

# FAIRTRADE PREMIUM IMPACT



**PRODUCER NAME:** PRATIBHA-VASUDHA JAIVIK KRISHI KALYAN SAMITI- FLO ID: 4531

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**COUNTRY:** INDIA

**PRODUCT:** ORGANIC COTTON LINT

**FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED SINCE:** 2006

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## SALES AND PRODUCTION

**PRODUCT VARIETY:** Organic Cotton Lint

**ANNUAL PRODUCTION CAPACITY:** 800 MT FT Cotton Lint

**MAJOR COUNTRY OF EXPORT:** USA, Canada, Germany, Spain, Sweden, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and India

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## ABOUT THE PRODUCER ORGANIZATION:

Pratibha – Vasudha Jaivik Krishak Kalyan Samiti (VASUDHA) is a registered society of smallholder cotton farmers in India, established in 2006 under Fairtrade certification and is today one of India's largest Fairtrade organic cotton farmers' networks. It is promoted by Pratibha Syntex Ltd., which is a vertically integrated, sustainability-oriented manufacturer of knitted textile products. Sustainability is in its core and to have sustainable raw material for its own supply chain, Pratibha established its organic farming project named **Vasudha**, means mother earth, way back in 1999 with 500 farmers. At present Vasudha Farm Project covers 100,000 acres of area and positively impacts the lives of 25,000 farmers. Currently, about 20,000 tons per year of organic, BCI and Fair-Trade cotton lint is produced under the Project.



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## MORE THAN RESPONSIBLE TEXTILES!

### FAIRTRADE PREMIUM COMMITTEE

Vasudha currently has about 1,550 cotton farmers in its Fair-Trade fold. A team of 44 democratically elected representatives on the Fair-Trade Committee and 7 members on the Executive Committee ensure implementation of Fair-Trade practices at *Vasudha's* farms. Since 2007, over US\$ 500,000 in Fair-Trade premium has been distributed to beneficiaries across 80 villages, in the form of need-based interventions. This investment has brought a great deal of change in the community.

### OUTCOME AND IMPACTS

- **SOCIAL IMPACTS**

**Right to Education and Prevention of Child Labour:** The 'Right to Education (RTE) Act', 2009 gives every underprivileged child the right to get access to quality education. Through its education-focused program, *Vasudha* aims to empower future generations. Farmer community felt need of good education for their children. There was no good school in surrounding and children used to go 30 kms far home to attend schools.



Figure 1 Vasudha Vidya- Fairtrade Flagship School

With over 500 students enrolled and staffed by 20 teachers, the School has now become sustainable, generating its own operating resources. Farmers pay a nominal tuition fee, while Fairtrade farmers get a 10% subsidy on the fee and an additional discount on sibling enrolment. The Premium has also been invested in setting up of computer centre and science lab, purchasing of 10 school buses and healthcare activities such as medical camps, clean toilets, water purifiers.



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*Pics : Vasudha Vidya Vihar- Fairtrade Flagship School and Investment for School Transport for Community children*



**“Vasudha Vidhya Mandir (School) has been providing quality education at affordable fee. The school is upto 12<sup>th</sup> Class. I admitted both my children in the school. With the Fairtrade Premium School, all Fairtrade organic farmers get special discounts in fee. With the English education system of the school, I am ensured that the school will play a pivotal role in building a strong foundation for my children. The school also provides bus facility, which saves my time else I had to pick and drop my children.”- Subhash Radheshyam- Fairtrade Cotton farmer**

**Empowering Rural Women:** Fuelled by a passion to change the socio-economic status of lesser-privileged Indian women, Vasudha with FT premium support set up community vocational centres and provides training in fabric cutting and sewing. This helps generate work opportunities to empower rural women.

**Right to Medical, Health care & Sanitation:** Vasudha also invested FT premium to undertake initiatives to impact health and living & working conditions. These include conducting medical camps, construction of sanitation facilities, provision of potable water facilities, tree plantation, installation of solar energy street-lamps and support to an Old Age Home.

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“We were forced to walk during dark nights as there were no street-lights, which is very risky in the village. Many people had been bitten by snakes. It was a big relief when Fairtrade took a stellar role for the safety of the villagers, with the installation of Solar Lights in the village streets. We feel safe and sound.”

- *Ranchhod Kaluji- Fairtrade Cotton farmer*

## • ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

**Non- GMO Seed Production Programme:** VASUDHA provides its farmers quality seed material every year to maintain genetic and physical purity in order to avoid GMO contamination at the farm level. The cooperative has its own non-GMO seed production programme and is working towards seed sustainability. VASUDHA also makes its own chemical-free fungicides, insecticides and nutritional supplements and sells it to farmers at cost.

The cooperative also offers periodic training to its farmers. Technical experts provide periodical workshops and training camps on different topics. The farmers are trained on the technology of producing organic inputs at home; the inputs are also available for sale through this centre on subsidized rates. They have also constructed a warehouse for its farmers where they can store their crops to avoid distress sales of their produce.



VOSC has established own Non-GMO cotton seed production program. This program is now supported by TRAIID and this year aim to produce sufficient number of good quality Non-GMO hybrid seeds with farmers participation. This is a step towards seed sovereignty and preservation of bio-diversity. It has established a nursery where produced and distributed 60000 saplings to farmers. It produces low cost organic inputs branded as *Sudarshan* (a bio pesticide made of leaves extract),



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*Bheem* ( A growth Promoter made of soybean). These inputs are given of farmers on very low cost and have potential to reduce cost of input for farmers by 60%.

**Water Management:** Vasudha has installed drip irrigation for 125 farmers covering 125 acres, conserving 35 to 40% water. 80% of FT cotton farmers are using drip irrigation today. They have promoted organic manure production and increased the organic carbon content in the soil for retaining its moisture for efficient water usage.



**“Our village did not have water facility for our cattle, and they used to drink from contaminated sources. We have constructed cattle drinking water tanks by FT premium and which has affected health of our cattle positively. This also ensured water availability for cattle throughout the year.”** *Kailash Poonam Chand- Fairtrade Cotton farmer*

**Infrastructure:** The region is very well connected by roads and railway network, electricity is available round the clock and even rural roads are very well built. They promote agroforestry among its farmers by introducing Bund Farming with drumstick and gliricidia plants which reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity and help supplement income. In 2015, they distributed 100,000 saplings free of cost to the farmers and in 2016 the target is 500,000 saplings.

Sustainable farming practices have contributed to increasing the soil fertility. Reduced usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticide have saved the water resources from pollution. All these improvements have improved the health situation of the community. The manufacturing unit of Pratibha Syntex also implements environment friendly technologies and practices like rainwater harvesting, zero water discharge, use of natural gas and effective recycling of spinning and cut waste.



**“ I have been producing Non GM Cotton seed under Fairtrade- TRAIID Project from last 3 years. It has not only made locally grown good quality low cost non GM cotton seeds available for Fairtrade farmers but also given me economic benefit from seed production. This has helped me to pay engineering college fee for my son who is now a software engineer.”-** *Kailash Bhawanji- Fairtrade Cotton Farmer*

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## • ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

### Vasudha Organic Solution Center (VOSC):

Addressing all needs of farming community Vasudha also invested in improving agriculture which is major source of income for farmers. It established Vasudha Organic Solution Centre which works towards nurturing a scientist in an farmers and promoting him/her as an entrepreneur. It worked as nodal center which trains farmer as scientists, promotes continuous research through participatory trails, creates repository of best practices, establishes SoPs for organic input production.



Figure 2 Fairtrade Organic Input Production Centre

Besides farming Pratibha's textile processing too is Fairtrade certified. Sustainability is at the core of Pratibha's business strategy that is embedded into its product, planning and process. Pratibha as a clear mandate that involves 100% conversion to sustainable materials, 50% reduction of water and carbon footprint, 33% reduction in solid waste disposed and 5% profit invested in people and communities. Initiatives and interventions undertaken by Vasudha are aligned to achieve these strategic milestones. At farm level they have already started training farmers on management and leadership skills to become enterprising. Soon Vasudha shall be an SPO fully owned and managed by farmers themselves. Working towards establishment of self – sustaining farming community which has all the agriculture resources from seed to inputs produced within community and also has basic quality facilities for education, health and enough income opportunities for the coming generation.

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