

# Gram Vikas



## GRAM VIKAS DECADE-V

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK  
FOR THE PERIOD STARTING APRIL 2019

JANUARY 2019



# Gram Vikas Decade V

In January 2019, Gram Vikas completes 40 years of working in partnership with rural communities in Odisha, and a few years with communities in Jharkhand.

The “Decade V Document” outlines the strategic direction and programme framework going forward into the fifth decade of Gram Vikas’ work.

This plan is an outcome of a series of consultations based on:

- Assessment of our work in the past four decades;
- Scan of the changes in the environment in which we operate, and
- Understanding of the changing and growing aspirations of the communities we partner with

*This Strategic Plan & Programme Framework is approved by the Governing Board of Gram Vikas in November 2018*

## Vision & Mission

The statements of organizational vision and mission were articulated in the year 2004, as Gram Vikas completed 25 years, at the end of an extensive consultative process. The strategic plan and programmatic framework for Decade V is being built within the overall directions provided by these statements

*The vision of Gram Vikas is an equitable and sustainable society where people live in peace with dignity*

The Mission of Gram Vikas is “to promote processes which are sustainable, socially inclusive and gender equitable, to enable critical masses of poor and marginalised rural people and their communities to achieve a dignified quality of life”

## Key achievements in 40 years

In the forty years, Gram Vikas has enabled and supported rural communities across Odisha to build a dignified, sustainable quality of life.

- Supported over 60 villages to reclaim their rights over land, trees and other resource, through mobilizing people’s movements in Ganjam and Kalahandi districts
- Built 54,000 biogas plants, enabling as many families to access a safe and renewable source of energy for cooking
- Regenerated more than 10000 acres of wastelands into productive community managed fuel/fodder and fruit plantations
- Established four residential schools for children from remote, tribal villages; providing good quality education to 1500 children every year
- Supported 3500 families to build permanent, disaster-proof houses after the 1999 Super Cyclone; and 16000 families after Cyclone Phailin in 2014
- Supported 80,000 families in 1400 villages to build household toilets & bathing rooms and get piped water supply

## Global and national recognition

2018	FICCI-India Sanitation Coalition Award 2018 in the Not-for-Profit (Rural) category for contributions in the field of sanitation
2013	STARS UK Impact Award 2013 for WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)
2012	Global+5 Grand Innovation Award from Global Journal for MANTRA
2010	Water Award 2009-2010: "Best Water NGO - Water Supply" for outstanding contribution in the field of Water in India
2007	Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship
2007	India NGO Award - NGO of the Year 2006
2006	Ashoka Changemakers Innovation Award : 'How to Provide Affordable Housing' & 'How to Improve Health for All'
2006	Kyoto World Water Grand Prize at the 4th World Water Forum, Mexico for addressing critical water needs of communities and regions of Orissa
2004	World Bank Development Marketplace 2003 for delivery of energy services to remote, adivasi villages
2003	Tech Museum Awards 2003 by the Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose, California, for community managed Vertical Shaft Brick Kilns
2003	World Habitat Award 2003, by the Building and Social Housing Foundation UK, for the Rural Health and Environment Programme
2001	Most Innovative Project Award 2001, by the Global Development Network of the World Bank for the Rural Health and Environment Programme
2001	Outstanding Social Entrepreneur 2001 by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Geneva
1996	Allan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Award from Brown University, USA for efforts towards prevention and reduction of world hunger
1993	K P Goenka Memorial Award from the Asian Cables Foundation for significant efforts in renewable energy technologies
1990	Government of India Award for contribution towards popularization of biogas in the voluntary sector
1986	Prakruti Mitra Puraskar (Friend of Nature Award) from Government of Orissa

# Four decades of development action

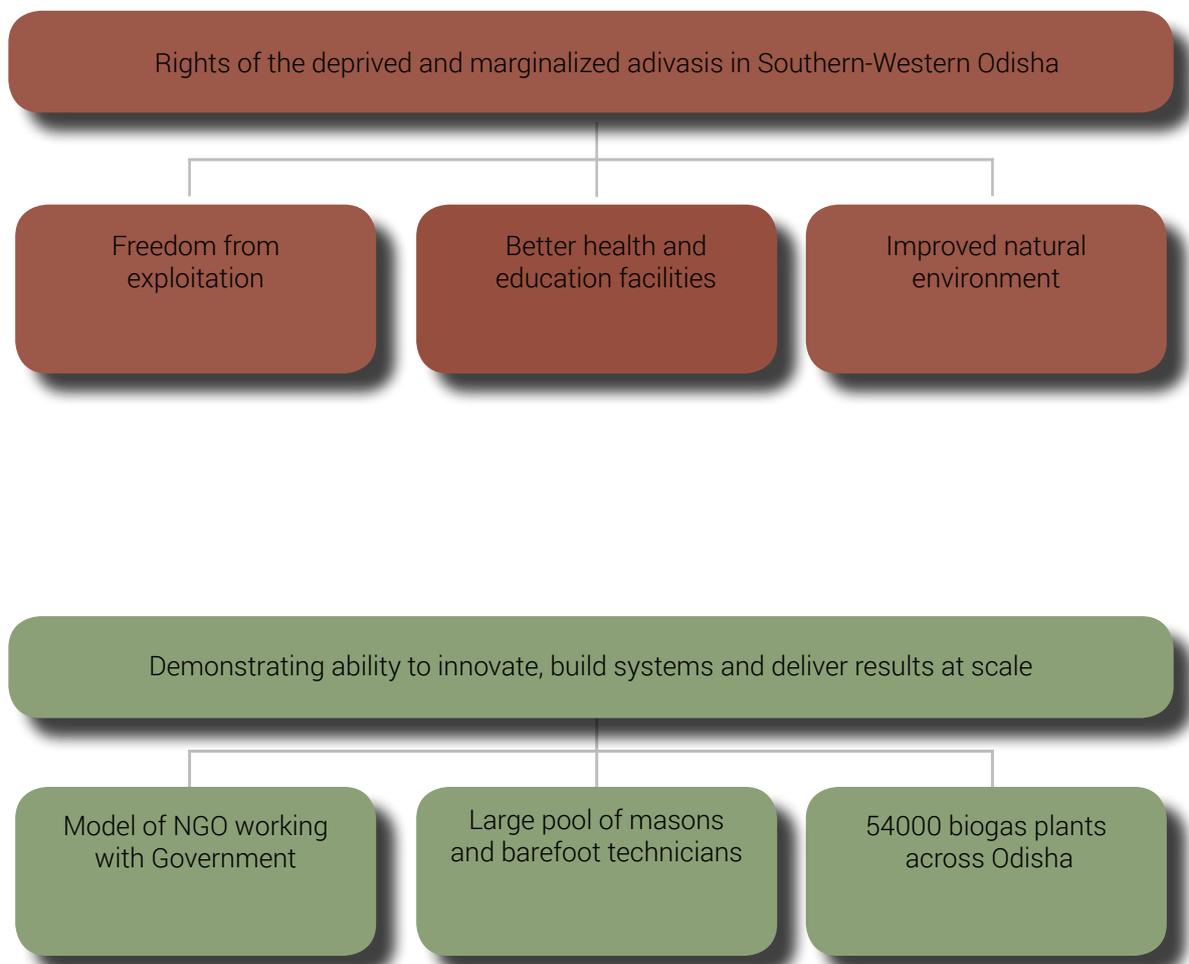
## Recap of key milestones

The Gram Vikas Decade V strategic direction and programme framework will be built on the achievements, experiences and lessons learnt from the past 40 years of our work.

### Decade 1 - 1979-1988

Gram Vikas had for most part of its first three decades, skillfully balanced two approaches to community development: the first focusing on rights of indigenous communities and working towards their empowerment through engagement in 'softer' aspects of development; while the second approach focused on mobilizing rural communities around building physical infrastructure (biogas plants) and leveraging processes to enable a better quality of life (reduced drudgery for women, environment benefits).

While the former remained to work intensively in a limited area of operation focused largely on indigenous people in remote areas building awareness and trust among them, the latter expanded geographically, together with increase the scale of operations on a steady basis.



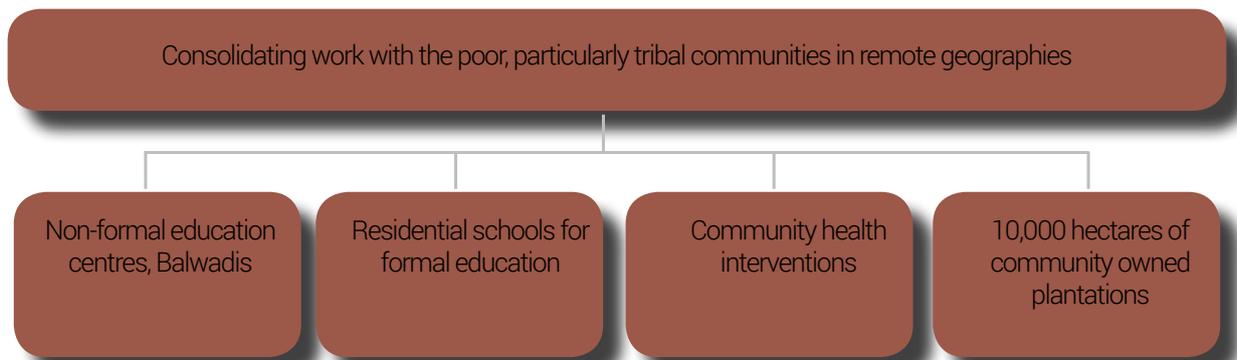
# Four decades of development action

## Recap of key milestones

### Decade 2 - 1989-1998

The two parallel streams of work continued to operate in the second decade. The intervention in biogas promotion reached scale and at its peak, Gram Vikas withdrew leaving it to local resource persons to continue the work. From a situation assessment of the villages it had made contact with, realizing the apathetic condition of disposal of human waste, contamination of drinking water and resultant health problems, Gram Vikas initiated a pilot intervention in rural water supply and sanitation.

Work with indigenous communities continued to deepen within the defined geographic areas. Recognizing the slowness of the rights based approach and responding to aspirations of the indigenous communities, Gram Vikas started work in formal schools for tribal children, health services, agriculture and afforestation.

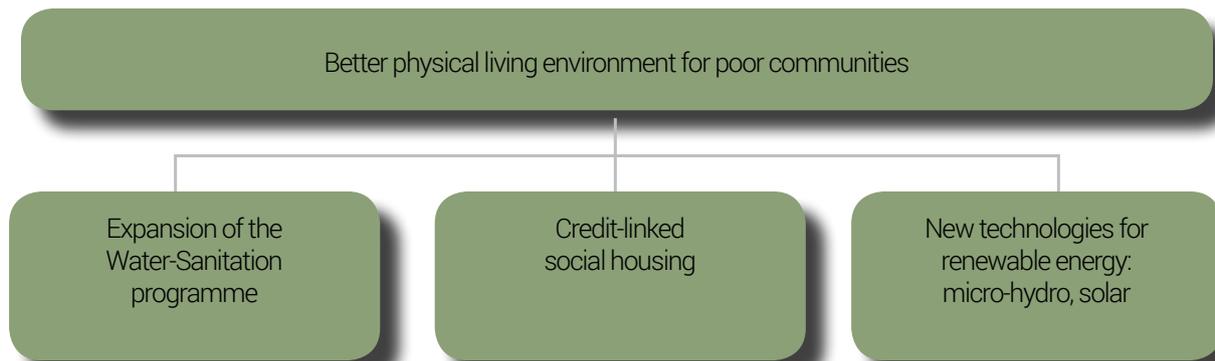
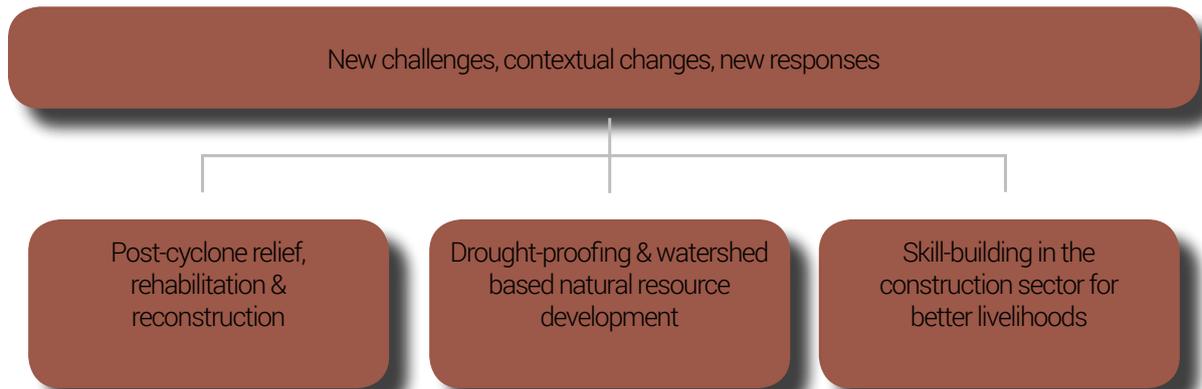


# Four decades of development action

## Recap of key milestones

### Decade 3 - 1999-2008

The 1999 Odisha Super Cyclone brought about many changes to the way we worked. Our work in rehabilitation and reconstruction brought about greater external attention to Gram Vikas and new partnerships were developed during this period. Our collaboration with the Government of Odisha was re-established, and took a much more elaborate shape, covering multiple sectors and locations. The work with indigenous communities moved closer to the principles of work followed by the other stream, and synergies were established. An intensive internal strategic planning exercise helped evolve the organizational vision and mission statements. The programme approach of MANTRA – Movement and Action Network for Transformation of Rural Areas - was given shape during this period.



# Four decades of development action

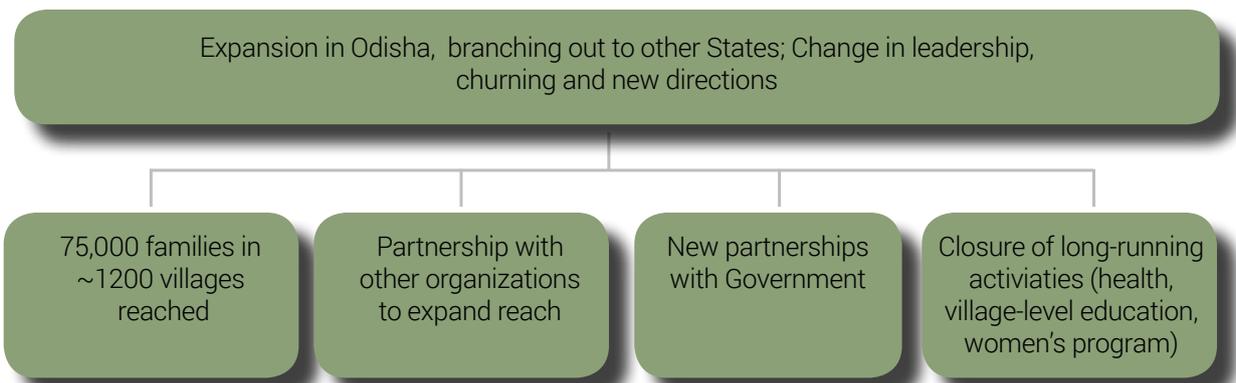
## Recap of key milestones

### Decade 4 - 2009-2018

The fourth decade has been eventful. Geographic and numeric expansion took on a new rhythm. Partnerships with other organizations were attempted to scale-up the MANTRA approach to new States in India, with mixed results. Almost complete dependence on government schemes to fund the water-sanitation interventions resulted in reduced intensity of community engagement, consequences of which requires Gram Vikas to address issues of system failure in some villages.

The Founder-leader stepped down after 35 years in 2014. The transition came with its challenges, but the organization has gradually stabilized under the new leadership. Several processes have been initiated to strengthen internal processes and capabilities.

The current efforts are towards streamlining operations and plan for a new phase of growth which is responsive to the aspirations of rural communities and cognizant of the challenges and opportunities in the external environment.



## Looking back - Summary

The past 40 years have marked a remarkable journey for Gram Vikas, with a fair share of ups and downs. At each stage when things did not work out as intended, the organization demonstrated its resilience and adaptability to make course corrections, often leading to improved results. The general public perception of Gram Vikas being an organization that can deliver results of high quality, and operate at a reasonably large scale, has continued over the decades.

Gram Vikas has also been open to recognizing its shortcomings and addressing deficiencies, and this marks it as a reliable partner for the village communities as well as development partners.

Village communities that we have partnered with cherish the joint achievements. In many cases, neighbouring villages continue to encourage Gram Vikas to initiate a partnership, which given the resource constraints, human and financial, have not happened in many cases.

Despite internal and external challenges, Gram Vikas has been able to retain a core team of staff members, who are a repository of institutional memory. Over the years it has also continued to attract new talent into the staff pool, as well as a steady stream of volunteers and interns. We have also nurtured personal contacts and networks across a wide range of stakeholders.

# Preparing for the fifth decade

## *Looking around and within us*

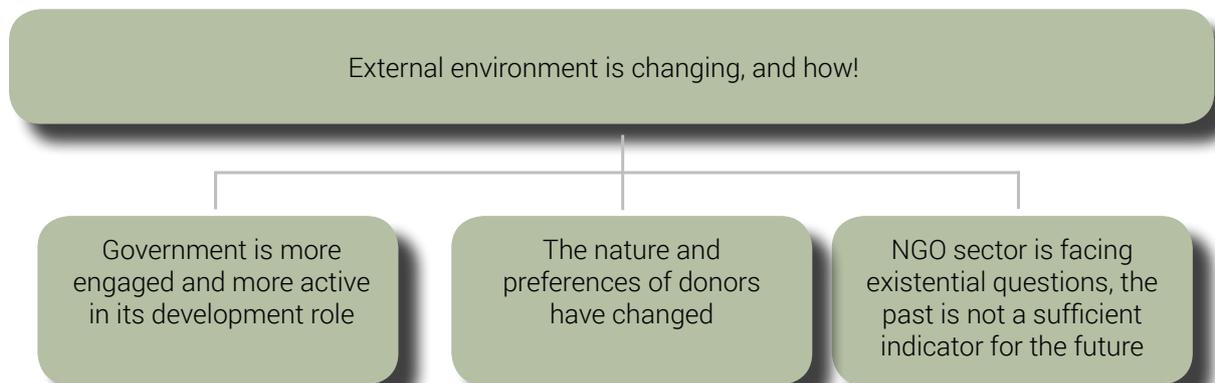
As we prepare to embark on the journey in the fifth decade, it is imperative that we look around us to understand how the world has changed and is changing rapidly. It is equally important for us to look critically within, and not blind our perspective by basking in the glory of past achievements.



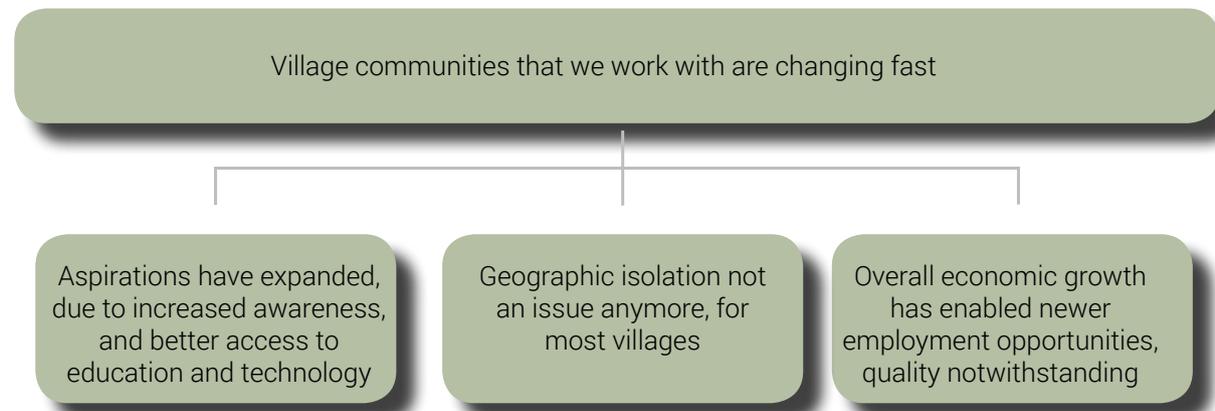
# Preparing for the fifth decade

## *Looking around and within us*

### The world around us



Grassroot NGOs are not considered important anymore, as the State and Market seem to have gained the ability to reach the last mile. There are limited resources for developing and demonstrating innovative solutions to development challenges.



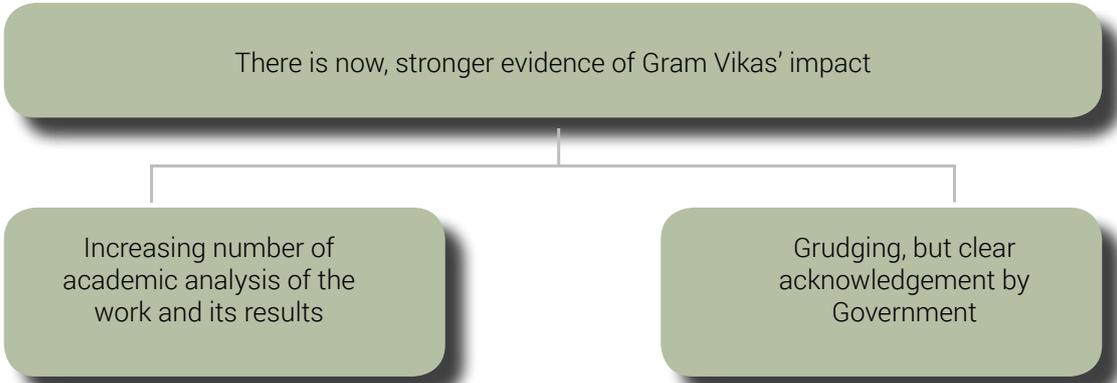
Development in general, improvements in physical connectivity and increased opportunities to migrate and see the world around them, have enabled the rural poor, particularly the younger generation, to aspire for a different world than what their parents lived in. For Gram Vikas to continue to be relevant it is important that we understand the changes in their aspirations.

Poverty and other development challenges continue to characterize many of the areas Gram Vikas works in.

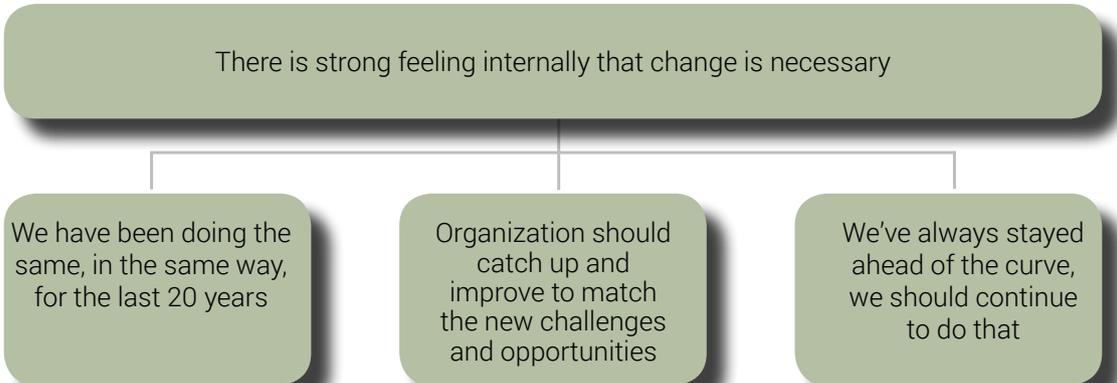
## Preparing for the fifth decade

*Looking around and within us*

### Factors within us



Acknowledgement of the fact that Gram Vikas has been able to contribute substantially to improving the quality of life of rural communities is a matter of strength, that we need to build upon.



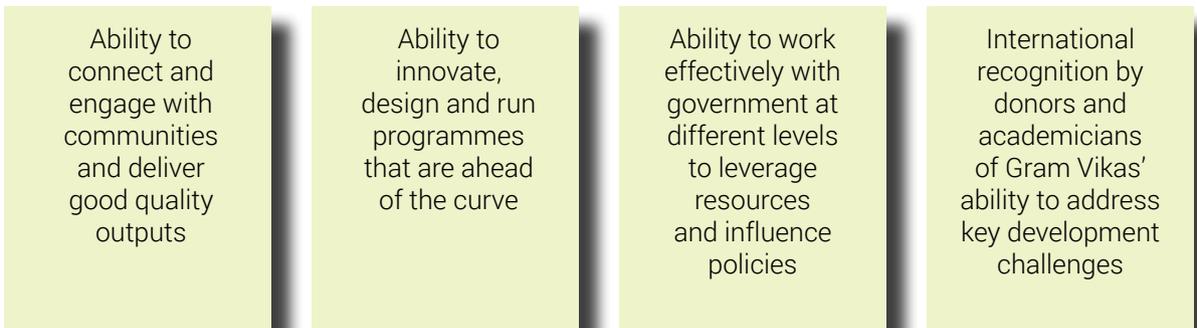
The feeling is that with the rapid changes outside, Gram Vikas needs to remain nimble footed to adapt and build upon what have been able to achieve, and strengthen the ability to innovate and demonstrate on the ground.

# Preparing for the fifth decade

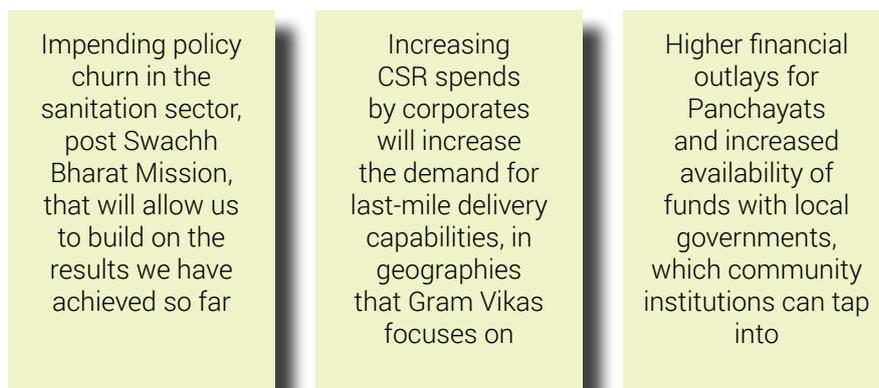
*Looking around and within us*

## Strengths & Opportunities

The community 'rootedness' that we have is our biggest strength. The abilities we have consistently demonstrated to work at significant scale and deliver high quality outputs needs to be built upon.



Changes in development policies, if taken advantage of, will help us build stronger interventions, and continue to be relevant to the communities we work with. The changes in the funding environment will require innovations in resource mobilization and financial arrangements.

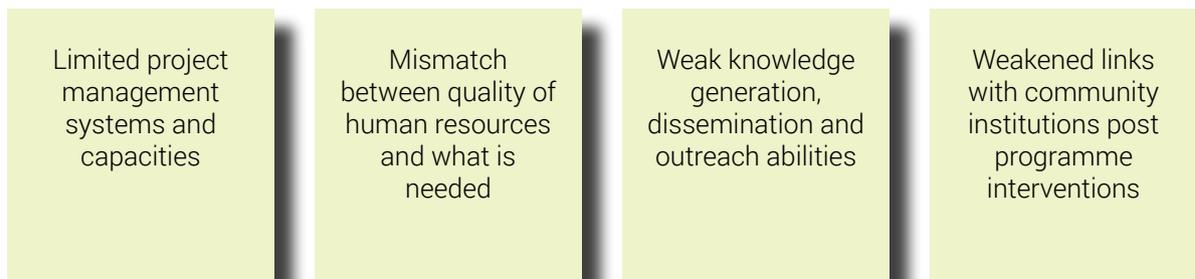


# Preparing for the fifth decade

## *Looking around and within us*

### Weaknesses & Threats

While we have demonstrated ability to work effectively at scale, we may not have been equally rigorous about our efficiency. Internal abilities have not matched up to the growth and will need to be addressed with great alacrity. Quality consciousness, time- and cost-efficiency and better communication towards the communities and to external stakeholders are critical areas that need to be addressed



Increasing political aspirations at different levels is a matter to contend with for its effect on community cohesion and local dynamics. Sector-unfriendly policy pronouncements give rise of lack of confidence within and outside. New types of community development models, with deeper pockets make it difficult for us to attract good talent. Inflation, changes in tax structures and competition driven wage-rises lead to cost increases that donors are unwilling to provide for.



## Looking ahead - Summary

Gram Vikas has demonstrated pathways to address issues of poverty and underdevelopment. In the changing context, there is a clear role for Gram Vikas to partner with rural communities who are otherwise neglected in the growth story.

The path ahead is not likely to be an easy tread, and necessitates that we recognize and address the challenges so as not to lose our advantage. What remains the same is our resolve to overcome, and to continue to be relevant to rural communities. Many villages in Odisha, and now Jharkhand, have come to rely on Gram Vikas as a true friend, the one with them in times of need. It will be this unending source of inspiration that will keep us going.

The knowledge that we have institutional strengths that we can rely upon; memories to guide our way ahead; and supporters and collaborators - old and new - will stand by us in our journey.

We need to become smarter, and more efficient. We need to learn from our mistakes and take necessary steps to correct those that cannot be wished away. We need to build upon what we have already achieved, while keeping an alert eye and open mind to the prospects of further expansion and growth. We need to grow, both in depth and in breadth.

Two hands coming together to form a heart – *the spirit that will guide us in the next decade.*

# Gram Vikas Decade V

## Broad strategic contours

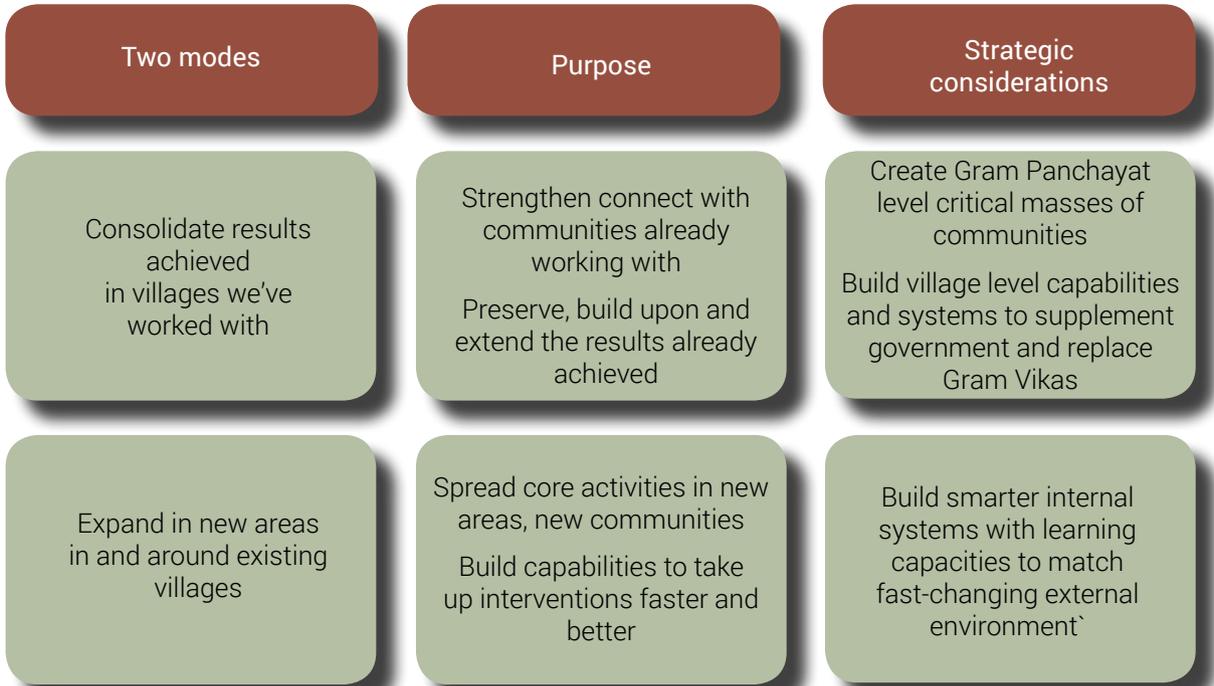
The Decade V strategy will be built on two broad principles:

- 1. Consolidate
- 2. Expand

This will help Gram Vikas grow deeper, with the communities we have already worked with; and, wider, reaching out to new communities in the geographies that we have chosen to focus upon.

The programmatic framework will be built on these two principles.

## Decade V – Strategic elements



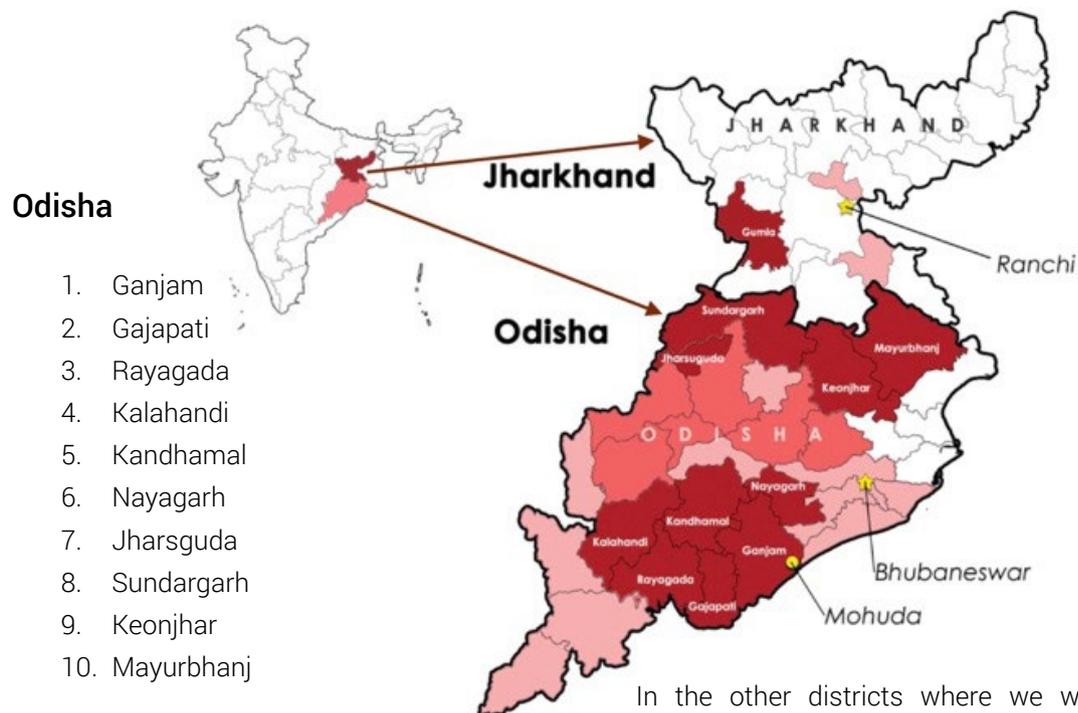
## Decade V – Programmatic pillars

Gram Vikas' work in Decade V will be organized in six programmatic pillars which will help build upon, extend and sustain results already achieved; create new interventions in response to the needs of communities; and, help manage the inter-connectedness of development problems and their solutions.



## Geographic Focus

We will work intensively in ten districts of Odisha and one district of Jharkhand



In the other districts where we we have had operations in the past, we will choose to intensify the work if and when sufficient human and financial resources become available

# Decade V – Programming principles

The MANTRA (Movement & Action Network for Transformation of Rural Areas) approach has guided our work with the communities and will continue to do so.

The key principles of MANTRA will continue to be the guiding principles for the Decade V programme

## 1. " ALL OR NONE"

The 100% inclusion process ensure that every single household, including the poorest and social excluded, in the village participate and contribute to the programme. besides serving equity, that all or none approach also creates a unique opportunity for the entire village to work together for a shared purpose.

## 5. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The creation of corpus fund and the maintenance fund ensure 'inbuilt financial sustainability', and that future generations continue to be served and there is the availability of resources for maintenance of infrastructure



## 2. SHARE COSTS

The community contributes significantly to the capital cost and bears the cost of running and maintaining facilities. this inclusive stake-building ensures that people continue to care for the results individually as well as by making demands on the village organization.

## 3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

People 'take responsibility' from an early state to generate consensus, mobilize local contributions, manage construction and take charge of operations and maintenance. This is a sound way to ensure long-term sustainability.

## 4. EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

The process promotes affirmative steps to ensure that women and poor people are included in the management of asset and processes. this enables their active participation in creating and sustaining solutions meant for them and equitable sharing.

Cross-cutting principles in all the programme pillars include:

- Use of information and communication technologies for efficient internal functioning (including feedback systems)
- Pro-active reaching out to the external stakeholders
- Continuous pursuit for greater transparency and accountability in all directions
- Ensuring compliance with statutory requirements



## Focus Area - Water

We will work towards ensuring continuous availability of safe drinking water, adequate flow of water for domestic and productive uses and build sustainability of water resources.

### ***Community-owned and managed piped-water supply systems***

- Piped water for drinking and domestic uses to 100% of households in the village

### ***Community level management of drinking water quality***

- Technology-enabled tools and systems for water quality monitoring
- Village level capacity building for water quality testing and repairs

### ***Sustainable water demand management***

- Technology options for water management
- Village and household level capacity building to manage water demand

### ***Sustainability of water sources***

- Rainwater harvesting and recharge
- Spring-shed based rejuvenation of gravity flow water supply systems
- Land & water management on watershed principles



## Focus Area - Livelihoods

We will work towards ensuring secure and sustainable incomes for rural communities; sustainability of land and forest resources; and, help build the quality of human resources

### ***Productivity of land resources***

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Agro-forestry

### ***Diversified income sources***

- Animal husbandry
- Business opportunities in the Water-Sanitation-Hygiene sectors
- Income earning opportunities using information/communication technologies

### ***Access to rights***

- Forest Rights
- Employment Guarantee Scheme

### ***Skills for increased incomes***

- Skill building in the construction sector
- Safer migration



## Focus Area – Sanitation & Hygiene

We will work towards integrating and deepening water & sanitation interventions to ensure better health and nutrition outcomes

### ***Access to household facilities***

- Toilets and bathing rooms for 100% households in a village
- Nutrition gardens

### ***Practice adoption for improved hygiene***

- Proper use of household toilets
- Safe handling of child & animal fecal matter
- Handwashing and safe handling of drinking water

### ***Health outcomes for women***

- Menstrual hygiene and social practices
- Adolescents and nutrition

### ***School Sanitation***

- Toilets for schools
- School children as behavior change agents

### ***Village & environmental sanitation***

- Open Defecation Free villages
- Solid & Liquid Waste Management



## Focus Area – Habitat & Technologies

We will work towards creating sustainable and dignified habitats and physical quality of life for rural communities and continue to promote the use renewable and appropriate technology options

### ***Renewable sources of energy***

- Appropriate sources of energy for domestic and community use
- Decentralised electricity generation
- Renewable energy for village water supply systems

### ***Technologies for connectivity and livelihoods***

- Smart Communities

### ***Disaster-resistant habitats***

- Technical support for habitat development appropriate to the local context
- Technical capacities for post-intervention management and support



## Focus Area – Education

We will support the Gram Vikas residential schools and help them become centres of excellence, providing high quality and technologically up-to-date education to children from marginalized rural communities.

### ***Technology enabled teaching & learning***

- Academic excellence together with nurturing abilities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, Sports and cultural activities

### ***Effective and continuous engagement between schools and communities***

- Stronger relationship between Gram Vikas schools and communities
- Support and guide in career building for school graduates



## Focus Area – Village Institutions

We will work to build village level capabilities, structures and processes to enable stronger self-governance by the communities. We will ensure that village institutions operate on the principles of equity, justice, accountability and transparency and will provide increasing opportunities for women to rise to leadership positions.

Our work on strengthening village institutions will be an over-arching component, across all the focus areas. The Village Water and Sanitation Committee will be the registered organisation to own and manage all development processes supported by Gram Vikas. User-specific institutions at the village level such as self-help groups or joint liability groups, or multi-village federated institutions such as producer collectives will be formed and supported as and where required, for taking up specific activities.

Specific focus on activities in this area will include:

- Building technical and subject matter knowledge at the village level
- Improve accountability and transparency of village institutions
- Enhance and promote women's leadership in village institutions
- Convergence of Village Water and Sanitation Committees with Panchayats for water governance
- Working with Panchayati Raj Institutions for mobilizing and leveraging resources for local development
- Strengthen panchayats through better citizen engagement and partnership

# Gram Vikas Decade V

## *Preparations*

Taking the strategic plan and programmatic framework to action requires putting together the necessary financial and human resources and also starting on improving our internal systems and processes.

## Mobilizing Human Resources

Building the Human Resources requirement to ensure effective and proper implementation of the Decade V Strategy and Programme will be a very challenging task. We plan to address this issue at multiple levels:

- Identify HR from within operational villages
- Build systems for nurturing and training local HR
- Build partnerships with academic institutions for capacity building of staff
- Leverage technology to reduce/supplement human requirements
- Strengthen linkages with volunteering/ internship opportunities
- Attract high-quality experts to work with Gram Vikas, full-time and volunteering

## Mobilizing Financial Resources

Raising financial resources to fund the Decade V activities will be an ongoing challenge. The limited internal resources of Gram Vikas will be used in a way to leverage new funding and fill critical gaps. Attracting financial resources for our work will depend entirely on how well we do our work.

- Build organizational capacities to attract CSR funds for Decade V programmes
- Use goodwill, networks and demonstration to influence CSR funding priorities
- Get better leverage on Government and local government resources and community contributions
- Utilize own resources strategically to prove points; demonstrate innovations
- Explore ways and build capabilities to tap 'new age' giving; development/ social impact bonds and similar instruments

# Gram Vikas Decade V

## *Preparations*

### Programmatic Preparations

We have initiated several activities, including programme pilots, to prepare for Decade V.

**WASH Status Assessment Survey**, covering all villages and households where GV has helped build water and sanitation facilities and institutional systems. The Survey will help us understand the results of our work in these villages, identify gaps, and open a platform to explore continuing the engagement with the villages under the new programme framework.

Design of pilot intervention for community-level **water quality management** system and capacity building

Preparation of plans, protocols and capacity building framework and tools for **hygiene-sanitation-nutrition follow-up** to water-sanitation works, and piloting initial actions on ground

Learning about spring-sheds and other ways to ensure **water source sustainability**

**Smart Community Interface** being piloted

### Strengthening Internal Systems

Several internal system strengthening activities have been initiated.

New **Cadre & Compensation structure and Performance Management System** put in place

**Staff Development Cell** to plan and build staff capacities starts functioning

Technology **application for attendance and leave monitoring** is functional

Integrated **financial reporting system** created and being rolled out

G-Suite App based **internal communication system** being rolled-out

**Comprehensive communication strategy** and related tools being developed

**Technology enabled monitoring system** for activity monitoring, to be put in place

**Strategy and capabilities for resource mobilization** to be developed



Plot # 72/B, Forest Park, Bhubaneswar 751009, Odisha, India

Registered Office: Mohuda Village, Berhampur, Ganjam District, Odisha 760 002



+91 674 259 6366



info@gramvikas.org



www.gramvikas.org



@GramVikasIN



gramvikasodisha



gramvikasodisha



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