



Role of Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BIAF) in Rural Development of Maharashtra

Dr. S. D. Takalkar

Professor and Head
Department of Commerce,
Arts, Commerce and Science College,
Narayangaon, Pune
Email ID - drsdtakalkar@gmail.com

Miss. Kanase Jayshri Nivrutti

Research Scholar,
Research Centre in Commerce,
Arts, Commerce and Science College,
Narayangaon, Pune.
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune
Email ID - kanasejayshri26@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

BIF is a non-political NGO. Manibhai Desai established the 'Bharatiya Krishi Udyog Pratishthan' (BAIF) on 24 August 1967 with the objective of rural development in mind. When the cornerstone was inaugurated. At that time the institution did not have both the space and the building. In his inaugural speech, Manibhai had said, "We will not select a single social worker for this organization. This organization will be run by taking experts and technology in various disciplines, maintaining financial and managerial discipline." Through Uruli Kanchan Gram Panchayat Manibhai got 100 acres of Gairan land in Gram Panchayat limits with the help of villagers. Agro-industries have the potential to provide employment for the rural population not only in farming but also in off-farm activities such as handling, packaging, processing, transporting and marketing of food and agricultural products. BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) plays a significant role in rural development by implementing various sustainable development programs aimed at improving the livelihoods of rural communities.

KEYWORDS: BAIF, Rural Development, Agro Industries, Water Management, Livestock Development, Women Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION:

BAIF is an organization that embodies Gandhian values, development and research capacity building and quality of life improvement. The organization is based on the pillars of human resources, readiness to use science and technology and work together on the national development agenda. Manibhai had kept rural development in mind while establishing the 'BAIF' NGO. To encourage activities useful for the weaker sections of the rural society. To implement them properly. E.g. Technical irrigation systems, agricultural implements, agribusiness water management, catchment area management, soil conservation agriculture



forestry, forest development, biological development, conservation of dairy cattle pedigrees, agro processing industry, fencing development, and rural biological environment, animal husbandry and health development Efforts should be made to establish and maintain well-equipped artificial insemination centres, to provide information on more milking masses to the rural people, to undertake vaccination activities to protect livestock from diseases. Continuous efforts for research and development related to agriculture and livestock, undertaking activities related to agriculture, research and development, working in the fields of animal science, biological physical livestock health, social communication, information and management etc., establishing research centers laboratories and experimental institutes, making progressive investments , providing infrastructure for technology development and research. etc.

BAIF is implementing these programmes with support from various Corporates under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Philanthropic Organisations and Government Departments. BAIF is also collaborating with Corporates for achieving their Carbon Offsetting / Neutrality Goals. BAIF has been closely associated with several State Government Departments as either an Implementation Partner or as a Knowledge Partner for Rural Development Programmes. The focus of collaboration with International Institutes is for conducting state-of-the-art field-based Applied Research and Technology Transfer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The said research study was carried out with following objectives in view:-

1. To study the activities implemented by BAIF for rural development.
2. To study the Programme and Programme Outreach of BIAF.
3. To review the progress and performance of BAIF in Maharashtra.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present research study uses the most recent available published secondary data. To achieve the above stated objectives, the secondary data was used. The secondary data that are mainly used are published in annual reports of various organizations and survey reports of leading business magazines. For the said research study the secondary data is also collected from the various National and International Research Journals which are related to Commerce, Management, Marketing and Finance. The Secondary data is also collected from various websites.

About BAIF Livelihoods:

BAIF Institute for Sustainable Livelihoods and Development (BISLD), is a not-for-profit Organisation registered under Section 8 (formerly Section 25) of the Companies Act, 1956 and formally established on April 16, 2012. BISLD is closely associated with BAIF



Development Research Foundation, a reputed Non-Government Organisation founded in 1967 by Dr. Manibhai Desai, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi.

Background of the BAIF:

Mahatma Gandhi stayed in the Urali Kanchan village near the city of Pune in 1946. At that time Gandhi had lost trust in western medicine and wanted to explore Nature therapy. For this purpose he nominated Manibhai as the manager of the newly established Nature therapy Ashram at Urali. The young Manibhai gave a pledge to Mahatma Gandhi to devote his life to uplifting of Uruli. Although Gandhian principles were central to Manibhai's work, he believed the rural poor can benefit from scientific advances. During his work at the Nature cure ashram, Manibhai self-taught himself aspects of horticulture and cattle breeding. To take this work further, Bharatya Agro-Industries Foundation, was organised and registered in 1967 under the Indian Public Charitable Trust Act of 1950. The purpose of the foundation was to help rural communities to improve their socio-economic status by increasing food production along modern lines by making improvements to agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and other allied activities. Manibhai was appointed managing trustee and director of the foundation. Yashwantrao Chavan, then a senior cabinet minister in the Indian government and Vasant Rao Naik, then chief minister of Maharashtra were chairman and deputy chairman of the organization respectively.

Manibhai Desai was of the opinion that there was a great deal of poverty in rural India. The main cause of this poverty is unemployment in rural areas and depletion of natural resources. Manibhai proposed some constructive ideas to change the situation in rural areas. He says that, "to change the present situation in India, economic activities should be considered as the basic element of rural development, varieties of crops, vegetables, fruit trees that give maximum yield in agriculture should be cultivated and hybrid cows should be produced from Indian cows." With the help of colleagues in the ashram, he started carrying out useful agricultural activities.

Established:

Dr. Manibhai Desai was born on 27 April 1920 in a farming family in Kosmada, a small village in Surat district of Gujarat state. While still a student, he took an active part in Mahatma Gandhi's movement. In the month of August 1945, on the orders of Mahatma Gandhi, he visited the ashram at Wardha. At the Ashram he was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's ideas of Gram Swarajya for rural development. 1946 Mahatma Gandhi founded the Naturopathic Ashram in Uruli Kanchan District Pune and entrusted it to Manibhai. For the next 47 years, Manibhai promoted naturopathy for community health and founded the 'Bife Development Research Foundation', an organization committed to sustainable rural development.



Expansion of the BAIF:

The programs of Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation reach more than 53,93,223 households in 1,64,835 villages spread over 343 districts in 14 states of India. The Institute of Agricultural Industries of India conducts various activities/programmes in different states. It covers various ecosystems, agro-climatic zones and communities in 13 states of India. In alignment with its Vision and Mission, BAIF Development Research Foundation has adopted the Gandhian approach to rural prosperity with emphasis on Climate Change Mitigation and Resilient and Sustainable Community Livelihoods. With its multidisciplinary team of about 6000 employees and associates, BAIF is implementing major Nature-positive programmes such as Livestock Development, Natural Resources Management, Agri-Horti-Forestry (*Wadi*) and Agrobiodiversity Conservation for Sustainable Livelihoods and Enriched Environment.

Activities of the BAIF:

1. Livestock development
 - Crossbreed cow-breeding and disease prevention
 - Siddha Valu Yojana, Dhavalkranti
2. Tribal Development Programme:
 - Agriculture, Horticulture and Aquaculture
 - Drinking Water and Irrigation Scheme
 - Jan Utthan (CEC) Programme
3. Integrated Watershed Development Programme
4. Women Empowerment – Formation of Self Help Groups
5. Environmental Development
6. Afforestation program in industrial sector
7. Health programs for holistic development

Programme and Programme Outreach of BIAF:

BISLD is committed to promote sustainable livelihood of the rural poor. With an innovative and integrated approach to rural development and environmental conservation, the flexibility of the programmes enables BISLD to serve the most disadvantaged by addressing the specific needs of each family, village and local area. Community participation is the foundation of all the programmes.

1. Livestock Based Livelihoods:

The Dairy Development Programme aims at improving the livestock breed through artificial insemination for enhanced production. The Dairy Development Programme aims at improving the livestock breed through artificial insemination for enhanced production. Promotion of goat husbandry and backyard poultry for landless, small and marginal farmers are another activity.

The key components are:

1. Genetic improvement of livestock through artificial insemination centres, each catering to a cluster of about 12-15 villages



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2. Preventive health care and first aid services
 3. Promotion of fodder production and feed management
 4. Facilitation for developing value chains for both dairy and goat development programmes

Outreach:

33,82,103 families	89,558 villages	321 districts
12 states	4379 Centres	52,84,949 Artificial Inseminations

2. Water Centric Livelihoods:

Sustainable management of natural resources for viable development of community and ecosystem is the key aspect of this programme.

The projects under NRM include:

1. Watershed Development
2. Land scape Approach for resource management through convergence of resources
3. Region-specific innovative approaches for water resource management – arid, semi-arid, hill, ravine, Western Ghats, rain-rich areas
4. Promotion of efficient water use technologies
5. Silvipasture for conservation of wastelands and production of fodder
6. Promotion of non-conventional energy such as solar and bio-energy
7. A forestation, Industrial Greenbelt Development, Environmental Awareness
8. Forest-based livelihood
9. Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Outreach:

9 watersheds	8136 ha	13,103 families	115 villages	12 states
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3. Agri Horti Forestry (*wadi*):

The Wadi programme, an integrated farming systems approach, includes horticulture and forestry tree species and crop diversification in the farming system. Emphasis is laid on promotion of fruit trees and indigenous and multipurpose forestry tree species to address the nutrition, fodder, timber and fuel wood requirements of the families, while improving their farm income. Appropriate initiatives are introduced for soil and water conservation as well as soil improvement. These initiatives have helped convert degraded lands into productive assets. Other location-specific short gestation livelihood activities like agriculture improvement, small plot vegetable cultivation, floriculture and inland fishery-based initiatives have also been promoted along with tree-based farming.



Outreach:

3112 ha	22217 tribal and poor families	1068 villages	12 states
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4. Climate Action Programmes:

Based on the Fodder development resource base of the families and the area, the projects are designed to create a source of sustainable livelihood in the farm. The projects are mainly implemented in the tribal and resource poor areas.

The main projects include:

1. Improved agricultural practices for enhanced production and income
2. Sustainable Multi-species Agricultural Resource-use Trials (SMART) for diversified and intensive farming in small plots
3. Climate smart agriculture
4. Organic farming
5. Sericulture
6. Agri-business through local people's organisations

5. Health, Nutrition and Women Centric Development:

This programme aims at improving the quality of life of the participant families through preventive health measures and development initiatives as given below:

1. Clean drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene
2. Mother and child health care
3. Empowerment of tribal healers
4. Agriculture-nutrition and nutrition supplementation
5. Promotion of backyard gardens for better family nutrition
6. Women Empowerment through –
 - Promotion of Self-Help Groups of Women
 - Drudgery reduction technologies
 - Empowerment of women through micro- enterprises
 - Linkages for micro-finance
 - Literacy and education

6. Skill Development and Empowerment:

Community empowerment, promotion of leadership among community members and skill development for self-employment are the key measures.

The important activities include the following:

- Awareness generation on overall development and entitlements
- Promotion of People's Institutions for continued and sustainable development
- Skill development of rural youth in various farm-based and non-farm vocations



Outreach:

992 employees through 249 trainings	43,886 farmers in Livestock	10,808 farmers in NRM	40,765 farmers in Farm-based Livelihoods
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Contribution of BIAF to Rural Development:

1. Wadi (Tree Based Farming System) Programme:

Wadi' is the combined cultivation of beneficial varieties of crops, fruit trees and forest trees while 'Wadi program' is a holistic rural development programme. By focusing on the concept of 'tree-based agriculture', sustainable employment opportunities are created. 'Wadi' is an ideal program for smallholder farmers in rain-fed areas who are unable to farm profitably due to limited resources and inadequate irrigation systems. In the 'Wadi' program, the orchard can start production in just 4 years using the latest grafting method.

Table No. - 1

Coverage of Agri-horti-forestry (Wadi) Programme

	On-Going Projects				Completed Projects		Cumulative Coverage	
	New Coverage in 2022-23 (On-going Projects)		Cumulative On-going Projects				On-going and Completed Projects	
States	New Villages	New Families Benefitted	Total Villages	Total Families	No. of Villages	Families	No. of Villages	Families Benefitted
Maharashtra	118	3576	180	8579	3507	100781	3687	109360

Source: - BAIF Annual Report 2022-23

2. Livestock Development Programme:

Livestock has a unique place in the lives of rural people in India. The share of livestock sub-sector under the agriculture sector in the gross domestic product of the country is continuously increasing. Livestock rearing is an ideal supplementary business for farmers with small and medium land holdings in dryland areas that depend only on rain. Farming is affected from time to time due to the vagaries of nature, the farmer only has the experience of animal husbandry youth leaders. In India's agricultural economy, the mixed farming system in which crops and animal husbandry complement each other has given rise to this sector. In this, the output of one method is the input of another method. The Institute's Livestock Development Program covers activities such as rearing of milch cows, goat rearing, backyard and small scale chicken rearing, fodder development, preventive animal health and training in improved animal husbandry practices. The program of development of milch cows is mainly implemented through Godhan Vikas Kendra in various projects.



Table No. – 2

Performance of Livestock Development Programme

States	Districts	Centres	Villages (Cum.)	Families (2022-23)	Families (Cum.)	Total Insem. (2022-23)
Maharashtra	27	496	6084	198501	665535	429067

Source: - BAIF Annual Report 2022-23

3. Integrated Watershed Area and Water Resources Development Programme

a. Water Resources Development Programme

The importance of water for creating employment opportunities, maintaining social health and social welfare in rural areas is unique. Water is a natural resource and it is a basic need of animals. No social and economic progress can be sustained without water. Development of water resources is done through development of springs, construction of diversion dams, construction of new wells and deepening of old wells, construction of water troughs and lift irrigation etc.

b. Watershed Development Programme

A watershed is not just a watershed but a socio-political-ecological entity. Watershed provides food security, social security and economic security to the community and is the life support system of rural areas.

c. Landless development

Most of the families below the poverty line in rural areas are landless. Many of the families who own agricultural land are small land holders and cannot sustain their family from that land and the situation of such families is no different from that of landless families. All such families need special efforts to increase their income by providing employment. For the development of landless families, employment is created through activities such as small businesses, skill development, goat and goat rearing.

4. Women Empowerment Programme:

The Women Empowerment Program aims to create a society where women have the right to take decisions for their own good as well as for the good of society. This is an attempt to increase the social, economic, political and legal power of women. Only empowered women can confidently claim their rights.

5. Community Health:

The Community Health Program focuses on creating awareness on preventive health, public and personal hygiene, health and proper nutrition. Emphasis is placed on backyard creation through various projects. Malnutrition is overcome by creating awareness about including green vegetables from the backyard in the diet. Special campaigns are conducted to



create awareness on health issues and efforts are made to connect stakeholders with government health schemes.

6. Public Institutions:

Emphasis is placed on people's institution building which is used to create a sense of ownership among the project stakeholders, help in the smooth implementation of the project and sustain the resources generated during the project during the post-project period. These people are instrumental in bringing about sustainable development through institutional projects. People's organizations work at both village level (primary) and divisional (peak/higher) level. Examples of primary people's organizations are Wadi Tukdi, Youth Groups, Village Level Watershed Committees and Self Help Groups. The primary people's organizations come together to form apex organizations such as federations or cooperatives at the village level. Public organizations perform the following types of work.

- Finding poor families in the village.
- Disbursing project assistance and coordinating project activities.
- Establishing relationships with various government accounts and financial institutions.

Bharatiya Krishi Udyog Pratishthan has implemented beneficial schemes for rural and tribal, underprivileged families in India and provided self-employment opportunities to them. Due to which such families have benefited from sustainable livelihood and improved standard of living and protection of human values.

Programme Impact

A family with three milch animals earns an income of Rs. 60,000 – 75,000 per annum while a tribal family through Wadi (Agri-horti-forestry based livelihood) is able to earn Rs. 40,000 – 55,000 per year and come out of poverty. With the increase in cropping area by 20-30%, the watershed development programme generates year-round employment even for landless and increase in crop production by 35-60%. The quality of life of the community especially of women and children has increased with various health measures and development initiatives.

CONCLUSION:

The organization 'Bharatiya Krishi Udyog Pratishthan' has emphasized on economically and socially empowering the disadvantaged section of the society through livestock development, water resource development, women empowerment, wadi program to empower the families in the rural areas through various programmes. With the encouragement of all the new and old sponsoring organizations, the organization is trying to improve the standard of living of 2,79,459 rural families by helping them in various ways in 5,612 villages spread over 118 talukas in 31 districts of Maharashtra. The government and various development organizations working in rural areas have taken note of the work of BAIF organization in the context of watershed development. In this regard, a watershed development



program has been started in Aurangabad district of Marathwada with Bajaj Foundation, a charitable organization. Out of which 67,283.19 hectares area has been treated till date. This has greatly helped in increasing the underground water storage. Due to the availability of water, not only the area under crops has increased, but also the productivity of various crops and livestock has increased the income of the farmers. Today, thanks to Manibhai's vision, more than 45 lakh families in 60,000 villages across 16 states in India are living a better life than before by overcoming poverty through initiatives such as dairy cow rearing, water resource development, wasteland orchards (wadis), women's empowerment and community health.

BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) plays a crucial role in rural development through its innovative programs and interventions aimed at empowering rural communities. By focusing on sustainable agriculture, livestock development, natural resource management, and skill-building initiatives, BAIF contributes significantly to improving livelihoods, enhancing food security, and fostering socio-economic progress in rural areas. BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) is an organization dedicated to rural development in India. Overall, BAIF's efforts have led to tangible improvements in the quality of life, income levels, and resilience of rural communities, contributing to the overall development of rural India.

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