The day every one of us gets a toilet to use, I shall know that our country has reached the pinnacle of progress

- Jawaharlal Nehru, Former Prime Minister of India.

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Vision
Gramalaya envisions a society in which all people will have equal rights and access to protected water, sanitation, health and improved income status without gender discrimination.

Mission
Gramalaya is an NGO dedicated to promoting water, sanitation, hygiene and overall improvement of the rural, urban, coastal and tribal population in India. Thus, working for the empowerment of marginalized communities, especially the women and children.

Core value
Emancipation through Entrustment, Entitlement and Empowerment
Gramalaya ensures that all its projects reflect the above core values that encourage people to be emancipated from the cycle of poverty and deprivation through participation. Thus, communities are entrusted to work on the project by being part of its implementation process and its continued success.

Guiding Principles
- Ensuring Innovativeness and creativity
- Enabling environment and transparency
- Evolve Exit strategy and sustainability plans
- Encouraging community ownership of the project
- Enlisting people’s co-operation and participation

It is a sin that one’s faeces exposed to other’s eyes. It is a big sin that one’s faeces in the open space transmitting diseases to others.
– S. Damodaran, Founder Director, Gramalaya, Tiruchirappalli.
The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) aims to halve the proportion of people without access to water and sanitation by the end of 2015. It is an endeavor that is driven by worldwide statistics that put more than 2.4 billion people without access to adequate sanitation facilities and more than 1.1 billion people lacking protected water facilities. In India more than 70 crores people do not have sanitation facilities and are practicing open defecation. Many international organizations and Government and Non-Governmental organizations are working for the promotion of water and sanitation facilities in the rural and urban slums including coastal and tribal population areas. Gramalaya is one such organization working for water and sanitation initiatives in India, especially in the rural areas of Tiruchirappalli District, in Tiruchirappalli City Corporation, Municipalities, tribal villages of Green Hills and the tsunami affected areas of Nagapattinam coastal villages.

Gramalaya has formulated a strategy plan that would promote health and hygiene initiatives with a main focus on sanitation for the next five years period (2007 – 2012). It is a comprehensive development approach which aims to improve the overall socio-economic status and health development of the target communities. The underlying principle of the Gramalaya approach lies in the belief that health empowerment would in turn lead to economic and social upliftment that would give people the power to confront not only illnesses arising from water and sanitation related problems but also the resulting poverty and depression that follows. At the end of this five years period, Gramalaya will shift its focus towards economic development through microcredit and livelihood promotion activities for the next five years (2013 – 2018). The two phased strategy by Gramalaya would most certainly lead to a gradual social empowerment as a natural process of change.

The endeavours of Gramalaya have been greatly encouraged by the successes during the last five years period (2001 - 2006), where much was achieved in the field of water and sanitation. Gramalaya along with the local government and panchayat declared India’s first village Thandavampatti as open defecation free village in the rural areas of Tiruchirappalli District, while the Kalmandhai slum in Tiruchirappalli City Corporation area was officially declared by the then City Corporation Commissioner of Tiruchirappalli as India’s first open defecation free slum. The Gramalaya’s project works were well recognized in the booklets and pamphlets published by the Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) – South Asia.

The above momentous projects of Gramalaya have paved the way thus far for 47 rural villages and 100 slums to be declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF) zones. Further, Gramalaya has been innovative in its response to the issue of health and sanitation by developing India’s first child friendly toilet for slum children. It has also initiated India’s first low-cost, durable, water saving polypropylene toilet pans for adults and toilet pans for children as well as designing and developing the concept of community managed toilets by women self-help groups. The Toilet technology centre established at the Gramalaya Training Centre in the rural project area was the first of its kind technology park with more than 24 toilet type designs ranging from leach-pit latrines to eco-sans, community toilets and toilets for school and noon meal centres. The budget of the toilets range from zero toilet to Rs.4,500/- for eco-san toilet models. Today, Gramalaya...
projects are being replicated in other areas as its work continues to impact the field of water and sanitation to include the concept of toilet technology and community managed toilets.

The work of Gramalaya also incorporates advocacy and lobbying for health and sanitation issue as one of the Executive Members of the State Rural Sanitation Society, functioning under the aegis of Government of Tamil Nadu and chaired by the Rural Development Secretary. In addition, Gramalaya has also made its presence felt as one of the members of National-level Task Force Committee for Urban Sanitation formed by the Ministry of Urban Affairs, Government of India which is the policy making body for urban sanitation.

However, there remains much to be done as water and sanitation is still a dream for many especially among the poor living in the urban slums and remote rural areas. International organizations, NGO representatives and donor agencies seeing the Gramalaya projects as a workable solution have encouraged these projects to be replicated and build upon in other Districts, Region and States with national coverage of project intervention. Thus, after almost 2 decades and considerable achievements at the local level, Gramalaya is now set to expand its area of operation through its expertise and experiences.

The current five year strategy plan has been worked out keeping in mind the expectations of the donor agencies currently supporting Gramalaya as well as the aspirations of its own staffs that have been associated with water and sanitation activities for the last 10 years. Majority of the objectives set out in the plan is based on conclusions from the
ESRMs (Experience Sharing and Review Meeting) conducted twice a year in which all project staff right from the grass-root-level to senior-level including the board members participate. Initially, Gramalaya envisioned itself simply as a local grassroots-level NGO and rather hesitant to undertake water and sanitation project beyond Tiruchirappalli and Tamil Nadu State. However, a closer review of the situation in Tamil Nadu and India on the whole, led Gramalaya to believe that it can truly make a difference in providing accessible water and sanitation, an optimism that is reflected in its success to meet the MDG of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

The desired goals of Gramalaya are achievable provided local, State, national and international communities come together to provide the necessary financial and technical support needed for such an endeavor to be successful. Gramalaya’s commitment to the field of water and sanitation stands firm, seeking unwavering support from the grass-root level to global communities to make its aspiration an existing reality. Therefore, Gramalaya to ensure that the present five year plan is effectively implemented has gone back to its foundation to re-evaluate its administrative policies and accounting guidelines while improving the infrastructure facilities to be able to cope with the needs of the future.

You owe to the world for everything. You came to the world and enjoyed it. World does not owe you. Do good to the world. Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Sanitation is more important than political independence. Making every village ‘nirmal’ (clean and healthy) is central to all development efforts. Clean, green and healthy villages are an enduring sign of India’s progress.”

The means and strategies of the five year Goals are outlined below — Strategic Plan 2007 - 2012
GOAL 1

Increase the number of families to 5,00,000 with access to adequate Water and Sanitation facilities in the rural and urban slums by the end of 2012.

(At the start of 21st century, worldwide some 5000 children will die each day for want of a glass of clean water and sanitation)

Objectives

1.1 Expand the area of operation to nearby Districts and State in the next 5 years
1.2 Enabling accessible water and sanitation by supporting the communities which would result in long lasting improvement in their lives.

Initiatives

1.3 Mobilize potential donors for expansion and grant support.
1.4 Create infrastructure facilities including human resource and capacity building of the NGO

Strategic Target

1.5 Reaching 45,000 families with current donors support in the rural areas.
1.6 Reaching 33,000 families with water and sanitation facilities in the urban slums
GOAL 2

To act as a catalyst in promoting water and sanitation issues

What has been lacking is the concerted drive to extend access to water and sanitation for all through well designed and properly financed national plans, backed by a global plan of action to galvanize political will and mobilize resources - Human Development Report – 2006 – Beyond Scarcity

Objectives

2.1 Advocacy and lobbying on water and sanitation issues at the community, national and global-level
2.2 To work closely with Government in framing policies with regard to water and sanitation issues.
2.3 Offer technical expertise as a consultancy organization for NGOs and Government

Initiatives

2.4 Gramalaya will work to promote and encourage other NGOs and the Government to work on water and sanitation related issues through advocacy and participation in policy decision making processes.
2.5 Campaign on water as a basic human right will be initiated with emphasis on the gender perspective.
2.6 Gramalaya will bring quality advocacy and policy guidelines to motivate the different players for water and sanitation sector

Strategic Target

2.7 Participation in different e-forums and e-conference activities
2.8 Sensitise local Government and NGOs for formulating policies and implementation plan with regard to water and sanitation.
2.9 Publish IEC materials on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene education for use by NGOs Outreach workers, school health educators including resource materials for community development through CBOs.
GOAL 3

To establish an International Resource Centre for Water and Sanitation

(I hear, I forget. I see, I remember. I do, I understand)

Objectives

3.1 To serve as an information cum documentation centre
3.2 To be a training cum capacity building NGO for Water and Sanitation sector
3.3 To work as a networking organization

Initiatives

3.4 Efforts would be made to establish a National-level resource centre at the Gramalaya Training Centre. The resource centre will function as a training and capacity building institutions for NGOs/MFIs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs).
3.5 The resource centre will have connectivity from local to global level working organizations on water and sanitation and serve as an information centre.
3.6 The resource centre will also function as a networking organization whereby all NGOs/agencies/Government Departments working in the water sector have a platform to come together to exchange views and network.

Strategic Target

3.7 Successfully demonstrated projects, stories will be documented for dissemination of information and exchange of ideas.
3.8 All existing successfully demonstrated models and the documentation available will be compiled and kept for information sharing and learning purpose.
3.9 Networking strategies would be worked out including the criteria for membership selection, rules and regulations. This network will not only disseminate information but also engage in capacity building of organizations, individuals, including local communities working for water and sanitation.
GOAL 4

To initiate role model projects in rural, urban areas and in coastal regions for replication and expansion

Objectives

4.1 To undertake water and sanitation works at least in one Municipal City Corporation, two Municipalities and three town panchayats including in the coastal areas.
4.2 To cover at least one District with 100% sanitation approach
4.3 To demonstrate technical type designs and successful coastal region project

Initiatives

4.4 The current urban intervention project in Tiruchirappalli City Corporation will be phased out in the year 2007-08.
4.5 Funding will be mobilized from donor agencies to extend urban slums intervention in one of the Municipal City Corporation closer to Tiruchirappalli to consolidate the project experiences and for replication
4.6 During the years 2008-2010, one District (Tiruchirappalli) will be covered with 100% sanitation
4.7 One coastal area project will be undertaken in Nagapattinam District in Tamil Nadu.

Strategic Target

4.8 Gramalaya will withdraw from the current project intervention in the urban slums of Tiruchirappalli city by the end of March 2008.
4.9 Based on the models and experiences, one new Municipal Corporation, Salem or Coimbatore city corporation in Tamil Nadu will be taken up
4.10 For rural intervention, with the funding support from donor agencies and Government departments and PRI initiatives, Tiruchirappalli District will be taken up for 100% sanitation coverage.
4.11 To field test and set model projects, one coastal area project with integrated water, sanitation and hygiene intervention will be taken up in Nagapattinam district for which funds would be sought.
GOAL 5

To upscale works from district-level to regional-level
(Experience, Evaluate, Enrich and Expand)

Objectives

5.1 To increase the area of operation from block-level to District-level in the next two years.
5.2 To increase the area of operation from district to state-level in the next five years period.
5.3 To increase the area of operation from state to national-level

Initiatives

5.4 Two to three districts for 100% sanitation coverage will be taken up in the year 2008-2010.
5.5 In the year 2010, one nearby State will be taken up for water and sanitation activities.
5.6 Based on the experiences gained, efforts will be taken up for extending projects in few more states in India.
5.7 Gramalaya will ensure the human resource system developed with administrative and financial policies will also include procedures for supporting accountability and transparency.

Strategic Target

5.8 After successful completion of the project in one district, three more districts namely Namakkal, Nagapattinam and Villupuam District will be taken up for district-level projects.
5.9 One City Corporation in the nearby State Karanataka and rural parts of Karnataka state will be taken for water and sanitation intervention.
5.10 Funds from potential donors for undertaking the district-wise and nearby State will be mobilized from national and international agencies.
5.11 Taking lessons from the urban and rural initiatives, the project activities would be extended to nearby State at national-level. For undertaking national-level projects instead of direct implementation of the project, Gramalaya will play the role of umbrella NGO for which training, capacity building and funding support will be made available to interested and identified NGOs. While capacity building and training will be directly provided by Gramalaya either in house or on the spot, support funding will be directly provided by donor agencies to the certified NGOs through Gramalaya.
5.12 To undertake all the above activities, support funding will be mobilized by Gramalaya for institutional development, training, exposure visits and capacity building of the staffs. To work in par with other national-level and international organizations, Gramalaya will also recruit experienced and qualified professionals in the field and further capacitate them with intensive and adequate training and orientation.
GOAL 6

To function as a nodal agency for mobilizing funds and extend technical support for other needy NGOs.

Objectives

6.1 To work as a liaison NGO for donor and NGOs to extend financial support directly from the donors
6.2 To work as monitoring agency for arranging site visits with NGOs
6.3 To work as an evaluating agency between the NGOs and donor agencies

Initiatives

6.4 Gramalaya will act as a Nodal agency for other INGOs/agencies and Government departments for which technical support directly provided in terms of project appraisal, monitoring, documentation, institutional development services would be provided.
6.5 Gramalaya will engage in offering consultancy services to the needy NGOs and donor agencies in the form of providing technical expertise, project formulation and designing, offering training support etc.,
6.6 Gramalaya will act as a monitoring agency including conduct evaluation studies for requests made from NGOs, donor agencies and from Government Departments and submit reports based on the assignment.

Strategic Target

6.7 Efforts will be taken up to equip Gramalaya to act as a Nodal agency in the field of water and sanitation.
6.8 Assistance from international agencies will be sought for establishing nodal agency concept on request.
6.9 On the request from donor agency and Government departments, Gramalaya will undertake monitoring works.
6.10 The staffs of Gramalaya will be deputed in national and international training institutions for upgrading their skills in project monitoring and evaluation with the overall aim of better performance management enhancing human capital.
GOAL 7

To work as an intermediary between NGOs and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) for promoting water and sanitation works

Objectives

7.1 To assist the NGOs for financial support in terms of grant driven and loan oriented projects.
7.2 To encourage MFIs to allocate more funds for water and sanitation
7.3 To motivate the MFIs/NGOs to get involved in the water and sanitation sector

Initiatives

7.4 Many NGOs are already approaching Gramalaya for funding and professional support for both project formulation and fund mobilization activities. As there remains a dearth of NGOs working in water and sanitation field, Gramalaya will help NGOs by providing guidance on project formulation and fund mobilization both in terms of grant driven and credit oriented projects.
7.5 The existing MFIs will be motivated to allocate more funds for Water Credit and encouraged to consider Water Credit as one of the major portfolio and product.
7.6 Gramalaya will also act as an intermediary between NGOs and MFIs and liaise with them for entering into partnerships in terms of finance and technical support.

Strategic Target

7.7 One national-level workshop will be conducted on Sanitation wherein efforts will be taken to familiarize successful water and sanitation projects. This will encourage other NGOs to participate in the water and sanitation projects. Through this national workshop, new NGOs will come forward to take up water and sanitation projects and will be provided with consultancy services for project formulation and funding support.
7.8 One National-level seminar will be organized in a major city in India to familiarize Water Credit concept. Through this seminar, the challenges and opportunities in Water Credit will be identified and participation from more MFIs and NGOs will be initiated.
7.9 When more MFIs and NGOs come forward to take up water and sanitation projects, Gramalaya will encourage the newcomers in this field by offering technical guidance and a networking environment in which MFIs and NGOs will enter into mutual partnerships to provide adequate access to water and sanitation for all.

By working on the above strategies, Gramalaya will supplement the efforts of the MDG goal in achieving its vision and making objectives outlined under Goal – 8: Ensure Environmental Sustainability a reality.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG)

Goal – 8 Ensure Environmental Sustainability.
Target: 10

By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.