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## Experiments of Rural Development

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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 Panchyat 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.

### Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study the importance of public participation in rural development for their own villages
- 2) To know the role of Hon' Anna Hazare in the development of Ralegan Siddhi village.
- 3) To study the Five point formula introduced by Hon' Anna Hazare.
- 4) To study the role and contribution of Hon' Popatrao Pawar in development of Hiware Bazar village.
- 5) To study Jamkhed experiment of Dr. Rajnikant Arole and Dr. Mrs. Mabelle Arole.
- 6) To learn and study the lesson from the forth experiment.

### Scope of the Study

The study is related with the development of rural area, particularly Hiware Bazar, Ralegan Siddhi and Jamkhed. The work of Hon' Anna Hazare, Hon' Popatrao Pawar, and couple of Arole family. Various experiments introduced by these of fame people are considered and detected the effects of their experiments.

### Research Methodology

The research paper is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through discussion with the people's of the related villages and observations. Secondary data is collected through books, research papers published in different journals and other published and unpublished data. The special data is collected for Ahmednagar District.

#### 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.

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Watershed management is not something which the villages 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 to farm ponds and check dams supported by boulders the village of Ralegan Siddhi started harvesting rain water. The availability of water around the year has helped in changing the face of the village economy.

### **FIVE 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. 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 Labor**

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.

#### **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 realize 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 ones barren hills around 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 in to a ' Model Village'. People, not only from India but abroad, flock to

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see this village. It is the magic of people's own efforts and popular participation in improving their own lot. Initiatives like his may be the saviors of our economy.

### **(B) Hiware Bazar - Replication of Relagan 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 replication 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 rain fed 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. He village has bagged the Gram Abhiyan Pruraskar (1995-99), 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 Relegan 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 drives. 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 bajra. There has also been an increase in the production of oilseeds, pulses and fruits. He 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 water shed development, the village of Hiware Bazar has been dramatically transformed from a drought prone village to a green and prosperous' model village'. Hiware Bazar has adopted Anna Hazare's Relegaon Siddhi model, along with their five point formula, with great success.

### **C) The Jamkhed Experiment**

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 delivery system by emphasizing the participation of the community in decision making. Their final aim was to see that the village 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

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resources and personnel. The attempt was to evolve total-not fragmented health care, integrating 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. Though the project was successful it was soon realized that health for the sake of health was not a viable mode. There was 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 for poultry and dairy were taken up. The whole programme thus took on a much wider canvas- that of social-economic development of the whole taluka.

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

#### **Lessons From The Four Experiment**

We have tried to examine four experiments 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 preset ongoing Government schemes for the development of their villages. It needs to be emphasized here that mere provision of programmes by the Government is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for rural development. Unless the villagers cooperate willingly these schemes cannot be implemented successfully. The villagers have to be made aware regarding the benefits of various Government Schemes. The sarpanch of the village has to furnish necessary documents and pursue the 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 concerned 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 his organizations is used to get themselves elected; rather that 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 important problem is the size and reliability of the experimental in the experiments under our study the area of the experiments is a single village or a group of villages, Ralegaon Siddhi, Hiware Bazar is single villages. But Jamkhed experiments have covered a group of villages. Another interesting observation is that all these experiment to availability of irrigation and progress of co-operative sugar factories. Now there are visible signs of these experiments being replicated in the nearby villages. But there is a clear need of enlarging and diffusing these experiments throughout the district.

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### Suggestions to Strengthen People's Participation

Throughout our discussion we have been saying that development cannot be viewed simply as a process of economics growth alone. Development is dynamic and integrated process of change involving economic, social political cultural and ethical factors, leading to a creation of just society. Unless social justice is achieved economic reforms cannot remain the sole prerogative and responsibility of only the government of few elites in the society. It is a process which demands the active and conscious participation of all the people to transform the present structure of the society. Participation of people in the developmental process would stem from a critical awareness of all individuals. The suggestions for strengthening the people's participation in planning are stated in the last chapter.

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