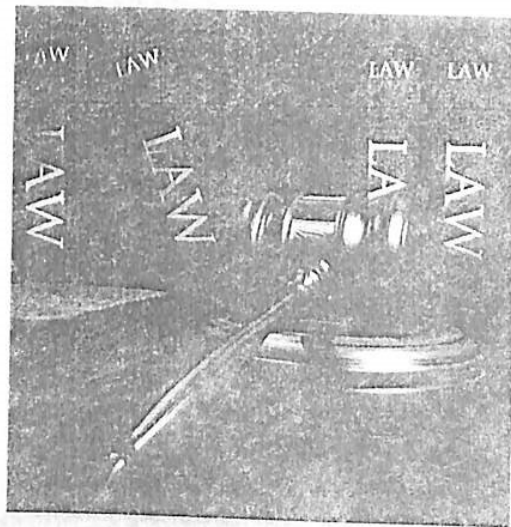


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4. Stopping Tree Felling :

The hills around the village, which were ones full of green trees, were bare due to indiscriminate tree felling. The local population depended on the forest for fodder and fuel. The villagers failed to realise that they were cutting their own life line. Anna Hazare, explained the need of forests. The forests help in generating top soil, conserving water, checking floods, maintaining weather cycle and of course provision and food, fodder and fuel. Now the once barren hill areas of the village bloomed once again with lush green forests.

5. Stopping Indiscriminate cattle Grazing:

Anna Hazare persuaded the villagers to stop indiscriminate cattle grazing to preserve the grass on the hill slopes. Special grass was grown to feed the feed the cattle.

Anna Hazare, through his charismatic leadership, made the villagers to stick to the above five point formula. This formula has transformed the village, supported by water tankers, to a self sufficient one with enough water, green fields, employment, higher standard of living and addiction free happy people. Ralegan Siddhi has now turned into a 'Model Village'. People, not only from India but abroad, flock to see this village. It is the magic of people's own efforts and popular participation in improving their own lot. Initiatives like this may be the saviors of our economy

By focusing the above five points programme watershed programme also implemented by the peoples belongs to these village Ralegan Siddhi village comes under acute drought prone areas of Ahmednagar district. Total geographical area of this village is 971.56 hectares out of which 691 hectares area is under cultivation i.e 71 % agricultural land is irrigated and well irrigation increased by eight times during watershed programme. The impact of integrated watershed development programme in double cropped area increased by 52%, cropping intensity by 66%, well irrigation by 800%, number of well by 300% increased respectively during the said period. More water consuming crops were prohibited e.g sugarcane. Farmers were prefer less water consuming crops.

B) Hiware Bazar- Replication of Ralegan Siddhi Model:

Anna Hazare's Ralegan Siddhi experiment had begun in early seventies and by 1990 the face of the village had completely changed. Politicians, bureaucrats and common people flocked to see this 'Model Village' in the hope that this model could be replicated. It was in 1990 that Mr. Popatrao Pawar, the Sarpanch of Hiware Bazar, started seriously replicating the Ralegan Siddhi model of development.

Hiware Bazar is another typical village situated 17 Kms from the district place, Ahmednagar. The village was surrounded by barren hills and had to depend on water tankers in the summer months. The agriculture was ruined and poor farmers were prone to depression and alcoholism. Many Problems in the village related to its undulating hilly topography, with shallow land and poor soil fertility. The average rainfall per annum largely amounted to 350-400mm. The topography and poor rainfall contributed to a perennially drought like situation.

The transformation of this water scarcity village began in the early 1990's. Within last ten years Hiware Bazar has demonstrated a successful transformation from a drought prone habitat to a picture of plenty and prosperity. The village has bagged the Gram Abhiyan Puraskar (1995-96), the Adarshgaon Puraskar (1997), the National Productivity Award (1998-99), the Vanashree Puraskar and the Clean Village Puraskar (2000-2001). Mr. Popatrao Pawar, the Sarpanch of Hiware Bazar, admits that he was inspired by Anna Hazare's Ralegan Siddhi model. He is a Commerce Graduate. In 1990, when he was elected unopposed as the village sarpanch, he started studying and implementing various government schemes for village development. As his efforts have borne fruits the villagers have elected him unopposed as the Sarpanch for the third time successively.

On the lines of Ralegaon Siddhi Mr. Pawar decided to undertake watershed development plan for the village 976.84 hectares of land area around the village was divided into four watersheds. Along with the villagers he decided to construct various types of bunds and trenches on the hill tops accompanied by tree plantation drivers. Up to 1998-99, with the help of the villagers, 3,53,000 trees were planted on 378 hectare land area. At various places around the village storage and percolation tanks were constructed. This integrated approach helped in recharging ground water, improving soil fertility and agricultural productivity. The rise in its water table led to additional cultivation of 250 acres of land. The villagers were also pursued to adopt improved cropping patterns and new irrigation techniques. The farmers now grow onions, potatoes, cotton and vegetables, in addition to the tradition crops like jowar and ragi. There has also been an increase in the production of oilseeds, pulses and fruits. The villagers thoughtfully decided against planting of crops like sugarcane and banana as they consume excessive amount of water. The villagers have also succeeded in increasing the availability of fodder from a meager of 200 tonnes in 1994 to over 1,500 tonnes in 2000. This has helped in increasing the milk production from 300 liters in 1994 to over 2000 liters in 2000.

Today, due to the charismatic leadership of Mr. Popatrao Pawar and the collective efforts of the villagers towards watershed development, the village of Hiware Bazar has been dramatically transformed from a drought prone village to a

MANAGEMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Introduction

It has been accepted by all that the goals of economic planning cannot be achieved unless the people actively involve themselves in the participation implementation and follow-up of the developmental plans and programmes. Through the importance of public participation in planning has been accepted right from the First Five Year Plan, the spirit of participation has not been realized. Whatever planning we have attempted has low rate of success due to lack of people's participation. In fact people's participation forms the central idea of democracy. In order to maximize people's participation the Government has taken a right step in 1992 by introducing 73rd Amendment of the "Indian Constitution". A part from strengthening the Panchayat Raj system the Amendment aims at reducing the political and bureaucratic interference in the rural development. In this paper we intend to explore the importance of people's participation in planning take a stock of some experiments in this regard in Ahmednagar District and suggest alternative strategy to make people's participation more effective.

Ahmednagar District : Management of People's participation :

A) Anna Hazare's Ralegan Siddhi Experiment :

Anna Hazare, a well known social activist, is now a national figure. Various state governments like Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir have invited Anna Hazare to learn from his development work at Ralegan Siddhi. Ralegan Siddhi, the former drought prone village of Ahmednagar District, has been transformed into an Oasis, by the non tiring efforts of Anna Hazare in the last 25 years. The main thrust of Anna Hazare was to convince the people to embrace watershed management techniques intelligently. Watershed management is not something which the village would not understand. Simply put it needs one to conserve rain water in every way possible. Starting off with trenches and earth bunds on hill slopes, farm ponds and check dams supported by boulders the village of Ralegan Siddhi started conserving rain water. The availability of water around the year has helped in changing the face of the village economy.

5 Point Formula

The villagers of Ralegan Siddhi also willingly agreed to implement Anna Hazare's five point formula. This includes.

1. The Prohibition of liquor

Many such addicted farmers have to sell their land to repay the debts. Anna Hazare convinced the villagers regarding the horrible effects of drinking. Now there is no shop selling wine in the village. Even bidi and gutkha is not available in the village. The villagers willingly abstain from consumption of wine and tobacco.

2. Adopting family Planning Norm

The population in India is crossed the one billionth mark. It is generally agreed that this population explosion has nullified whatever gains of development we had in the planning period. 70% of Indian Population still lives in the rural area and this proportion has remained unaltered over the years. In agriculture it is always possible to find some work or the other for the children. It is for this reason that children have never been considered as an economic burden in an agrarian society. Anna Hazare was successful in creating awareness among the villagers and pursued them to adopt small family norms.

3. Supplying Self Labour :

Anna Hazare realized that of all the new values to be created, self-help and self reliance were the most important ones. The villagers had a tendency to depend on external help-whether of some agency or the government and in the process their own initiative and vitality had been sapped. Anna Hazare instilled work-culture and through their voluntary help (Shramadan) could build a school building and other amenities. Anna Hazare is of the opinion that it is not the shortage of physical resources but factors that inhibit the fullest expression of man's natural self i.e. identify with work in which he should find pleasure and fulfillment, that has restarted development in India.

the village of Ralegan Siddhi village. Hiware Bazaar has adopted Anna Hazare's Ralegaon Siddhi model, along with the other projects in the area, with great success.

The water conservation programme also implemented by the peoples of Hiware Bazaar village. Total agricultural land in the village is 650 hectares, out of these 650 hectares is under irrigation, drip irrigation is adopted for 250 hectares. There is a 50% increase of agricultural fruits received by the farmers. Ground water level is also increased, water is available upto 1000 feet. Out of the 235 families only 2 families belonging to BPL category and six families are landless. Due to the development programmes annual per capita income is increased from Rs. 832 to Rs.30,000 during 1991 to 2011.

C) The Jamkhed Experiments:

In 1970 work on a comprehensive rural health project was started in Jamkhed, a less developed taluka in A'nagar district by a dedicated doctor couple; Dr.Rajnikant Arole and Dr.Mrs. Mabelle Arole. Provision of health facilities is a generally neglected aspect in rural India. The couple departed from the normal health delivery system by emphasizing the participation of the community in decision making. Their final aim was to see that the village community owned and ran their own health Programme. Their thrust was on the use of local resources and personnel. The attempt was to evolve total-not fragmented health care, i.e. curative, promotional, preventive and curative care. Though the project was started with outside funds, the community leaders were involved in it from the very beginning.

The Jamkhed experiments demonstrate that an inexpensive delivery system of health care can be built by active participation and involvement of the community. Through the project was successful it was soon realized that health by the state of health was not a viable model. There was a greater need of providing potable water and food. As the experiment could not continue indefinitely on borrowed food, the community had to go in for improved production techniques. Other agencies interested in agriculture and irrigation was contacted. Simultaneously other agro based projects like poultry and dairy were taken up. The whole programme thus took on a much wider canvas-that of socio-economic development of the whole taluka.

The Jamkhed project has been successfully with respect to its health aims. They have trained many village level health workers especially less educated women and the health statistics of the region has also improved. But they had to go in for other social programmes to support their nutrition and community kitchen programmes. Apart from the dedicated project manager Mrs. Arole, the other major factor for the success of the project has been the continuous inflow of outside funds.

Lessons From The Four Experiments :

We need to examine four experiment involving different intervention agents. In case of Ralegan Siddhi, a social activist Anna Hazare, in Hiware Bazar, the village sarpanch-Popatrao pawar and in jamkhed, a dedicated doctor couple- Mr & Mrs Arole acted as change agents. All these experiments revolved around a bottom up, participatory model of change. All the persons, who acted as change agents, are from the local area. They realized the need to mobilize the community and organized them to undertake community work. These leaders were in a way successful in creating awareness among the villagers and invoking their voluntary participation in planning and executing community work.

In case of Ralegan Siddhi Hiware Bazar the leaders were successful in implementing majority of the present ongoing government schemes for the development of their villages. It needs to be emphasized here that mere provision of government schemes is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for rural development. Unless the villagers are made aware of these schemes cannot be implemented successfully. The villagers have to be made aware regarding the availability of various Government Schemes. The sarpanch of the village has to furnish necessary documents and file them in taluka and district level Government departments to get the schemes sanctioned for his village. In the absence of social activities or local organizations this work has to be solely undertaken by the Sarpanch of the village.

It is impossible to sustain a development process in the long run unless the local people are organized. Mobilization, however, cannot be an end in itself, because what is desired is development which is more than being a 'state' is a process. The process of development has to go on continuously. For this consciousness has to be instilled in the people so that they continuously work for their betterment. Often the political leaders are successful in organizing people but this organizations is used to get themselves elected; rather than for developmental purposes. More often such leaders wish to keep the masses in perpetual poverty; so that they remain docile followers who depend for everything on them.

The most importance problem is the size and replicability of the experiment. In the experiments under our study the area of the experiments is a single village or a group of village. Ralegan Siddhi, Hiware Bazar is single villages. But

Jamkhed experiments have covered a group of villages. Another interesting observation is that in the past few years fall in the relatively under developed talukas of Ahmednagar District has been the requirement to start and progress of co-operative sugar factories. Now there are visible signs of increased demand for sugar in the nearby villages. But there is a clear need of enlarging and diffusing the co-operative sugar factories.

According to Prof. B.M. Desarda, economist and former member of the Planning Commission, "The drought in the state is due to the failure in planning, improper policies and the heavy impact of natural calamities of nature." He recommends the strategy of watershed development, soil conservation, rain water harvesting and protective irrigation. There is a meticulous need of micro planning. "A drought proof agriculture is possible only if it is exactly what has been undertaken in the above experiments. There is no point in talking about drought proofing unless the basic need of water is fulfilled. "Maharashtra Government, in the last forty years, has spent nearly a hundred thousand crore on various water projects and drought related employment projects. However, the situation is desperate because of the lack of conceptually sound and operationally effective approach to drought proofing and water harvesting". These two villages, viz. Ralegaon Siddhi, Hivare Bazar, demonstrate that, if properly executed, the villagers can change their own fate.

If proper awareness is created among less educated, simple village folk they provide solutions to the drought problem. We must learn to trust the common people and work with them. If not, we tend to go around signing papers, expens, the same technology, and the same processes. These experiments also provide an alternative to the Government organizations. The government and other funding agencies create large number of NGOs which are treated as solutions to all our problems. The government officials are not aware of the squander money on show piece programmes and their own self.

Suggestions to Strengthen People's Participation

It is not our intention we have been saying that people's participation is the only solution to the drought problem. Development is a social and cultural process. It is a result of the interaction of various social and cultural factors, leading to a creation of just society, where the people are able to determine their own destiny. It is not the sole prerogative and responsibility of only the government and the village community. A development process demands the active and conscious participation of all the people of the community. A development process demands participation of people in the developmental process would be a great success. It is necessary to have a number of suggestions for strengthening the people's participation in rural development at district level. A paper

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