MANUAL

INTEGRATED VILLAGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Lessons from Hiware Bazar, Gangadevapalli, Ramachandrapuram and Piplantri Gram Panchayats

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Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

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MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

You cannot build nonviolence on a factory civilization,
but it can be built on self-contained villages.

– M.K. Gandhi

Mind of Mahatma Gandhi (Ed. Prabhu & Rao),
3rd ed, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1968.

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Message

The development works at the Gram Panchayat (GP) or village level are often driven by the line departments as per the constraints of various development schemes. Participatory village planning and development are generally lacking across the country in spite of the Constitutional Provisions to promote the same through the Gram Sabhs and Gram Panchayats. While there are many examples where some good work has happened in one sector or the other, it is rare when we come across examples where holistic development has taken place with community participation through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

In this context, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) undertook a study with the intention to capture the planning and development management processes in select best performing GPs and to prepare a step by step manual to manage GP and village level planning and development. The study covers four Gram Panchayats including Hiware Bazar (Maharashtra), Gangadevipalli (Andhra Pradesh), Ramachandrapuram (Andhra Pradesh) and Piplantri (Rajasthan) which have earned a reputation for themselves as model panchayats with multi-faceted development. Initially, the study was launched to capture in detail the planning processes followed in Hiware Bazar only, however, later on other three GPs were also included for wider understanding of the processes used in participatory planning and micro level development in these GPs. The outcome of the study is this manual for Integrated Village Planning and Development.

In this regard, my thanks are due to Mrs. L.M. Vas Secretary (MoPR) for her overall guidance and support. I would like to thank the Elected Representatives (ERs) and community members of the four GPs for sharing their experiences and insights and also the officers of respective district, block and Gram Panchayats for facilitating the work. My thanks are also due to UNDP for supporting this assignment under the Capacity Development for Local Governance (CDLG) Project.

I would also like to thank Mr. Sanjeev Sharma, National Project Manager (NPM), MoPR-UNDP CDLG Project, Dr. Kajri Mishra, Consultant, for their contributions in developing the guide and other members of the National CDLG Project cell including Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Ms. Antara Borkakoty, and Ms. Komal Bhatia for their assistance.

I hope the experiences and insights gained from the four GPs would help others in their efforts of transforming their villages.

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United Nations Development Programme

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Message

This manual on village planning, prepared under a joint Ministry of Panchayati Raj-UNDP programme on capacity development for local governance, documents successful examples of village planning. It distills elements that contributed to their success and presents the "what, when, how and by whom" of participatory village planning and development in a simple form to ensure easy replication.

Sound micro-planning is of critical importance to ascertain the needs and aspirations of people at local level in a country as vast and varied as India. It also has the potential for providing a sound foundation for higher levels of planning. This guide can be read and used in conjunction with the manuals and guidelines on integrated district planning to achieve successful village planning.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution mandated the establishment of Panchayats at the district, intermediate and village levels. It also envisioned that Panchayats will plan for economic development and social justice that, in a sense, was a reversal of the hitherto centralised approach to planning. This manual is a useful tool for realising the vision of the Constitutional Amendment Acts.

This document is meant to be used by elected representatives of the Panchayati Raj, along with their Panchayat staff and communities to enable better and more participatory planning. We are confident that this manual will be extremely useful for ensuring a participatory village planning process.

Caitlin Wiesen

Caitlin Wiesen
Country Director

CONTENTS

This Manual is about how to initiate and undertake participatory village planning and development. It is based on the successful processes of local self-governance, village planning and development by a number of Panchayats across the country. The Manual is intended for use in participatory planning and village development *at the village level* – by elected village representatives (Sarpanches and Panchayat members), Panchayat secretaries and other staff, village leaders and others engaged in organizing and supporting Panchayats and communities in village development efforts.

The Constitution of India has mandated all rural communities have powers (decided by the respective states) to govern themselves through elected Panchayats, and plan for economic development and social justice in their jurisdictions. Elected representatives, along with their Panchayat staff, are expected to lead this process of self-governance, and engage the people in participatory planning for all-round development of the village. In the last decade, a number of Panchayats in various parts of the country have forged ahead on this, and by involving the people in thinking about and planning for their villages transformed their villages into prosperous, well- endowed and democratic communities. With inspired leadership of committed sarpanches and village elders, participatory planning involving all residents, mobilization of voluntary contributions and systematic implementation of projects, villages such as Gangadevapalli and Ramachandrapuram in Andhra Pradesh, Hiwre Bazar in Maharashtra and Piplantri in Rajasthan (among others) have changed from water-scarce, poor and deserted villages to economically vibrant, environmentally restored and socially cohesive communities. They have also in the process become places which provide excellent models for participatory village governance and development planning. Their successful efforts have provided rich learning and shown that with some key initiatives, all Panchayats across the country by involving and working together with their communities can also create such transformations in their own villages in a few years.

This Manual provides the following –

1. Explanation of the basic ideas and terms used in relation to village planning and development.

2. Description of the typical process of development planning, including a process map of the steps and how they are related. It must be understood that this is a 'typical' and generalized process – the actual steps and sequences may have to be varied in relation to the specific village context. Suggestions about how to vary the process in specific kinds of villages are also provided.

3. The essential steps in undertaking participatory village planning and development. Various alternative ways in which these steps may be undertaken, depending on the local conditions, are also mentioned. Possible sources of information, funds, technical support and other kinds of inputs required are indicated, but other ways may also be found locally.

The process, steps and actions are explained in simple language, with examples and suggestions derived from the actual experience and actions of these successful Panchayats. The effort has been to make this Manual as simple and easy to use as possible, without diluting the essential content and key components. All 'technical' terms, jargon, textbook approaches and complicated methods and tools are avoided. The simple ways in which some successful Panchayats in the country have managed to bring about visible and admirable change in their villages are those that are included and explained.

TO THE USER - HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

To make most effective use of this Manual, please begin by reading the first two sections of the Manual - SECTION I, which has the explanation of various terms, and SECTION II, which is a brief description of the typical planning cycle and process. If you have not engaged in any kind of village planning efforts before, these parts will provide a simple picture and overall understanding of the subject, and an overview of the various steps, people and actions involved.

Next, reflect on and consider the overall situation of the village – are there any ongoing (or were there previously) planning efforts in the last few years? Is there any kind of data or information collected about the village? Are any other people or groups doing some planning or development efforts in the village? This kind of stock-taking need not be very formal or extensive – it is basically a matter of collecting your thoughts and if required some information informally from knowledgeable people in the village. Use this reflection to identify the best place in the planning cycle where you should start. Refer back to the Planning Process diagram to decide on a good starting point.

Then read the third part of the Manual – the description of various steps and how they can be undertaken. It would be most helpful to browse through the entire third section (all the steps) once before reading in detail to get an overall familiarity with the content and layout. Then you may choose to read the Planning Steps in sequence, or explore those which you think are more appropriate to your village. You may choose to read the boxes, which provide examples of how other villages undertook the various steps and actions required, or suggestions on how to undertake some specific action.

A systematic undertaking of all steps described here, in a periodically cyclic fashion, is necessary for an efficient planning process and most successful development results. However, not all villages may be at a stage or ready to accomplish this in the first attempt, and it may take two or more cycles for things to fall in place in the sequence suggested. Do not be discouraged – it may take a few attempts and some time, but as people see the results emerging, the support and momentum increases very quickly!

It must be understood that village development and transformation is complex and not simply a matter of mechanical replication – it requires commitment, perseverance and tolerance by leaders, creating widespread involvement of the village residents in both decision-making and action, and patient and careful monitoring and management of processes. The key is patient and determined leadership and eliciting widespread and sustained involvement of villagers.

READ

SECTION I: Understanding the Basics

↓

READ

SECTION II: The Typical Planning Process

↓

CONSIDER

What is the situation in YOUR village?

What planning has been done?

↓

READ OR GO THROUGH

SECTION III: The Steps in Village
Planning & Development

↓

CONSIDER

Which components or steps of planning have been
attempted in your village?

Which is the most suitable step to begin with?

(questions are suggested in PART B
to help you decide)

↓

READ

STEPS in PART C selected, in detail;
Read examples and suggestions
APPLY

ABBREVIATIONS

APARD	Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBO	Commodity Based Organisation
CDLG	Capacity Development for Local Governance
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DRDA	District Rural Development Authority
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
GP	Gram Panchayat
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ISL	Individual Sanitary Latrines
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NOC	No Objection Certificate
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
SHG	Self Help Group
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
YSHADA	Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

WHAT IS PLANNING?

Planning is the process of systematically finding the best ways to solve a problem, achieve some desired goal or create some required object.

There are basically five simple steps in planning –

1. Identifying the problems, needs or objectives – What is the problem? What is needed to make our village better? What are the things we want to achieve?

2. Identifying the various ways in which the problems can be solved, needs met, or objectives achieved.

3. Finding the most suitable and commonly acceptable ways of solving the problem, meeting needs or achieving the objectives.

4. Detailing the solution or the project, including the detailed design, budget, technical inputs required, how it is to be constructed or undertaken, how it will be maintained, who will do each of these parts of the work, etc.

5. Implementing the project and managing it, including the monitoring, reporting, auditing processes.

WHAT IS IMPLEMENTATION?

Implementation is getting things done as planned. Ideally, it should be done in the most effective and efficient manner, but very often some hurdles and issues arise. These can sometimes be anticipated and possible solutions thought out. Provision should also be made in schedules and resources for such contingencies, which are the unexpected hurdles in implementation.

To implement any plan, the following basic steps are involved –

1. **Develop an implementation plan** – this includes what is to be done, where will the money come from, who will actually do the work, when and how it will be done, who will monitor/ supervise.

2. **Organize the resources** – money, people, technical support, materials, etc.

3. **Get it done!**

4. **Ensure there are proper procedures for creating it and afterwards, for managing** - supervision, monitoring, record-keeping and reporting.

WHAT IS VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING?

Village Development Planning refers to (1) the process of identifying the pressing problems in a village and finding the best ways to solve them, and (2) in villages which have most of the basic

amenities and facilities, it also means identifying the common aspirations of the residents and finding ways to achieve those.

In general, village Development Planning is the process of doing both the above – that is, identifying problems and finding ways to solve them, PLUS also identifying future desired goals and systematically finding ways to achieve those. The focus is on improving current conditions towards better social and economic status (development), through a systematic process. First, planning must be directed towards meeting the basic life needs of all the residents – safety and security of persons and their possessions, housing, water, sanitation, electricity, roads, transport and communication facilities, livelihoods, education and health facilities. Even when there is no "problem" as such, there are many ways in which life in the village can be made better for everyone. Finding ways to do that is "village development planning."

In village development planning it is very important that all households in the village and all groups of people are included and their problems and needs considered and addressed. Particular attention must be paid to addressing the needs of poor households, SC and ST groups, women, children and the elderly.

WHAT IS "DECENTRALIZED PLANNING"?

When the planning for development of a village, block or any such unit is done by the elected representatives, officers and people of that area then it is known as "decentralized planning". Decisions of what to do and how to develop localities have usually been taken by people who are in higher levels of government (state or national) or outside the locality. However, with the institution of Panchayats as local self governments, this earlier approach is to be changed, and Panchayat representatives and community leaders are required to take the initiative and plan for development of their areas by involving all village residents in the decision-making processes.

WHAT IS "PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT"?

This is the process of planning and undertaking village development with the involvement of all residents in the village or locality. Village development through systematic planning can only be successful if it directly involves all segments and groups residing in the village and includes their concerns, suggestions and contributions. Efforts initiated by Panchayat members, community leaders and officers can only be successful and sustainable if undertaken with the full and widespread involvement of community members at all stages of the process. This means involving people in identifying the issues and priorities, the best ways to resolve them, deciding on the ways in which they are to be implemented, raising resources and using them and in monitoring, supervision and management.

WHY SHOULD VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING BE PARTICIPATORY?

There are a number of reasons why village development planning MUST be participatory –

1.   It is required by law in most states. Many village development activities have been made the responsibility of Panchayats, and the activities, decisions and accounts of the Panchayat are

to be presented to the Gram Sabha periodically. In some programs (such as the MNREGS) this process, known as social audit, is compulsory.

2. Participatory planning, which is planning by the local residents about the development of their own village, leads to greater success as it brings the cooperation and contribution of all people and groups to the plan.

3. It also helps mobilize the required resources through help in raising additional funds and voluntary contribution of labour, time or money.

4. Participation in the village development process ensures a feeling of 'ownership' and pride in the achievements of the village and therefore leads to better usage and maintenance of assets that are created.

5. Also, when rules for better maintenance and use of systems and assets in the village are made with the participation of the village residents and with common decision-making, there is better adherence to the rules and therefore greater overall success of plans. Various aspects of community life, for example about restrictions on free grazing or on sharing of water, also require rule-bound behaviour. This is possible only if all people have been involved in making the rules and setting the sanctions for non-adherence.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING?

Integrated **Village Development Planning** is the process by which all aspects (sectors) of local life are addressed systematically, including their interconnections and overlaps. Typically, integrated planning includes plans for better housing, water and sanitation, health, education, infrastructure such as roads and power-supply, transport and communication linkages, livelihoods improvement, land and watershed treatment, and other related aspects that would together result in improved quality of life for **all** residents of the village.

The advantage of integrated planning is that the natural cross-connections and overlaps between "sectors" and various service departments can be taken care of, and projects made successful. For example, building a school (education sector) also requires providing water to the toilets (water supply) and lighting (power-supply). In doing 'scheme-wise' or 'departmental' planning such crucial connections often get missed. However, because state and central governments function through separate departments with separate programs, doing "sectoral" planning or scheme-wise planning is more common, and projects often fail because the interconnections between sectors or subjects get little attention. **By first doing integrated planning at the village level, and thereafter working out how to link the requirements to various departmental programs, these problems can be avoided**.

WHY IS INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING NECESSARY?

First, because **systematic planning helps to identify the most efficient and effective way to address problems or undertake new projects,** or find the most effective and suitable solutions. It is also the most effective way to achieve any desired goals for improvement of village life.

Second**, by adopting a systematic approach, results are quickly achieved and in the most**

cost- efficient and effective manner. Therefore the results become visible and felt by all concerned and appreciation is gained by the initiators.

Third, to achieve desired changes and goals, the involvement of various people is required. With a full plan in hand, all those concerned with its achievement can see their roles and contribute their part, so that the project is smoothly implemented. **That is, coordination becomes easier with a prior plan.**

To realize any goal or project, resources are necessary. **A plan enables a full calculation of the resources required**, such as money, people, land and machinery etc., which can then be **used to mobilise and put together the necessary funds from different sources** such as government schemes, Panchayat resources, NGO support, donor organizations, local banks, businesses and the community.

HOW IS PARTICIPATORY AND INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DONE?

There are many ways to do integrated village development planning explained in textbooks and by experts. However, it is basically about people sitting together to find the best ways of solving local problems and improving village life. This can be very effectively done in simple ways, as shown by some village Panchayats in the country, and explained in this Manual. However, in all cases, there are some common essential components, though they have been achieved in somewhat different ways in different places. Each of the components can be achieved through a number of steps, which can be selected depending upon the local conditions and situation in YOUR village.

However, all three essential components must be eventually achieved. These are –

1. Preparation and regular updating of a detailed database about various aspects of the village,

2. Mobilizing the village residents and getting them interested and involved in the planning and development processes, and

3. Undertaking the planning process systematically to solve the problems, meet the needs and realize the aspirations of the people. Doing this successfully and sustainably depends on the first two components.

The steps through which successful Panchayats have developed these and by doing these, their village, is explained in this Manual, and illustrated with examples from the various cases.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS

Planning is a process of taking stock of current problems and needs as well as future requirements and wants, and systematically identifying the most effective way of resolving issues and achieving the desired objectives. It can be applied to a single issue, problem or objective, or to many; it can be used to improve working of an organization such as the Panchayat, or to develop the village. Studies of successful and sustainable village development and management reveals that **the most important ingredient for this is the extensive involvement of village residents in decision-making – that is, PARTICIPATORY VILLAGE PLANNING & MANAGEMENT. The** essential aspects (parts) of participatory village planning and management, and the steps involved in each are explained in this section. Read this section for an overview and to decide on where to start the process in your village.

THE THREE ASPECTS OF PARTICIPATORY VILLAGE PLANNING

There are three **ASPECTS** (or **COMPONENTS**) of participatory planning, and all three are essential for successful development of the village. These are –

1. Having detailed and updated information on all aspects of a village – the **VILLAGE DATABASE**

2. Getting the village people together, and interested and involved in the planning and development processes and activities – **GETTING PARTICIPATION**

3. Systematically preparing plans for various kinds of developmental activities, executing them and managing the systems and projects developed – **PLANNING, EXECUTING and MANAGING.**

The first two aspects (**INFORMATION** and **PARTICIPATION**) are essential requirements so that the third part or aspect – the actual **PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, IMPLEMEN-TATION AND MANAGEMENT** – can happen successfully and also be sustained over time. The first two are also relatively simple to do (or already exist in every village to some extent), so they need not delay the start of the actual village planning. But all three aspects must eventually be properly undertaken, and this involves a number of steps, as explained below.

What kind of planning should be done, however, depends on whether there has been any participatory planning process in the village before. **Where no successful exercises have been undertaken in recent years, it is best to start with an initial "problem-solving" planning cycle** and demonstrate the effectiveness of participatory planning and development to the village residents. Thereafter more comprehensive and multi-issue planning efforts can be made. In both kinds of planning, the steps involved are the same, only done with more issues and sectors in the latter case.

STEPS FOR EACH PART OR ASPECT OF VILLAGE PLANNING

Each of the three parts or aspects of participatory planning described above can be undertaken through a number of steps. Developing the village database and mobilizing people are essential parts on which the success of participatory planning exercises rest. Once these first two have been achieved to some degree to start with, the planning process can start smoothly.

The steps involved in each part of planning are given below, and in the next section the sequence in which these steps can be done in different village contexts is briefly discussed.

1.   Getting Information and Developing the Village Database (D)

This is the first aspect. In order to develop any village – that is, to solve the existing problems and to improve various aspects as desired by the residents – you need to know what is the current actual situation in the village. The good thing is, in every village, the residents already know most aspects of their village. But usually, the information is not written down or systematically put together at the village or Panchayat level. So any quick and simple exercise, such as consulting a few people from various parts of the village to gather together the basic information, is sufficient to start the first round of (problem-solving) planning. But eventually, collecting detailed information on all aspects, systematically assembling them in a village database, and updating it from time to time, is necessary for more extensive and integrated village planning purposes.

To start by getting the village information rapidly and then collect more detailed information to construct a village database, the following steps can be adopted –

1.   **Step D1 – Decide how to quickly collect village information.**

2.   **Step D2 – Quickly collect and analyse the basic information** - on key aspects of village and the issues and problems to kick-start planning. (Rapid Assessment)

3.   **Step D3 – (Eventually) Develop a comprehensive list of items** on which detailed information is to be gathered (An indicative list of items is provided in Insert I).

4.   **Step D4 – Organize the system and people** to collect the detailed information.

5.   **Step D5 – Develop a Panchayat database – a system for recording, arranging, storing, updating and retrieving** the data when required. (Using computers is most convenient).

How these steps can be undertaken (with examples) is explained later in detail in SECTION III of this Manual. You can refer to them once the sequence of steps to be followed is clear.

2.   Getting and Sustaining Widespread Participation (P)

Getting people to be interested and involved in village planning and development is the key to successful village transformation. Concerted and systematic effort has to be made to mobilize the community and get the residents involved in the process – **to get widespread participation**. In most villages this is not a typical practice – people go about their own

business, leaving common problems to be somehow solved (often expecting the 'government' will do so). Therefore their interest must first be captured and all groups brought together to solve common problems. People will get involved if (1) they feel their views are being heeded, and (2) their issues and problems are getting resolved. Successful resolution of a common and pressing problem at the beginning will show residents the usefulness of getting involved and planning together for the village. Therefore the first round of participatory planning should be of "problem-solving" type.

To elicit and then sustain widespread participation of residents, the following steps are to be taken.

1. **Step P1 – Identify one key or pressing problem** faced by the whole village (or almost all the people) – the rapid assessment through the steps D1 and D2 are useful for this.

2. **Step P2 – Organize (one or more) village meetings** to find a widely acceptable solution and decide on ways to implement it (i.e., planning to solve the problem).

3. **Step P3 – Ensure there is widespread involvement in implementation and management,** by distributing the responsibility for detailing the design, resource-raising, implementation, supervision/ monitoring and managing the process among the village residents. The essence of success is getting as many people involved as possible.

4. **STEP P4 – Establish systems for transparent and accountable functioning – with regular** monitoring, reporting accounts to the residents/ users, getting feedback from and resolving issues with the community and users. (social audit)

5. **Step P5 – Sustain and establish the system of participatory planning** (through regular meetings and systems for people's involvement) to take up other issues and village development tasks in the same way.

3. Participatory Development Planning & Management (DP)

This is the central aspect and comprises a number of steps. **Planning** includes three essential steps (as explained in **SECTION I**), and all these are also important for participatory village planning -

1. **Step DP1 – Identify the problems (or needs, objectives or desires) of the residents.** There are likely to be a number of them, but in the beginning, it is important to identify the most pressing problem faced by the maximum number of people in the village. This can be done in the village meeting as in Step P2. Later other issues and needs can also be taken up.

2. **Step DP2 – Identify the various possible solutions, and find the most suitable and commonly acceptable solution,** in consultation with the village residents, through a village meeting as in Step P2

3. **Step DP3 – Detail out the solution – the program or project**, including the location, detailed design, resources required and budget, technical inputs required, how it is to be constructed or undertaken, how it will be maintained, who will do each of these parts of the work, etc. This is also to be decided through discussion with residents - Step P2

is the best way. Also, information collected in Step D1 and/or Step D4 is very useful for this.

However, to actually realize the project, **the solution must be IMPLEMENTED,** and the **program or project has to be MANAGED**. For this, three more steps are required -

4.   **Step DP4 – Prepare the implementation plan** – How will the project be done, who will do the work, who will supervise, who will coordinate, how will resources be utilized, how will progress be reported to Panchayat, the village community and/or the users, etc. This is also to be decided through discussion with residents (use Step P2; Step D1/ D4 will also be useful).

5.   **Step DP5 – Implement the plan of Step DP4** – Monitoring and trouble-shooting by the leaders will be necessary during execution.

6.   **Step DP6 – Decide on the management system and rules** - who will run the project, who will manage/ monitor and how, where will the resources come from, who will audit, who will report and how to different sets of people, etc. This is also to be decided through discussion with residents (use Step P2; Step D1/ D4 will also be useful).

7.   **Step DP7 – Set in place (institutionalize) the selected system for managing** the project or program after it is developed and ensure transparent management of operations.

These steps are necessary for all kinds of planning, whether for a simple or small project, or for all-round village development or integrated village development. But in villages where participatory planning efforts have not been made earlier, or there have not been successful participatory exercises, getting people to work together is not easy. In such places, the best way is to start by using these steps to resolve one urgent problem that affects maximum number of people in the village. Once success has been achieved by working together, people will be more inclined to get involved in further planning and development efforts, and integrated village planning exercises can be undertaken periodically, using the same steps.

It is important that the steps D3 to D5 are done through participatory discussion and decision-making, so that the people cooperate in the process and readily share correct information about themselves and their households. It is also crucial that decisions for all the Planning steps DP1 to DP5 are done through discussion in the village meetings (P2 to P5).

WHERE TO START & HOW TO DO THE STEPS

The steps required to achieve each aspect or part of the planning process do not have to be all sequential as listed above. However, the steps for each component have to be undertaken in the order listed (D1, D2 etc. to D5, for example). That is, the steps in different parts can be undertaken in parallel – that is, P1, D1 And DP1 can all be done simultaneously if appropriate in a village. Table 1 below lists the steps in each part in parallel, and thereafter, we suggest some sequences that could be applied in different village situations.

Table 1: Components and Steps in Participatory Village Planning & Management

COMPONENT 1 PREPARING A VILLAGE DATABASE		COMPONENT 2 GETTING PARTICIPATION & SUSTAINING IT	
D1 – Decide how to quickly collect information D2 – Gather and rapidly analyse village information to identify key issues and problems		P1 – Identify pressing problem(s) faced by all P2 – Organize one or more village meetings to discuss the problem, find and detail solutions, ways to implement and manage	
(D1 and **D2** will enable the first round of mobilization and planning, and provide the opportunity to discuss and get support to develop the next three steps D3, D4 & D5)	**COMPONENT 3 PARTICIPATORY PLANNING & MANAGEMENT**		**P2 is a key step, which will need to be repeated**. It is the main setting in which Planning steps DP1, DP2, DP3, DP4 and DP6 will be done.
	DP1- Take stock of issues & identify the problems or needs		
D3 – Develop a comprehensive list of items on which data is to be collected	DP2 – Consider alternative solutions and select the most suitable and widely acceptable		P3 – Ensure widespread involvement of village residents in deciding all details; also in implementation and management (through devising a suitable system such as resident committees, etc.)
D4 – Organize the system and people to collect village-wide data	DP3 - Detail the solution – the program or project (design, technical support, funds and other resources required, etc)		P4 – Establish systems and practices for transparent and accountable functioning by involving all groups.
D5 – Prepare a Panchayat database with system for recording, arranging, storing, updating and retrieving	DP4 - Decide the plan for doing the project – how it will be done, who will do it, etc.		P5 – Sustain participatory planning and development management in village.
	DP5 – Get the resources and Implement the project or program! Monitoring and trouble-shooting will be reqd.		
	DP6 – Decide about the management system and rules for operation of the project, management and operation.		

How to do each step is discussed in detail in SECTION III of this Manual. But first, at this stage, it is necessary to get the overall picture of the various aspects and the steps required to build each aspect or part of the process. It is also important to note that the advisable sequence of steps for each part is from the first to the fifth, in order. However, the steps in the three parts can be taken in different sequences depending &situation in YOUR village.

Stop here and think about the situation in YOUR village. Has there been a participatory planning exercise before, in the last few years? Has it involved all or some of the people? Has there been any data collection exercise? Is the information available to the Panchayat in a systematic form, which can be discussed with the village residents? Has any village planning been done before, by the Panchayat? If the answer to most of these questions is NO, then the sequence of steps given in Fig 1 below is advisable. In villages where either some planning exercise, participatory decision-making or database preparation has already been initiated, the process can be started at different points as appropriate. However, all steps in the planning process must be systematically undertaken.
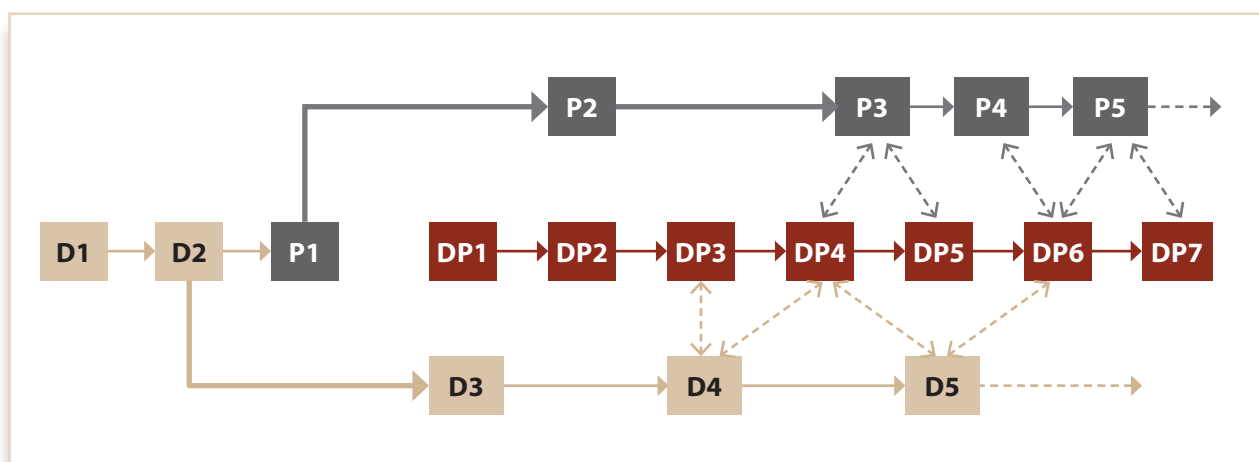

Fig 1: Sequence of Steps in Villages without Prior Participatory Planning Exercise

MOST ESSENTIAL – COMMITTED, HONEST AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

The most important factor in successful participatory planning and development management in the village is the committed and transparent leadership by the person or group initiating and leading the process. This leadership can be taken up by the Sarpanch, the Village Secretary, Panchayat members, village elders, village-level officers, community leaders or even NGO personnel. Whosoever leads the process, however, has to be dedicated, honest, accessible to all people in the village and most crucial link with all groups in the village.

Three aspects are observed to be common in all the Panchayats where dramatic transformation of the village situation was achieved through participatory planning –

1.　The **leaders were very motivated and dedicated to the process,** and inspired a group of people in the village to help them in this task of village development.

2.　All **leaders worked hard to make every decision transparent and shared** by all residents.

3.　**All decisions were made in village meetings, which were frequently held** – at least once a month, but more often in the beginning. In addition, numerous smaller meetings were regularly held in wards, streets and small hamlets.

　　These points surface repeatedly in all successful examples of village planning and development by Panchayats. Leaders who have based their efforts on these three aspects have not only ensured successful and sustained village development, but also their standing

and position in the village. In addition, they have all won recognition and many awards and accolades in their state and in the country!

Above pictures show the State and national awards, prizes and recognition won by the village Panchayats which have undertaken participatory village planning and development successfully. These include recognition as "model villages" of the state, with cash awards and additional funds for village development, "Nirmal Gram Puraskar", awards from the President of India and many others.

STEPS TO VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Transforming your village is not easy – but neither, it appears, is it so very difficult. As a growing number of examples from many states across the country show, your village can become a vibrant, healthy, educated, rich and green one – with your initiative, joint community effort and support available from government, NGOs, individuals and companies. Many Panchayats are taking the initiative granted to them by the Constitution of India to do this, and are changing themselves; it is possible in your village too. See the stories of some villages - Hiware Bazar in Maharashtra, Gangadevapalli and Ramachandrapuram in Andhra Pradesh, Piplantri in Rajasthan – in the accompanying CDs. And see the way in which the Panchayats and the people in these villages, working together, have transformed their villages and homes. It took time to achieve some changes, years in some cases, and a few months in others – but the results are spectacular as you can see. Like many villages in India, perhaps yours too, these were also villages with many problems – lack of water, no sanitation, social vices, poor schools, few or no health facilities, mud roads, deforestation and poor agriculture, and little employment opportunity. People migrated out to towns and cities in search of work, sometimes leaving behind their families for long months. Others locked up their houses and moved away permanently. The villages had become run-down, deserted, even poorer and with few youth.

Then started a change – one person, with a few friends, some well wishers and supporters, began the process of turning the village around. One leader, with a few friends, started to tackle the problems, with the people of his village, systematically and energetically. To make it the fertile, prosperous, happy, well-endowed and beautiful village that everyone in India dreams of. One leader, working together with all others in the village, changed it back to a vibrant, lush, green and well- supported community, with all facilities and amenities. Such changes are possible everywhere, in every village, with joint efforts of the community, spearheaded by the Sarpanch and Panchayat members. It is possible everywhere, with determination, sustained effort and systematic planning.

The questions that arise – How does one start? Where to begin? When is a good opportunity? What to do to achieve such dramatic transformation in my village? This Manual is designed to provide some answers to these questions, based on the experience of the four villages shown in the documentaties in the accompanyig CDs. This booklet will set out the steps that can help you achieve the same transformations in your village as people did in Hiware Bazar, Gangadevipalli, Piplantri and Ramachandrapuram – and perhaps in many other villages across the country we do not know about. These are steps that were actually taken in all these villages and yielded the dramatic results you see. These steps are tried and tested by experience, feasible and practical. By adopting these steps, you could convert your village into the kind of village that you see in these examples.

If we examine the experiences of turning around the four villages, there are some clear and common steps in all cases. These four villages are different in many ways – located in different states, of different sizes, with different agriculture patterns, different distances to towns – yet all of

them followed basically the same few key steps and successfully transformed their villages. Though things were done differently, the common steps were taken in all. By adopting these steps, the same effect can surely be produced in your village.

In Section II, the three **ASPECTS** (or **COMPONENTS**) of the participatory planning process were set out. The relationship of the various parts and the steps was also explained. **In this SECTION III, the STEPS through which each aspect can be developed or undertaken are described in detail.** Here we explain how the steps can be undertaken, with illustrations and examples from the villages where Panchayats have successfully used these steps.

PLANNING ASPECT 1:
GETTING INFORMATION & DEVELOPING A VILLAGE DATABASE

STEP D1:   HOW TO QUICKLY GET VILLAGE INFORMATION

Getting a full picture of the village situation is the first step towards identifying the pressing problems of village residents and eliciting their participation in resolving them. You, the leader, must first think of the best way for a rapid stocktaking of the village situation in a way that covers all parts of the village and all groups of residents.

Various ways of getting information on different aspects of the village, from the most informal to the most formal, are listed below. Do not rely on one approach, but mix an many different ways as possible. The various ways are -

1.   From your own knowledge, if you are a long-time resident of the village and familiar with various aspects – you may already know much about the village!

2.   Talking to your friends, senior family members and other knowledgeable people in the village whom you know.

3.   Visiting different parts of the village and talking to some key people in that area about themselves and their problems/ issues (a quick survey). Ask your friends to help in covering all parts of the village.

4.   If there are any organizations such as self-help groups, farmer's organizations or youth organizations, contacting their members or office bearers and getting their views is another way of getting a quick picture of the village and the issues.

Note that it is good to have a wide-based system, so that information about different aspects of village life and activities, and different areas of the village are available. For best effect, your sources and network should include some women from different areas, at least one member of all caste groups and the young and old citizens of the village. Relying only on one's family and close friends will provide only partial information.

> **Systems for Rapid Information Collection**
>
> In Gangadevapalli, the Sarpanch had spent all his life in the village and knew it thoroughly from every aspect. He also had a number of friends from different parts of the village who were familiar with the village situation and could augment his information; this was the basis of the first efforts at village development and change. In Piplantri, the young Sarpanch relied on his father, an elder of the village, his father's friend the retired Headmaster of the school, and his own friends, to find out about the urgent issues in different parts of the village. In Ramachandrapuram, the Sarpanch had recently returned from his job outside the country, and therefore was not current with village affairs. He therefore developed a network of friends and village elders with whom he discussed the village situation. These contacts helped provided information about various aspects and get a good understanding of the village conditions.

STEP D2 :   RAPID INFORMATION COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Using informal and formal systems to quickly collect and assemble information about the various aspects of village life and the most pressing issues and problems facing the residents is the key starting point of a participatory village planning exercise. The important objective is to find the most common and urgent issue in the village, to provide the reason for people to come together and start participating in village affairs.

It is not enough to discuss with people and get a sense of the village affairs. The information must be assembled and written down systematically. Start by getting the broad parameters – the number of households, the population, the facilities and amenities in the village, what people do for a living, who owns land and how many are landless, what kind of houses, water supply, sanitation facilities, roads, power supply, communication, education and health facilities, etc. exist. List the primary occupations and how many people are in each, whether people migrate, when and why. It is also important to know how many households are really poor or live in very poor conditions, or how many people have no sources of income. Estimate the cattle population in the village, and find out where they graze and how they are looked after. You could use the items listed in **Insert I** to compile this, but such an extensive exercise is not required at this stage – the objective is to get a quick sketch of the village situation only.

Also note down the resources available – water sources, forest land, extent of common land, nearby employment centers, etc. Also think of the people from the village who are highly educated or have good jobs – they may live in the village or outside, but are important sources of help and information.

List also the main issues or problems faced by people in the village, which you are aware of or find out through your information-gathering exercise. For each problem, consider how many households are affected or what proportion of the households face the problem. Do not forget to consider the groups who often remain out of village public life, such as lower caste groups.

Exact information may not always be available, but for the initial rapid-information exercise this is not necessary. The important thing is to get a reasonably clear picture of all aspects, all segments of the population and all areas within the jurisdiction. **This exercise is the background work required to start getting people together for participatory planning and decision-making. It is important that the information include all areas and groups in the village.**

Then ANALYSE the information to find the one key problem that confronts most residents. If most people are affected by it – for example, by the scarcity of water, or the absence of health facilities – then there will be a good response to a participatory planning exercise. There are likely to be many issues and needs, of different groups, but the one that is both significant (not trivial) and affects the largest number of people, is to be identified. A systematic collection of information that spans all areas and groups of people is therefore a pre-requisite to correct identification of a significant problem.

STEP D3: **LISTING ITEMS FOR COMPREHENSIVE DATABASE**

Eventually, a comprehensive database of the various aspects of the village and its development must be prepared and kept in the Panchayat for systematic local planning. This will start with generating a list of the items on which data is to be collected in consultation with a wide cross-section of village residents. This is important because the people must be willing to share the information and cooperate with the process and provide accurate and detailed inputs.

The collection of accurate, current and detailed information about the village situation and all households depends to a large extent on the willing involvement of people – otherwise, data is often inaccurate, incomplete or old. Therefore, the collection of information and preparation of a village database must be widely discussed by the leaders. Moreover, their willingness would emerge from their perception of its utility. Therefore, this exercise is best undertaken after some problem-solving rounds of planning which has led to successful resolution of some common issue(s). There is no urgency to start such an exercise at the beginning, before there has been any effort at participatory problem-solving in the village or some measure of resident involvement in village development has taken place.

Also, to generate the comprehensive list of items, the experience of early problem-solving efforts is important. The participatory discussions and experience of undertaking a project and managing it will suggest some kinds of information on which data is required. More items can be generated through additional discussions with the people, officers and staff of different departments, the block development officer, headmaster and/or schoolteachers and health workers. The Panchayat Secretary, who prepares reports regularly on village conditions, will also be able to suggest items from the reports he is asked to prepare by higher levels of government.

A list of possible items is provided in INSERT I. However, generating a locally relevant and useful list is important, as it should directly help in local planning. Also, the kind of items should be such that people can readily provide the data and understand the results when aggregated or collated in different ways.

Generating a Comprehensive List of Items for Village Database

After a number of years of local planning and many successful participatory planning initiatives such as piped water supply, lift irrigation, uninterrupted power supply, pucca roads and other development work in the village, the Ramachandrapuram Sarpanch initiated the process of developing a comprehensive database. According to him, the experience of doing the various projects suggested the need for the database, for every time there was a proposal or scheme, a variety of information was required by the respective State Department or Mandal office. He realized the need for an updated and comprehensive set of information that could be used for such planning and development efforts. He consulted with the elected members, committee presidents, women members of self-help groups, the milk cooperative chairman and other colleagues in his own NGO to develop the list of items and decide on the system. The idea was also discussed in more than one Gram Sabha and the suggestions included in the list. Currently, the process of collecting the information is ongoing.

STEP D4:   DECIDING THE SYSTEM FOR DATA COLLECTION

Two kinds of data are required for planning – village data and households data. Comprehensive data collection on all items will be time-taking and laborious the first time it is done. An efficient system that distributes the work and also manages to capture accurate and reliable data must therefore be devised. Support and cooperation of the village residents as well as involvement of the more educated people is important, both to devise a convenient and efficient system as well as to actually collect the data.

The Panchayat in most villages does not have adequate staff to undertake a comprehensive data collection exercise – this can only be done with the cooperation and support of the people. They in turn will be willing to cooperate if they see the positive results of some participatory problem solving and planning. The system for collecting data must therefore also be discussed in a village meeting and a group of volunteers formed from among the educated people of the village and the youth. This group will provide the core support required to the leaders in devising the system and the people in providing the individual and household information.

Village-level data such as layout and width of roads, extent of common lands, encroachments on roads and common lands, existing facilities and amenities and their condition and other such information can be assembled from Panchayat records or those of various departments. Existing records, however, must be updated and verified on the ground - both through discussion in the village meetings and the help of volunteers to verify the ground reality. Various systems could be devised to undertake the household data collection :

1. Distributing a list of the items to all households and asking them to provide the information on the same sheet. The sheet can be designed by the volunteers, pretested and distributed. The volunteers would also help the people and households who are unable to fill in the sheet due to illiteracy.

2. Selecting volunteers from each area of the village or street, who will collect the data in a pre-designed form by visiting the households in their own area/ street. The format could be designed in consultation with the volunteers. The time period for data collection should be decided in the village meeting and made known to all.

Systems of Data Collection

In Ramachandrapuram, the data is provided by all individuals to the Panchayat. The Panchayat has designed a booklet that contains the list of items on which the individual provides information. There is space for a photograph, and the booklet includes all details about the person ranging from age and place of birth to occupation, property holdings and income. All individuals in a household have separate booklets. Volunteers are available to help individuals in completing the information.

In Gangadevapalli, all information is collected by 'leaders' on every street. These street leaders are volunteers who not only help in gathering local information from the households, but also monitor that the rules pertaining to street cleaning, water usage, sanitation practices and other activities made by the village residents (in village meetings) are heeded. The leaders volunteer during the village meeting and perform their responsibilities for a period, after which they may choose to step down or re-volunteer.

STEP D5   PREPARING A PANCHAYAT DATABASE

The data collected about the Panchayat must be organized so that it is useful for planning, recorded in a way that can be easily stored and retrievable, and also periodically updated. This requires systematic design of the database and the means of recording and retrieval. The database may be prepared in computer systems, but where the resources for this (expertise, computer sysyems) are not available with the Panchayat, it can be also be recorded and stored physically in registers.

There are two primary objectives of developing a Panchayat database – (1) to help the Panchayat and village residents plan and manage their village development, and (2) for the Panchayat, the residents, higher-level governments at the block, district, state and national levels to monitor the progress of development activities in the village; i.e., for monitoring and reporting purposes. Therefore the data collected about different aspects of the village and the resident families must be compiled in a manner which is useful for these purposes, and also be easily accessed.

Computer systems are useful for preparing, compiling, storing and retrieving data, but often villages and Panchayats do not have the computers, expertise, uninterrupted power supply and other resources to prepare and maintain a working computerized database. However, in villages where these are available, computerization is possible and useful. In other villages this should be aimed for eventually, but a good start can be made by compiling and recording the data manually in registers. The key is to have the information in a form readily accessible, useful, and regularly updated.

The following actions are therefore required to prepare a database :

1. **DECISION** about the type of database storage and retrieval system (computerised or manual).

2. **GETTING THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT** – For a properly designed and usable database, technical support will be required for the design, compilation and entry. The Panchayat Secretary, educated residents, local staff of various state departments and the Block Panchayat office are good sources for advice and support. Educated and trained youth in the village, a nearby college or the local town could be requested to volunteer.

3. **RESOURCES** – The design, compilation and data management work will require resources – computer hardware and software (if computerization is decided), space for its location and operation and funds for the personnel, and maintenance and operation. The Block or district Panchayat may have a scheme for this – find out – or suggestions. Funds can also be accessed from local institutions (banks, insurance companies) or private companies, or NGOs. Volunteers may be recruited to give time for compilation, data entry and maintenance.

4. **DESIGN** of the database - A number of decisions will have to be taken regarding the items and the units (household, ward, neighbourhood, hamlet, village, etc) for compilation of the collected data. The list of items in Insert I for example can indicate how and what dimensions need to be collated, but the Panchayat may decide to add or alter these to suit its planning, monitoring and reporting requirements.

PLANNING ASPECT 2
GETTING AND SUSTAINING PARTICIPATION

STEP P1 IDENTIFYING A COMMON & PRESSING PROBLEM

What is the ONE most important problem or issue in the village that affects MOST residents? The FIRST TIME you are attempting participatory planning in the village, identify the most critical common problem that affects almost all the people/ households every day. Later, as participatory processes become accepted, this step will include (1) stock-taking to identify the other important issues that prevail, and (2) thinking of ways in which to improve current conditions, infrastructure, facilities and amenities.

Systematically identifying the most pressing common problem and in the process beginning to mobilize people is the single most critical step in initiating participatory village planning and development. This is the "homework", the preliminary groundwork to be done by YOU (the leader) and the leading group in order to persuade people to come together, discuss the problem and undertake participatory planning to find and implement a solution.

If there is already a practice of participatory discussion and village planning efforts in your village, this step is still necessary. Remember, participatory planning MUST include all groups and people residing in all parts of the village. Ask yourself if the existing process includes everyone. Are women left out of the discussions? Are the lower caste groups included? Are households in the peripheral hamlets or streets part of the discussions and decisions? If the answer to any of these questions is **NO**, then the existing process is to be strengthened and made more inclusive through this step.

Variation in the villages where the existing practices of village decision-making are already inclusive and fully participatory – In such a village, where the answer to all the above questions is **YES**, then this step will be part of the current process. It is likely that many of the basic living and livelihood issues are resolved already – pucca housing, water, sanitation, pucca roads, schools, health facilities, telecommunications and transport facilities, reasonable level of economic activity, etc. In such villages this step will be useful to (1) identify the still pending concerns and issues of the people – these may affect specific groups, or a smaller number of households, but are nevertheless important to village status and overall development. For example, a developed village should not have a group of very poor people who do not have a basic house and sufficient livelihood sources! (2) Also, through systematic groundwork, the wishes and aspirations of the people – how to make their village even better – can be captured.

Finding the most common and pressing problem can be done in many ways, such as those mentioned in Steps D1 and D2.

1. Perhaps you already know the main issue(s), because you live in the village – but make sure you are correct! The issue should (a) be very pressing, and (b) among all issues affect the most people in the village. To make sure, verify it with others – your friends, village elders, or call an informal meeting of the people, as many as you can gather.

2. If you don't have any definite picture, do a systematic search, by asking some people in

every part of the village, as suggested in Step D2. This is like a small informal survey. They may respond with a variety of answers, but ask them for the first two or three most critical problems they face, and which is the most pressing. How many people in the village do they think face the same problem(s)?

3.   Then collate your findings to find the one problem which is most common, urgent and affects people the most. This is important because the more pressing and common the problem is, the more people will be inclined to gather together to find a solution.

4.   When (and IF) you do such a quick survey, when people you ask identify a problem, also ask how they think the common problem can be solved. This will give you a better picture of people's ideas and wishes, and the kind of solutions they would like. This information will be useful in later steps!

Typically, such problems will relate to issues of daily life – livelihood activities (e.g. agricultural issues), housing, water supply, education and health facilities, roads, electricity supply and connection, connectivity to other villages and towns, etc. The task is to identify which is most pressing, most important to people and affects the largest number.

Common Problems

Water availability, for drinking and for irrigation, is a common problem in many villages. In Hiware Bazar Panchayat, with the deforestation of the hillsides, and low rainfall, the water table had fallen, land was denuded and wells and handpumps were running dry. Agriculture was unremunerative, little agriculture labour was required and people had to migrate to towns for employment. Piplantri Panchayat had the same problems – deforestation, denudation through open grazing and falling water tables. Gangadevipalli also faced a similar problem, with a few handpumps and one tap located at some distance from the village. Ramachandrapuram Panchayat, in the next district, had adequate groundwater, and many handpumps, but the water was highly fluoride contaminated. (Flouride causes fluorosis, a debilitating disease of the teeth and bones) The nearby river ran dry for most of the year due to an upstream dam. No other surface water source was available close by for drinking or irrigation use.

Lack of education and health facilities are other problems. Piplantri did not have a high school and girls stopped studying after Class VII because they had to travel to another village. Residents of Gangadevapalli and Ramachandrapuram also faced similar problems regarding children's education.

STEP P2   GETTING PEOPLE TOGE THER & FINDING SOLUTIONS

Having learnt what the main issue affecting most people in the village is, do not right away try to 'fix' the problem. Organize a meeting of all the village residents to discuss the issue and find the best and most acceptable solution. Invite ALL in the village, and persuade them to attend. Even if not all people come, most are likely to come if you spend time convincing them since the problem is acute and affects everyone. In the meeting, through discussion, find the most commonly acceptable solutions, and the ways to implement and manage them (STEPS DP1 to DP4, and STEP DP6).

If you are an elected office-holder in the Panchayat, you can call a Gram Sabha. If a statutory Gram Sabha is not due, call an extraordinary Gram Sabha. If an official Gram Sabha is not possible, make it a village meeting, or an "aam sabha" or general meeting.

Use your contacts, well-wishers and friends to reach out to everyone, but ask EVERYONE, **men and women,** young and old, all groups, to come. It is important that ALL the people in the village are included, even if there are a few households not affected by the problem. It is also important to include people who are in different 'groups', castes, hamlets.

Tell people why you want to organize a village meeting, the agenda being to find a common solution to the main problem affecting the village. Some people may disagree with the importance of the issue, especially if they are not very affected. (For example, even if water supply is a critical issue for most people, some households will have made their own arrangements like a private well or handpump). Be open to their ideas of what is important, and tell them that the question of which village issue is most important will also be discussed and decided in the meeting! **It is crucial that everyone knows the intention, and also that their suggestions and ideas are important and valuable.** They must be persuaded that their time will not be wasted, that it will be useful to attend the meeting, and that a feasible solution is very likely to emerge.

Getting everyone to come to a village meeting is not easy. But it can be done. Since the issue affects everyone, they will be interested in having it solved. But you must be able to convince all that their suggestions are important and that they will be heard – this is where your persuasive talents and those of your supporters are necessary. It may take much effort, particularly if it is the first time such a request is being made, and in your village there is no earlier practice of regular meetings and attending Gram Sabhas. So initially not every person or household may come, but try to maximize attendance.

Other important points to remember in doing this, which can help make this effort a success –

1. Fix the meeting at a time when everyone is likely to be free – evenings, or a festival day, or a Sunday. You can discuss informally with some people about a good date and time.

2. Have the meeting in a place which can be easily reached by everyone. Explain why you are requesting this meeting, and ask them to think of a solution to the village-wide issue.

How to Ensure Women's Participation

In many villages most women do not participate in village affairs or take part in community discussions. However, their involvement is critical to successful participatory planning and village development, so they must be persuaded to be part of the village exercises. Contacting and persuading them may be best done through those women who do take an active part in village life and are therefore well-known and respected. These can be aanganwadi or ASHA (health) workers, women teachers in the village school, office bearers of self-help groups, wives of elected Panchayat members or the Panchayat secretary, or women in the village who are active in village affairs and are well-known. The leaders organizing the meeting should also ask the men to bring their wives and senior women of their households. Senior men and women should be requested to allow their daughters and daughters-in-law to attend. If all fails, and very few women come, separate meetings should be organized with only women, till such time as they start joining the village meetings.

3.   Announce details of the meeting through a variety of channels – through the network of friends, relatives and the other people you normally meet. You can also use wider methods of broadcasting the information and requesting everyone to attend, for example –

   a.   through loudspeaker or similar public announcements throughout the village;

   b.   through the village newsletter, if there is one;

   c.   by writing the date and time on the wall of the Panchayat building and other public buildings (with their permission if you are not in the Panchayat);

   d.   through house-to-house visits to inform and request people to attend; and/or

   e.   by inserting an announcement in local radio/ TV channel with date, time and request to attend. This can also reach people temporarily outside the village.

Gram Sabhas and Village Meetings to Solve Problems

In all the villages where problems were successfully solved, Gram Sabhas and village meetings played an important role in the process. In Hiware Bazar, Gangadevipalli, Ramachandrapuram and Piplantri, water scarcity was a major issue which affected everyone. In each case, the starting point towards a solution was getting people together in a village meeting/ Gram Sabha to discuss the issue and find a solution. In Hiware Bazar and Piplantri, the community met, discussed and decided that it would undertake watershed treatment and water harvesting structures through voluntary labour. The first meetings were difficult to organize, but the Sarpanch and his friends visited from house to house to explain the urgency and importance of the watershed treatment work. They had met with officers in the block and district to get some financial support for the work, and could slowly convince all to attend the first meetings. In these meetings it was decided how to actually organize the work, who would take different responsibilities, where the resources would come from and other details.

In Gangadevipalli, the community had become used to acting together for their drive to eradicate alcoholism, and to get their village designated as a separate Panchayat. So it was a little easier for the Panchayat to bring villagers together for participatory planning. However, it was because the issue of drinking water was very acute that all households came together to plan for the solution. At the time, all women of the village were involved in the village meeting. In fact, women were in the forefront – the Panchayat at that time comprised fully of women – and the wife of the present Sarpanch was the leader at that time. Women participated actively in the village discussions and decisions.

But in Piplantri, which is a 'group Panchayat' with six villages, and much bigger than Hiwre Bazar or Ganagedevapalli, it was difficult for the Sarpanch to organize a whole-Panchayat meeting even to discuss the water issue, though it was very critical to all households. He had already begun work on upgrading the local school to 12th grade level, and won some supporters. Still, rival political groups in the village opposed him and persuaded their supporters to stay away. The Sarpanch decided to go ahead anyway, and called for a village meeting to decide how to resolve the issues of water scarcity. Though he knew many people may not come, he prepared for the meeting in the village square, marking out the place, arranging for water and sitting with his friends and supporters and those who had joined them. He initiated the discussion, though only a few people attended. Observing the proceedings from afar, some more people joined. In subsequent meetings, the numbers rose and now most people come to such village meetings and Gram Sabhas in Piplantri.

Use at least 2 to 3 of these ways of informing people, so that everyone is reached and persuaded. If those residing outside the village in nearby towns and cities can also be informed and requested to attend, it will bring additional ideas and resources for planning.

4. Make sure that **ALL PEOPLE** are requested to attend – all castes, all groups within the village, even people you may consider as your opponents. Since this is a village issue, everyone is affected and should have a voice in deciding how to resolve it – plus, it minimizes failure! Women may need to be contacted separately if necessary through women leaders.

Do some preparation for the meeting. All people should be able to find places to sit. There should be access to some drinking water. If it is during the day, the area should be shaded in some way – by a tree, or perhaps you can arrange for some cover. Request the village secretary to be present. Request an educated person to take notes of the discussions and decisions

STEP P3: ENSURING WIDE INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

It is important that decisions and actions regarding village development are taken with the involvement of all groups of people in the village. Ensuring extensive attendance at village meetings and taking all major decisions in that forum is a good beginning. But people must also be involved in working out the details, in implementing the decisions and projects and in the management of the facilities created. This will ensure success of the efforts because of wide cooperation, increased support and help and also reduce the costs.

A number of systems can be devised to have wide involvement of the people, and all these have been successfully tried in various places.

1. **Forming subject-specific committees,** such as Water Committee, Irrigation Committee, Education Committee, Health and Sanitation Committee, Electricity Committee etc. These committees can be the Panchayat Committees, **or additional ones formed by the common decision of the village residents.** The committees can include elected members of the Panchayat, senior people in the village, educated residents, youth volunteers, teachers, health workers, or any resident. Committees must have a designated Chairman or President and a Secretary, who can lead and coordinate the work of the committee, keep records and be responsible for organizing the committee's functioning and reporting progress to the village residents in the Gram Sabha/ Aam Sabha.

2. **Forming Area Committees,** which can be responsible for various matters pertaining to a part of the Panchayat. There can be Ward Committees, Mohalla or Street Committees or, in States where group Panchayats are the norm, at two levels - both Village and Street Committees. The difference is that these committees are responsible for coordinating the matters on all subjects/ sectors within their area. As in subject-committees, there should be a Chairman/ President and a Secretary, to coordinate, organize, record and report.

3. **Forming Ad-hoc Committees** when the need arises to plan out and organize some specific project or event.

A number of factors must be ensured for these committee systems – or any other method that is devised in a village – to work.

- The decision to form the committees, the members and office bearers should be decided in all-village meetings. They can be proposed/ suggested by the leaders or the Panchayat members, but the final decision has to be made by all villagers.

- All committees must be widely represented. Ideally, there should be some women members and members from the smaller groups in the village on them.

- Rules and powers of the committees should be discussed in village meetings and finalized so that all (including committee members) are aware and agree.

- Major decisions made by the committee must be shared with residents in village or area meetings. Accounts must also be presented at least annually.

- The committee functioning and details should be reported to the full village in the Gram Sabhas held during the year. More informal reports and discussion of issues can happen more frequently as required for smooth functioning.

Systems for Ensuring Full Involvement in Planning & Management

In Gangadevapalli, 18 subject-specific committees have been constituted, on various matters such as drinking water supply, education, health, women's affairs, savings, agriculture, etc. The system was devised with the first project undertaken by the village – the installation of a piped water supply system. A Water Committee was elected in the Gram Sabha, which coordinated the full planning, detailing, resource raising and execution of the two projects: now the Water Committee manages the water supply system, supervises operation and maintenance, collects water charges, enforces rules of water usage, levies fines for defaulters and coordinates all matters pertaining to drinking water provision in the village. The successful experience led to other development initiatives and the formation of numerous committees to coordinate and manage affairs related to them. Women play a major role in ALL committees, with some comprising only women. The committees report and discuss issues in the frequent Gram Sabhas.

A parallel system of 'street leaders' is also devised in the same village, where volunteers are decided to coordinate matters and enforce village regulations on each street. These leaders work in conjunction with the various committees, to ensure that the respective matters are functioning smoothly in their street.

The Sarpanch in Ramachandrapuram has devised an innovative system to get the full involvement of the elected members in the village affairs and also to elicit the experienced advise and leadership of village elders and active community members. The Panchayat has allocated different subject portfolios to each Ward Member, who is designated as the respective Minister. For example, there is a Minister for Water, Minister for Power and Irrigation, etc. The Ward Members therefore are responsible not only for matters pertaining to their Ward but also the matters pertaining to their portfolio for the whole village. Committees are constituted to coordinate development on each Portfolio (subject), and the Minister is head of the respective Committee. Further, all elders of the Village are constituted into a "Legislative Council" (which is not statutory, but advisory). Each member of the Council is the Chairperson of one Committee. Major village development decisions are taken in the village meetings, but the detailed decisions, organizing and coordination of the work is undertaken by respective Ministers with their committees.

In both Panchayats, committee constitution, rules, reporting and renewal happens in the Gram Sabhas or in the Aam Sabhas frequently organized.

STEP P4   SYSTEMS & PRACTICES FOR TRANSPARENCY

Ensuring that the village development processes are widely known to all residents is a critical element in ensuring continued participation and rapid village development. All major decisions must be taken in village meetings or through wide consultations with different groups. Processes of implementation of projects and details of management processes are also to be openly shared in village meetings. Panchayat accounts, details of various projects and programs implemented and various committee accounts must be reported at the annual Gram Sabha.

The village planning and development processes initiated by the leaders will only be trusted and supported by village residents if the major decisions are transparently made with people's involvement. Also, other detailed decisions and the use of funds and resources must be made known and open to public scrutiny. Information can be shared in a variety of ways –

1. In the statutory Gram Sabhas, all Panchayat accounts, committee accounts and major decisions such as number of beneficiaries under different schemes must be shared for public knowledge.

2. These details should also be notified in a visible place such as the Panchayat walls, other public buildings or on notice-boards.

3. All major decisions must be taken in village meetings and Gram Sabhas or Aam Sabhas. These include the composition and rules of various committees, decisions about projects to be undertaken, who will implement, where the resources will come from, who will manage and how. Selection of beneficiaries under various government schemes, selection of contractors to execute projects and selection of volunteers are other decisions that should be made in village meetings and Gram/ Aam Sabhas.

4. Records of the Panchayat, and the various Committees, contractors or departments must be properly maintained and readily accessible to the community members on demand.

5. Lists of the people in various positions, or involved in various village development tasks, the source and amount of funds for various projects, other resources of the village etc should also be widely notified.

Circulation of village news through a village newsletter or newspaper is another method for increasing transparency. This can be organized by youth volunteers who act as journalists and publishers. Citizen-band radios have been tried in some places, but require substantial technical understanding.

The key to transparent and accountable village development is the practice of widely sharing details of Panchayat functioning and village development activities and the resources and people engaged therein – additional ways can also be devised to do this.

Various ways of displaying Panchayat and village development information used in Gangadevapalli. Above - Annual expenditures and allocations of Panchayat funds painted on Panchayat wall. Top Right – Village Plan painted on Panchayat wall, showing location of various projects. Right – Board placed near a project detailing source and amount of funds, date of completion and details of sanction.

STEP P5 SUSTAINING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

After the first efforts and initial successes of participatory planning, the processes have to be continued, sustained and institutionalized. Without this, the people will lose interest and village development process will slow down again. Participatory decision-making for improving the village conditions, people's involvement and contribution in implementation and management of projects and community programs all have to be continuously maintained for full effect.

Typically, after one or two successful initiatives, participation in village planning and development management slows down and progress falters. To counteract this, additional efforts are required at that stage to keep the momentum and maintain people's interest in village development. Various actions can be taken for this –

1. Initiate a more comprehensive village planning process, following the same steps as in the first round of (problem-solving) planning, but considering more issues, needs and also aspirations of village residents.

2. Initiate area-wise micro-planning exercises by forming Area Committees with area residents. Different parts of the village, where different groups or castes reside, have different issues. For example, some part of the village may be water-logged or without pucca roads, and may require specific attention. Involve the respective Ward member, and respected elders in such exercises. Remember, the development of the WHOLE village is essential to overall change and progress.

3. Ensure that the practice of Gram Sabha, Aam Sabha and issue-specific village meetings are maintained. If there is no major issue, different committees or groups in the village could discuss their progress and issues. Or some cultural and educational activity could be organized, following some discussion of village affairs. An interesting or highly qualified person – perhaps a village person who is now residing outside, or has an important position-could be invited to discuss on some aspect of development

4. Ensure that at least the statutory Gram Sabhas are held regularly, and in addition, atleast a number of Aam Village Sabhas are also held. If village activities and accounts are reported, people will be interested and trust in the activities of the Panchayat and village leaders will increase.

PLANNING ASPECT 3
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

STEP DP1 TAKING STOCK & IDENTIFYING A COMMON PROBLEM

In the first round of planning, which should be geared to solving a major issue in the village, identifying the common pressing problem faced by the largest number of residents is critical. The task is of finding out which of the many issues and problems that exist in any village poses the greatest difficulty and for the majority of the people, so that it can be taken up for attention. This can only be done in a village meeting (Gram Sabha or Aam Sabha). In later rounds of planning, other issues can be taken up.

To identify which issue is most pressing and also affects the maximum number of residents, a list of village-level issues identified through rapid assessment as described in **Step D2** is necessary. Also, a village meeting must be organized as described in **Step P2**. In the village meeting, the various issues previously listed must be discussed, and a common agreement must be elicited about the priority issue which is to be first attended to.

In any village, there are likely to be multiple problems, issues and needs. Moreover, different groups will have different priorities and urgencies. For example, even in a water-scarce village, a few people may have no problem due to private sources, but may lack power supply. Whereas for the majority water supply may itself be the priority. Similarly, an anganwadi may not be important for those with no young children whereas for many others it may be a necessity so that the mothers could work during the day. Deciding the most pressing and widely felt problem may therefore require extensive discussion and some systematic solution. Some ways are –

1. To take a vote and decide by majority opinion. A simple vote could be taken by counting raised hands for various options. Another way is to ask everyone at the meeting to note their preferred option on a chit of paper, collect them all and then count the votes received for different options.

2.   However, if some groups are not present at the meeting, these methods may leave out their opinion and skew the decision. If there is a noticeable lack of attendance by some groups – for example women, or people from some parts of the village, or particular castes, additional mechanisms may be required. For example, a messenger could quickly go to those areas and call people, or they could be asked to come and register their opinion in the Panchayat. However, in most cases, a widespread issue can readily be identified that everyone will agree is a major problem.

STEP DP2   FINDING & DESIGNING THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTION

After finding the common problem faced by the village residents in the village meeting or Gram Sabha, ask people to suggest alternate and possible solutions. Consider the pros and cons of the various alternatives and find a commonly accepted solution. The decision should emerge from the discussion, with all suggestions being considered fairly, including your own. The most appropriate solution is one that is both sound and also acceptable to all segments of people in the village.

The best solution to a common problem is the one that emerges from the discussion among all those who are affected through a deliberative process, and is not given by an "expert" or outsider who does not reside in the village. Outsiders and knowledgeable people could be invited to the meeting to give suggestions. Suggestions may be made by anyone, including you, or outsiders invited for the purpose (such as the NGO in Gangadevipalli) but it must be thoroughly deliberated and found acceptable to all the village residents before any decision is made.

It is important to consider all suggestions for merit before the final selection and decision is made. This is not only to ensure that the best alternative is selected, but also so that the most feasible one and one that most people are comfortable with, is selected. Also, unless the various ideas are

taken on board and discussed, people will not feel involved and be a part of the decision-making, a crucial element in successful village development.

It is also **important that the most widely acceptable solution is adopted, rather than only the "best'.** The more people are comfortable with the decision, the more they will connect with and support it and ensure its success. On the other hand, if the "best' option is one which fewer people in the village feel comfortable with, the likelihood of its success is affected.

Finding the Appropriate Solution

Different villages found the appropriate solution in different ways. In Gangadevipalli, the solution identified for their drinking water problem was to develop a piped-water supply system. Since it involved technical work to plan out and execute such a project, the decision was taken to approach a local NGO for support and help in this regard. The Sarpanch and some associates approached the NGO, which agreed but only if the villagers contributed some part of the costs. In Ramachandrapuram, the proposal of the Sarpanch, to construct a sub-surface retaining structure in the stream bed was also accepted.

In Hiware Bazar, it became obvious through discussion that the only solution to the water scarcity problem was watershed treatment and rainwater harvesting. This required extensive labour, but also technical know-how about contouring, developing check - dams and water retaining structures. Extensive plantation was also required. The Sarpanch and villagers decided to request support and technical advice from the officers of the Forest Department for help under the Joint Forest Management Program and from the Watershed Development Program of the state. However, there was also agreement to contribute voluntary labour, develop rules for grazing and maintaining watch-and- ward systems.

In Piplantri, the same solution was identified – extensive watershed treatment, hillside plantations stream bunding and check - dams for rainwater harvesting. However, there were differences in people's preferences about where the work should be done and how it should be organized. The Sarpanch requested the BDO to help make technically sound choices, and he in turn persuaded the Junior Engineer to participate in the village meetings and provide technical guidance. In light of the technical merits of different suggestions from the community, the final decisions were taken.

If there are many solutions that are emerging, the final decision is always a problem. It could take some more meetings to discover which would work best, or which actually is the one most people are comfortable with and prefer. There are many ways to address this –

1.   A few people could be selected by the Gram Sabha to discuss the various options further and suggest the best one, with explanations of why that is so. If there are 'experts' or more knowledgeable people in the village about the matter, they could be part of this small group. Whatever be the suggestions of this group, however, the final selection and decision should be made by the whole village, perhaps by calling another meeting.

2.   A voting system could be used to decide the most preferred option. A simple vote could be taken by taking count of raised hands for various options. Another way is to ask everyone at the meeting to note their preferred option on a chit of paper, collect them all and then count the votes received for different options.

3.   If the matter involves some technical issues such as in a water supply project, or in check-dam construction, requesting inputs from a technical person to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives would be advisable. Technical people could be from the village, the local officer of the state government department (eg., the Junior Engineer), teachers or students of local colleges or ITIs or an NGO person invited for the purpose.

STEP DP3   DETAILING THE SOLUTI ON & PLANNING E XECUTION

Proper planning and organizing the work is essential for successful results, and for utilizing resources effectively and efficiently. Appropriate detailing and designing of projects, and devising proper systems of implementation, monitoring and reporting progress (to residents) are crucial.

Though identifying the most sound and widely acceptable solution to the problem is important, the actual results depend on working out the detailed design of the project and planning for its execution. A proper design and systematic process for implementing the solution – whether it involves actually constructing the project or undertaking extensive social initiatives or other measures, must be worked out through extensive consultation and ratification in the village. This process includes a number of tasks –

1.   Detailing the physical design, to be done with technical input if necessary.

2.   Preparing a budget and identifying possible sources of funds.

3.   Identifying different people to do the various kinds of work, and being clear on who will do what - from design and project development to organizing the resources, supervising or doing the tendering, construction, supervision, monitoring, payments, systematic record- keeping, reporting, etc. Forming a committee decided by the Gram Sabha to coordinate, organize and monitor, emerges as the best way of proceeding with the implementation.

4.   It is important that roles and responsibilities of different people, or the committee and its members, be clear to all. It is also important that these be decided transparently, preferably in further village-level meetings or Gram Sabhas.

Implementation of the Water Supply System in Gangadevipalli

Once the village community decided that the solution to their drinking water problem was to develop a piped-water supply system, they requested the NGO Bala Vikasa to help them. Balavikasa agreed on condition that the village contribute part of the amount required. Through more Gram Sabhas, in which the NGO also joined, this proposal was discussed and a system to collect the contributions from all households was devised. Because water supply is a area-specific issue, the community was divided into 18 residential areas and residents of these areas accordingly formed 18 groups and elected a leader from among themselves. These leaders formed the Water Committee, along with 6 other co-opted members from among elders and Panchayat members, with the Panchayat President as ex-officio Chairman. Each leader had responsibility for visiting every household in their section of the village to explain the project and collect contributions. Through their collective efforts sufficient money and labour contributions were raised to construct two overhead storage tanks totalling 1,00,000 liters capacity within five years, and extend supply pipelines to about 250 individual households.

STEP DP4   FINDING RESOURCES FOR VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Today, finding the resources including money, people, technical help etc. to implement solutions to village problems is perhaps easier than finding a commonly accepted solution through community discussion. Various resources, particularly money, can be sourced from government programs of various kinds, departmental schemes, NGO support and directly approaching development and corporate donors.

It is important to realize that the most critical resource is within the community – locally feasible and appropriate ideas and solutions, support, voluntary involvement, contributions of various kinds including money, and not least, taking responsibility for organizing, implementing, operating and monitoring. However, additional resources as required are not difficult to get if there is a proper plan and demonstrable community cohesion and support. Central and state government programs provide resources for almost every aspect of village development, and information on this can be sourced from Block Offices and Block Development Officers. **Access to them and their ready help will be easier if they see that it is a whole community effort and participatory.**

Technical support can also come from within the community, if there are trained persons, or from contacts of people in the community. In addition, government staff of various departments can provide technical inputs on a range of subjects and issues – again, community cohesion and involvement is likely to attract ready help, for then the officers know the project is likely to succeed. Further, NGOs and donors can also bring trained people to help, as can colleges and research institutes in the vicinity.

The key resource is the planning, community-organizing, and project organizing work. This is available within the community itself, and only requires patient mobilization, discussion, persuasion and participatory decision-making. Moreover, there is no substitute for this, which can make the village development efforts successful and sustainable. However, in order to harness these resources, community organizing, inclusive functioning and transparent village-wide participatory decision-making is necessary. This requires sustained and continuous efforts from the leader and leading group.

Finding Resources for Village Development

For its water supply project, Gangadevapalli put together 10% of the funds required through cash contributions, labour contributions and land from within the community, and could therefore get additional money from the NGO (85-90% of the total costs). The sanitation work, including individual sanitary latrines is through the Total Sanitation Campaign funds, augmented with contributions from within the village in cash, labour and organizational work. In Hiware Bazar, the watershed development work was undertaken with money from the Watershed Development Program of the Maharashtra state government, and voluntary labour contributions (shramdaan) from within the community. Resources awarded under the Adarsh Gaon Yojana of the Maharashtra government has also helped in many initiatives.

In Piplantri, the Sarpanch brought together resources from the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) program and contributions from the adjacent marble quarrying company to upgrade the local school to 12th grade. Similarly, money could be sourced from the PMGSY for the internal concrete roads and inter- linkages from other programs. Again, in Piplantri, the watershed development and plantation programs are funded from multiple sources, the Adarsh Gaon Yojana, the marble company and voluntary labour and watch-and-ward duty by villagers; the streetlights are from villager's contributions (operating costs) and electrical fixture companies (light fixtures); the sanitation work, including individual sanitary latrines in all households is under the Total Sanitation Campaign; piped water supply to all households under the Swajaldhara program.

List of contributors for village temple and meeting place in Ramachandrapuram

Water Purification Plant funded by Tata Projects from which all households get drinking water in Gangadevapalli

Overhead water tank & treated drinking water supply system managed by the Water Committee in Gangadevapalli

Funds were raised from various sources for piped water supply system and RO plant for drinking water in Gangadevapalli

Proper leadership is therefore another key resource – and this is definitely within all communities. It also has to emerge from within the community – external actors cannot provide this resource, though they can augment some of the technical and organizing aspects required.

STEP DP5   DEVISING SYSTEMS FOR OPERATION & MANAGEMENT

Devising and setting in place adequate systems for operation, maintenance and management of the facilities developed through participatory planning is an important step in the process. Both the personnel and financial resources for the smooth running of the facilities must be considered. Rules for its use must also be developed so as to ensure fair access and efficient use of the systems. As in every other aspect, it is important that these be decided by the community and that the management includes village residents as decided in open meetings.

The system for operation and maintenance must be discussed in the community and devised in advance, even while the project is being implemented or constructed. Some important questions that must be decided are –

- Who will operate, manage, and/or supervise?

- Will there be any payment for those who are involved in the operation, maintenance and management?

- If technical support may be required (for example, a plumber for a water supply system),where will the person be available and how?

- Who will pay for operation and maintenance, or where will the money come from?   Who will maintain records? Who will audit? Who will report progress to the village?

- How will the village people know what is being done? If things are not being managed satisfactorily, what will be done? Where and how can complaints be made?

Making appropriate rules for use and management is equally important – the above systems will need rules to be framed. It is important that these rules are made through village meetings or Gram Sabhas and widely understood and agreed upon. The sarpanch and Panchayat alone should not decide or formulate the rules, for adherence by all residents in the village is necessary for success. This will only be possible if all the residents agree and accept the rules. Even then, however, there may be some who would break some rules – it is therefore necessary also to decide what will be the action taken if anyone breaks the agreed-upon rules. Also, a monitoring system_should be discussed and instituted – who will monitor that people adhere to rules?

All the systems designed and rules framed should be widely shared, publicly displayed and made available in some written form. User charges, where required, must be fixed through adequate discussion in village meetings, and all revisions must also be discussed. Collection systems, fines or sanctions for late or non-payment are other important points.

Management Systems for Village Facilities

In Gangadevapalli, the Water Committee also developed rules to regulate water supply from the OHTs and use in the community. Lifetime Membership fee for individual tap connection is decided by the Committee. No monthly rentals/ fee are charged. There is no public tap in the village, but sufficient water is available in household taps from 6 to 10 am every day. Tenants and temporarily residing families with no tap connection can collect water from neighboring families and pay an amount of Rs. 50 per month to the Water Committee. For family functions and celebrations, families have to pay Rs. 50 for required water. To maintain uniform distribution of water each tap connection is restricted to 1/2" diameter pipe at a maximum height of 4 feet from the distribution pipe line. To control water wastage every connection must have a regulating tap, and watering of plants is to be done with buckets – no hosepipe connections are allowed. Water supply is disconnected if any family is found watering the plants directly from the tap, or with overflow from collection tanks. Fines are also levied for stagnant water around taps or lack of on/ off regulator on the tap. The families then have to pay a penalty of Rs. 100 for reconnection, and until the penalty is paid neighbors are not allowed to give water. Though residents monitor each household's behaviour and rule-breaking is immediately noted, the designated street leaders also monitor that residents adhere to the rules.

Recognizing the successful performance of the Water Committee TATA Projects has donated a water purification plant in 2004. The Water Committe has also framed rules for supply of safe drinking water to households from this plant - every family in the village is provided safe drinking water of 20 liters per day on payment of Rs. 300 per annum (which is less than a rupee per day); additional 20 liter cans of water are supplied at Rs. 2. Households must ensure that the cans are sufficiently cleaned, and maintain cards where water collection and payment in recorded.

In the system instituted by the Water Committee, every household has numbered 20-liter water cans (above) and is given a drinking water card. Empty cans are left to be filled at the RO plant every day and collected cans filled. Number of cans and charges are entered in the water card and the charges collected every month.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The village planning and development process described in this Manual is REAL. It has been based on the successful experiences of Panchayats in various parts of the country. The process is also made fairly SIMPLE, being broken down to the common key steps taken by these successful Panchayats. The outcomes are also real, substantial and have completely transformed life and conditions in these villages. With a little systematic effort and by bringing people together, YOU can also achieve the same in your village.

As discussed throughout this Manual, three factors underlie the success of these efforts. First is **committed, transparent and honest leadership.**

The second factor is the **wide involvement of all people** in the village planning and development process.

The third is the **systematic planning and implementation efforts** described in this Manual – with people involved in all decision-making processes.

At the core is the **LEADERSHIP** factor. A few key pointers towards effective leadership –

- **Bring together a few key people in the village as a spear-head group** – elders, community leaders and other significant village members – to support your efforts.

- **Connect with ALL groups in the village** - women, young and the elders. All caste groups. People in all areas within the village. Officers and government staff in all departments connected with village affairs. Village residents who have migrated outside for jobs, education and/or business, whenever possible.

- **Be open, accessible, approachable and respectful to all**. No one should hesitate to share their ideas and views with you, your friends and in group or village meetings.

- **Be open to new ideas, whoever suggests it**. All suggestions and ideas must be given due consideration.

- **Be open and accept views contrary to your own** or to those of the people close to you. Contrary views serve to build sustainable development by bringing disagreements to the surface so that they can be resolved amicably and openly. Contrary views also open up new ideas and ways of looking at things that can be very productive and innovative.

With these simple leadership skills, and with systematic planning efforts, you can change your village!

INSERT I

This is a list of possible items for collecting village data for a Panchayat database. This list is only indicative – other items may be added or items in this list changed to suit the specific requirements of the village and the Panchayat.

Area details

Area of village (in hectares)

Number of households

Average Household size

Number of houses - Pucca

Number of houses - kutcha

Number of houses – mixed (partially pucca)

Population data based on local enumeration

Total population - Persons

Total population - Males

Total population - Females

Scheduled castes population - Persons

Scheduled castes population - Males

Scheduled castes population - Females

Scheduled tribes population - Persons

Scheduled tribes population - Males

Scheduled tribes population - Females

Education facilities

Number of school going children – girls, boys

Number of children attending school (by age group)

Number of primary schools

Distance to nearest primary school

Number of middle schools

Distance to nearest middle school

Number of secondary schools

Distance to nearest secondary school

Number of senior secondary schools (or distance to nearest ones)

Number of colleges (or distance to nearest ones)

College available within range (distance from village)

Number of adult literacy class/centres

Number of industrial schools (or distance to nearest one)

Number of training schools (or distance to nearest one)

Number of other educational schools (or distance to nearest ones)

Medical facilities

Medical facilities (or distance to nearest one)

Number of allopathic hospitals (or distance to nearest one)

Allopathic hospitals available within range

Number of ayurvedic hospitals (or distance to nearest one)

Number of unani hospitals (or distance to nearest one)

Number of homeopathic hospitals (or distance to nearest one)

Number of allopathic dispensaries (or distance to nearest one)

Number of ayurvedic dispensary (or distance to nearest one)

Number of unani dispensary (or distance to nearest one)

Number of homeopathic dispensaries (or distance to nearest one)

Number of maternity and child welfare centres

Maternity and child welfare centres available within range

Number of maternity homes (or distance to nearest one)

Number of child welfare centres (or distance to nearest one)

Number of health centres (or distance to nearest one)

Number of primary health centres

Primary health centres available within range

Number of primary health sub- centres (or distance to nearest one)

Number of family welfare centre (or distance to nearest one)

Number of T.B. clinics (or distance to nearest one)

Number of nursing homes (or distance to nearest one)

Number of registered private medical practiotioners or within range

Number of subsidised medical practitioners or within range

Number of community health workers or within range

Number of other medical facilities

Drinking water facilities

Safe drinking water facilities – number of households covered

Tap water – households covered

Well water – households covered

Tank water – households covered

Tubewell water – households covered

Handpump – households covered

River water

Canals

Lakes

Spring

Other drinking water sources

Post, telegraph and telephone facilities

Availability of Post, telegraph and phone facilities

Number of post offices (or distance to nearest one)

Availability of internet connections

Number of telegraph offices (or distance to nearest one)

 Number of post and telegraph office (or distance to nearest one)

Number of telephone connections

Communication facilities

Bus services

Railways services

Railway service available within range

Navigable waterway including river, canal etc.

Navigable waterway available within range

Banking facilities

Number of commercial banks

Commercial bank available within range

Number of Co-operative commercial banks

Co-operative bank available within range

Credit societies

Credit societies facilities

Number of agricultural credit societies

Available within range

Number of non agricultural credit societies

Available within range

Number of SHGs

> Women's SHGs (number and membership)

> Men's SHGs (number and membership)

> Mixed (or subject-specific SHGs eg., farmer's SHG) – number and membership

Other credit societies available within range

Recreational and cultural facilities

Television connections available

Number of households connected

Number of cinema/video-halls

Cinema / video-halls available within range

Number of sports clubs

Sports club available range

Number of stadium/auditorium

Stadium /auditorium available within range

Approach to villages

Approach through paved roads (distance)

Approach through mud roads (distance)

Approach foot path

Approach - navigable river

Approach - navigable canal

Approach - navigable waterway other than river or canal

Distance to nearest town

Power supply

Power supply facilities

Households with Electricity for domestic use

Households with Electricity of agricultural use

Electricity for other purposes (street-lighting, local businesses)

> Number of streetlights

> Number of business connections (eg., rice mills, flour mills, shops, etc)

> Number of community establishments connected (e.g, school, health center, etc)

Households with Electricity for all purposes

News paper/magazine

News paper/magazine facilities

Newspaper

Magazine

Income and expenditure of the village

Total income of Panchayat

Total expenditure of Panchayat

Most important commodities manufactured

Manufactured item no. 1

Manufactured item no. 2

Manufactured item no. 3

Land use in hectares

Extent of forest land

Extent of Panchayat land

Number of government canals

Number of private canals

Wells (without electricity)

Wells (with electricity)

Tube-wells (without electricity)

Tube-wells (with electricity)

Tanks

Rivers

Lakes

Waterfalls

Others

Total irrigated area

Unirrigated area

Culturable waste (including gauchar and groves)

Area not available for cultivation

Preparation of Manual for Integrated Village Development Background Report

Capacity Development for Local Governance Goi-Undp

Ministry Of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj

THE PROJECT

While the formation and operation of Panchayats in rural India is now a reality, they are yet to evolve as strong and vibrantly functioning local self governments in most parts of the country. Till this is achieved, significant change can hardly be expected in the pace and trajectory of rural development. Both theory and experience suggest that the kind of developmental transformation that is desired can best be achieved through the active participation of citizens. Indeed, in the isolated spots across the country where the spark has been lit and Panchayats have become active and vibrant, both villages and the lives of the villagers have been amazingly transformed. The key questions are, why and how has it happened in these few places amidst a sea of modest performance in terms of local self-governance? What are the key features that have triggered collective decision-making, responsive representation and good governance in some locations? And, most important, **how can integrated village planning and development be widely catalyzed using the lessons from such places where successful local governance has transformed whole villages***?*

This assignment was directed to answering the above questions, and **developing a Manual for Integrated Village Development based on the processes adopted by the Panchayats and citizens in villages which have shown remarkable self-governance and local development. The key idea underlying this exercise is that the 'successful cases' of villages where exemplary local self governance has yielded visible and significant development provided the opportunity for identifying locally feasible and practically sound process maps for village planning.** The larger objective was to use this locally derived process of people-led village planning to catalyse efforts in other locations – being rooted in local realities, these models of action would be both inspirational as well as provide user-friendly templates for action in other locations. A Manual derived from the actual processes undertaken by Panchayats and communities is expected to be more amenable to adoption and use by other Panchayats and village communities than technically sound but complex procedures of local planning.

However, only a few such exemplary cases of vibrant local self governance and Panchayat-led village development have so far come to light, though many more may exist in the country. Of those that are known, even fewer have been systematically examined. For example, Hiware Bazar in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra is among the places where remarkable Panchayat functioning has taken root, and among the few locations where the resultant developmental transformation is dramatic and multi-sectoral. The story of Hiware Bazar has been widely reported, filmed and described, but systematic study to derive answers to the above questions and isolate features that could be replicated elsewhere is missing. There appear to be at least a few other villages, such as Gangadevapalli and Ramachandrapuram Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh that have also instituted remarkable local self governance and achieved dramatic transformation of their respective villages, but these are even less documented and analysed.

This assignment was therefore designed to undertake systematic examination of the processes through which notable self-governance has developed in some villages and a dramatic socio-

economic transformation has been achieved. Using the insights from such examination, a Manual for Integrated Village Development was to be prepared, for wide dissemination and use by elected representatives and others charged with the task of village development.

1.1 INITIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) AND SUBSEQUENT CHANGES

Originally, the project was conceived as an in-depth study of the development of Hiware Bazar Panchayat in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, and the preparation of a Manual for Integrated Village Planning and Development based on the experience. The Terms of Reference are enclosed in Annexure I. The initial work-plan accordingly included a systematic, intensive, multi-method case study of Hiware Bazar and analyses to derive two models. One was the emergent process model of the development efforts, that which could be replicated elsewhere through a 'Manual'. The second was the understanding of key leadership features which could be used in training programs for elected representatives and to develop criteria for awarding recognition to outstanding elected Panchayat leaders.

A number of issues surfaced in respect of the above approach, which were discussed at the inception meeting and first progress review in August September 2010; minutes are enclosed in Annexure II. A key issue was the attempt to generalize from a single case, particularly one that was (apparently) unique in many respects. It was not only a methodologically unsound approach, but more practically, the Manual using Hiware Bazar as an illustrative case was unlikely to be widely accepted. A key condition necessary for learning and adoption is identification, which is based on similarity; since Hiware Bazar has features which preclude its identification as a 'typical village' – for example, social homogeneity - it presented the danger of being 'rejected' as an example of what is possible in other types of villages. Consideration of this aspect was particularly relevant as the discussion also identified that Gram Panchayat level elected representatives and functionaries would be the prime user group that the Manual should be aimed at.

It was therefore decided to revise the approach, and broad-base it on a selection of cases of successful village development by Panchayats. The revised workplan therefore included the

examination of three to four cases from across the country and the production of a working Manual for Integrated Village Planning and Development based on the commonalities that surfaced in the processes through which village development had been crafted by the respective Gram Panchayats. **The focus of the assignment was to be on the following -**

a.   **identification of the generic process adopted by the respective Panchayats, and**

b.   **use of the above in the preparation of a user-friendly Manual for Integrated Village Development Planning.**

The revised ToR therefore excluded the preparation of detailed case studies of the villages. Also, it was expressed that the other deliverable model envisaged in the TOR – the note on Panchayat leadership for development of an incentive program – was not necessary, as such incentive programs had already been developed.

1.2   CASE SELECTION AND STUDY METHODOLOGY

Though, ideally, a large number of cases should be examined to delineate a generalizable process-model for village planning by Panchayats, it was decided to restrict this exercise to a maximum of four cases. Three to four were thought to be optimal considering both time and utility. India is too variegated to capture the diversity of village development efforts without a large number of cases; the point of looking at a few was to draw out the generic patterns while also capturing the differences that occur across sociological and legal contexts. Morever, the cases to be documented were the instances of successful village planning by Panchayats and/or communities themselves, which could serve as inspirational examples in the manual. Few were known other than Hiware Bazar, and finding many more in a limited time-frame was unlikely, and in any case would have required extensive investigation and verification.

Though there are no doubt a fair number of interesting cases of Panchayat initiatives for village development in the country, few are widely known or documented, with Hiware Bazar perhaps being a notable exception. With initiative taken in this respect by the Capacity Development for Local Governance Project, a few others have also come to light and efforts to document and disseminate those were underway as this project unfolded. It was therefore decided to include some of these cases for the current exercise, and study the development initiatives taken by respective Panchayats in these villages.

Cases had to be selected from sufficiently divergent contexts to offer a range of illustrative examples for the Manual. Also, the transformative work of the Panchayat had to be physically visible and verifiable. Finally, the efforts had to be multi-sectoral and integrated. Given these considerations, and the available known examples, three other cases were selected along with Hiware Bazar – **Gangadevapalli** and **Ramachandrapuram** in Andhra Pradesh, and **Piplantri** in Rajasthan. Though the two villages in Andhra Pradesh were in a similar legal and state context, the innovative structural arrangements in Ramachandrapuram were unique and deserved study. In all, these four cases reflect initiatives and successes in different statutory and geographical contexts and within different time-frames. As such, they offer a reasonably varied set of experiences and illustrations for a Manual.

Except Hiware Bazar, the other three cases had not been studied in detail or systematically documented so far – short documentaries were the only secondary sources available to start with. While extensive primary data collection and study of each of the latter three cases was not feasible in the scope of the project, nor was it necessary for the production of the Manual, additional efforts to uncover details of the respective stories were necessary. These included field visits during which a variety of approaches were used to document the case and understand the 'story'. These included secondary materials, field documentation including transect walks and interviews with key informants at various levels (state- and district level officers and experts, respective Sarpanches and other elected representatives, Panchayat and other Committee members, Panchayat Secretary and other staff as available, SHG groups and farmer's groups), focus group discussion with village residents and visits to school, health-care and child-care (aanganwadi) facilities, nurseries and village commons etc. Secondary materials included prior studies, the filmed documentaries of the village transformation, village plans, budgets and/or other documents as available. In addition,

discussions with NGOs and other organizations who were familiar with and/or had been involved in the village efforts helped augment the information as well as provide 'external' views that served to cross- check and triangulate the self-reports obtained in the village.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

While this document is a Report of the entire assignment, and therefore includes the current section which sets out the background, ToR and considerations thereof, **the primary task was the development of a user-friendly Manual for Integrated Village Planning and Development. The Manual is composed separately, with contents designed for use by the identified groups.**

In this Background Report, in addition to the requisite details of background and ToR etc. in Chapter I, the brief descriptions of the four cases of successful Panchayats that were studied are set out in Chapter II, focussing on the process model for village development that emerged in each case. Common features of the village development processes are identified – the emergent 'process model' of practical village development planning and implementation – in the last section of the same chapter, and the special features and divergences also discussed. This serves to provide a template for development of a "How to" Manual for use by elected representatives/ village functionaries in other locations. The considerations and rationale for the structure, design and content of the Manual itself is set out in Chapter III of Section A (this section). Recommendations for adaptation of the Manual for different States/ locations is also included, as are suggestions for additional features such as illustrations/ pictures, design of a 'kit' and jacket insertions.

The next Volume contains the text of the suggested Manual. The actual physical and textual format would require further design attention, including for the 'kit' recommended, cover-page and additional features such as pictures/ illustrations, to mention a few of the inputs that would be tequired to make it a user-friendly, stand-alone Manual.

CASE STUDIES & EMERGENT
VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Four examples of substantial participatory village development through local Panchayat initiative and community involvement were studied to identify the skeleton of the process in each case, and their common attributes and significant differences. in addition to the basic information about the village and the history of the initiatives, an each case, the stories of specific efforts, hurdles faced, strategies used and people involved were also attempted to be captured. Though the extent of success in capturing information, particularly in triangulating the 'stories' for reliability, varied to an extent, the central purpose of understanding the key steps and the primary action-points was well-served.

The story of the four villages is captured in brief below in the next four sections. **The descriptions provided here are not intended to be detailed and critical 'case studies', but to analytically delineate the processes and key steps in each case in order to discern commonalities and divergences.** This is necessary, first, to examine if there was a common 'model' that could serve as the empirically grounded, practical, underlying process-map for developing the 'Manual'. Second, the differences in the experiences also need to be identified and the pertinent reasons understood. Third, both commonalities and unique features in regard to the hurdles faced, approaches used to overcome them and innovations applied are to be isolated. The last section sets out the analyses of the four stories, focussing on the commonalities and divergences in respect of these aspects.

2.1   HIWARE BAZAR, MAHARASHTRA

The dramatic transformation of Hiware Bazar, a village in Nagar Taluka, Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra, through Panchayat leadership and community involvement is by now widely known. The village is ensconced in the rain-shadow area of the Sahyadri Range, with an average annual rainfall of less than 400mm, but erratic and uneven. Of the village area of 976 hectares, a little over half is reliably arable (500 ha)[1]; most land is privately held with only small patches of forest (70 ha) and Panchayat land (8.5 ha). In 1999 about 120 hectares was irrigated (now @ 300). The population of Hiware Bazar in 2001 was 1,150, but now is estimated to be around 1500, with some immigration. The population is relatively homogeneous in terms of caste, with 185 Maratha households out of 205 (now 217), and only two Scheduled Caste families. Only 12 households were landless.

2.1.1   What the village was like before

Located in the rain-shadow area and with extensive land degradation, the village faced many problems like drought which led to poor agricultural produce, low literacy rates, health problems and social problems. By the late 70's, water scarcity was acute and agriculture and allied activities

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[1]   The daa on this differs widely. Government and census records list 795 hectares as 'cultivable', but the figures in other reports, based on actual observation and data from development projects, differ widely.

were unprofitable, though in 1972, when water scarcity hit the state, a percolation dam was built using EGS funds. By the early 1980s as many as 50% of the village population had migrated out. During 1989-90, less than 12% of the cultivable land was under cultivation. The village's wells used to have water only during the rainy season. The village took to making, drinking and selling country liquor.

With low employment and few sources of income, 22 liquor shops and extensive gambling, constant conflicts and disputes were the norm and crime rates were very high. Families migrated for survival and youth for employment and a better life. With this condition of the village, only under-performing government officials were posted there, and police would ignore the village completely. There was a small school in the village earlier with only two rooms, and students had to walk a distance of 7 kms to study after the 4th grade. No health facilities were available, sanitation was a problem and the lack of water made it difficult to maintain hygiene.

2.1.2   What the village is now

Today, each village resident earns almost twice the average income of the top ten percent of the country's rural population; apparently, in the last 15 years the average income has gone up by 20 times[2]. Press reports suggest there are 54 millionaires in this village. The number of wells has increased from 97 to 217. The land under irrigation has increased from 120 ha in 1999 to almost 300 ha. As against one unreliable crop in a year in the past, farmers now grow three, sometimes even four crops; this is however, tempered with rules of rotation and limits on water-intensive farming by households. Grass production has dramatically increased (from 100 mt to 1000 mt in four years,2000 to 2004), resulting in increased milk production – from 150 litres per day during mid-1990s to almost 3000 litres per day now. in 1992 there were 180 families below poverty line and by 2005 there were only 7 – currently only two are known to be so.

Infrastructure, and therefore quality of life is remarkable - people staying in huts earlier now live in bungalows which they report cost about 5 to 6 lakhs; reportedly, some have been constructed by professional architects. The village has underground drains – therefore a better morbidity profile – piped water, primary healthcare centre, veterinary clinic, schools, nursery, gymnasium, community centre, library, open-air auditorium, and solar-powered streetlighting in the village The village boasts of 100% literacy levels. Today there are not only a number of schools but also a college in the village, and 3 out of 32 students studying medicine are girls. The Sarpanch aims at achieving 100 % computer literacy by introducing computer education in schools and later for the entire village. In the '80s, it had only one motorbike; now it has 270 motorbikes, 25 four-wheelers and 17 tractors. The village has almost 100% telephone and TV penetration.

The social situation is also impressive. Though there are only two Muslim families, the village has contributed to constructing a mosque for them. Equity is emphasized – no one in the village lives in a kutcha house, and landlessness is reduced to two households, and ways to address that are being explored. Women heads of households own the houses. The village sets its own rules for conduct, and crimes committed are resolved internally by the villagers with the Sarpanch: the

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2   *Reportedly, the per capita income of the village has increased from Rs 832 to Rs 24000, though the exact source of this data and the calculations were not clear.*

general understanding is that if the police are involved, then it "would corrupt and complicate matters", and mar the record of the village. The community has donated substantially to survivors of the Kargil war and to tsunami victims.

Environmental conservation and sustainability are key concerns and substantial energy needs are met through bio-gas and solar sources; the former also supports organic farming. The villagers have planted as many as 35 lakh trees in the past twenty years and regenerated degraded forest and private lands. With forests and flora has come fauna - birds, deer, etc. The village also maintains a patch of land where 100 different species of plants are preserved.

Such dramatic achievements have brought acclaim and awards to the village, including as "Adarsh Gram" (ideal village); apparently the State also got its first National Productivity Award due to the work in Hiware Bazar. The local DRDA has extended financial assistance for the construction of a training centre for Sarpanches.

2.1.3   How did the changes happen?

The process of change has its roots in two 'origin stories'. According to one, a son of the village, Popatrao Pawar, a post-graduate with profound interest in cricket, gave up his career in Pune and returned to his village in the eighties to "pay back his dues" by creating positive transformations. He started with trying to improve the "moral environment" by discussing the ills of liquor, vice and conflict, and attempting to close liquor shops and gambling places. Another version suggests that a group of youth in the village decided that things have to change for better, and requested Popatrao Pawar to contest for the position of Sarpanch in 1989 as he was not only literate but was also aware of the issues. Either way, it is clear that he is the force behind all the changes that has transformed Hiware Bazar, and that concerted efforts at village development began after his election as Sarpanch in 1989[3]. The task has spanned more than 20 years of hard work by the occupants, led by the Sarpanch, who remains in position unopposed even today.

The **first steps** were with addressing the most pressing issue in the village – water scarcity. In 1972, when the village's percolation tank was constructed under drought relief work, one of the village's wrestlers was given the task of supervision. In 1982 under the similar circumstances it had been repaired, but was still not adequate. Mr. Pawar decided to tackle the problem at the grassroot level, and with the help of his youthful friends,[4] mobilized people to tackle the chronic problem of water scarcity by doing shramdaan (voluntary and collective unpaid labour). In 1993, they successfully implemented a **watershed development and afforestation programme** on the 70 ha forest land by building 420,000 continuous contour trenches along the hill near the village, and massive plantation and afforestation. Adjacent wells were recharged the same year and irrigated land increased from 20 to 70 ha. By 2006, the village was 50% water surplus.

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3   *Maharashtra's Panchayat system was relatively more established than in most other states, and following the Ashok Mehta Committee recommendations, the state was one among the seven in the country to initiate substantial reforms in the late eighties.*

4   *Apparently, he was inspired by the work of Anna Hazare in Ralegaon Siddhi, where the philosophy pf "jan, jal and jungle" was used as key to making a village self-reliant, prosperous and harmonious.*

The other important issue – apparently simultaneously tackled, but which helped rally the community perhaps even more than the watershed efforts – was that of **reforming the poor functioning of the village school**. Due to the village's bad reputation, the administration deputed teachers for the village school considered as punishment posting, resulting in poor functioning and little learning by students. Led by Pawar and the youth group working with him, the villagers took a firm stand – they locked out the school for two months with the demand that the district administration depute good teachers. Eventually the administration complied. Thereafter, over the next few years concrete steps were taken by the villagers, including monitoring, extension of school building with land and labour donated by villagers (shramdaan) and additional voluntary teaching by some educated youth to improve the standards of education and the environment in which it was being imparted.

In 1994, the village was included in the Adarsh Gram Yojana of the Maharashtra government, and under this program about 52 earthen bunds, two percolation tanks, 33 loose stone bunds were constructed. About nine check dams have also been constructed in a series on the downstream nallah. However, all of these were accompanied by **enforcement of five rules** – ban on tree felling, ban on free grazing, family planning, ban on sale of liquor and fair contribution of voluntary labour by all. Various rules about what crops can be grown, how many crops can be taken etc are also worked out transparently and in a fair way, "Water shedding" is practised, which regulates the number and type of crops a farmer is allowed on his land, with full utilization permitted in rotation[5].

The village, as a policy, has banned tube-wells for environmental concerns. Due to lack of farmers in the village initially the people practiced community farming. Involvement of youth groups, community involvement in decision-making, rule development and enforcement, monitoring and voluntary labour appear to be the central motifs all throughout.

2.1.4   Central features of the Hiware Bazar change process

Four features are clearly visible – inspired and sustained leadership, participatory decision-making, cooperation and community mobilization for **voluntary labour.** Clearly, leadership was the initiating factor, but one of the more notable features is the fully consultative and participatory mechanisms used for decision-making. **The extensive and systematic involvement of the community is ensured** through regular meetings. Every aspect of development planning is discussed, minuted, decided together, implemented with shramdaan on a regular basis and monitored by the Gram Sabha (plenary meeting of all villagers). This ensures transparency, community ownership and sustained engagement. All new decisions are taken by the Sarpanch in **consultation with all adults.** Suggestions are welcome from everyone, including school children. In fact, one of the student's suggestions was to introduce HIV tests for couples getting married, which is being successfully implemented - today every couple has to go through an HIV test before tying the knot.

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5   *The process of water shedding works as follows: Let's say a farmer grows 3 crops a year. Then in a particular year he is allowed to grow 2 crops and another farmer is allowed to grow a complete crop. By growing 2 crops the farmer allows another farmer also to grow a crop and earn his livelihood. Through such co-operation every farmer supports the other and the entire village benefits. Though difficult at the beginning, through sustained efforts the water shedding exercise has been very effective in the long run.*

Further, there is a strong **principle of self-reliance.** Resources for a number of initiatives in the early years of the effort were secured from various government programs, such as social forestry, the Watershed Development Program, the Drought Prone Area Programme, the Rural Sanitation Programme, Women's Welfare, and others. Once the village had established a community-based and concerted effort, however, there has been an increasing orientation to raising their own resources. Apparently, no loan has been taken from the government nor were the benefits of any subsidies used in recent years. Also, the schedule caste population has not been allowed any benefits from the government, thus eliminating any room for discrimination. The village has and will always be self-reliant, says the Sarpanch.

Cooperation is also a strongly held value and practised very effectively. For example, during the 'Ganpathy Utsava', the village decided to have one idol instead of one in different sections – the Rs 21,000 which was thus saved was gifted to the wife of a Kargil martyr living in the neighboring village. Another example is the practice of 'samodayik kheti' where two or three families work collectively in each other's farm, thus solving the problem of labour unavailability, high wage rates and long distances for the manual labourer, while creating an environment of sharing and thereby social cohesion.

2.1.5 Leadership, Hurdles and Issues

The unquestionable leader of this transformation appears to be the long-standing Sarpanch Mr Popatrao Pawar. His level of education, exposure to other contexts, orientation to the writings and ideals of social leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jayprakash Narayan, Anna Hazare, Vinoba Bhave and Baba Amta are no doubt key to his leadership abilities and untiring efforts. While initially the support of his friends and youth groups in the village was also a key feature, the legitimacy gained from the early successes and the participatory methods adopted has resulted in his assuming a position of respect and leadership in the community, with even his elders acknowledgement of his capabilities. Mr Pawar is today a member of several committees involved in development efforts elsewhere in the country. He has represented India at international conferences including at SAARC, delivers guest lectures at several universities and colleges, and has been advisor to the Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan governments in replicating the Water Shedding programme in their states. The village itself has several national and international visitors who spend time in the village examining the self-sustained and self-sufficiency model.

The road, however, had been rocky in the beginning when Mr Pawar faced **fierce opposition by the residents** and **political interference**. Though its **early successes** in re-afforestation, which were helpful in demonstrating the positive results of collective action and systematic wasteland regeneration was through working closely with the forest department, **this relationship between the Forest Department and the villages was painfully developed.** Presently, the entire management of the 70 ha of forest land under the village is the villagers' responsibility; the department even does not have a guard to protect the reserves. However, building this relationship took time and sustained effort. In 1992, the forest department rejected the request of the villagers as earlier joint efforts by the department and villagers had been destroyed by free grazing. However, the villager's **persistence made the department reconsider in** 1994, bringing the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme to the village. These efforts along with **strict rule enforcement**

produced **visible results**. Under JFM and EGS water and soil conservation works were taken up in the upper reaches.

Support of the community was not easy to get either. Mired in poverty, conflict and uncertainty, trust was low and cohesion had been lost. Extensive work with the community was necessary in the beginning, explaining how and why the initial efforts were to be made. What helped was one, **the acuteness and commonality of the water problem** and two, the **support and efforts of the youth** groups in the village. **Quick success** in terms of water availability and the **cultural homogeniety** no doubt played an equally important role. **Transparent and participatory decision-making** were clearly other factors.

In all, the lessons of integrated village development and planning from this example are substantial and offer a fair template for application in other similar contexts. These are discussed later, in the last section.

2.2   GANGADEVIPALLI, ANDHRA PRADESH

Though less widely known nationally than Hiware Bazar, Gangadevipalli, a small village of 256 households in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh, has attracted wide attention in the state for the notably enlightened local governance and community-wide involvement in its transformation. With agriculture as its main economic base but low yields and single cropping due to lack of adequate irrigation, the village was quite a typical Indian village. Cotton mills nearby provided some employment, and a number of people had jobs in nearby towns, but there was a generally low economic base and few livelihood options. Till 1994 Gangadevipalli was a small hamlet on the outskirts of Machapur Gram Panchayat – and therefore had little attention from or involvement in Panchayat affairs.

2.2.1   What the village was like

In the seventies Gangadevipally was like any normal village in India with multiple social, economic and political problems. The village lacked basic amenities such as water supply and sanitation facilities, primary health, education facilities and other infrastructure. Children dropped out of school and illiteracy was normal. The village was and is a fully agriculture-based economy with families having very small and marginal land holdings. There was a major drinking water problem with only one well in the entire village. Children were also made to drop out of the schools and work in the fields. Expectations and reliance on external assistance was high but help from government or any other organization was not readily forthcoming as the conditions in the village including the lack of unity among the community and cooperation among the leaders did not presage any positive results. Unrest, apathy, hopelessness were words frequently used to describe the state of the village then. It was remote and cut-off from the Gram Panchayat. Alcoholism was a huge problem and led to frequent conflicts in households and disputes in the village besides causing extensive indebtedness, loss of livelihoods and financial ruin for many families.

2.2.2   What Gangadevapalli is like now

Today this village has pucca houses, piped water supply and total sanitation, good roads, power supply and street lighting, full literacy including among adults under the age of 50, 100%

family planning, 100% house tax collection, 100% small savings, 100% electricity bill collection, 100% filtered water to the entire village and 100% abolition of child labour with all children attending school, among many other admirable achievements. All people under the age of 50 have been taught to read and write. With full sanitation, the village won the Nirmal Gram Puraskar in 2007. The school has been upgraded to a high school and all children attend. The villagers have converted an existing irrigation tank into percolation tank for water recharge that will ensure that the irrigation and drinking water bore-wells will have sufficient water for present and future generations. The community is making further effort to construct check-dams and percolation ponds for ground water improvement.

The traditional crops such as cotton, paddy, chilli, maize and pulses were characteristic of the farmer's choices, most of them water-intensive. With improved irrigational practices and technology, such as drip irrigation and the sprinkler systems, village women now produce vegetables in 150 acres and have increased their income by 30-40% compared to the previous years. The women are playing a key role in the vegetable cultivation.

All households have piped water supply, TV, telephone, power, access to credit and life and crop insurance. Since the drinking water in the area was fluoride contaminated, a Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant has been installed to supply safe drinking water to every family in the village. Mechanisms of conflict resolution, a local TV channel and community radio for education and news, a bank, agriculture resource center and other facilities make life easier and the community productive. Modern farm equipment such as crop-harvesters are used by the villagers for paddy, maize and other crops, saving time, energy and money.

2.2.3   How did the change happen

According to the villagers, the change began with **the determination of one** Mr Kusam Raja Mouli – the current Sarpanch, to change the village situation. His idea of a village where unity prevails and people cooperate, participate in innovative activities using local resources rather than being desperate for external assistance, was the driving force. By sharing his dreams and convincing some of the community leaders he was able to form a committee for total prohibition and initiated a **drive against the sale and consumption of alcohol**. Soon the whole community was involved in bringing about total prohibition and in 1982 it was successfully implemented. As an initial step, they succeeded in completely enforcing the ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol, a situation which has reportedly continued unbroken till date. This not only brought peace to the community, but also demonstrated the possibility of concerted community action.

The next significant step was to address the **drinking water problem** in the village. There was only one well located some distance outside the village and water collection for household consumption took almost two to three hours daily for the women. The village leaders, led by Raja Mouli, approached Bala Vikasa Social Service Society, an NGO based in Warangal, for assistance in solving the drinking water problem. The organization agreed to help design a piped-water supply system, with an overhead water tank, and to provide 15% of the costs. The rest was to be raised by the village – with 18 motivators and groups of villagers doing the rounds of every household in two months the necessary Rs 65,000 was collected, and the villagers contributed land and voluntary labour to realize the project.

Key measures that underpinned success was the formation of a Water Committee to **systematically plan and coordinate** this effort, and to **develop and strictly enforce rules for judicious use of water** for sustainability. After the money was collected and the system constructed, the water committee continues to regulate the use of the water for equal access and fair distribution, collects the fees/ charges and oversees its operation, new connections and maintenance. Water supply is disconnected if misused or any of the rules are broken, and a fine of Rs 100 and reconnection charges are imposed. In all, there has been uninterrupted water supply since the system was installed in the early nineties.

This success further encouraged the villagers "to dream together and work together". **More committees were set up,** including one for resolving conflicts, and **rules were made to regulate** community life and develop fair systems. Fines were imposed for non-compliance, and the income was productively used to develop various facilities and amenities in the village. For example, income from the resolution of conflicts by the relevant committee has been used to contribute towards the development of an independent electricity sub-station for the village, and ensure uninterrupted power supply for irrigation and domestic use. It has also helped to install 60 street lights where none existed a decade ago.

Total sanitation was also achieved, with support from the government program, and use of the village funds to subsidize lower income families. The effort was coordinated by the Sanitation Committee, which not only organized the construction of the individual sanitary facilities (ISLs), but also developed strict rules to stop open defecation and later littering, use of plastic bags, etc. Again, the imposition of fines for non-compliance, strict committee and community monitoring, transparent use of funds collected and open and fair dispute resolution were key features underlying success. Similarly, funds have been procured from government and donors by the Education Committee to develop and upgrade the school from 4th grade to 7th and thereafter to a high school, with sufficient infrastructure in the school. With funds collected from resolving disputes among the villagers, a streetlight program was also initiated.

Another concern was the high fluoride content in the drinking water, and support for a RO plant came with the growing recognition of the village propensity to manage public services fairly and sustainably. TATA Projects, made aware of the fluoride issue, donated the water filtration plant to the village absolutely free of cost on condition of systematic operation and internal raising of operation costs. Now the village has completely filtered water, a per-head quantity available in cans from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. everyday to every household with a card system. Additional water is available on payment. Then the Gram Sabha formed a committee for the Greenery Project in the village. Each household was asked to sow trees within their lands and also by the side of the road in front of their homes. They were made personally responsible for those trees. The rules were also strict. In case the villagers did not take care of their planted trees they were not given the can of drinking water.

Other facilities, amenities and health awareness are also the result of the "committee" mechanism. The Ganga Dish Committee was formed in 1997 for delivery of cable TV to every household; they collect installation and monthly fees, but maintain and repair free of cost. The Health Committee raises awareness of disease and public health norms, counsels for appropriate family planning interventions and undertakes aids awareness. The Loans Committee counsels and supports bank

linkages to avoid usury and prevent debt-related suicides; the local banks help in follow up for timely repayments.

Rule adherence is now a norm and has encouraged good citizenship. All bills and public fines are readily paid. There are 256 houses and other institutions. Total amount payable as tax to the Gram Panchayat by all the houses and institutions put together is Rs. 95,706, which is always collected in time. Electricity, water and other cesses are also easily collected, and ensure resource availability for proper maintenance and upgradation of community facilities. Of the revenues generated through water tank and the drinking water purification projects, the Water Committee has over time allocated an approximate amount of Rs. 13 lakhs for different development activities in the village.

2.2.4 Central features of the Gangadevapalli transformation

As in the case of Hiware Bazar, **committed leadership, full community involvement, consensual and participatory rule-making**, and **strict enforcement** emerge as key characteristics of the process of change, with systematic planning from an early stage. Formation of Committees for systematic planning and transparent implementation, and the **mobilization and pooling of resources from various sources** from government, banks, other donors, NGOs and community are key special motifs in the success of Gangadevapalli's efforts. They have 22 Committees at present which provides space for involvement of all adult citizens and coordinates every aspect of village life; and in resources, they have pooled more than Rs. 15 lakhs from various non-government program sources, not counting the value of voluntary labour contributions towards village development.

Though legally it is the responsibility of the Gram Panchyat to provide for the primary needs of the community, in Gangadevapalli the responsibility is widely shared through the Committee system. This leaves the Panchayat President (Sarpanch) energy and time to effectively mobilize resources to support village development from various sources. The Committees provide a mechanism for sharing of responsibilities and full participation in planning and implementation to the citizens. Backed by frequent village meetings – Gram Sabhas – almost twice a month, full, responsible and continuous participation in ensured.

Committees are elected by/in the Gram Sabha, and have rules for systematic, transparent and accountable functioning. Each has a President and 1/3 members are rotated every year. All new projects are announced publicly in the village through microphone. The Sarpanch Mr. Rajmouli has ensured strong leadership in each and every committee. An all-committee "Coordination Committee" is headed by the Gram Panchayat President, and consists of presidents and secretaries of all the existing committees. If there is any laxity in the functioning and implementation of any decision by any sectoral/service-providing/ project committee, the Coordination Committee intervenes, trouble shoots and restores smooth discharge of service. **Systematic micro plan** for integrated development of the village is routinely prepared every year in the community, and various Committees accordingly make efforts in mobilizing resources and in implementation. Youth and children are also involved to ensure sustainability of community citizenship and development efforts. Innovations in Panchayat design has also set unique trajectories and added strength and quality to the community development efforts by addressing gender equity and women's development issues. Gangadevipally bifurcated from Machapur Gram Panchyath in 1994.

By this time, the villagers had already set the collective-action trend in community development. To continue this, and with the self-conscious pride in innovation and in being unique, the villagers unanimously decided to have 100% women's leadership and elected all women representatives in the 1995 Gram Panchayat election, though only 3 seats were reserved for women by law. With previous experience in community action – through participation in the various Committees – the women reportedly displayed excellent leadership and governance skill, and the village decided to continue in the same pattern in the next elections too. The all-women leadership in Gram Panchayat during the first 10 years has promoted attention to equity, gender-relations and environmental issues through development committees such as Women Problems Resolving Committee, Health Committee and Clean and Green Committee, along with initiatives for financial and technological advance through Loans Recovery Committee, Ganga Dish Committee (for cable TV), Education Committee etc.

The Village Panchayat office is considered the **Village Secretariat.** The office is equipped with computers and has internet access. Baseline data has been systematically collected and is used for effective monitoring and delivery of services to the citizens.

Innovative and enterprising resource mobilization has been another key feature in Gangadevipalli's success. From the first effort at collecting the 15% contribution for the water supply system, which was systematically organized with the help of the NGO, other funds have been mobilised and/or given by various organizations and the government programs. Funds for total sanitation, watershed efforts, etc have been mobilized from government projects, while Tata Projects donated the RO plant on the strength of the community's ability to organize collective delivery of the service. The Andhra Bank Chairman on his visit to the village decided that it should be adopted as the Pattabhi Model Village, and arranged for the Bank to also donate Rs. 5 lakh to support construction of a veterinary hospital. The District Collector sanctioned Rs. 2 lakh for the equipments and medicines. LIC of India adopted this village and declared it as BHIMAGRAM, and observing the prompt payment of all the policy premiums in the village, gave an award of Rs. 25,000. This money was used in extending the school building.

Revenue from payments of taxes, fees and fines not only enable operation, repairs and maintenance of various projects, but many projects specially the water supply project have become the source of surplus funds for village development due to the innovative approach. A total of Rs 20 lakhs was generated through water tank and water purification project since 1993, and even after maintenance expenses and spending substantial amounts for development programs, they maintain a surplus. Additional resources are generated innovatively, for example, from visitors. The water committee charges an amount of Rs. 1,600 from each group visiting the village in recent times and has pooled about Rs. 75,000 which is to be utilized for capacity building of the villagers.

2.2.5 Leadership, Hurdles and Issues

As with every such individual initiative, the would-be leader Mr Rajmouli faced a lot of resistance and some opposition in the beginning, though the latter was tempered due to his reputation and standing in the village. Nevertheless, in a village where addictions and attendant issues of indebtness and conflicts were the norm, factionalism was rife and therefore community-level interventions were hard to achieve. Persistence and persuasion, plus the eventual support of other elders and

different leaders in the community, and most importantly, mobilization of the women, were the keys to the successful imposition of total prohibition, though the process was laborious and long. It was this success that boosted community cohesion and action on other fronts subsequently. Taking on a community-wide problem of domestic water scarcity and resolving it successfully with community involvement reinforced these attributes, and there appears to have been no looking back since then.

Achievement of the water supply and school upgradation projects were relatively easier, but the total sanitation effort posed major behavioural hurdles. As had become the norm, the village formed the Sanitation Committee to undertake and execute the individual sanitary latrines (ISL) project. The committee ensured that ISLs were constructed in all the houses in the village; all were constructed in 3 months. But it was very hard to convince people, especially the men, to use them. Finally, a meeting of the Gram Sabha was held and the entire community agreed on the imposition of a fine of Rs.500 for every act of open defecation, and eventually, strict and fair implementation of that rule ensured total compliance. Today it is habitual, to the extent that daughters are only given in marriage to a family which has an ISL.

Inspired, right-thinking, and most importantly, "**participative leadership**" appears to be the key to the early successes which in turn engenders the faith in local and participatory planning efforts for village development that underpin snowballing community cohesion and concerted action. Sustained leadership – both de-jure and de-facto – also emerges as another important feature, for where it has not been so as in Piplantri the process has flagged to an extent. The counter examples of the other three prove that it is necessary for building sustainable community involvement and a 'self-governance ethic': this apparently has not had the time to develop sufficiently in the single tenure of the Piplantri Sarpanch, though he clearly continues to play a strong leadership role.

The legitimacy of the Sarpanch, the full involvement of the community in decision-making and rule-bound functioning of Committees appears to have precluded any major hurdles after the difficulties faced in achieving total sanitation. Apparently, there have been no major difficulties, though time and efforts are substantial in some instances such as funds for the irrigation project etc.

2.3   RAMACHANDRAPURAM, ANDHRA PRADESH

Ramachandrapuram is a small village with 471 households in Koheda Mandal of Karimnagar District which has achieved remarkable transformation through innovations in self-governance arrangements and participatory planning and development. The most interesting feature of this story of transformation is the structural innovations and the "village government" metaphor that carried the process, unlike the previous two examples – though even in the latter, partial constructions of a similar nature have been used. In any event, the developmental outcomes appear to be as dramatic as in the previous two examples.

2.3.1   What the village was like

Earlier, the village was a fairly typical Indian village, with a measure of poverty, low economic development, skeletal amenities and poor health and education facilities, poor connectivity, low employment and therefore seasonal and longer-term emigration, and similar other characteristics. Though with a substantial arable area, agriculture productivity was low for there was little irrigation,

and employment alternatives were few. In addition, there was a severe social and economic issue in the level of production, sale and consumption of liquor; high alcoholism and vices like gambling were commonplace. Liquor consumption was exceptionally high - liquor worth Rs. 6,000 to 7,000 was sold in the village every day. Worse, the practice was so rampant that it was sold even to school children, and addiction from an early age was commonplace.

Amenities were also problematic – with the water table sinking the fluoride content in the water was very high, and though water was available through the 8 handpumps in the village, the high contamination caused fluorosis, though many cases remained undetected. Basic infrastructure was poor - the village was accessible only by a kutcha road, there was no drainage system, initially none and then erratic power supply. School facilities were available, but drop-out rates were high – not only because of the social environment, but because the school itself functioned poorly with high teacher absenteeism and poor facilities.

2.3.2 What Ramachandrapuram is now

Through the efforts of the Panchayat, the situation has changed substantially in the last decade or so. The main business of the village – production and sale of liquor – is completely stopped and alcoholism is a thing of the past. The school is revitalized and well-equipped, and all children attend. There are two Anganwadi centres in the village, one in the school. The village has its own substation and uninterrupted power (for some hours) to the entire village. Every house is connected to a piped water system that draws from the river and avoids the fluoride-contaminated groundwater. With water availability and increased fodder cultivation the livestock population has gone up in the village by 8%, with higher milk production. The village now has pucca roads, and is well connected in all directions.

Irrigation systems have been introduced and land under cultivation has increased manifold, resulting in more than two-fold increase in average household income. Over 1900 acres of land is now being cultivated, over three times the land that was cultivated previously. Agriculture has diversified with the regular crops of groundnut and paddy continuing alongside cash crops and vegetables based on adoption of innovative irrigational techniques. The annual turnover from all the agricultural activities in Ramchandrapur is now worth over Rs. 3.5 crore.

The practice of thrift-savings and insurance is now widespread. There are 29 SHGs, 7 farmers' groups and also a thrift group each for men and women. They also save through private savings. The village has 1,490 registered voters with 1,750 insurance policies, and a total premium payout of the village is between Rs. 30-40 lakhs. Individual household savings also amounts to about Rs. 40-50 lakh. Put together Rs. 1 crore is the collective annual saving in this small village.

Social consciousness and responsiveness has also increased - all the residents of Ramchandrapuram have pledged to donate their eyes after death.

2.3.3 How the transformation was undertaken

The first step along the road to change in Ramachandrapuram started with the eradication of the most flourishing business in the village – liquor production and sale - and the extensive alcoholism. The Ramchandrapur Panchayat constituted a committee of respected village leaders and Panchayat

members for eradication of alcoholism and decided to totally prohibit liquor in the village. This could be achieved through extensive discussion, house-to-house visits by members, close monitoring and establishment of rules. Though acceptance was slow, the public support in the Gram Sabha afforded a basis for enforcement of the ban. Today no liquor is available in the village.

The Sarpanch simultaneously attempted to revive the school and develop better quality education. At his request, a retired headmaster agreed to get involved, and look after the school; he does not take any remuneration. In addition, as a part of the ICDS project, he initiated two Anganwadi centres in the village. The pre-school children are escorted from home by the Anganwadi staff to ensure regular attendance.

The key innovation that has helped in the change process in Ramachandrapuram is the governance structure that the Gram Panchayat has adopted. First is the **"Cabinet system".** Unlike other Panchayats, the Ramchandrapur Panchayat has all the elected members constituting the "village cabinet", with each ward member acting as a "minister". A concept of individual ministries for different programs is practised, with each Minister having one portfolio. Each minister independently looks after the ministry he holds. All the ministers fully co-operate with the Sarpanch and try to minimize impediments to progress.

A complementary concept is that of a village **"Legislative Council",** wherein the Panchayat has made provision for elders to come together and work as the village legislative council for overall development. This is a first in Andhra Pradesh, perhaps in the country. However, since the village legislative council is not a statutory body, its advice would not be binding on the Panchayat. To enable this, Gram Sabha nominated each member of the Council to head the various committees of the Panchayat. Thus the Council members not only advise the "cabinet" – that is, the statutory, elected Panchayat, but are also enabled to serve the village in the role they play in the committees.

Generally the Sarpanch controls the village administration, but in this village, things are done differently. The entire administration is decentralized, with fifteen committees handling all the different programs. Each Committee is headed by the member of the "legislative council", and includes the respective "Minister" as the secretary. The Sarpanch does not interfere in the various committees' activities. Ministers and others meet at least once a month. In this system, the ward members, as ministers, hold responsibility for the portfolio across the village and thereby think of the village as a whole instead of just their ward or constituency.

Developmental activities appear to have progressed well under this innovation in the local governance structure. Infrastructure was the primary issue and the Panchayat has tackled each systematically. A major initial intervention was in developing an alternate source for drinking water, since the fluoride content in the groundwater was very high. They developed a piped-water supply system, through a combination of local contributions and government funds, which drew on water from the river through pipes and distributed it from two water tanks constructed for the purpose in the village. This enabled supply of uncontaminated water to all homes every day for about an hour. Water is chlorinated every day and the tank cleaned every week. The 8 hand pumps in the village now lie unused.

Another issue was power supply, without which irrigation was also a problem. With persistent requests the electricity board sanctioned a 33/11 substation for the village. To accommodate it the

Gram Panchayat raised the necessary funds (Rs. 40,000) from the villagers to buy an acre of land. Thereafter atleast 7 hours of uninterrupted power is assured. With that possibilities of irrigation were explored. The only river in the village was dry because of a nearby upstream dam, so the villagers decided to construct a subsurface dike to hold necessary water. With help from a donor they could lay a pipe from the river that supports irrigation through sprinkler systems.

To address sanitation issues with no drainage system in the village, the Gram Panchayat encouraged people to build soak pits near the discharge points. The water overflow from these pits are diverted into kitchen gardens in their own backyards. Members of the Panchayat Committee themselves went from house to house and convinced people of the advantages of following good sanitation practices.

With the growing faith of the villagers in the new system, conflict resolution is now managed by themselves within the community. Recourse to police and courts is avoided unless it is a criminal case, and the effort is to resolve all the other kinds of conflicts within the village through mediation.

2.3.4   Central features of the Ramachandrapuram transformation

The unique feature that appears to be the key in the transformation process of Ramachandrapuram is the very innovative and imagination-stirring design of the Gram Panchayat structure. While leadership, participatory decision-making, multi-source resource mobilization and sustained engagement by elected members are important parameters, as in the other cases, here the central factor that enables the three latter appears to be the innovative design of the governance structure. This is different from the three other cases where charismatic leadership appears to be the driving force and underpinning feature.

The structural innovation unleashes a number of positive energies. An important one is the village-wide engagement of all elected members, instead of a ward-specific, constituency-specific focus. Morever, **their focus is thematic, sectoral or programmatic** instead of geographical or sub-community (in the ward). Further, by eliciting the involvement of citizens in committees, wider participation, active support and ownership is ensured. And by having the most credible and respected elders who are part of the "legislative council" lead the committees, their wisdom, experience and support is also ensured.

Another important feature is the systematic approach to planning and implementation. With each "ministry" developing a plan to tackle issues pertaining to its portfolio and developing further facilities, and all the various initiatives integrated in a village plan, there is a coordinated approach to village development. With this approach, it is not surprising that the Panchayat has paid significant attention to developing a detailed and effective database of the village and residents for use in planning, implementation and monitoring. Even the approach to developing this was systematic – for example, an information booklet was designed to capture the information of each household; it has 150 questions which record in detail all aspects pertinent to their community. To develop the actual computerized database, the Gram Panchayat secretary was trained by APARD (the State SIRD) about the hardware and software, on data entry procedures and preparation of reports as necessary. This database now supports the village planning exercise which is therefore more accurate and information-based.

2.3.5 Leadership, hurdles and issues

Surprisingly, charismatic leadership is not as much a visible factor in Ramachandrapuram as in the other cases studied – it is more of "creative leadership" that is evident. Apparently the innovative design for the governance structure was the brainchild of the Sarpanch, as is the "creative integration" of various ministry plans and resolution of conflicts among governance actors. Further, participation is through this structure more than through the Gram Sabhas, though the latter are frequent and considered very important in getting all citizens on board in various projects. Moreover, many of the important decisions are taken in the Gram Sabha, or shared there for ratification.

The most significant hurdles were apparently in the first stage of removing the sway of alcohol in the village and imposing total prohibition. Not only was the process slow and required extensive household-level and individual-level engagement by members of the Committee that was formed for the purpose, but also accentuated conflict. This led to a perception by some members that they were "worsening the situation" rather than improving the village condition, and loss of motivation on their part. It was through a series of cycles of energetic effort and stepping back that eventually the effort gathered momentum and the ban attracted the support of the Gram Sabha.

Another issue is the raising of resources for development projects. While government programs are forthcoming and can accommodate many of the basic requirements in areas such as health and education, the issue of finding funds for larger capital investments in critical projects has been formidable. The village was constrained by its location, being downstream from the dam constructed on the nearby river, as well in being some distance from it. Further, groundwater was contaminated and not potable, so an alternate source was absolutely necessary. Yet the large investments required to source water from the river – both in the case of the drinking water project as well as the irrigation efforts – were apparently not possible within the rubric of existing government programs in either sector. The village had to raise funds from other sources, and this was difficult given the reputation of the village and the lack of information on possible sources. The drainage system still awaits such funding possibilities, though a plan has been drawn up.

2.4   PIPLANTRI, RAJASTHAN

Piplantri Gram Panchayat in the Rajsamand District of Rajasthan is another story of successful village development through effective and enterprising local self governance. The Panchayat is a "group Panchayat', consisting of 12 hamlets located in seven (earlier six) revenue villages, a distinctly different formation from the three other cases where development efforts generally took off after the village became a separate Panchayat. The Panchayat has a total estimated population currently of about 6500 (2001 Census records 5138), with 1100 households and additional immigrants working in the adjacent quarry. Less than 15% are BPL. The terrain is hilly and the largest business of marble quarrying (R.K. Marbles) in the state is located partly in the Panchayat area.

2.4.1   WHAT PIPLANTRI WAS BEFORE

Though the nearby quarry provided ample work opportunities to the Piplantri residents and therefore employment was not an issue, the village was not unlike most Indian villages in terms

of missing infrastructure, poor facilities and therefore poor quality of life. The hilly terrain and decades of unregulated use of the hillsides for grazing and timber had degraded the lands, and with loss of green cover, water tables had fallen, stream flows had reduced very substantially and wells ran dry. Reportedly only two wells nearer a valley remained full and women had to trudge the distance and carry the water back uphill. Without water, agriculture suffered and lands went untilled. There was little irrigation potential and the quarrying had led to soil pollution – the marble dust could blanket fields with a layer that hardened with moisture.

There were only two schools, one upto 8th class and the other upto 10th. Children had to reach another school 15 kms away for further study. Dropout rates were high and girls generally stayed home after 8th class, even if boys were sent to schools outside the village. The mid-day meal scheme was hardly working and the three anganwadis did not function well. The roads were narrowed by side-encroachment, unpaved, and there was no street-lighting or drainage system. Few households had individual sanitary facilities, and without adequate water that was not going to emerge.

2.4.2 What Piplantri is like now

Today this village has piped water supply to individual households, paved and relatively much wider roads, additional road networks, power supply and street lighting. There are two schools with secondary (10th class) and higher secondary (12th class) levels, and 11 upto the middle level (8th class). Schools are well-equipped with a full complement of teachers who attend regularly, adequate furniture and supplies, amenities such as water and sanitation facilities, cooking gas connections and play space and equipments. There are almost no dropouts and even girls study on till at least high school (12th standard). There are nine anganwadi kendras which work efficiently. A number of well-maintained common sanitary facilities, 60 dustbins with regular waste collection and household- level soakpits with kitchen gardens help keep the village environs hygienic. As a result, today Piplantri Gram Panchayat is known as a Nirmal Gram Panchayat, and has received the Award for total sanitation. It is also one of the villages recognized under the Pandit DeenDayal Upadhyaya Adarsh Gram Yojna of the Rajasthan government.

Health facilities are upgraded and working well, with three Primary Health Centres and one Ayurvedic Aushadhalaya. Other facilities and resource centers like a Kisan Seva Kendra, two ration shops, a Patwar Bhawan, a Community Hall, the Mahatma Gandhi Library and a herbal garden with solar powered water spinklers have been developed. All wells are flush with water, there are 50-odd handpumps. Agriculture has revived, and the common lands which were laid waste due to the dumping of quarry wastes are reclaimed and replanted. Over 1.5 lakh trees have been planted in the last 7-8 years. Effective watering and watch-and ward systems have been initiated to ensure plantation survival and protection from free grazing.

The Panchayat itself is revamped. Panchayat meetings (not just Gram Sabhas) are publicly notified and open to all; there are ample seats in the meeting room itself, signalling that all are welcome. Not only are statutory Gram Sabhas held but a number of other "aam sabhas" or open gatherings in various hamlets are held regularly. It has a new air-conditioned building, the Panchayat Bhavan. Village elders are consulted in every major decision and involved in some capacity or the other in all initiatives and programs.

The trend of emigration has also reversed. Not only has the growing quarry alongside attracted immigrants from other states who stay in the village, but earlier emigrants, such as those who had found long-term employment elsewhere, are now returning to their abandoned homes and participating actively in community deliberations.

2.4.3 The Process of Change

Unlike the previous three cases where transformation was crafted over a decade or more, the transformation of Piplantri has been fairly rapid, in just about 5 years. Also, Piplantri was not beset with any major social issue (like alcoholism in the other two cases); it was just at a low-level habitat rapidly deteriorating due to land degradation and water-table depletion, quite like the negative trajectory of Hiware Bazar before its revival. Unlike the latter, though, because of the rich quarry adjacent, employment was not an issue for the majority who were willing to undertake manual labour.

The transformation began with the election of Mr. Shyam Sunder Paliwal as Sarpanch in the 2005 elections. His political ambitions had not met with success before, but with the support of his father and his friends, who were respected village elders (including a previous Headmaster of the middle-school), he won that election. He was self-driven to craft substantial changes in his village, but was further inspired by the TV-coverage of Sarpanches being handed the "Nirmal Gaon Award" by the President: he was determined to make his village one and transform it from its present state.

The first initiative was to take up an issue that vexed many in the village – the issue of girls' schooling which was difficult or discontinued because of the 15km distance to the nearest town high school. The Sarpanch therefore set about upgrading the existing school to 12th grade, using the resources available under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. However, he went further – he prevailed on the community to donate land, money or labour, and the local quarry management to provide additional funds, to construct exceptional premises and equip it with furniture and facilities as good as "any English-medium city school". Extensive meetings with the community helped in this process, though the gatherings remained skeletal at first. The new school building, and premises for teacher accomodation cost Rs.20 lakh and offers the full range of courses including computer courses.

Support and advice on program opportunities was provided to the Sarpanch by the then Block Development Officer. With his support, the Sarpanch also initiated activities under the Total Sanitation Campaign, beginning with sourcing funds for construction of separate and high-quality toilet facilities for girls and boys in all existing (and the new) schools, a total of 17 facilities. Private household-level toilets were constructed for the 215 BPL families, with additional support from APL households. Common toilet facilities were also constructed in strategic locations, and child-friendly ones in the anganwadi. All households were persuaded to construct drains and soakpits in their respective backyards to keep the roads hygenic – the gain in terms of kitchen gardens, once demonstrated, was sufficient to motivate all.

Attention to detail, educational campaigns and hygiene training aided by UNICEF, who the Sarpanch persuaded to help, were key features of this effort. All educational premises are provided "cleanliness supplies" – soap with soap dish, acid bottles and brush for cleaning napkins,

tumblers and mugs, as well as supplies to improve children's hygiene such as nail cutters, mirror, comb, oil etc. Systems for household waste collection and regular cleaning of drains and public toilets were instituted with local waste bins, six lorries for waste collection, regular burning of garbage and additions to sanitation staff. Educational banners and posters for hygiene in all educational institutes, street squares and public buildings also boosted awareness and compliance.

The success of the TSC won the village the Nirmal Gram Award, and selection under the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Adarsh Gaon Yojana of the State, provided more resources for various initiatives. A pressing village issue, the falling level of ground water, could be addressed. Water harvesting through check dams on stream beds, rooftop rainwater collection in the schools and land treatment for retention was initiated through collective decision-making and pooling resources from different program sources and voluntary contributions. The quarry had earlier obtained permission (NOC) from the previous Panchayats to dump waste on the 34 hectares of village common land, and payment of a small (1%) royalty on all material quarried from Panchayat land. This dumping permission was revoked, and the company asked to clear the land by the Gram Sabha. 1.5 lakh trees have been planted on these denuded hillsides – it has been ritualized – people plant a tree when there is a birth of death in the family, women tie rakhis to the trees. Today all wells are full and there is plenty of water for irrigation in the check-dam, though pumping it uphill is energy-intensive. Some solar-powered pumps are being used to water plantation on public land, and efforts to extend such are on. With more water came greenery and now there is abundant fodder for the animals and plentiful harvests.

To meet drinking water needs, the Gram Sabha decided on a piped-water supply system. Using the opportunity provided by the Swajaldhara program, 13 piped water-supply schemes for potable water were developed in the 11 Panchayat wards, covering 800 plus households. 2 solar water pumps are installed to ensure supply, even if there is no electricity. Water and Cleanliness Committees were formed in 7 villages. Other facilities were also arranged – intra-village roads and inter-village connecting roads were constructed under the PMGSY. Watershed treatments were undertaken under the state government program. Additional government schools and various staff were added under SSA and the Adarsh Gram Yojana. An Ayurvedic Aushadhalaya was constructed under Guru Golwalkar Yojna; 50% of total expenditure was borne by the adjacent quarry company. The company has also contributed to other initiatives, including for 450 tree guards for plantation in local educational institutes and play-furniture for schools.

For facilities not covered by any programs – such as streetlighting – innovative means have been devised. Maintenance of streetlights and payment of electricity bills for the same is handled by villagers. When people demanded streetlights, an engineer was called to survey and give an estimate; it was about Rs.15-16 lakhs of installation cost and Rs. 50,000 as monthly electricity bill. Since the Gram Panchayat could not afford it, in the subsequent community discussions it was proposed that each house put a light on its roof. The Gram Panchayat invited applications from willing families to bear the operational costs of this one light, and the GP (Sarpanch) mobilized the high-power fitments and initial set-up costs (about Rs 700) from companies manufacturing the fixture. Today there are 350 such "street-lights".

Open decision-making and community involvement have been key instruments in these processes. The Sarpanch Sri Paliwal, on assuming office changed the way Panchayat meetings were conducted,

and also made sure meetings were held regularly. At that time, all the ward members and Sarpanch together decided to conduct the meetings openly, in the presence of community elders and other interested citizens. This initiatel a process of transparent and inclusive decision making, and active participation. With initial successes in respect of school upgradation and the Total Sanitation Award, villagers responded with greater participation and voluntary contributions of land, labour, time, ideas and external connections in higher government and industry. Today people trust the Panchayat, and its involvement in social dispute resolution and settling conflicts is substantial.

2.4.4 Central features of the Piplantri transformation

In Piplantri, there are three central features that are startlingly strong. One is the high drive of the erstwhile Sarpanch – a different Sarpanch is in position after the 2010 elections as the seat became reserved – to "achieve results". The second is the systematic and full use of all available government programs to develop the basic facilities and amenities in the village. Third is the creative sourcing of additional "CSR" resources from a variety of sources, from the adjacent quarrying company to electrical fixture manufacturers. Principled stands on waste dumping, need to offset pollution and land usage and harmonious labour relationships with the quarrying company have been central features in this respect. For example, in a context where quarry owners typically prefer non-Rajasthani migrant labour to avoid labour-handling problems, the adjacent quarry, the largest in the state, uses all the labour Piplantri can offer without any issue. Morever, the additional immigrant labour is well treated as 'guests' in the village, though rents are high. Further, the Panchayats refusal of the NOC for dumping wastes has actually forced the company to adopt the cleanest quarrying practices possible in the region, and earned it an international reputation.

People's participation in the decision-making and in developmental efforts are no doubt another mainstay, and have been crucial to the success of the ex-Sarpanch's initiatives. However, they are evident as a critical but not driving factor in Piplantri. The motive force clearly comes from the ex - Sarpanch's drive to achieve a radical transformation, despite his limited education, relatively less exceptional social inspiration and no "spearheading group" as say, compared to the case of Hiware Bazar – this is clearly a case of "determined individual leadership". That is not to reduce the importance of the support garnered and participation from elders and lay villagers alike, but the "charismatic leadership" evident in some other cases is not a central feature. On the other hand, the Piplantri experience demonstrates a relatively simpler, less time-consuming and more replicable process.

2.5 EMERGENT COMMON FEATURES AND DIVERGENCES

Examination of the four cases of 'suo-moto' village development and enterprising local self-governance surfaces startling commonalities in both form and content that readily suggest a 'model' for village planning and development. In the light of the fact that these are all examples where the change-processes were self-initiated and followed a locally rooted and practically implementable trajectory, the strength and relevance of this model to other locations is, arguably, superior to theoretically or academically generated templates for a proper village-development process. Moreover, the initial conditions are close to generic, and the contextual conditions varied enough to suggest that this emergent model is valid across a large range of locations.

To derive a process- model that can provide the underpinnings for a 'Manual' we examine below the process and content commonalities across the four examples and in the next section, the unique features and divergences that illuminate some key aspects of the process.

2.5.1 Common Features of the Village Development and Change Process

The important features to examine in respect of the trajectory of change in the four examples are suggested by the need to find a model that can be translated into a Manual, with step-wise directions for users to follow. One approach is to examine the answers that emerge in each case to the following questions –

- Who initiated the process?
- How did it start?
- What was the first step?
- How was the community mobilized?
- What mechanisms were used for extensive community involvement?
- Where did the resources come from, or how were they mobilized?
- What hurdles were faced?
- How were the hurdles tackled?
- What features have enabled ownership and sustainability?

The answers to these questions, compared across the examples, provide the key features of a model of village development and planning. The features of the village cases on each of the relevant parameters are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Commonalities in village development trajectories

No	Aspect		Hiware Bazar	Gangadevapalli	Ramachan-drapuram	Piplantri
1	**Initiation by**		Individual / Youth Group	Individual	Individual	Individual
2	**Leadership**	**Motive force**	Sarpanch (& friends)	Sarpanch & Committee Presidents	Sarpanch and Ward Members, Village elders	Sarpanch
		Character-istics	College educated, inspired socially motivated	Educated, inspired socially motivated	Educated, inspired socially motivated	8th class, achievement-oriented
		Mecha-nisms of legitima-tion	Youth Groups Participatory approach	Village leaders Participatory approach	Village elders Participatory approach	Section of village elders, transparency
3	**Community Involvement Mechanism**		Youth groups Gram Sabha	Committees Gram Sabha	Village Parliament Committees	Aam sabhas, Open Panchayat

No	Aspect		Hiware Bazar	Gangadevapalli	Ramachan-drapuram	Piplantri
4	**First initiative**		Remove social vices	Remove social vices	Remove social vices, prohibition	Aam sabhas, Open Panchayat
5	**First development effort**		Address water scarcity	Address drinking water problem	Revive school system, involve retd. Headmaster	Upgrade school, building, TSC
6	**Resource Mobiliz-ation**	Timing	After problem identification and initial planning	After problem identification and initial planning	After problem identification and initial planning	After problem identification and initial planning
		First source	Govt. program	NGO	Govt. program	Govt. program
		Respon-sibility	Sarpanch & youth supporters	Sarpanch and as-sociates	Sarpanch, Ward members, committees	Sarpanch, Sec, BDO
		Sources	Initially govt programs, then from community + govt. allocations	NGO, Govt programs, Banks, Corporates	Govt. programs, companies, community contacts	Govt. Programs, local & other companies,
		Community contribu-tion	Voluntary labour, later funds too.	Voluntary labour, organizing, operating, monitoring	Voluntary labour, organizing, oper-ating, monitoring (in committees)	Voluntary labour, suggestions
7	**Re-visioning Panchayat structure/ operation**		Panchayat called "Village Sansad"	Panchayat as "Village Secretariat"	Panchayat as "Village Govt" with Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Soudha	"Open Panchayat"
8	**Timeframe**		20+ years	12 -15 years	10-12 years	5+ years
9	**Integrated Planning**					
	When started		After initial 10-12 years	After first 7-8 years	After initial 7-8 years	After 3-4 years
	Who does		Panchayat	Panchayat	Panchayat	NGO with Panchayat support
	Need identification, Proposals development		Panchayat, Gram Sabha	Panchayat, Committees, Gram Sabha	Committees, Panchayat, Gram Sabha	Sarpanch & ward members, Aam Sabhas
	Community involvement		Gram Sabhas for ideas, discussion of proposals, final plan	Gram Sabhas for ideas, committee election, discussion of proposals and setting rules, Committee develops details	Committees for ideas, Gram Sabhas for committee election, discussion of proposals and finalization	Sarpanch with others generate ideas, Aam Sabha discussion
	Finalization		Panchayat	Panchayat	Panchayat	Panchayat

2.5.2   Important Dimensions of Development & Planning Process

The examination of the successful cases of village transformation by Gram Panchayats through empowered local governance has been revelatory in its divergences from the typical approach to local integrated development and planning that is prescribed and required by higher governments. It is important to note these differences, so that the learnings can not only be incorporated into the Manual to be designed, but more important, inform the design of frameworks, guidelines and timelines set by higher governments, for planning by Panchayats.

1. **The starting point for transformative village development planning is NOT integrated, departmental/sectoral or program/ scheme directed planning.**

    Even less is it planning and budget preparation for different sectoral and departmental schemes. The standard (ideal) models of village planning, either integrated or sectoral, departmental or scheme-directed, are in one or the other of three trajectories (unless it is completely adhoc). In one model it starts with need identification, assessment of existing situation (sometimes participatory), finding and/or assembling the relevant data, identifying alternate or a feasible way of meeting the need, projectization and budget development. Another, more future-directed process starts with 'visioning' a desired future and identifying requirements (often derided as a 'wish-list'), followed by assembling of baseline data and identification of available resources – particularly available government programs   or schemes programs – and developing suitable projects and budgets to utilize the available resources. A third way is program or scheme directed – the existing government program and available resources are explained, including what useful initiatives to improve village conditions can be realized under that, and possible projects and budgets are identified.

2. **The process begins with resolution of ONE major, community-wide issue.**

    The developmental trajectory starts with resolution of ONE critical and major issue – such as water supply – that affects everyone in the community. This is often preceded by years of effort to address a social issue (such as alcoholism) by the spearheading group, who have by then developed sufficient credibility to bring together most of the community on the development issue. Among our cases, the Piplantri experience was the only one without this background; the Sarpanch had the backing of some village elders but had not established a record of social engagement. The experience there is therefore different, with the Sarpanch facing more opposition and hurdles, and much less community involvement at the beginning.

3. **Resolution of that one critical issue is by transparent decision-making and with community involvement.**

    Community involvement in the resolution of the first critical issue taken up is crucial to both the success of that solution as well as the launching pad for participatory village development and empowered local governance subsequently. The positive material gains from the success demonstrate that community participation and/or voluntary contribution does yield rich dividends that are tangible and useful. Moreover, such community involvement is made possible due to the high credibility of the "leader" – in all these cases the Sarpanch – which in turn is established by their prior record of social engagement. In the one exception (Piplantri) the Sarpanch did not have this but did have the support of significant and respected elders in

the community, from which followed acceptance and rallying-around by some segments of the community; he himself also wielded a degree of power, sufficient to mobilise attendance at the Aam Sabhas he conducted in different hamlets in the beginning.

4.   **Integrated development planning emerges later in the process, often after a number of years of systematic "problem solving".**

There is no integrated or even systematic sectoral/ program-directed planning at the start. The process begins with a "problem solving" approach, in respect of one critical issue/problem in the village that affects almost every household. It is AFTER this is successfully resolved – and in some cases a number of other separate problems after that – that any integrated planning is set in place. The successful resolution of the critical problems, in a participatory and transparent way, is the foundation on which the credibility of the leader/Sarpanch and spearheading team is built and community trust in Panchayat efforts are developed sufficiently to take on systematic and formal processes later. Though by now at least three of the cases studied were doing systematic annual planning, the systems had been established after years of a "problem solving" approach.

5.   **The process is internally motivated and initiated, not initiated from the outside either by civil society or government, though substantially supported by either or both in all cases.**

In every case, the initiation of and motive force for the process has come from the "inside' – from a village resident who was elected as the Sarpanch. In no case was a direct external impetus evident. In fact, in some cases, external attempts had failed so spectacularly and regular public systems (such as schools) were functioning so poorly that state developmental agencies had given up or refused to grant more support. That is not to say that there was no external support – there was, often from early in the process, such as in Piplantri where the BDO in position provided all information and helped design the projects, or in Gangadevapalli where the local NGO agreed to help with funds if there was a measure of village contribution.

6.   **The internal initiator is the Sarpanch, with a core internal (spearheading) group or support from such and external support from govt/NGOs.**

The Sarpanch emerges as the crucial leader in all four cases, supported by a 'team' of sorts – either of a peer group of friends as in Hiware Bazar or the 'Council' in Ramachandrapuram or the 'elders' supporting the Sarpanch in Piplantri. This resonates with other known experiences of successful transformation (eg., Ralegoan Sidhi), where there is always one internal 'leader' – in these cases the formal position of Sarpanch with developmental responsibilities and the individual initiatives coalesce to produce sustained leadership. Also, though in all cases the extensive involvement of the community in the decision-making is key to the success, there is clearly a smaller nucleus or team that leads the efforts, strategizes, mobilizes the community and organizes contributions.

7.   **Watershed development, and planning for water supply and use is a common st arting point.**

A startling revelation was that the first developmental issue to be addressed was common

across all four cases – the lack of water stemming from land degradation. In Piplantri, it accompanied the attention to raising school level, but nevertheless, according to the Sarpanch, water scarcity was the first issue that surfaced in the initial Aam Sabhas. Also surprising is that in at least three of the four cases, watershed treatment and other efforts had been tried a number of times before, but had quickly fallen apart without dramatic success. This is revealing, for it points out the difference between external intervention (with its own different design/process) and internally-initiated processes.

8.   **Atleast three dimensions are addressed together in resolving an issue and/or developing a facility or amenity – finding the solution (project), rules for effective operation and an organizational mechanism for operation, maintenance and rule enforcement.**

A key to the success and sustainability of the efforts in all four instances is that the solutions devised to the issues were not planned as "projects" but developed as full service-providing initiatives. In each case, the 'project' – water supply system, water harvesting structures, school development, sanitation initiatives etc – was planned and executed along with development of rules for successful operation and organizational mechanisms for their use, operation and maintenance, and most importantly, for rule enforcement. Success and sustainability was ensured with the simultaneous attention to all three dimensions, which was possible because of the internal process/project 'ownership' by the Panchayat and the community – a fact often forgotten in the village-development planning through external programmatic means.

9.   **Community-wide involvement, but using a variety of mechanisms (not just Gram Sabhas!).**

In each instance, transparent and inclusive decision-making and community involvement in planning and implementation is clearly central to the success both of the various development initiatives as well as in building local self-governance. However, it is equally noteworthy that such involvement is not through Gram Sabhas only – though that is clearly a very effective mechanism. The more telling discovery is that other methods of community involvement are equally effective, such as the many committees in Gangadevapalli, the "Village Council" and sectoral committees in Ramachandrapuram and the 'Aam Sabhas" (hamlet-level gatherings) at Piplantri. The keys are complete transparency and extensive involvement of as many of the community as are willing. A variety of optional structural arrangements could be devised as options for Panchayats to choose from depending on the context attributes.

10. **Use of symbolic nomenclature/terms to convey picture of "local government."**

In almost all cases (except Piplantri) the Village Panchayat was called differently in the local parlance, conveying the idea of a 'village government'. Not only did it establish the identity of the Panchayat in terms that the community could relate to, it also conveyed in some form the functions and roles of the Panchayat, the members and the community. As the Sarpanch of Gangadevapalli explained – "People understand 'government', Secretariat, etc... when we call the Panchayat as 'Village Secretariat', they can then relate and expect things from the Panchayat that they expect from the government ....but since they are able to see, to participate, they can also see the difficulties and help to solve them.... they feel empowered and happy to join in 'government'.....".

DESIGN OF MANUAL : PARAMETERS

This project/ exercise has been fully directed to the preparation of a **Manual for Village Planning and Development**, based on the study of actual cases of significant village development achieved by active Panchayats. In India, Panchayats have historically been seen primarily as 'developmental' in nature, both in the Gandhian imagination as well as in the programmatic efforts initiated variously by the national and state governments since the 1950s. The Constitutional provision for establishment of local self-governance in the country also makes planning for "economic development and social justice" a primary function of Panchayats, particularly of Gram Panchayats. Initiative, ideas, energies and know-how, however, appear to be sparse at that level, and in general, significant efforts at systematic planning for village development by Gram Panchayats and concerted implementation of self-initiated projects have been missing.

Sources of information and guidance for local-level actors, on what is possible and how local development efforts can be undertaken for full and fruitful use of available governmental and other resources also appear to be thin. Guidelines, directives and manuals currently available do not appear to be directed for use by local actors who face many limitations in dealing with governmental apparatus, formats and language. Yet despite this, there appeared to be some Gram Panchayats and villages which have utilized the spaces and resources provided by the formation of local governments to radically transform their villages and communities and achieve amazing degrees of change. How has this been achieved? What was the process that was applied? Is there any commonality in the trajectory of change in these cases? These questions have not been systematically examined in relation to most cases of impressive village transformation through Panchayat initiative. Since one of the prime goals of local governance is the kind of village development that has been achieved in these cases, it was envisaged that understanding these successful cases of local self-governance and local development management by Panchayats can help elucidate a grounded and practical process that could be widely disseminated for use by local actors in other Panchayats.

It was therefore conceived that an easy-to-use, simple, how-to manual for integrated village development planning and management could be developed based on an examination of such successful cases which could be distributed widely for use by Gram Panchayat elected representatives, functionaries and development organizations. This project was therefore accordingly designed. Though there have been revisions in approach and scope as the work progressed, the central objective of preparation of the basic text of a Manual for Integrated Village Planning and Development has remained intact and become better defined.

The decisions on some parameters for design of the Manual were taken after an initial exercise of examining the Hiware Bazar experience. These decisions, and the underlying rationales as discussed are set out here. These decisions have been to a large extent borne out by the examination of other cases, and subsequent interactions with people in the field.

3.1   TARGET USER GROUPS

Though the Project began with the idea that a generic Manual for village development could be

prepared, it became clearer after the initial work, that a Manual, to be effective and useful, has to be carefully designed keeping in mind the target user groups. Three issues were pertinent in this respect – the level of Panchayat, therefore the characteristics of the users in terms of educational levels, language familiarity and acceptability of perspectives, and finally, the roles expected of them in local governance.

It was decided (see Annexure I) that users at the Gram Panchayat level were to be the primary target user groups which would be the 'design group', though the manual could be used at other levels below the Panchayat such as wards/ palli/ hamlets, or at higher levels above such as at block and district. However, the central aim would be to inspire elected representatives and/or Panchayat functionaries at the Gram Panchayat to initiate similar efforts and to provide a simple guide to how they could proceed. **The primary users of the manual would therefore include Sarpanch, elected ward members, members of various Panchayat Committees, functionaries of Panchayats (eg., Panchayat Secretary) members and office-holders of active CBOs and NGOs working at Panchayat level and active members of the community. It was to be designed keeping these groups in mind.**

There were three reasons for targeting these groups. First, planning for integrated village development was the primary responsibility endowed to Gram Panchayats, and elected representatives and Panchayat staff were expected to anchor the process; yet capacities were perhaps weakest at this level in most places. Conversely, weak capacities also meant that all existing guidelines, manuals and similar documents were unlikely to be accessible and effectively comprehensible, which indicated an urgent need for a simpler guiding document designed explicitly to be accessible to users at this level. Second, the successful cases of Panchayat-led village development that are increasingly being identified had all been initiated and effectively managed at this level. Third, and most importantly, direct involvement of citizens in local development decision-making was possible only at this level and below – perhaps itself an explanation behind the emergence of the successes that had been noted.

Clearly, developing a user manual for these groups presented sharply different considerations in content and design from developing a "Village Planning Manual" for use by development professionals or functionaries at higher levels. These were therefore to be taken on board.

3.2   DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Identification of the target groups immediately sets pointers for design of the Manual. This includes aspects of intent, content, size, language, format and overall design.

Intent: Since the intention is that the Manual should be used as a handbook or guide to undertaking village development by the user groups, it must first be seen to be useful and comprehensible. To be considered useful, it must necessarily be helpful in achievement of the user's goals – for example, in helping the elected representative gain the confidence and support of his constituency and in helping the Panchayat Secretary fill his plan-preparation and reporting tasks. That is, its usefulness in this respect should be readily apparent to the user.

Also, to enhance the possibility of it actually being used, the Manual would have to be "inspirational", in that it provides concrete examples of what has been done by similar people

elsewhere, and clearly illustrates the possibility of similar changes in the user's location.

Content: In line with the above, the content should therefore be both practical and geared to achievement of visible outputs in terms of local development, and not just the preparation of a plan or budget for submission to higher levels of government. While this does not preclude its utility for preparation of plans for village development or for various schemes etc., the Manual should not be geared to that end. That is, the content should focus on how to transform villages rather than how to prepare plans or budgets to transform villages.

Clearly, the content needs to be presented in terms of "*simple steps*" to initiate and undertake village development and strengthen local governance, rather than descriptions of a planning and development process. Also, examples of how it has been effectively achieved elsewhere would help to demonstrate the feasibility of achieving the same in the user's context. This implies two things. One, that the illustrations/ examples used should be acceptable and easily related to the user's context – it should be 'similar' enough for acceptability. Two, the content should also make the possibility of village development, based on the experience of successes elsewhere, realistic in terms of achievements as well as issues and hurdles faced, timeframes, extent of efforts etc.

Language: Many users at this level, particularly among elected representatives, are likely to be unlettered or with low educational attainment, which is therefore a formidable barrier to the use of any Manual. Realistically, therefore, the Manual should not centrally be aimed at this subset among the target user groups – that is, a practical approach would be to assume it will primarily be used by those people among the target groups who have at least a middle-school education and design accordingly, while keeping the content and presentation simple enough for use by others. Making it completely pictorial would not only be difficult but is likely to substantially reduce its effectiveness, for the process of local development is sufficiently complex as to necessitate some substantial textual explanations. Also, the phenomenon of completely unlettered individuals in local governance structures is slowly eroding, and where it persists, individuals find their own innovative mechanisms to read and use materials provided, especially if they are simple in presentation and appear to be useful. In sum, therefore, the Manual must necessarily be written simply, illustrated where possible, and present the content and steps in as direct and simple a manner as possible without becoming simplistic.

Format/ size/ design: In keeping with all above, the Manual must be designed in an easy-to- use/refer format – small size and thickness, large print, appropriate illustrations, attractive cover and noticeable indexing and well-packaged. To enhance chances of usage, the Manual should be a relatively small 'booklet' which can be often referred to and carried around easily. A maximum of 40 pages was decided at the review meeting, and in addition, a paper size smaller than the typical Report (A4/ letter) is indicated.

3.3   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGN OF KIT

The full textual content of the Manual has been provided in this Report (Section B). While this addresses the ToR for this project, the task of Manual production needs a few additional steps. To make the Manual acceptable and useful for the targeted users, and in keeping with the design parameters described above, the following are therefore recommended –

- The Manual must be produced in a smaller, stand-alone format and distributed widely.

- It must be translated into Hindi and in various local languages for distribution in different states where Hindi is not locally used.

- The design and format for such production must be developed as described in the above section, including illustrations/ pictures where useful.

- It is suggested that the Manual be prepared as a 'kit', which includes

  » the Manual,

  » a CD with the video documentaries of the four successful cases that have been used as examples throughout,

  » Illustrated stories of the four cases in simple format

  » Various forms and formats for information collection, recording and planning that would be useful at village level – as for example, for a comprehensive data-base of all village households, local resources etc. as is being used in Ramachandrapuram.

ANNEXURE I

ORIGINAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Develop a Working Manual for Integrated Village Level Development Management by drawing from the experiences of the Hiware Bazar model in Maharashtra

1. **Background:**

   The Government of India-UNDP project Capacity Development for Local Governance (CDLG) is implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). The project aims at strengthening institutions and mechanisms so as to enhance capacities of elected representatives and functionaries for human development-oriented, inclusive-planning, implementation, and improved accountability in local governance, mainly of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). One of the key components of the project is to undertake Action Research in areas that could help understand the approaches that have proven to be effective at the grassroots level.

   Local elected leaders in rural India are coming in a big way to make a difference in local governance. Among millions of elected local leaders, some have led transformation of their communities. Hiware Bazar a village located in the semi-arid district of Ahmednagar in the state of Maharashtra is such a success story. Like many other villages in Ahmednagar district, Hiware Bazar suffered from constant drought and crop failure. During 1989-90 hardly 12 percent of the cultivable land could be farmed. The village was also devoid of any public services which resulted in out migration, first seasonally and then permanently. Those left behind cleared the dwindling forests for survival and many became agricultural laborers. The village touched the rock bottom in late 80's.

   The panchayat election in 1989 became an important milestone in the history of Hiware Bazar. The sarpanch is the power house of energy and force behind the transformation of Hiware Bazar since 1989. Under the new leadership, regular gram sabhas became a common feature where villagers charted out their development action plans and the panchayat ensured that all departmental projects in the village followed an integrated plan. The village first tackled their water crisis and became a model village in watershed management. The village prepared its own Five Year Plan for 1995-2000 for ecological regeneration. Under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, villages created water conservation structures and regenerated land and water resources. The panchayat instituted compulsory course on water education for primary school children and strictly enforced water management in the village. There has been a sharp reduction in poverty due to profits from dairying and cash crops. The village has set up its own set of BPL indicators to select beneficiaries of welfare programs. The village implemented Adarsh Gaon Yojana, which advocated ban on liquor, deforestation and free grazing and promoted family planning and labor contribution for development work. Today, Hiware Bazar is reaping the benefits of its investments made in integrated,

inclusive and sustainable development of the village and its people. It has received many national and state awards. Visionary and dynamic leadership made the transformation of Hiware Bazar possible. The early results of reclaiming water and land resource established credibility of the leadership. Relying on a consensus building approach, the new leader was able to rally people around for collective action. Participation of villagers in gram sabha became very active. Collectively, they decided village development priorities and held public servants accountable. The Panchayat developed integrated village development plans to direct all development efforts by parties inside and outside the villages.

Among millions of elected local officials, leaders who were able to transform their communities in the way the Sarpanch in Hiware Bazar did are exceptions rather than the norm. It would be important to understand the incentives that encourage the elected leaders of Hiware Bazar to pursue a village level integrated development; what were the enabling factors for transformation; what kind of management tools did the village use for bringing convergence and holistic development in the village; what type of constraints did they encounter and how did they overcome them, etc.

2. **Assignment Objectives:**

The main objective of the assignment is to develop a working manual that identifies and elaborates the core elements of village level development management and planning with particular reference to Hiware Bazar experience. It should document existing interventions that led to transformation of the village through convergent planning by way of integrating the government budgetary support and the available natural resources with the local human resources through participative planning. The working manual should be such that it could be adopted for undertaking integrated village planning by any village in the country. The engaged consultant should take note of the study titled "Hiware Bazar: Lessons in participatory planning" undertaken by YASHADA, Maharashtra.

This experience will be used as a case example to identify the management tools needed by leaders for improving local governance that ensures better planning practices, resource mobilization, distilling ownership in local processes, enforcing local accountability and enhancing overall service delivery.

3. **Key Tasks:**

The consultant is required to undertake the following:

- Hold discussions with the key officials at MoPR while finalizing the methodology and the outline of the study, and after returning from field visit. During the field visits, the consultant is required to interact with the Gram Panchayat members in Hiware Bazar, taluk officials in Nagar and district administration in Ahmednagar. In addition, the consultant is expected to hold discussions with officials in YASHADA, the state level training institution, as well as with the State Government's Planning and Panchayati Raj Departments.

- Conduct detailed analysis of the village transformation towards its integrated development.

- Develop thorough understanding of the strategy formulated and adopted. The analysis should cover but not be limited to areas such as: (i) how the local leaders rallied for community involvement? (ii) how the village leadership managed participation from various departments in supporting the preparation of the plan? (iii) how they managed conflicting demand among the constituency? (iv) mechanism for resource mobilization, (v) disciplining the process of Gram Sabha, (vi) how did they achieve early results that got people's confidence? (vii) what type of technical and management tools were used by the local leaders? (viii) what kind of skill development and capacity enhancement issues were handled? (ix) how did the address key barriers and challenges and what were the incentives for sustaining the transformation for years?

- Review of existing interventions that aim at encouraging emergence of local leaders and providing them with skills and tools. This would potentially cover, but not be limited to the following areas:

  » Understand the incentives and mechanisms for attainment and sustenance of leadership, the qualities need to be instilled in the capacity building programs for GP leaders; the driving forces for achieving the leadership qualities in managing local governance.

  » Develop a concept note for an incentive program to recognize leadership for bringing sustained and positive and sustainable change in local governance.

4. **Outputs**

- An inception report outlining the methodology and an outline of the study to be produced within 2 weeks of signing contract. This will be prepared after an interaction with the MoPR and the CDLG project team.

- A draft manual to be produced within 6 weeks of the assignment and presented for interactive review by the MoPR and the CDLG project team at New Delhi. The consultant will incorporate the suggestions and comments made by the review team.

- A final manual will be submitted within 2 weeks after receiving comments by the MoPR and the CDLG project team. This manual should serve as a working manual for integrated village level development management, with focus on micro level planning and implementation, including the processes involved that could be adopted by any village in the country.

Note: The manual will be produced in simple usable English language, and have a maximum of 50 pages including annexures, with 12 point Times New Roman script (single-spacing), with suitable pictures.

DECISIONS ON REVISION OF ORIGINAL TOR

Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)

Minutes of the meeting held by SPR on 30 Aug 2010

Subject: CDLG: Village Level Development Planning & Management Manual

A meeting was held by Secretary Panchayati Raj (SPR) on 30 Aug 2010 in his chamber to discuss the issues raised during the inception meeting held earlier on 20 Aug 2010 at Samrat Hotel. The meeting was attended by Shri Sudhir Krishna AS(MoPR), Shri Hrushikesh Panda AS(MoPR), Shri Sanjeev Sharma, NPM (CDLG Project), Ms. Ruchi Pant PO(UNDP), Ms. Juthika Banerjee, Consultant (MoPR), and Dr. Kajri Misra, IRMA, who is engaged to develop the manual for village level development planning and management.

Dr. Kajri Misra made a detailed presentation on the progress of the work, and raised the issues which have been previously raised during the inception meeting, and which required advice of SPR and other participants who were not part of the inception meeting.

The discussion helped in further clarifying the objectives of the assignment, the issue of expanding the assignment to examine more than one village (Hiware Bazar), and the implications on time and the cost. The following decisions were taken:

1. The primary potential users of the Manual should be Gram Panchayat Pradhans, Panchayat Secretary, other GP level ERs, and community leaders. The manual should be written and designed accordingly;

2. The manual should be generic, and not Hiware Bazar specific. It was decided that four to six similar success stories could be identified and investigated while preparing the manual;

3. The period of engagement of the consultant should be suitably increased to ensure the expanded amount of field work, from the old proposal of covering one Panchayat/ Village Hiware Bazar to the proposed four to six Panchayats/villages;

4. UNDP may be requested to suitably support the enhanced cost of engagement of the consultant to do the expanded assignment;

5. To identify panchayat/village level success stories, a query may be posted on the Solution Exchange. Other informal channels may also be explored to identify some good work done at the village/panchayat level.

TRAINING REPOSITORY FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ
Capacity Development for Local Governance
http://pri-resources.in

The repository is an online resource centre to facilitate sharing and use of information and resources developed by various government and non-government agencies to help build capacities of the elected representatives and functionaries associated with the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the country. It has databases related to training materials, resource persons, academics programmes, and other useful links.

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