concrete road running through it. All families of this rehabilitated village have horticultural patches, which forms their basic income.

Shyam Sundar Bhuiyan, the Secretary of the village, leads this village effort. He has a number of such patches, roughly an acre each. He grows oranges, pineapples, mangoes, jackfruit, bananas, lemon, coconut, date palm, pomegranate, custard apple and cashew. The centre of the patches is for turmeric, ginger, pepper and bay leaves. Besides these, he grows flowers like *dahlia* and jasmine and even herbal plants. He does his own grafting after training at the government horticultural farm in Udaygiri.

Like the rest of his village, his dependence on *bogado* or shifting cultivation is minimal, and the practice has almost come to an end. He says that previously he earned a meagre Rs2000 a year from selling produce from *bogado*, after keeping some for his own requirements. He now manages to earn between Rs30,000 to Rs40,000 from his plantations. He recognizes that *bogado* aggravates soil erosion, and has built stone bunds and terraces to prevent erosion within his garden.

He has no land to grow paddy, as all such land belongs to the non-tribal people. But he seems well off with the returns from his plantations. Taking to horticulture has improved the condition of his daily life. He has spent lavishly on building a *pucca* (permanent) house, and people joke that the remaining income he spends on hospitality to visitors! Like other families in his village, he is also constructing a *pucca* house with a toilet and bathing room, and is happy that they will soon have piped water supply to their houses.

Gram Vikas as part of its livelihoods programme, started motivating people to take to horticulture, in this area, since 1991. The beginning was gradual but it picked up in the last 4-5 years, replacing *bogado* as the basic means of survival. Presently, Gram Vikas' role is limited providing loan assistance and technical and marketing support where necessary. The people manage this venture all by themselves.

In fact, the improved lifestyle is noticeable in almost all the village households. With augmented incomes loan repayment has become easier. "The produce is sold to merchants, who can now come to the village itself, on account of the concrete road built with Shyam Sundar's initiative", people tell us, as trucks rumble in, and leave the village laden with pineapples.

We leave the village with an obvious success story and our hands full of mangoes, bananas and pineapples from Shyam Sundar's garden—a delicious proof of his prosperity and reputation as a good host.

4.5 Agriculture development

In the aftermath of the cyclone of 1999 and the recurrent droughts in Orissa, there has been an increased vigour to improve alternative livelihood sources of communities. At the micro level development of cultivable land through leveling, bunding and digging of farm ponds where appropriate are promoted. Gram Vikas supports communities in agricultural activities, including cultivation of paddy, vegetables, fruit trees such as lemon, papaya and banana. We also promote composting of organic wastes and limit use of chemical fertilizers.

In villages where settled agriculture has been successful, we notice reducing dependence on *bogodo* (shifting cultivation) for food requirements, but the extent of results have been affected by the severe droughts which have resulted in large scale crop failure across Orissa.

Technical support for cultivation and storage of ginger and onion in Kalahandi, have been successful in the past year, and farmers are able to hold off sale till the time when they can get better returns. In the Tumba project area (Ganjam), Gram Vikas aided the local people's organization to revive two local *haats* (weekly markets). For an area where all villages are located on hill-tops and none can be reached by motorable road, this has made a big difference in selling what they produce, and also for purchase of essential requirements.

Land and water development work is also underway in Bolangir district. Banjipalli village has been supported for construction of a spillway pond and discussions are on in Lukapada for establishing a Lift Irrigation point, with technical assistance from PRADAN. Both these projects will be completed by March 2004, and are expected to significantly augment agriculture production.

4.6 Integrated Watershed development

Gram Vikas is the Project Implementing Agency (PIA) for watershed projects funded under schemes of Government of India in Bangamunda block. The funds are directed through the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Bolangir. 10 micro watershed projects are currently underway in the block, four apiece under Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) III and IV and two under the Additional Central Assistance -Revised Long Term Action Plan (ACA-RLTAP) of the special programme for KBK Districts. Of these, DPAP IV and ACA watersheds were sanctioned during 2002-03.

Participatory micro planning for preparation of the five-year watershed action plans were conducted in all 10 watersheds. Technical assistance from the AFPRO Task Force at Bhubaneswar was utilized in the first four watersheds. Watershed associations and committees have been formed and registration procedures completed in all watersheds.

Under the Entry Point Activity provision in the DPAP projects, watershed villages are being motivated to take up community based water and sanitation, with 100% coverage, along the lines of RHEP. So far, four villages in three watersheds have agreed to do this and villagers

have started collection of local materials for construction. Other villages are expected to be motivated upon seeing the benefits of this activity in these four villages.

Gram Vikas was also appointed a partner agency for the Western Orissa Rural Livelihood Project (WORLP) in Bangamunda block during 2001. However, implementation has been delayed as necessary clearances and finances have not been provided by the Project.

In addition to the government financed watershed projects, Gram Vikas is also implementing integrated watershed development in three villages in Kalahandi district through the Integrated Tribal Development Programme projects in Thuamul Rampur and Badabafila. Tribal families in Tukuguda, Tangiri and Tikirpada have agreed to abstain from *dangar* (slash and burn cultivation) in earmarked areas within their villages and develop the hills and surrounding lands using watershed principles. Work in these villages began in mid -2002 and is expected to be completed by March 2004.

5 Infrastructure development

Gram Vikas' intervention in the rural infrastructure sector focuses on mobilising communities to pool resources to create basic infrastructure for sustainable disaster-proof habitats. People contribute their own labour and locally available materials. Gram Vikas recognises and supports communities in providing certain Social Costs. These costs are determined in the specific context of each habitation. Loans arranged where required by Gram Vikas, as in the case of housing.

5.1 Housing

Gram Vikas provides financial and technical support for building permanent, disaster-proof houses. In the plain regions, houses are made of brick and cement, with filler slab concrete roof. In inaccessible areas where cement cannot be transported, GCI sheets or tiles are used for the roof. In hilly areas houses are built with locally available stone. As a rule Gram Vikas supports construction of houses with at least 45 square metres of plinth area. Each house has two rooms, a kitchen space and a veranda. The houses are designed such that toilets and bathing rooms can be built alongside each house. Gram Vikas provides loans to the families for the construction of the houses. Loans are accessed from Housing Development Finance Corporation, Mumbai and Stichting DOEN Foundation, Netherlands. The average cost of each house is Rs. 45,000. The quantum of loan depends on the type of house being constructed, and ranges from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 40,000. Gram Vikas also provides technical guidance, mason support, training and support for bulk purchase of building materials. Construction of 3,479 houses has been supported so far with loans of over Rs. 67 million, of which 3,256 houses are completed in all respects. Of the Rs. 31 million repayment due at the end of the reporting period, 67% has been recovered. Collections in the past year were affected by the severe drought conditions.

The housing finance activity has evolved over the past two decades from a full grant approach to a full loan approach. The experiences have been varied, in terms of people's involvement, ability and attitude to repay. Establishing the loan-based approach has been slow as the government schemes operate on a full grant approach. In recent years, there has been growing demand from the people for Gram Vikas assistance, as government allocations for housing are limited and determined by political patronage. There has been significant impact on rural housing in the area, both self-financed and government supported, as people are now more conscious about design, costs and quality of construction.

5.2 Sanitation

Sanitation and provision of drinking water are the entry point interventions in the Rural Health and Environment Programme (RHEP). Gram Vikas promotes 100% coverage of families in a village in the sanitation component under which individual toilets and bathing rooms are constructed. The subsidy component provided by Gram Vikas is only Rs. 2500 per family, of a total cost of between Rs. 5,000 to 7,500. Each family contributes the balance amount in the form of labour and materials. In case of very poor villages efforts are made by Gram Vikas and the community to obtain funds under government schemes or MP/MLA local area development funds. Involvement of all families and raising of the corpus fund with Rs. 1000 from each family are non-negotiable conditions under RHEP. These conditions have spurred processes of collective work and collaboration within the villages as the experience of Gouri Shankar Raj, Gram Vikas supervisor in Puranapani village illustrates:

A model for equity

Purunapani is a small village in the Kantamal Block in the district of Boudh. To reach the village, one has to walk a distance of 8 km from Masanipada on the Boudh-Bolangir road. There is no *pucca* road to the village. Eighty-five families live in Purunapani, working as wage labourers, peddlers and some as marginal farmers. There is an acute scarcity of drinking water and they say they face a famine-like situation every year for want of rains. The Government has tried to provide safe drinking water by sinking bore wells, but their efforts have failed.

When I visited, I met with the ward member and discussed the possible implementation of RHEP with him. He said he would discuss it with the villagers and seek their response within a few days. Two months elapsed, but there was no information. Kahnai Bhoi is a marginal farmer of Purunapani. One day while I was passing through, Kahnai came to me and said, "Sir, I will call every body in the village to a meeting and you will explain the scheme to them". I agreed, the meeting was held, and I spoke about RHEP. The villagers formed a committee to take responsibility for implementation of the scheme and set about motivating others to save for the corpus fund. From that time, I met the villagers once a week. There was no let up in motivational efforts, yet weeks passed by without any collection of corpus fund. Most families were willing to pay but they felt that they were too poor to afford it.

The scenario suddenly changed during one meeting when some villagers who earn their livelihood as masons declared that they would construct the toilets and bathrooms for the extremely poor families, free of cost. Another man declared that he would contribute 42,000 bricks that he had been stocking for construction of his new house to the construction of RHEP infrastructure. He did not demand payment of the cost of brick immediately, instead he allowed people to make payments according to their convenience. Construction of toilets and bathrooms began almost immediately. The masons even trained some interested youth in masonry, creating more helpers on the building site— speeding up construction process.

All families, irrespective of their economic status, worked with unity. Although some of the families have not contributed any thing to the corpus fund, their individual accounts have been credited by voluntary contributions made by others. There is no resentment in the minds of others who have made unique sacrifices for their brethren.

In the 67 villages (5,044 families) supported prior to March 2003 an additional eighty-three families have built toilets and bathing rooms with their own resources and some assistance from community funds. 100% sanitation coverage continues in these villages even after the withdrawal of Gram Vikas. In the 38 villages where Gram Vikas extended facilities over the

past year, of the 3020 toilets to be constructed (3005 for individual families and 15 for public utility near schools and community buildings) 1701 have been completed, while the rest will be completed by June 2003, before the advent of the monsoons.

Together with toilets and bathing rooms, drainage systems are developed to ensure that wastewater does not accumulate. In several villages, banana and papaya planted around the soak pits have helped to leach excess water and keep the pits dry. Cleanliness drives are carried out in all villages to motivate villagers to ensure that the village surroundings are unpolluted and clean. Children are also encouraged to partake in maintaining village cleanliness.

5.3 Drinking water

The entry point activity under RHEP ensures toilets, bathing rooms and supply of protected piped water to all families in the village habitation. Water pumped from a safe source (mostly deep tubewells) is stored in an overhead water tank, and supplied to every family. Each family has a water-tap in the toilet, bathing room and in the kitchen.

Over the past year, efforts have been made to link this intervention with the Swajaldhara scheme for rural water supply promoted by the Ministry for Rural Development, Government of India. Being one of our core interventions, this is an opportunity for us to demonstrate effective ways of utilising government resources. There have been requests from several local organisations to associate with us and learn from our experiences in implementing community-based rural water supply programmes.

Gram Vikas provides all technical support in establishing the water supply systems. Villagers arrange for electricity and are responsible for operations and maintenance of the system. They are trained by Gram Vikas in undertaking minor repairs and maintenance.

In the *adivasi* villages of Kanheiput, Madanguda and Anusahi, water from perennial natural springs is collected and supplied via pipes to all families through gravity flow water supply systems. With the demonstrated feasibility of this, more villages are encouraged to undertake the same programme.

Water supply systems established ensure access to protected piped water all through the year. The intervention is a boon especially for women, who are saved several hours spent earlier in fetching water. Water supply systems in all 67 villages under RHEP are functional and being maintained and used by the communities. For the 38 villages covered in the past year, water sources have been identified in all villages. In 36 villages it comes through deep borewells and in Attarsing village in Gajapati, water comes from a spring through gravity flow supply. Water tanks have been constructed in seventeen villages, while for the rest construction will be completed by June 2003.

5.4 Community infrastructure

Gram Vikas provides partial support for the construction of community halls or school buildings in villages where such common facilities do not exist. Gram Vikas normally meets about two-thirds of the cost of construction of these units; the community contributes the balance amount. The need for a multipurpose disaster proof community building for each village became more critical after the cyclone. The multipurpose buildings are used for running the day school, conducting village meetings, as store and workspace for women, etc. There is a separate room for storing grain in every building.

6 Promotion of Community Health

From the early 80s health has been one of the focal interventions of Gram Vikas. The activities under the health programme are planned under the broad areas of prevention, promotion, and curative health needs. Gram Vikas is involved in ongoing data collection and health monitoring among communities we work with.

Project level dispensaries are run by Gram Vikas trained nurses appointed as health staff in remote *adivasi* areas to provide essential medical facilities. Serious cases are referred to the government hospitals. Village health committees comprised of elected men and women monitor health status in the villages on a periodic basis, with special focus on sanitation and timely intervention during the outbreak of diseases. Periodic monitoring of growth of children to arrest malnutrition is also carried out. Project staff assist the health committees to liaise with the government to procure medicines and vaccines for immunisation for eligible children.

To ensure that basic care is regularly available at the village itself, regular training of Village Health Workers and Traditional Birth Attendants are organised. The health workers are responsible for running the drug distribution centres in villages, while birth attendants have played a crucial role in ensuring safe deliveries and post natal care.

In the past year we have encouraged and facilitated villagers to subscribe to the Janashree Bima Yojana of Life Insurance Corporation. This insurance scheme provides for financial compensation in case of accidents and death. An annual premium of Rs.100 provides insurance cover between Rs.20, 000 to Rs.50, 000. There are currently 2,020 persons insured across 100 villages. Eleven claims worth Rs.220, 000 were made in the past year.

Efforts are being made to revitalise traditional knowledge in medicines, and use of local herbs for treatment of common ailments. Herbal gardens have been developed for demonstration in Rudhapadar and Thuamul Rampur projects. Villagers are motivated to develop a small patch of medicinal herbs near the houses. Herbal preparations for malaria, fever, stomach ailments, etc are being prepared at the project and have a growing clientele.

7 Human and Institutional Development – Community level

Gram Vikas promotes village, cluster and area level people's organisations to take charge of development processes initiated. The approach to people's organisations is slightly different under ITDP and RHEP given the specific contexts they operate in.

7.1 People's Organizations in ITDP areas

Each village where the ITDP operates, a village committee consisting of men and women is formed. These organisations draw on the strength of traditional institutions among *adivasi* communities, at the same time encourage representation of women and youth. Given that most of these villages are small in size, the reach of village committees often is limited. Therefore, committees are formed with representation from villages in a cluster, as area committees. These bodies arbitrate in times of conflict, and are also able to motivate villagers to take collective action on specific issues.

In the village and area committees, Gram Vikas promotes equal participation of men and women. To encourage more women to participate actively and make their participation meaningful, various steps are adopted. A separate organisation for women is created at the village, area and project levels, where they are able to articulate their concerns and discuss common issues. In many villages women spearhead issue-based activities. These include community action on atrocities against women, alcoholism, revitalisation of government

schools, etc. Women have also come together for income generation activities, increasing their economic controls, which in turn impacts the social relations vis-à-vis men. The process is however slow and fraught with challenges as it involves questioning and standing up against centuries of accepted social norms. There are many positive changes though, as the case in Amthaguda village of Kalahandi by Maju Verghese from College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, written in course of his internship with Gram Vikas, illustrates.

Alcohol Turns Sour In Amthaguda...

Never before was alcohol sour in Amthaguda, a tribal village in Thuamul Rampur block in Kalahandi district, until a group of women decided that they needed an end to this menace. For too long they had experienced beating, wastage of land and labour, and above all social disruption in their community.

Mukta Devi, 35, the leader of the movement against alcohol in Amthaguda says, "now we've got the power, the power of togetherness of women".

Each day, Mukta Devi and her children were victims of abuse after her husband's daily alcohol consumption. Their land was gradually mortgaged, acre-by-acre, and every night her drunkard husband demanded saris, pots, and anything that was valuable in the house to pay for his habit. Once he even tried to snatch her nose-ring. She was forced into menial labour to feed her two children.

The change began when Gram Vikas established the Self-Help Group (SHG) of Amthaguda. In the SHG meetings the women shared their personal problems, developing an intense bond among themselves. Mukta Devi found that she was not alone in her predicament; there were others who faced the same problem. They also discovered that the problem of alcohol was not just in their own village but that the women of other villages had also begun to struggle against this devil of theirs. The women in Amthaguda got in touch with the women in Kuang, a nearby village and the movement against alcohol began!

Together the women organised to discuss with the men-folk the disadvantages of drinking. They destroyed all the local alcohol making apparatus in the village and those men who continued to get drunk were caught, tied to a tree and made to give a public apology along with a fine of Rs. 51, decided by the village committee.

The movement against alcohol has been very successful and the women now enjoy the fruit of their labour. Almost 80% of the villagers have left the habit of drinking. Mukta Devi is now happy, and her husband is a transformed man. They are recovering their lost land acre by acre.

As co-ordinator of this successful movement against alcohol Mukta Devi is now an icon in the village. When I went in to meet her, her daughter called 'ma... ma...' When there was no answer she called 'co-ordinator, co-ordinator...' and there came Mukta Devi.

In most areas under the ITDP, in addition to accessing government development schemes and social security benefits, two of the most important activities at the community level are the running of the community grain banks and managing the village fund. Gram Vikas community grain banks are operational in 116 villages covering 2,864 families.

About 237 metric tons of grain (paddy, rice, millets etc.) is available with the grain banks, of which 53% has been loaned. The stock in the grain banks provides foodsecurity for a period of two to four months. The community periodically sells surplus stock, especially if there is a good harvest.

A village fund is maintained in four ITDP projects covering 1,549 families in 66 villages. This is raised through collections from all families in the village, as well as savings from free labour contributions to government schemes implemented in the village. The total size of the fund in these villages is Rs. 288,046 of which 34% is currently given out as loan support for emergency needs within the village. The fund is primarily used for community purposes such as repair and maintenance of infrastructure, hosting events such as *sisu mela* (children's fair) and exposure visits to other villages. The respective village committees manage the grain bank and the village fund.

7.2 People's organisations in RHEP areas

The design of the RHEP, now the spearhead intervention of Gram Vikas involves formation of the village organisation as one of the first steps in the implementation process. A general body of all men and women heads of households in the village selects an equal number of men and women to form the Village Executive Committee.

One of the biggest challenges in the implementation of RHEP is in bringing women to the decision-making platform in traditional patriarchal villages. Gram Vikas has therefore strategised to form separate general bodies in the initial stages. In separate spaces, women especially are encouraged to articulate their aspirations and concerns. Through a slow and sustained process women gradually gain confidence and are able to articulate better before they join the common forum. The same effort that goes into bringing women to the decision making platform is also invested in bringing the poorest and most marginalized people in the villages on board. In course of time, the separate general bodies are brought together.

The Executive Committee in each village plays a vital role in the implementation of the RHEP. One of the first tasks of the committee is raising the corpus fund. Involvement of all families and their participation is a non-negotiable under the RHEP norms. Each family in the village contributes, on average, Rs. 1000 each to create a village RHEP corpus. The interest from the corpus is used for extending the RHEP infrastructure to new families that may come up in the village in future, so that coverage is maintained at 100%.

The original value of the Corpus fund raised in the 67 villages covered before March 2002 was Rs. 5,327,000, which have been placed in separate long-term deposits. The current value of these funds is Rs. 8,646,894. In several villages where the fund has doubled, the villagers are contemplating purchasing generators, which will provide backup when grid electricity fails. In the 38 villages covered over the past year, the total value of corpus raised is Rs. 3,105,100.

The Village Committee also manages the maintenance of the sanitation and water supply infrastructure in the village. Monthly expenses average Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,000, including cost of electricity and payment to the pump operator. This is done through contribution from the villagers and income from common assets like ponds, social forestry etc. Richer families contribute a percentage of gross produce towards maintenance expenses as well. The mode of collection of maintenance funds differs from village to village and is determined by the resources available. In many villages the youth are coming forward to take the responsibilities of the village, and their leadership is gradually being accepted.

The Executive Committee in each village registers a Village Development Society. Of the 105 villages where RHEP has been implemented, 64 villages have registered societies, while the other applications are pending. The Village Development Societies take up a variety of development works on behalf of the village, and also link closely with Panchayats in the region in accessing development resources.

7.3 Access to government funds

Together with village committees, Gram Vikas makes consistent efforts to leverage development funds from government schemes. This is done in conjunction with efforts to vitalise Panchayats. Development plans are prepared per village and discussed at the Palli Sabha. These plans and requests are then taken to the Gram Sabha. Villages are also motivated to access funds from the Local Area Development funds of elected representatives, Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly.

During the year 122 villages (54 of ITDP and 68 of RHEP) accessed funds in excess of Rs.15 million for various development efforts in the villages. More than 90% of these funds have gone directly to the village societies. These funds are for support towards construction of water supply systems, toilets, roads, community hall, pond development, irrigation infrastructure, housing, group agriculture, etc.

In addition to these, Gram Vikas has directly received funds from the government for implementation of specific projects. Under the Prime Minister's Relief Fund High School Programme, Gram Vikas undertook to construction 19 High Schools. Of these 15 have been completed and handed over. The Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Pattnaik inaugurated four schools. Each school building has an approximate area of 4,000 sq. ft. The total cost of the project is Rs.18 million.

Gram Vikas was also given the mandate by DRDA, Ganjam to construct nine High Schools under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund Programme. In addition we are constructing one Primary School for the National Highways Authority and one bridge to Ramaiyapatnam village in Ganjam, inhabited by over 300 fisherpeople families. This bridge will for the first time connect the village to the mainland, and will benefit people in terms of access to education, health, markets, and other services.

These projects provide an opportunity to promote aesthetic and cost-effective construction technologies through training and demonstration.

7.4 Community training programmes

Consistent efforts are made to improve the capacities of the communities for effective management of development interventions. Various training programmes, meetings, exposure and exchange visits and *melas* (camps) are organised to enable people to upgrade their skills, gain new ideas and develop confidence in their abilities.

Areas of training include management of self-help groups, village-level accounts, scientific pisciculture, improved practices in agriculture, livestock care, community health, herbal medicine, leadership development, gender sensitisation, understanding and improving effectiveness of Panchayati Raj institutions. 111 training programmes were organised involving 2855 men and 2915 women from the communities we work with in the past year. The training programmes are organised and co-ordinated by the training unit at head office and project staff. Resource persons include Gram Vikas staff, government officials, representatives from banks and other local institutions.

Events like Health camps, Education and Science fairs, Savings *mela*, and Women's *mela* are also organised. 67 events were organised in the past year catering to clusters of villages. These events are jointly organised by Gram Vikas and the communities we work with. Villagers help in co-ordination, setting up stalls, collection of food contributions, serving food, etc. These events create an interface between the communities, government officials and Gram Vikas.

8 Human and Institutional Development – Gram Vikas

8.1 Organization Structure

Gram Vikas currently has 262 staff (223 men and 39 women) based at the field projects and Head office. The project co-ordinator and a team of field supervisors and village level volunteers are responsible for each of the projects. Gram Vikas' work is supported at the field level by local volunteers and village level institutions. There are over 500 village level volunteers associated with Gram Vikas development programmes. Gram Vikas also hosts short and long term volunteers from within India other countries.

Apart from the RHEP and ITDP teams (related to the programmes) there are several teams, which provide support to the programme teams and at the same time are involved in some direct implementation. The support teams at Head office include Training; Planning Monitoring Evaluation Documentation (PMED); Livelihoods and Building Support; Electronic Data processing; Central Nursery, Farm and Dairy. The Watershed Support Unit (WaSU) set up last year is based at Bolangir and provides support to Gram Vikas projects in Bolangir, Bargarh and Kalahandi districts. Education and Health teams are decentralised and form part of the programme teams. The administration teams at Head Office include Accounts, Internal Audit, Vehicles Unit, Estate and Purchase.

The organisation is governed by a Board of eminent people associated with various facets of rural development. The Board chaired by Mr JB Singh (FORAD) has Mr BK Panigrahi (Lawyer), Dr Lata Ravindran (Professor, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar), Ms Neelima Khaitan (Managing Director, Seva Mandir), Mr NS Ayyengar (Journalist), Dr Rajesh Tandon (President, PRIA), Dr Saraswati Swain (Director, NIAHRD, Cuttack), Dr Shaheen Nilofer (Regional Manager, OXFAM Bhubaneswar). Ms Sunita Narain (Director, Centre for Science and Environment), Mr Vijay Mahajan (Managing Director, BASIX) and Mr Joe Madiath (Executive Director, Gram Vikas) as members. The members of the Board meet three to four times a year. The General Body of Gram Vikas meets annually.

8.2 Staff trainings

39 in-house staff trainings were organised during the year. These trainings were in the areas of Education, Accounts, Documentation, Computer familiarisation, Gender, Panchayati Raj, Education and Health. Training staff of Gram Vikas together with external resource persons facilitated these trainings. Inter-project exchange and exposure visits were organised to enable cross learning in the organisation. Staff also participated in various consultations and workshops organised by organisations including DFID, TERI, ISI, NIRD, PRIA, CAPART and NRMPO, which provide a forum for learning, sharing experiences and exchange of ideas.

Over 80 staff persons participated in the Annual Review and Planning event in May and the Biannual review in October. These events create learning and sharing platforms, and provide a forum where specific policies and strategies are discussed.

8.3 Learning Events

The process for revalidating the millennium mission and developing strategies for Gram Vikas was envisaged as a follow up to the evaluation of the organization held in 2001-02. In view of the recommendations of the evaluation team, the process was thought out in the following manner:

- ?? Analysis of institutional requirements/possibilities/challenges – considering Gram Vikas' past experience and existing/new challenges in the horizon

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- ?? Clearer understanding of key sectoral issues relevant to Gram Vikas' work – most importantly livelihoods; also self-governance
- ?? Reformulation of the Mission statement in a collective manner
- ?? Identification of strategic imperatives for actualising the Mission

Senior staff members of Gram Vikas took part in the process, which began November 2002. Through a series of learning events a clear, owned statement of the Mission statement, strategic perspectives and operational goals to the year 2015 were evolved. The learning events involved brainstorming-cum-planning sessions, in which senior staff members of Gram Vikas took part. Mr Josef Imfeld and Mr NR Jagannath from the HID team of SDC facilitated the events. Mr Deep Joshi and Mr Achintya Ghosh from PRADAN facilitated a brainstorming event on Livelihoods. A summary of the events held is as follows:

Event description	Dates
Institutional analysis to identify strengths, opportunities	November 19-21, 2002
Challenges in promotion of livelihoods for the poor in Orissa; Understanding concepts of livelihoods; identification of possible livelihood strategies	January 7-8, 2003
Reformulation of the Millennium Mission statement	February 3-7, 2003
Wrapping up	March 17-22, 2003

The draft document 'Gram Vikas 2015' will be presented to the Governing Board of Gram Vikas for approval and adoption. A series of events are planned from August to December 2003 to develop project specific plans towards achievement of the overall Mission and Goals of Gram Vikas.

8.4 Events and visits

Gram Vikas celebrated its 24th Foundation day in an event held between January 21-23, 2003. Over 4,000 people from villages across the state participated in the event, presenting testimonials, sharing experiences and presenting cultural programmes. Stalls and displays captured the gamut of activities Gram Vikas is involved in. Representatives of partner organisations and members of Gram Vikas board attended the event. Sri Balabhadra Majhi, Minister of State for SC and ST development, Govt of Orissa inaugurated the event. Sri SN Patro, Minister for Energy, Govt of Orissa attended the valedictory function. One of the major highlights was the handing over of certificates to women and men who had successfully trained as masons. People's representatives and officers of the government also attended various functions organised as part of the celebrations.

Visitors during the year include representatives of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Geneva; Building and Social Housing Foundation, UK; representatives of funding agencies and government officials. Sri LC Jain, former member of Planning Commission, Govt of India visited Gram Vikas in March 2003. His visit and the ideas he shared with us have given us renewed vigour.

Gram Vikas hosted the Eastern Regional meeting of the India Habitat Forum from March 14-16, 2003, in which over 180 participants from 80 organisations participated.

In course of the year several interns and national and international volunteers visited Gram Vikas for short and long duration projects.

9 Gram Vikas –An Overview of Programme Funding

Programmes	Funding Support	Project period
Movement and Action Network for transformation of Rural Areas (part support)	Christian Aid-ICCO	January 2002 – March 2003
Vikas MANTRA	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation	April 2002 to March 2007
Integrated Tribal Development Programme	EZE through Orissa Development Action Forum	January 2002 to December 2004
India Brick Project	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation	July 2001 - June 2002
Construction of 19 High Schools	DRDA – Prime Ministers Relief Fund for High Schools	January 2001 to March 2004
Construction of nine High Schools	DRDA – Chief Minister’s Relief Fund	April 2003 to December 2004
Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness in Western Orissa	Christian Aid UK	April 2002 – March 2004
Watershed development in Bangamunda block, Bolangir	DRDA under DPAP and ACA-RLTAP	2002-2007

10 Treasurer's note

July 21, 2003

TREASURER'S REPORT TO ANNUAL MEETINGS OF GRAM VIKAS

1. I am happy to place before you the audited statements of accounts of Gram Vikas for the period April'2002 to March'2003. I have discussed these Accounts and the Management letter with the Auditors.
2. The Annual accounts contain a set of Notes to which I invite your special consideration. Two specific issues need to be noted:
 - (A) Actual value of investment amounts will be adjusted on the date of maturity.
 - (B) Five special funds have been created following earlier decision of the Governing Board, two of which Housing Revolving Fund and Drinking Water Subsidy Fund are new.
3. The financial systems in Gram Vikas maintain a high order of integrity and transparency. I am pleased to report that there is regular internal audit scrutiny and the management is continuously reviewing and implementing needed improvements.
4. Gram Vikas has satisfactorily complied with all statutory requirements related to FCRA, Income Tax, Provident Fund and Gratuity. During the year, a special enquiry was conducted by FCRA authorities and I am happy to report that Gram Vikas was given a completely clean chit.
5. There is a healthy growth in total income during the year following a temporary decline in the previous year due to changing patterns of funding.

With these observations, I propose that these Annual Audited Accounts of Gram Vikas for the financial year 2002-2003 be approved.

Rajesh Tandon

Treasurer

11 Financial Statements

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2003

Particulars	As at 31.03.2003 (in Rupees)	As at 31.03.2002 (in Rupees)
LIABILITIES		
Capital Fund	174,256,863	145,899,103
Project Funds	40,311,904	27,402,073
Other Funds	44,779,399	27,838,871
Loans	87,457,687	65,725,137
Current Liabilities and Provisions	1,764,259	1,965,988
	<u>348,570,112</u>	<u>268,831,172</u>
ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	36,507,747	36,010,332
Livestock	283,600	254,000
Investments	147,027,356	112,225,062
Current Assets	164,751,409	120,341,778
	<u>348,570,112</u>	<u>268,831,172</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2003

Particulars	Year ending 31.03.2003 (in Rupees)	Year ending 31.03.2002 (in Rupees)
INCOME		
Grants in Aid	133,296,165	105,858,565
Global Development Network Award	0	6,025,761
Interest on Deposits & Dividends from Mutual Funds	19,699,158	17,222,633
Miscellaneous Receipts	4,878,303	4,646,615
Total	<u>157,873,626</u>	<u>133,753,574</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Programme Expenses	76,778,834	64,291,539
Sustainable Development Initiatives (Grants)	30,846,824	26,012,758
Administrative and General Expenses	3,690,172	3,795,739
Depreciation	5,256,868	5,932,140
Total	<u>116,572,698</u>	<u>100,032,176</u>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>41,300,928</u>	<u>33,721,398</u>

12 List of abbreviations:

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EZE	Evangelische Zentralstelle Fur Entwicklungshilfe E. V, Germany
Govt.	Government
HDFC	Housing Development and Finance Corporation
ICCO	Interkerkelijke Organisatie Voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Netherlands
ITDP	Integrated Tribal Development Programme
MANTRA	Movement and Action Network for Transformation of Rural Areas
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non Government organization
ODAF	Orissa Development Action Forum
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RHEP	Rural Health and Environment Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
SGSY	Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SHG	Self Help Group

Translation of Oriya/Hindi words

Adivasi	People from Scheduled Tribes
Balwadi	Pre School Education centres
Bogodo/ Dangar	Shifting cultivation
Dalit	People from Scheduled Castes
Didi	Sister
Gram Sabha	General body meeting of the Panchayat
Gaon sathi	Friend of the Village
Haat	Weekly market
Mela	Fair (a large gathering of people)
Pala	Local theatre troupe
Palli Sabha	General body meeting of a village
Pucca	Of permanent nature
Shramdaan	Voluntary contribution of labour
Vaidya	Native doctor/ Traditional healers

13 Reports and Publications

13.1 Publications

1. How do the poor help themselves – The case of rural poor and housing in Orissa – Liby Johnson and R V Jayapadma, Development Alternatives, April 2002
2. In Gandhi's footsteps - Geeta Vaidyanathan, Alternatives, 2002
3. Logjam - Clean cooking environment, improved *chulhas* and other matters... -Joe Madiath and RV Jayapadma, Down To Earth, August 2002
4. Every household counts – Ensuring Community participation in Orissa – Jalvani, Vol 5 No.1, March-June 2002
5. A figure of speech is jewel in the crown – Liz Stuart, Guardian, June 6, 2002
6. A bloodless revolution but with lots of guts! – Kylie Mc Evoy, Appropriate Technology Forum, Orissa, Vol 2 No. 1, January 2003

13.2 Other documents

1. Power from Renewables - Linking electrification and rural development: Joe Madiath and RV Jayapadma, RE Power Conference, TERI, April 2002
2. The Asuramunda Experience: A report on the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln (VSBK) project implemented by Gram Vikas, Orissa, Soma Dutta, September 2002

13.3 Video

"100%" – a film by Gram Vikas, directed by Mamta Murthy

"100%" is a 45 minutes long trip through the lanes of 15 villages in Orissa, India. By reinventing and reinforcing the concept of community in a village, Gram Vikas has set off a unique development experiment in this region. Termed RHEP (Rural Health and Environment Programme), it uses universally important needs of water and sanitation as a common ground for the villagers to come together to sow the seeds of "...a village republic." The fundamentals of the scheme require 100% participation from all the villagers and a financial stake too. How this number game snowballs into gains (and some interesting losses!) at the level of local democracy, caste, tribal identity, migratory pressures and the march of the feminine half of the population is the story of the film.

Minimising devices like voiceovers, the film uses sights and sounds collated over the two-week shoot, particularly the articulations of these communities in transition, to narrate this story. In the process it challenges the conventional look at poor villagers as passive recipients of aid and development planning.