MANUVIKASA

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FEDERATION MEETINGS: STRENGTHENING SHGS THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) play an important role in strengthening the economic and social well-being of women in rural communities. While individual SHGs provide a platform for members to save, access credit, discuss financial matters and support one another, their collective strength becomes even greater when they come together through federation meetings.

A federation brings together representatives and members from multiple SHGs, creating a larger platform for discussion, learning, problem-solving and collective decision-making. These meetings provide an opportunity for women to move beyond the activities of their individual groups and understand the broader challenges and opportunities affecting their communities.

Federation meetings provide a space where SHG members can share their experiences, achievements and challenges. Issues that may be difficult for an individual SHG to address can often be discussed collectively and resolved through shared knowledge and experience.

Members learn from one another about savings, internal lending, loan repayment, livelihood activities, financial management and other matters related to SHG functioning. Such discussions help strengthen the capacity of members and encourage them to take greater responsibility for managing their groups effectively.

The meetings also promote collective decision-making. Instead of working in isolation, SHGs can identify common concerns and discuss practical solutions together. This strengthens confidence among women and encourages them to participate actively in decisions that affect their families and communities.

One of the important functions of SHGs is promoting regular savings and responsible access to credit. Federation meetings reinforce the importance of financial discipline by providing a platform to discuss savings practices, loan management, repayment and the effective use of credit.

Through interaction with other groups, members can understand how different SHGs manage their financial activities and learn from successful practices. This exchange of knowledge can help groups improve their record keeping, financial planning and overall functioning. The federation therefore acts as a support system that encourages SHGs to remain active, accountable and financially responsible.

Federation meetings are also an important opportunity for developing leadership among women. Members get the chance to speak in front of a larger group, express their opinions, participate in discussions and take part in collective decisions.

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Editorial



Dear readers...

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the MANUVIKASA newsletter. Each newsletter is an opportunity to share not only our work, but also the spirit of partnership, participation and hope that makes our journey meaningful. The stories in this edition reflect the collective efforts of communities, supporters and our dedicated team to create lasting change.

Our Federation Meetings under Narishakti Greenway highlight the importance of collective strength among Self-Help Groups. These meetings provide a platform for women to share experiences, discuss challenges, strengthen financial awareness and work together towards greater confidence and self-reliance.

The inauguration of the Science and Mathematics Laboratory at Kansur, with the support of Dr. Manoj C. Desai, marks an important step towards making learning more practical, engaging and accessible. The laboratory will encourage students to explore concepts through observation, experimentation and curiosity.

At Sammasagi school, the implementation of STEM education with the support of Mrs. Nutan J. S. from Dubai, is helping children discover the joy of learning through science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This initiative aims to nurture creativity, problem-solving abilities and a spirit of innovation from an early age.

Our National Flag Awareness Programme reminds us of the values represented by our national flag–unity, dignity, responsibility and respect for our country. Through this programme, we seek to encourage children and communities to understand and uphold these values in their everyday lives.

The rejuvenation of Balagatti Lake and Balakatti Lake, made possible through the generous support of the Bahadurji Family, is a significant contribution to water conservation and rural resilience. These efforts have strengthened water storage, improved the potential for agricultural support and renewed community hope for a more secure future.

The Water Security and Rural Livelihood Project, supported by the CMS Foundation, reflects our commitment to addressing the close relationship between water availability and rural livelihoods. By strengthening natural resources and supporting communities, the project seeks to create more sustainable opportunities for farming families.

Through the Integrated Farming System Project at Kalaghatagi, MANUVIKASA continues to understand the needs of farming communities and promote suitable interventions in agriculture, water management, natural resource conservation and livelihoods. The project places farmers and their experiences at the centre of planning and action.
The Livelihood and Enterprise Development Programme (LEDP) on Catering and Event Management, supported by NABARD, is opening avenues for skill development and enterprise creation.

Our Cancer Awareness and Screening Programmes, conducted in collaboration with ASMITE Foundation and the Indian Cancer Society (ICS), emphasise the importance of awareness, prevention and early detection. Bringing these services closer to rural communities is a meaningful step towards encouraging timely health check-ups and informed choices.

I sincerely thank all our supporters, partners, community members whose contributions make these initiatives possible. Your trust continues to inspire us to work with greater commitment. I hope you enjoy reading this edition and that these stories remind us of what can be achieved when we work together.

With warm regards

Mr. Ganapati Bhat
Managing Trustee

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For many women, participating in such meetings can gradually build confidence and communication skills. Women who initially hesitate to speak or take responsibility can gain encouragement from their peers and gradually emerge as leaders within their SHGs and communities.

This process contributes to the broader goal of women's empowerment by creating opportunities for women to take leadership roles and participate meaningfully in community development.

The federation meetings conducted in this quarter across different locations have brought together a significant number of SHG members. Meetings were held at Manchikeri, Korlakatta, Arenduru, Bhavikodlu, Malagi, Hanagal, Channalli, Galagihulakoppa, Malali, Arehalla and Kadime.

The participation itself reflects the growing importance of these platforms. The meeting at Arenduru saw the highest participation, with 59 members, followed by Galagihulakoppa with 50 members, Channalli with 44 members, Kadime with 40 members, and Korlakatta with 38 members. Other meetings also recorded encouraging participation, demonstrating the continued engagement of SHG members in federation activities. Across these meetings, a total of 413 member participations were recorded. This provides a strong indication of the reach of federation activities during the quarter.

A federation meeting is not simply a gathering of SHG members. It is a platform for building relationships, exchanging knowledge and strengthening collective action.





When women from different SHGs meet regularly, they develop a sense of solidarity and mutual support. They begin to see that many of the challenges faced by one group are shared by others, and that solutions can often be found through cooperation. These meetings also create opportunities to discuss emerging needs, identify community-level issues and explore ways in which SHGs can contribute to local development. The collective voice of women becomes stronger when individual groups come together under a federation.

The variation in participation across the meetings also highlights the need to continuously encourage and facilitate wider involvement of SHG members. Greater participation ensures that more women have access to information, discussions and opportunities for learning. Regular communication, timely information sharing and creating an inclusive environment can help ensure that members feel that federation meetings are relevant to their lives and livelihoods. When women see tangible benefits from participating, their engagement naturally becomes stronger.

The continued functioning of federations is essential for sustaining the progress made through SHGs. Strong federations can help groups access knowledge, strengthen their institutions, identify common challenges and advocate collectively for their needs. For MANUVIKASA, these meetings represent an important part of the broader effort to strengthen women's institutions at the grassroots level.

By bringing SHGs together, federation meetings create a network where women can learn from each other, support one another and work collectively towards greater economic and social empowerment. The participation recorded across the different villages during the quarter demonstrates that these platforms continue to have an important place in the SHG movement. With regular meetings, active participation and collective leadership, federations can become powerful institutions for building stronger SHGs, more confident women and more resilient rural communities.

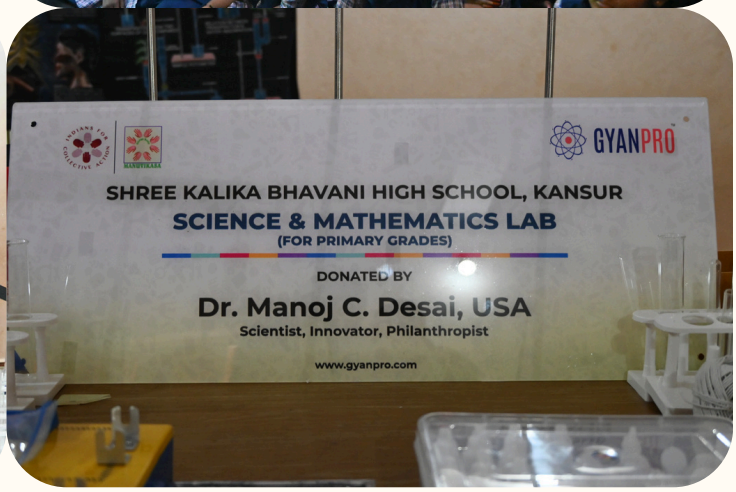
WHEN COLLECTIVE VISION LIGHTS A CLASSROOM

HOW INDIANS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION AND DR. MANOJ C. DESAI ARE BRINGING SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS TO LIFE AT SHREE KALIKA BHAVANI HIGH SCHOOL, KANSUR









In a small government-aided school in Kansur, a quiet transformation is underway. Rows of desks that once held only chalk and slate now make room for models, charts, and hands-on learning kits. A new Science and Mathematics Laboratory for primary-grade students has opened its doors — not because of a government grant or a corporate scheme, but because a community of Indians thousands of miles away, and one scientist among them, chose to believe that a village child's curiosity deserves the same tools as any other.

This is the story of Indians for Collective Action (ICA), a Bay Area-based collective founded in the 1960s by a small group of students and professionals who shared one conviction: that lasting change in India would not come from charity alone, but from ordinary Indians acting together, deliberately, and in partnership with those doing the real work on the ground. For over five decades, ICA has carried that founding spirit forward, connecting diaspora donors with grassroots organizations across health, education, and rural development — MANUVIKASA among them.

Among ICA's community of supporters is Dr. Manoj C. Desai — a scientist, innovator, and philanthropist whose own life reflects the very idea he chose to fund. Someone trained to question, experiment, and discover understands better than most what a child loses when a science lesson is only ever read aloud, never touched, tested, or seen. It was this understanding that led Dr. Desai to support the establishment of a dedicated Science and Mathematics Lab for primary-grade students at Shree Kalika Bhavani High School, Kansur — a gift aimed not at a single class or a single year, but at the earliest stage of a child's relationship with learning itself.

The inauguration of the Mathematics and Science Laboratory at Kalika Bhavani High School, Kansuru, was held on 18th August 2026 in the gracious presence of Mr. K. R. Hegde, Retired Teacher; Mr. Supreeth Kittenakere, Founder, Gyan Pro; Mr. Ganapathi Bhat, Managing Trustee, MANUVIKASA; Mr. Surendra Kulkarni, Scientist; Mr. Raju Adakalli, Renowned Writer; Mr. Shankaranarayana Bhat Girigadde, President, Kalika Bhavani Education Institution; Mr. G. I. Hegde, Headmaster, Kalika Bhavani English Medium High School; Mr. Hanumanthappa S. R., Science Teacher; Ms. Yashaswini Murthy, Mathematics Teacher; Mr. Nagendra Mutmurdu, Renowned Photographer; and Mr. Vasanth Manjunath Hegde Madanakallu, Secretary, Kalika Bhavani Education Institution.

The lab gives young students in Kansur what many take for granted: the chance to see a concept before memorizing it, to measure and build before being tested, to ask "why" and "how" and find the means to find out. For children in their formative years, this shift matters enormously. It is often in these early grades that a lifelong curiosity for science and numbers is either kindled or quietly lost.

For MANUVIKASA, this partnership is a reminder of something we witness often in our own work across Uttara Kannada — that meaningful development rarely arrives as a single grand gesture. It arrives as collective, sustained effort: a diaspora organization that stayed true to its founding purpose for sixty years, a donor who chose to invest in minds rather than monuments, and a school and community ready to make the most of the opportunity. Each piece depended on the other.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Indians for Collective Action and to Dr. Manoj C. Desai for their generosity and their faith in the potential of Kansur's children. As young students step into their new lab and encounter science not as a subject to fear but as a world to explore, they carry forward a vision that began with a handful of Indians abroad who simply refused to believe that distance was a reason not to act.



Dr. Surendra Kulkarni is a chemist, research leader, STEM Mentor and R&D centre builder. He has an experience of 11 years in academic research and 32 years in industrial R&D. MANUVIKASA extends its sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable support and encouragement towards this initiative.

BRINGING INNOVATION TO RURAL CLASSROOMS: MANUVIKASA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS STEM EDUCATION

Quality education is not only about ensuring that children attend school; it is about creating opportunities for them to understand, explore, experiment and apply what they learn. Recognising the gaps in access to practical and technology-enabled learning in rural schools, MANUVIKASA undertook a baseline survey of schools to understand their educational needs, infrastructure gaps and opportunities for innovation. Keeping technology, innovation and logical learning at the centre, MANUVIKASA identified the need to introduce STEM-based education in rural schools through practical, affordable and sustainable solutions.

As part of this effort, Government Higher Primary School, Sammasagi, in Hangal Taluk of Haveri District, was identified through the baseline assessment. Sammasagi is a rural community where many families depend on agriculture and daily-wage labour for their livelihoods. The school serves 86 students, including children from surrounding villages, and has dedicated and knowledgeable teachers who are committed to providing quality education. MANUVIKASA recognised that strengthening the existing teaching efforts with practical and innovative learning resources could create a meaningful difference in children's educational experiences.



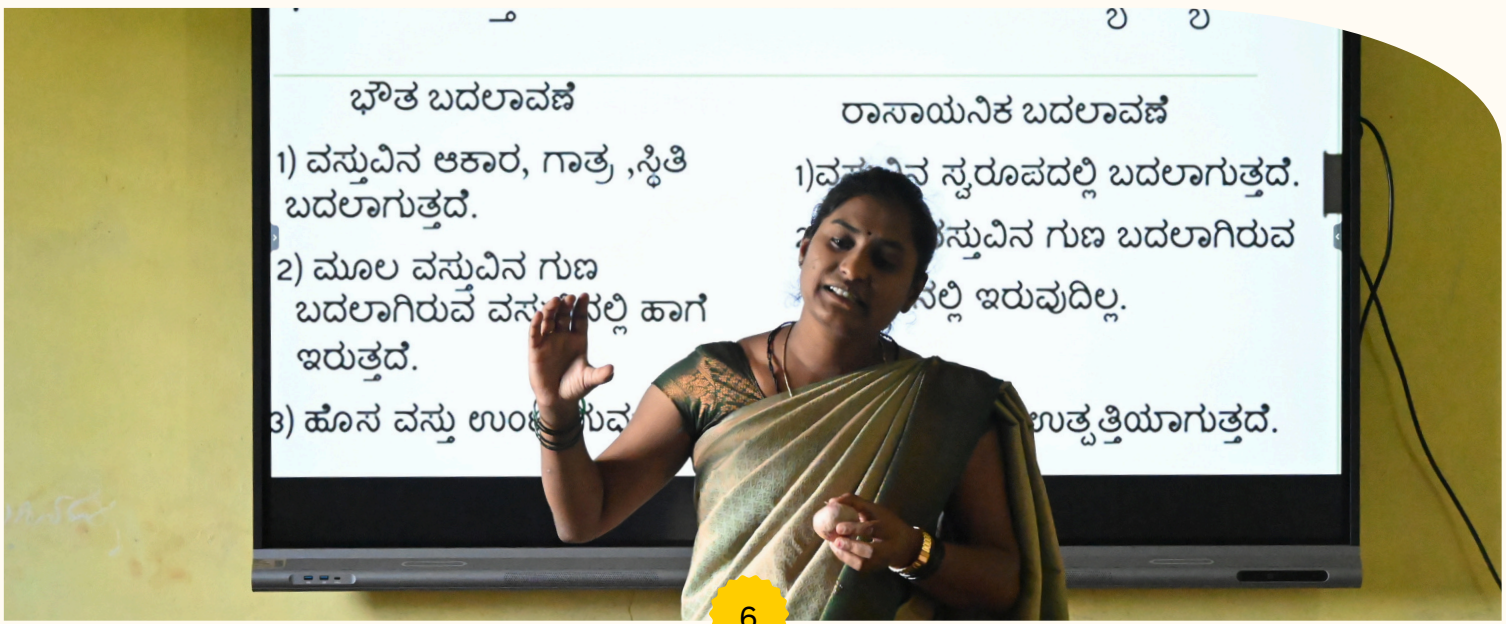




This led to the introduction of “LAB IN A BOX”, an innovative concept designed to bring laboratory-based learning directly into rural classrooms. In many government schools, limited infrastructure and resources make it difficult to establish fully equipped Science and Mathematics laboratories. LAB IN A BOX addresses this challenge through a compact set of Science and Mathematics equipment, enabling students to conduct curriculum-linked practical activities within the classroom. The experiments are designed for students from Classes 5 to 7, aligned with their NCERT-based learning requirements.

Through Science experiments, students are able to move beyond reading concepts in textbooks and experience them through observation, demonstration and hands-on experimentation. They can see reactions and processes, understand cause and effect, ask questions and connect theory with practical experience. Similarly, the Math Lab component helps students approach Mathematics through activities, models and logical problem-solving methods, making concepts that often appear difficult or abstract more understandable and engaging. The aim is to encourage children to move from simply memorising answers to thinking, reasoning and discovering solutions.

The LAB IN A BOX initiative at Sammasagi was supported by GYANPRO Educational Innovation Pvt. Ltd., which provided the Science and Mathematics equipment and technical support. The initiative received financial support from Mrs. Nutan J. S., a philanthropist from Dubai, who has a strong interest in contributing to the education of rural children. Her support has helped bring innovative learning opportunities to students who may otherwise have limited exposure to laboratory-based education. GYANPRO also provided hands-on training to teachers on the use of the equipment, Science experiments, Mathematics activities and necessary safety measures for both teachers and students. This ensured that the intervention focused not only on providing resources but also on building the capacity of teachers to use them effectively.



The LAB IN A BOX was introduced through a small inauguration programme at Sammasagi School on 25 June 2026, marking an important step towards strengthening experiential learning in the school. The initiative represents a shift from a purely textbook-based approach towards a learning environment where children can see, touch, experiment, question and understand. The real value of the intervention lies not in the equipment itself, but in the curiosity it creates in a child, the confidence it builds in a teacher and the opportunity it provides for students to experience Science and Mathematics in a completely different way.

Building on this experience, MANUVIKASA has continued expanding the approach to other rural schools. Science and Mathematics laboratory equipment was extended to Kulave School, with the potential to support practical learning and hands-on experimentation for students from nearby government schools as well.

Through this journey, MANUVIKASA is demonstrating that innovation in rural education does not always require expensive infrastructure. With the right assessment, appropriate technology, teacher capacity-building and committed partnerships, even a simple classroom can become a space for discovery. What began with a baseline survey at Sammasagi is gradually evolving into a broader effort to bring practical STEM education to more rural children.





LAB IN A BOX is more than a box of equipment—it is a box of possibilities. It gives a child the opportunity to ask “Why?”, a teacher the tools to demonstrate “How?”, and a classroom the freedom to turn textbook concepts into real experiences. Through continued partnerships and expansion, MANUVIKASA is working towards a future where every rural child gets the opportunity not only to learn Science and Mathematics, but to experience them.

MANUVIKASA plans to expand the STEM initiative to more rural and underserved schools through a need-based and evidence-driven approach. Schools will be identified through baseline assessments, community consultations and learning-gap analysis. The initiative will combine Science and Mathematics labs, teacher training, student engagement and safety practices. MANUVIKASA also aims to develop cluster-based facilities and strengthen partnerships with CSR organisations, philanthropists and educational institutions. The long-term vision is to make rural classrooms spaces of curiosity, experimentation, innovation and discovery.

MANUVIKASA AND PARTNERS RALLY YOUTH AROUND NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

In the quiet town of Sirsi, a gathering took place that wasn't just about preserving tradition, but about shaping a better tomorrow. At the heart of this movement was the shared vision of local organizations - led by FEVORD-K Uttara Kannada alongside dedicated social organizations working hand in hand with the Bharat Sevadal District and Taluk Committees.

The day began with a simple yet profound gesture: lighting the traditional lamp. Leaders, volunteers, and young students stood side by side, signaling a collective commitment to build a more conscious, unified generation serving the nation.

Inaugurating the event, Dr. Venkatesh Naik, Honorary President of FEVORD-K Uttara Kannada, highlighted the core mission driving their effort. He emphasized that the national flag is far more than a piece of cloth—it is a living symbol of India's unity, sovereignty, and pride. Protecting its honor, he noted, is a duty shared by every Indian, making it essential to instill this awareness deep within the hearts of students and the youth.

This message of responsibility resonated through every speech. Prof. K. N. Hosamani, President of the Bharat Sevadal Taluk Committee, reminded the audience that the flag embodies our collective identity and that nurturing a culture of respect for it gives purpose to such gatherings. Speaking on the event's broader goal, Dr. Riyaz Sagar, Secretary of FEVORD-K Uttara Kannada and Head of the Asmite Foundation, urged non-governmental organizations, students, and young people to step up as messengers, taking this vital awareness out into the wider community. Adding to this sentiment, Ganapati Bhat, President of FEVORD-K Uttara Kannada, reminded everyone that honoring the flag within legal regulations is a daily civic responsibility.

The event took a practical turn when Ramachandra Hegde, District Organizer of Bharat Sevadal, stepped forward to lead an interactive session. Through live demonstrations, he walked the audience through the history and journey of the national flag, demystifying the rules and protocols of the Flag Code. Students watched closely as he demonstrated the correct, respectful procedures for hoisting and lowering the flag, followed by a moving breakdown of the spirit behind Vande Mataram and the discipline expected during national observances.

The atmosphere in the hall was filled with active participation. Leaders and representatives from various non-governmental institutions, staff from the Social Welfare Department, and eager school children sat together, connected by a single purpose.

As the program drew to a close, hosted smoothly by Sreekumar S. Naik, Treasurer of the Bharat Sevadal Taluk Committee, a strong spirit of collaboration remained. With support from partners like Green Care Organization's Jitendra Kumar, Sankalpa Trust's Kumar Patagar, and Eco Care Organization's Sunil Bovi, the event served as a powerful reminder: when community organizations like MANUVIKASA and its partners unite to educate the youth, they aren't just teaching rules - they are inspiring the citizens who will shape a better tomorrow.







RESTORING WATER, SUSTAINING LIVELIHOODS: A COLLABORATION WITH BAHADURJI FAMILY FOR RURAL RESILIENCE









Pictures of Balagatti lake; before, during and after rejuvenation

In the rural landscapes of Rattihalli and Hirekerur taluks, water is more than a natural resource—it is the foundation of agricultural livelihoods, household security, and the ability of farmers to withstand dry spells. Recognising this deep connection between water and rural prosperity, the Bahadurji family, in partnership with MANUVIKASA, has supported the rejuvenation of two important village lakes, creating new opportunities for farmers and strengthening the long-term resilience of two rural communities.

The first intervention was undertaken at Balagatti Lake in Gundagatti village, Ingalagundi Gram Panchayat, Rattihalli taluk. Spread across 9 acres and 5 guntas, the lake had significant potential to serve as a dependable source of stored water. From 9th March to 24th March 2026, MANUVIKASA carried out extensive de-silting and rejuvenation work, removing 13,635 cubic metres of silt from the lakebed. This effort has created an additional water storage capacity of 13.635 million litres—13.635 million litres of water that can be retained in the landscape and made available to support agriculture and rural livelihoods during periods of water stress.

The second intervention took place at Balakatti Lake in Dudihalli village, Channalli Gram Panchayat, Hirekerur taluk. Covering 14 acres and 16 guntas, this larger water body was rejuvenated between 27 April and 11 May 2026. The work resulted in the excavation of 14,490 cubic metres of silt and generated an additional water storage capacity of 14.49 million litres. Beyond the physical transformation of the lake, the intervention represents an investment in the productive capacity of the surrounding farming community—helping conserve water locally and strengthening the ability of farmers to manage uncertain rainfall and dry periods.

Together, the two projects have removed 28,125 cubic metres of accumulated silt and created 28.125 million litres of additional water storage capacity. These are not merely engineering outcomes. They are tangible measures of how community water assets can be restored to serve the people whose livelihoods depend on them.

At the heart of this initiative is the vision of the Bahadurji family: that meaningful philanthropy should create sustainable value, particularly for rural communities whose lives are closely tied to natural resources. By supporting lake rejuvenation, the family has helped strengthen a critical piece of local infrastructure that can continue benefiting farmers year after year. Rather than providing only short-term relief, the intervention contributes to a more durable foundation for agricultural livelihoods—one built around water conservation, local storage, and community resilience.

MANUVIKASA's role has been equally important in translating this vision into action on the ground. Through planning, implementation, excavation, and completion of the rejuvenation works, MANUVIKASA has demonstrated how effective development partnerships can convert resources into measurable outcomes. The organisation's work ensures that support is not only delivered, but transformed into assets that remain within the community and continue generating value.

The rejuvenation of Balagatti and Balakatti lakes is therefore a story of partnership, purpose, and measurable impact. It is a story about restoring water systems so that farmers can face the future with greater confidence. Most importantly, it reflects the shared belief that access to reliable water provides communities with a stronger foundation for building secure, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods.



Pictures of Balakatti lake; before, during and after rejuvenation

STRENGTHENING WATER SECURITY AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION: MANUVIKASA – CMS FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

Water security is at the heart of sustainable agriculture and resilient rural livelihoods. Recognising the growing challenges faced by farming communities due to water scarcity, MANUVIKASA, with the support of the CMS Foundation, has been working with rural communities in Banavasi Hobli of Sirsi Taluk, Uttara Kannada District, to strengthen water resources, improve agricultural productivity and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The seven-month's project, implemented from April to October 2026, covers the villages of Naruru, Malanji, Andagi, Kirvatti, Hebbatti, Gudnapura and Badanagod. The initiative combines community-led water conservation with farm development, Integrated Farming System (IFS) models, plantation activities and strengthening of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

A major achievement of the project has been the successful development and rejuvenation of seven lakes—five small lakes and two medium-sized lakes. Alongside this, 30 farm ponds and 15 IFS model farms have been developed. The project has also completed the plantation of 2,000 saplings, organised seven awareness and beneficiary-selection programmes, and promoted seven water users' groups. Follow-up support is continuing with 100 SHGs.

RESTORING LAKES, RESTORING LIVELIHOODS



The rejuvenation of the seven lakes has created a significant impact on local farming communities. A total of 47,132 cubic metres of silt was excavated, and farmers transported approximately 28,939 loads of nutrient-rich silt to their agricultural fields. This not only increased the storage capacity of the lakes but also enabled farmers to apply the silt to their farmland, helping improve soil quality.

The seven rejuvenated lakes directly benefited 223 farmers and are expected to support approximately 371 acres of agricultural land. Together, these interventions are expected to create an additional 47.1 million litres of water storage annually.

FARM PONDS: BRINGING WATER CLOSER TO FARMERS



Along with community lakes, the project developed 30 farm ponds for individual farmers. Around 12,000 cubic metres of silt was excavated during farm pond development, directly benefiting 30 farmers. These ponds are expected to harvest approximately 7.5 million litres of water annually and play a crucial role in agricultural activities.

Farm ponds provide farmers with an important source of protective irrigation and help reduce dependence on uncertain rainfall. By storing rainwater at the farm level, they enable farmers to protect crops during dry spells and make better use of their agricultural land.

FROM WATER CONSERVATION TO INTEGRATED FARMING

The project has also promoted 15 Integrated Farming System (IFS) model farms, demonstrating how different farm-based activities can be combined to strengthen household livelihoods. Farmers received support related to organic manure, plants and indigenous seeds, with 28 varieties of seeds distributed to IFS beneficiaries.

The IFS approach encourages farmers to make productive use of available resources by integrating activities such as crop cultivation, livestock, poultry, beekeeping and nutrition-sensitive farming. This reduces dependence on a single source of income while supporting sustainable and diversified agriculture.





COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT THE CENTRE

Community ownership is a key feature of the initiative. Farmers and local communities have actively participated in lake restoration, silt transportation, plantation and water management activities. Water users' groups have been formed and strengthened to encourage collective responsibility for the long-term maintenance and use of restored water resources.

The project has also facilitated soil testing of farmland where lake silt has been applied. These efforts help farmers understand the benefits of soil improvement and encourage informed agricultural practices.

CREATING A MORE RESILIENT RURAL FUTURE

The combined interventions are creating impacts beyond water storage. According to the project's consolidated impact assessment, the initiative has created approximately 78 million litres of additional water storage capacity through lake rejuvenation and farm pond development. The interventions cover seven villages and are expected to benefit 1,160 acres of land and directly impact approximately 3,200 people.

The improved water availability has contributed to better agricultural conditions, with an estimated 0.5–1.0 metre increase in groundwater levels. Around 1,260 acres of agricultural land has been brought under protective irrigation, while 435 farmers have adopted second and third crop cultivation. Crop diversification, improved water access and sustainable farming practices have contributed to an estimated 40–50% increase in average annual farm incomes.

The initiative is also strengthening women's participation in rural development. Approximately 1,200 women are engaged through 150 SHGs and seven lake/farmer committees, creating opportunities for women to participate in decision-making, financial activities and livelihood development.

EMPLOYMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The project has generated an estimated 5,000 person-days of local employment through lake restoration, farm pond construction and livelihood activities. This has helped reduce seasonal migration among approximately 100 rural workers.

Environmental restoration is another important component. 2,000 saplings have been planted along lake-bund areas, contributing to greener community spaces and long-term climate resilience. The project estimates that these plantations could contribute approximately 15 tonnes of CO_2 sequestration annually upon maturity. Improved water availability and restored lake ecosystems are also supporting livestock and domestic animals, while creating conditions for the revival of local birds, fish and native flora.





LOOKING AHEAD

The achievements of the project provide a strong foundation for continued community-led development. In the coming months, MANUVIKASA plans to strengthen the seven water users' groups through regular meetings, follow-up, and capacity-building support; monitor the growth and maintenance of the 2,000 planted saplings; and provide continued technical and advisory support to the 15 IFS model farms. In addition, MANUVIKASA will support the regular maintenance and upkeep of the rejuvenated lakes to ensure their long-term sustainability and continued benefits to the community.

Follow-up with the 30 farm pond beneficiaries and 100 SHGs will continue, along with soil testing after silt application. The project will also focus on documenting beneficiary case studies and testimonials, strengthening loan linkages and facilitating convergence with relevant government programmes.

The CMS Foundation-supported initiative demonstrates that when communities, farmers and development organisations work together, water conservation can become a powerful pathway towards sustainable agriculture, improved livelihoods and stronger rural communities.

FROM UNDERSTANDING NEEDS TO CREATING CHANGE: THE IFS JOURNEY

Under the Integrated Farming System (IFS) Project, MANUVIKASA has been working in 32 villages of Kalaghatagi Taluk since September 2025. The project was initiated to understand the needs and challenges of farming families and support them through suitable interventions in agriculture, water management, natural resource conservation and livelihoods. During the first year, the project has focused on understanding the field situation, building relationships with farmers and communities, and implementing activities based on local needs.

The project began with a farmer survey to understand existing farming practices, land and water availability, major agricultural problems, livelihood sources and the support required by farming families. Through a Google Form-based survey, information from around 12,000 farmers was collected across the 32 villages. The findings helped the project team identify priority areas and plan interventions according to the needs of different farmers and villages.

Regular village-level meetings have been important part of the project. Meetings are being conducted in all 32 villages, with at least two meetings every month in each village. These meetings provide a platform to discuss agriculture, water-related issues, government programmes and other community needs. Village-level committees have also been formed in all 32 villages, strengthening community participation and local decision-making.

During the first year, several water and soil conservation activities were implemented. A total of 21 farm ponds were constructed to harvest and store rainwater for agricultural use. 124 land levelling and trench-cum-bunding works were completed to reduce runoff and soil erosion, improve moisture retention and make agricultural land more productive. In addition, 15 borewells recharge work was taken up to support groundwater recharge and improve the sustainability of irrigation water sources. These interventions are helping farmers make better use of available rainfall and strengthen water and soil management on their farms.

Promotion of sustainable agriculture has been another important focus of the project. During the year, 121 farmers received sustainable agriculture training covering improved cultivation practices, soil health, crop diversification, appropriate use of farm inputs and reduction of unnecessary chemical inputs. From these farmers, 25 were selected for model farm development. They were supported with four bags of manure, vegetable seeds, and different varieties of fruit and other plants such as arecanut and coconut. Depending on the requirement of the farm, either drip or sprinkler irrigation was also provided. These model farms are intended to demonstrate diversified and sustainable farming practices and encourage other farmers to adopt suitable practices.

Kitchen garden activities were promoted among farming families, particularly encouraging women's participation. 114 members received kitchen garden training, along with vegetable seeds and manure. The activity is helping families grow fresh vegetables for household consumption, improve nutrition and reduce household expenditure. Surplus vegetables can also be sold in local markets, creating an opportunity for additional income.
Another important component during the first year was the organisation of Animal Health Camps. A total of 30 camps were conducted, benefiting more than 950 farmers and over 4,000 animals. Cows, bulls, buffaloes, sheep and other livestock were covered through free health check-ups, treatment and medicines. Since livestock is an important part of many farming families' livelihoods, these camps provided timely veterinary support and increased awareness about animal health and care.



1. Village Level Farmers‘ Meeting



2. Backyard Kitchen Garden Training



3. Lake Rejuvenation



4. Trench cum Bunding



5. Borewell Recharge



6. Animal Health Camp



7. VB-G RAM-G Awareness Programme



8. Farm Pond

The project has also supported communities in accessing government employment programmes and schemes. Awareness was created regarding VBG-RAM G works, village committees were formed, and eligible families were supported in preparing job cards and accessing available employment opportunities.

Other than the project activity, more than 75 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been formed across 32 villages, covering more than 750 women members. These groups provide women with a platform for savings, collective action, information sharing and exploring livelihood opportunities.

Efforts have also been made to link eligible farmers and families with government schemes through different departments. Based on the needs identified through surveys, village meetings and field visits, the project team has been guiding farmers about available schemes and supporting them in the linkage process wherever possible.

MANUVIKASA will continue to work closely with farmers and village communities to strengthen sustainable farming practices, improve resource management and support better productivity, nutrition and resilient livelihoods among rural families.

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SKILLS, ENTERPRISE AND OPPORTUNITY: NABARD-SUPPORTED LEDP

FROM LEARNING A SKILL TO BUILDING A LIVELIHOOD



With the support of NABARD, Bengaluru, MANUVIKASA implemented a 20-day Intensive Livelihood and Enterprise Development Programme (LEDP) on Catering and Event Management at Uppunda, Byndoor, Udupi District. The programme brought together 38 women from 16 SHGs, providing them with practical skills, entrepreneurial knowledge and the confidence to explore catering and event management as sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The programme was designed not merely as a cooking course, but as a complete pathway from skill development to enterprise creation. Participants received hands-on training in vegetarian and non-vegetarian cooking, breakfast and snacks, sweets and desserts, menu planning, large-scale catering, food preservation, packaging and presentation. Experienced catering professional Chef Chandra M. Devadiga guided participants through practical preparation of a wide range of dishes, helping them develop skills that can be directly applied to catering orders and community events.

The training went beyond the kitchen. Participants learned event management, venue arrangement and decoration, procurement, costing, budgeting, inventory management, SHG strengthening, financial literacy, branding, marketing and customer service. Sessions on MSME registration, FSSAI and food safety compliance helped participants understand the importance of operating a formal and responsible food enterprise.

Digital knowledge was also integrated into the programme. Participants were introduced to UPI, online banking and social media marketing, enabling them to understand how digital platforms can be used to receive payments, communicate with customers and promote their catering services.

A key highlight was the exposure visit to Swathi Deluxe Hotel, Shiruru, where 33 participants observed professional kitchen operations, food safety practices, hygiene standards, customer service and hospitality management. The experience helped bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world business practices.

The programme also placed strong emphasis on entrepreneurship. Participants were guided to identify local market opportunities, understand customer needs, calculate costs and pricing, assess profitability and prepare basic business plans. The objective was clear: to transform skills into income-generating opportunities.

The programme recorded a 100% completion rate, with all 38 participants successfully completing the training. More importantly, the women emerged with greater confidence, practical skills and a clearer understanding of how they can build individual or SHG-based enterprises.





The LEDP represents an important step towards creating market-ready rural women entrepreneurs. By connecting culinary skills with financial literacy, digital marketing, regulatory awareness and business planning, the programme has created a strong foundation for women to move from being trainees to service providers, entrepreneurs and income generators.

The goal was not simply to teach women how to cook, but to help them understand how their skills can become a sustainable business.

Through continued handholding, market linkages and collective action through SHGs, the participants can build on the skills gained during the programme and explore opportunities in catering, food services and event management—contributing to stronger household incomes and more resilient rural livelihoods.

BRINGING CANCER AWARENESS AND SCREENING CLOSER TO RURAL WOMEN

Cancer awareness and early screening are important components of preventive healthcare, yet for many people living in rural communities, access to information and screening services remains limited. This challenge can be particularly significant for women, who may hesitate to discuss health concerns related to their bodies because of social taboos, embarrassment, fear or the belief that certain health issues should remain private. Such hesitation can sometimes lead women to delay seeking medical attention even when early diagnosis could make a significant difference.

Recognizing the importance of awareness and timely screening, the Indian Cancer Society (ICS), with the support of ASMITE Foundation led by Dr. Riyaz Sagar, has been taking cancer screening and awareness closer to communities. ASMITE Foundation has been supporting community mobilization and providing necessary local support, while the Indian Cancer Society provides the cancer screening services. Together, the initiative seeks to make preventive healthcare more accessible and encourage people to take proactive steps towards their health.

As part of this initiative, MANUVIKASA facilitated the participation of its Self-Help Group (SHG) members in a cancer screening camp, creating an opportunity for women from rural communities to access screening services and receive information about cancer prevention and early detection. Approximately 250 SHG members from different villages participated in the programme.





For many rural women, an SHG is more than a platform for savings and livelihoods. It is a trusted space where women meet regularly, share experiences and discuss issues affecting their families and communities. This trust makes SHGs an effective platform for introducing conversations around subjects that may otherwise be difficult to discuss openly. Cancer is one such subject. By bringing screening opportunities through a familiar community network, women can be encouraged to overcome hesitation and view screening as a normal and responsible part of taking care of their health.

The programme focused on creating awareness about cancer risk factors, early warning signs, the importance of regular health check-ups and healthy lifestyle practices. Participants were also sensitized to the importance of timely screening, particularly for oral, breast and cervical cancers. The emphasis was not only on identifying illness, but also on helping people understand that screening is a preventive step and should not be associated only with fear or the presence of symptoms.

In rural communities, misconceptions and social stigma can sometimes discourage women from seeking examinations related to breast and cervical health. Concerns about embarrassment, fear of what a diagnosis might mean for the family, or the misconception that screening is unnecessary in the absence of symptoms can all become barriers. Creating a safe environment for discussion and providing accurate information can help women overcome these barriers. Awareness can give women the confidence to ask questions, seek medical advice and make informed decisions about their own health.



Community-based screening programmes are therefore valuable not only because they bring medical services closer to people, but also because they create an entry point for conversations about health. When women receive information in a familiar community setting, they are more likely to discuss concerns, understand the importance of early detection and encourage other members of their families and communities to seek timely medical attention.



The contribution of MANUVIKASA to this initiative lies in its strong grassroots connection with rural communities and its Self-Help Group network. By mobilizing SHG members and facilitating their participation, MANUVIKASA helped connect a trusted community platform with a specialized cancer screening initiative. This role complements the vision and expertise of the Indian Cancer Society and the community mobilization efforts of ASMITE Foundation, helping extend the reach of the programme to women who may otherwise find it difficult to access or consider such services.

The participation of approximately 250 people from different rural villages demonstrates the potential of collaborative community-based healthcare initiatives. The programme brought together the medical expertise of ICS, the community mobilization and local support of ASMITE Foundation, and MANUVIKASA's established relationships with rural Self-Help Groups to create greater awareness and access to preventive healthcare.

Cancer awareness should not be limited to hospitals and urban centres. It must reach homes, villages and community groups, where awareness can help overcome fear, stigma and silence. For rural women especially, creating opportunities to speak openly about cancer and encouraging timely screening can be an important step towards protecting their health and wellbeing.

Through initiatives such as this, MANUVIKASA continues to use its community networks not only to strengthen livelihoods, but also to connect rural families with opportunities that contribute to their overall wellbeing. Awareness, timely screening and appropriate medical advice can together encourage early detection and better health-seeking behaviour, helping build healthier, more informed and more confident rural communities.





MANUVIKASA is working in Uttara Kannada, Haveri, Shivamogga and Dharwad districts and has appointed the following staff to oversee operations in the given blocks.

Sirsi	Manjunath Hegde (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management) Balachandra Naik (SHG management) Sayeesh Nayak (SHG management) Parashuram Madar (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management)	94494 53774 95351 68602 81054 33015 81978 87531
Siddapur, Honnavar	Punit Naik (SHG management)	96862 24908
Haliyal, Dandeli	Niranjan Kadam (SHG management)	72596 89630
Mundgod. Shiggaon	Ganapati Yalival (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management)	99802 05013
Hanagal, Byadagi, Haveri	Prashant Maradiyavar (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management)	98448 42013
Hirekerur	Basavaraj S G (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management)	84310 52674
Hubballi, Kundagol	Basavaraj Radder (Lake rejuvenation and SHG management)	80953 11643
Karwar, Ankola, Kumta	Naveen Naik (SHG management)	78991 54285
Kalaghatagi	Sunil D Poojar (Lake rejuvenation, Farm ponds construction, Land leveling)	80887 97500

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