



**Vicente Ferrer**

*Empowering rural communities*



## **Tamarind Plantations to Combat Poverty in India**

### **Project Rationale**

Drought is a calamity that Andhra Pradesh in southern India has been suffering for many years. Rocky, uneven terrain and a lack of vegetation further aggravate the situation for land used by small farmers. In order to reduce the effects of drought, Rural Development Trust (RDT), our local partner in India, promotes sustainable, long-term development projects focused on water harvesting, conservation, use of renewable energy sources, and diversifying livelihood opportunities.

More than 36% of the working population in Andhra Pradesh, India, make a living from agriculture and are therefore dependent on low-yield soils and erratic rainfall. The income is often not sufficient to make a living and they remain in poverty. In fact, Andhra Pradesh has a high rate of suicides among farmers due to the difficulties they face for providing for their families.

Tamarind trees can withstand drought periods and grow amidst adverse climatic conditions to give good yields to farmers. Since tamarind trees are deep-rooted, they do not require irrigation, after three years of life. Additionally, tamarind is a multipurpose tropical fruit that constitutes an indispensable ingredient in the south Indian diet.

## **Project Goal**

**The aim of the project is on one hand to improve the livelihood of farmers in the region for generations, and on the other hand to make a contribution to climate protection, in a chronic drought-prone area.**

The cultivation of the undemanding tamarind trees on degenerated soils in dry areas is optimal due to the tree's high drought resistance. The trees live up to 200 years and are therefore an investment for generations. The tamarind tree is a symbol of sustainability.

## **Project Description**

Our Tamarind Project will be implemented in the Madakasira region of Andhra Pradesh. It covers 176.67 acres of land. On average, 60 trees can be planted per acre.

Tamarind plantations have clear commercial benefits. It is not only used widely in the dietary preparation of souring, curries, sauces, chutney, and certain beverages but also its seeds, tender leaves, flowers, and young seedlings provide steady income to local farmers. In fact, many farmers state that tamarind yields higher revenue than mango orchards.

Dry weather is very suitable for fully ripening the fruit at the time of harvest. Harvesting is usually done from January to March. The yield from one tree aged about 25 years will be about 100 kg; 150 kg and 50 kg for the first, second and third picks respectively in a year.

## **Impact**

Our tamarind plantation program has a very positive impact on improving the living conditions of farmers as it diversifies their income sources and they will not depend so much on the rainfall. In addition, tamarind trees contribute to promoting natural vegetation in the district.

## **About VFF USA**

VFF USA is a DC-based foundation devoted to empowering rural communities in the Southeast Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. We focus on improving the lives of India's most marginalized groups to build a more just and equitable society. We place particular emphasis on assisting the most vulnerable populations--children, women, and people with disabilities--to ensure that development in rural areas leaves no one behind. Through our local implementing partner, the Rural Development Trust (RDT), we develop holistic, long-term solutions that empower communities, improve living conditions and promote lasting positive change.



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