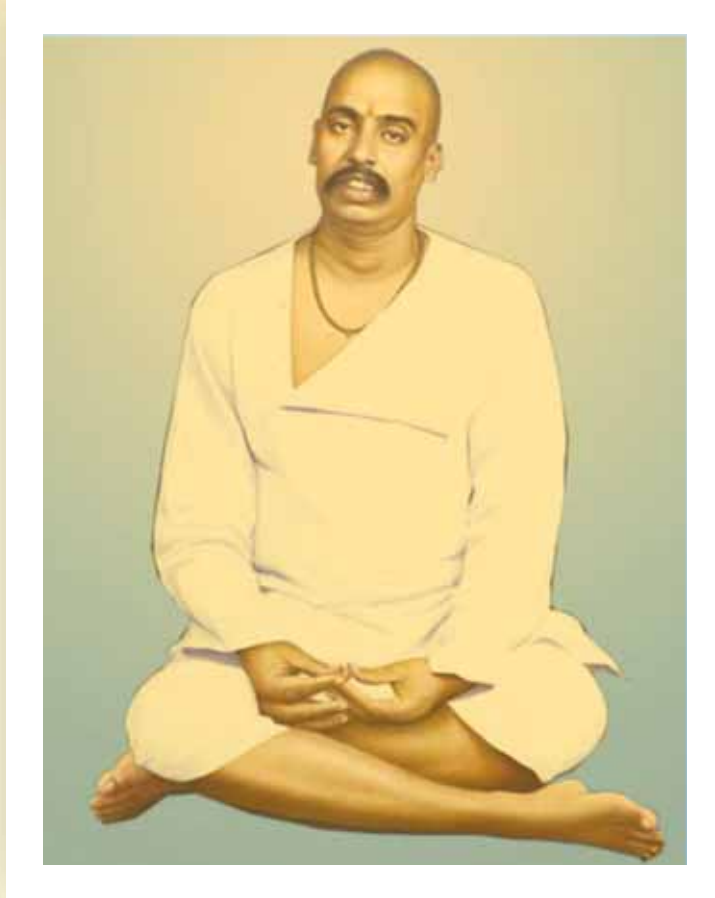


Gramgeeta

Gramgeeta, has been considered the sacred book on rural department as the name suggests. Tukadoji Maharaj, revered as Saint of the nation, has well-defined the concept of self-dependent village. Written in a lucid language for common villagers the book deals with the importance of self-sufficient village. It also covers all aspects of rural development. His literary contribution in rural development is unparalleled. His vision is still a guiding force.



Convince the people the truth that service to the village is the service to the God. Encourage them to become promptly prepared to render their services with united hands ||

Saint Dnyaaneshwar was born in a small village. Did he fall short in excellent talent & powerful intellect? Lord Krishna & Mahatma Gandhi held the reins of the national organisations living in the villages ||

In my opinion, the village is just like our body. (Like the care we take to keep clean our body) the village must be kept clean and pure. That will bring bliss to it ||

As we have a bath daily & regularly to keep our body clean, similarly we should try to keep our village clean. For such cleanliness and purification, all must render their hard efforts. Their participation in this work will bless them with divine merit of uplifting the village ||

The present age is of the powerful democracy. Today the people hold a great power to form a government by their

ultimate power of votes. If they come forward with resolute and firm determination they can demolish even the great and powerful empires and destroy them to dust with their united strength ||

When education makes people to co-operate each other and brings a habit of mutual co-operation then it can be admired and marveled. If the nationals become loyal and fully devoted to some great person and if they handover him all powers and full freedom to govern the country or society etc. It has always adversely resulted and the human life had to suffer greatest sorrows, agonies, torments etc ||

In fact, the village is the creator of the cities & towns. The villages are productive while the cities are the enjoyers of those products. So the cities will have to roam around the villages to seek pleasure and enjoyments. Then village people will not rush towards the towns and cities. On the contrary, the city people will run to the villages ||

The surest and never failing basic secret to reform the village is to unite and organise all the good and noble, excellent and virtuous individuals. The power of masses arises and grows through the unity and organisation only. It only can produce the GRAAM RAAJYA (the self government of the village) ||

There is only one way for their happiness. The villagers should opt the way of self-reliance. Without depending upon the cities, they should get all the work done in the village ||

Utilizing fully the excellent intellect, talent, knowledge of arts and skills and all manpower, energy and individual abilities, the villagers should develop the sense of self-reliance more and more. Idleness should find no place in the village ||

Persons with pure and pious minds and thoughts will act as the guarding sentries and soldiers. When the need arises. The village, where such seekers and social servicemen exist, will not have to face the calamities ||

Let Us Promote Rural Enlightenment



I am very happy to present this special issue on Rural Development continuing the glorious tradition of the 'Maharashtra Ahead'. This issue deals with different aspects of rural development. It underlines the progress from Gram Vikas to Gram Swarajya. We hope that it will give vital information to readers to have new experience.

Maharashtra which has known history of 2500 years earned eminence in the subcontinent on account of agro-based culture and self-sufficient villages that flourished on the banks of rivers like Godavari, Krishna, Purna, Warada, Bhima etc. Great dynasties like Shalivahan, Chalukya, Wakatak, Rashtrakutas, Yadavas, Shilahars of ancient India and medieval kingdoms of Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar and Imadshahi of Warhad [Vidarbha] enriched this area not only through sea-trade but mainly due to self-sufficient village economy.

The self-sufficient agro-based village administration was the back bone of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Swarajya that germinated the concept of the home rule - Independent country. The advent of British on the Indian land and the Industrial Revolution in Europe further transformed the self-sufficient and self-reliant agro-based village administrative set-up.

Rural development took momentum in the modern times as the village administration expanded from a handful of privileged people to all the villagers who started gathering at a particular place called Chawdi to discuss their common issues. The then autonomous and well-knit village system finds commendable references in some historically important documents like the Parliamentary Committee Report on the economic autonomy of villages and non-penetration of people's lifestyle (1812), Lord Elphinston's report on the village system of Peshwa's regime (1819) and a note of Metcaf (1830).

During the Independence Movement, Mahatma Gandhiji blended the idea of rural development with the political transformation. He introduced and propagated the idea of integrated development of villages. In the Post-independence Era, Panchayat Raj system was introduced in Maharashtra in 1962. Active participation of the Government machinery and the coordinated efforts by the three-tier Panchayat Raj system of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad have changed villages fundamentally.

Development of physical and social infrastructure is the greatest contribution of the Panchayat Raj system. Villages are prospering. People with close affiliation and affinity towards their birthplace are finding opportunities for self-employment and self-development in their villages. Peoples' participation in development process and Government's support to them has made this possible.

Villagers are accepting Information Technology and Bio-technology. Farmers are becoming computer savvy and internet-friendly. It is really heartening to know that villagers from Sangli successfully checked the falling rate of turmeric in the market through Facebook connectivity. This was revealed by Facebook India's chief Kirtiga Reddy recently in New Delhi. The State is gearing up to leap forward to have E- Panchayat that will make villages self-reliant, the dream, visionary Saint Tukadoji Maharaj had seen. In his Gramgeeta he stated:

*Village will be ruled by villagers, nobody will be their master;
villagers will take care of their village, sharing in every village work.
The dream is certainly turning into reality.*

This issue deals with different aspects of rural development. The inspiration and guiding force behind it are the Rural Development Minister Hon. Shri Jayant Patil and Minister of State Hon. Shri Satej Patil. We are grateful to Secretary of Rural Development Department Shri Sudhir Thakre and his associates for their support and cooperation.

Let us encourage villagers to participate in rural development by burying the hatchets and lit the lamp of development as Tukadoji Maharaj has said:

*Each and every village be awakened
Differences be erased from roots,
the lamp of village development be lit with best attitudes.*

Pramod T. Nalawade

Editor-in-Chief, 'Maharashtra Ahead', DGIPR



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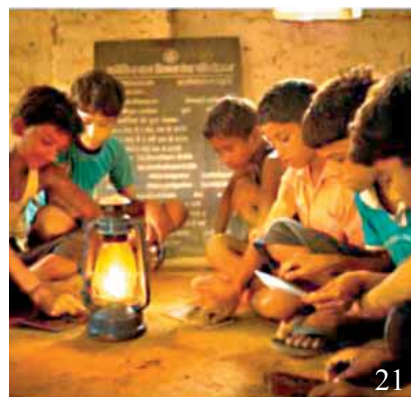
A Government of Maharashtra Production

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Balanced Growth

The National Rural Livelihood Mission aims at improving the Human Development Index.

Maharashtra has taken the lead in the country by implementing 'SANGRAM' project that facilitates e-governance in rural areas and aims at bringing greater transparency as well as accountability in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

The State Government has launched 'Yashwanth Panchayat Raj Abhiyan' this year to commemorate the birth centenary of the architect of Modern Maharashtra. Late Shri Yashwantrao Chavan. As an apt tribute to the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra this programme serves as the guideline for the good governance and rural development. The best ranked Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad will be awarded prizes every year on the 12th March, the birth anniversary of late Yashwantraoji.



The State has launched the *Mahatma Gandhi Dispute-free Village Scheme* and results are very encouraging. Last year nearly 4000 villages were declared dispute-free, out of which 271 villages became eligible for the 'Special Peace Award'.

Maharashtra has taken the lead in the country by implementing e-governance programme in rural areas. The Government has launched 'SANGRAM', *Sanganakiya Gramin Maharashtra Project*. It aims at bringing greater transparency and accountability in Panchayat Raj Institutions. Under the project all the Panchayat Raj Institutions have been provided with computers, multifunctional printers, internet connectivity and technical manpower.

The Eco-balanced Village Development Campaign (*Paryavaran Santulit Samruddha Gram Yojana*) is yet another progressive initiative undertaken by the State Government to facilitate environmentally-focused inclusive growth in rural areas. In all,

810 Gram Panchayats in the State received 'Paryavaran Vikas Ratna' award at the hands of the President of India. For encouraging the villages who have participated in the programme, the Government has provided funds to the tune of Rs.389 crore.

To improve the Human Development Index and remove poverty, the 'National Rural Livelihood Mission', a Centrally-sponsored scheme is being implemented in 9 districts in first phase, namely Gadchiroli, Jalna, Nandurbar, Osmanabad, Ratnagiri, Solapur, Thane, Wardha and Yavatmal.

Under the flagship programme, national 'Rural Drinking Water Programme,' nearly 15,000 habitations in the State are included in the Action Plan for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14.

The Government has launched the 'Rural Dalit Vasti Individual Water Connection and Toilet Construction Scheme', wherein a grant of Rs.11,000 for the construction of individual toilets and Rs.4000 for household water

tap connection per family of the Scheduled Castes and Nav-boudha community from the rural areas of the State will be provided.

Maharashtra has got a lion's share in 'Nirmal Gram Awards', given by the Central Government Gram Panchayats. Out of total 25,145 Gram Panchayats awarded by Government of India till 2010, 9082 are from Maharashtra. In the year 2011, an additional 442 Gram Panchayats in the State are recipients of this Award.

Government has launched the 'Maharashtra Sujal Nirmal Abhiyan' that aims at providing efficient and sustainable delivery of services in urban areas. This pioneering initiative focuses on reform-oriented capital investment in urban water and sanitation sector. So far, 70 urban local bodies have been benefitted under this programme.

For the farmers from the Scheduled Castes, pumping device with electric connection is provided on the wells completed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, *Jawahar Wells Scheme* are other interventions from the Government. More than 20,000 farmers are to be covered under Special Component Plan initiative.

Due to systematic and innovative efforts of the State Government, under the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme', in the month of May 2011 the weekly average attendance of labour reached to 6 lakh. ■

Excerpts from the address of the Governor K. Sankaranarayanan at joint session of the Maharashtra Legislature

New Perspectives for Rural Development

Change, though inevitable, needs to be substantiated by growth

Every change reflects its age. Change is the parameter of the time it has occurred in and therefore it is called 'the need for the hour'. Principles of the Rural Development are changing. It is significant today to implement modern technologies and have a new system for the Rural Development. It is the collective responsibility of all of us and hence people's awakening is a must, states the Chief Minister **Prithiraj Chavan**.

Mahatma Gandhi always emphasized on prosperity of villages. He said villages must be developed if the country has to grow.

Decentralization of power is inevitable to make democracy strong and fruitful. By implementing 73rd Constitutional Amendment that instituted the three-tier Panchayat Raj System in 1962, Maharashtra decentralized the power through the cooperation and participation of rural people in the development process, generating employment at the local level to stop the rural exodus to cities.

The first Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Yashwantrao Chavan took deliberate steps to strengthen the Panchayat Raj system. Half of the State is urbanized hence development of rural Maharashtra has always been our priority. It can not be ignored that the concepts of rural development are changing according to the times. In the recent past the lifestyles and thinking process of rural people have transformed. Even as change is vehicle of development, it needs to be complementary. For the growth of villages the state-of-the-art crop management must be implemented and agriculture must be supported by allied industries. Proper planning of water resources will definitely increase agricultural yield. Allied industries will bring in more investments.



WATER MANAGEMENT

As development speeds up, demand for water and power will increase in the rural and urban areas. Therefore planning for water will be crucial. Pressure will be on the available resources. In view of the future crisis of water every village needs to plan available water resources. Every single drop of water will have to be counted. This will put constraints on the uncontrolled utilization of water.

As we are responsible for creating the water crises, we must think of the ways and means of solving the

problem.

Rainfall differs in geographically in the State. Most of the rainfall goes in vain. Hence the key issue is how to plan the available rainfall. Planning and conservation of water in proper manner will lend us less dependency on external resources.

Water conservation helps raise underground water level. This in turn will save spending on water lifting. By storing and accumulating rain water we can use it for some time or for the rest of the period in the year. While implementing the ideas of rural



development in future, we will have to give a serious thought to the aspects of water management.

AGRICULTURE IS THE CULTURE

Maharashtra is the land of farmers. It has diverse weather, rainfall and soil. Maharashtra produces all sorts of fruits, flowers, vegetables and food-grains and therefore holds unique position in the agriculture sector of the country. Irrigated, moisturized, dry and migratory agriculture are some of the types seen in the State. Despite the rise of urbanization agriculture is still an inseparable part of the life for many in our country.

Since agriculture is to remain the focal point of rural development in future also, it is required to design afresh agriculture-based subsidiary industries and village-wise crop management plan through coordination of rural development committee, agriculture department and agriculture universities. Community farming is going to play a vital role in the development. This will facilitate

reduce expenditure on seeds, fertilizer, pesticides etc and increase quality agriculture produce to get profitable rates. Farmers in some villages of the State have set good examples in the field.

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

In the development of villages collective efforts are important. Development cannot be attributed only to economic growth but to literacy also. Upcoming rural generations should be imparted knowledge that would give them a vision for changing the conditions in the villages. They also deserve to get technical education as per their liking. Malnutrition has been issue of high concern for all and health literacy would be the better solution on it.

Solar energy and wind mill energy are better options to solve power problems. State Government's schemes should be implemented in cooperative manner. In rural development, conservation of nature and rural tourism have a vital role to play. Water resources are receding, rivers and streams are

getting polluted imposing serious threats to health of villagers affecting social life. If future generations are healthy then only their families can remain healthy. Alongwith agriculture development social health also should be protected. Integrated rural development will help to stop the rural influx to the cities.

The State Government has extended benefits of computerized Rural Maharashtra Project to grassroot level by implementing E-governance in all 27,920 Gram Panchayats, 351 Panchayat Samitis and 33 Zilla Parishads of Maharashtra. In these self local government bodies contracts of development works and purchasing of necessary materials is being done through E-tendering to maintain transparency and restrict corruption.

The State Government has started a guiding project of biometric system of teacher's and student's attendance in 1100 schools. Those beneficiaries who do not have land to construct houses under Indira Awas Yojana, are given assistance of Rs.12,000 to buy

one guntha of land. To get the market in rural areas 'Rural Mall' scheme has been launched. Prime Minister's Rural Road Development scheme for better approach roads, Rural Housing Scheme to cater to the needs of residence for villagers and Yashwant Rural Prosperity scheme for the development of rural environment have strengthened rural development in the State.

ECO-BALANCED GROWTH

With a view to making all-round growth of every village, extending qualitative physical infrastructure, elevating standard of living, using natural resources with ecological balance and sustainable growth the Government has launched the Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme for rural prosperity and for the sustainable growth. Maharashtra has again scored over other States by implementing performance yardstick for allocating grant to Gram Panchayats.

The yardstick is comprised of tree plantation, ban on unscrupulous use of plastic, renewable energy, use of toilet blocks, solid waste and sewage management. Maharashtra is the first State in the country to frame such a yardstick. The Gram Panchayat that fulfills all the criteria gets the grant from Rs. 2 lakh to 12 lakh in accordance with the population. Grant worth Rs. 389 crore has been allocated in the current year.

The Environment Development Programme in a village with population over 5000 have been taken up. The village development plan includes the facilities of market place, streetlights, public gardens and study centres. The micro planning will have public participation.

STRENGTHENING GRAM SABHA

For strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions they have been given more and more powers. Accordingly, Gram Sabha is the highest machinery of rural democracy. The Panchayat Raj system is the strength of rural development. Democracy can sustain and become strong only if the power is percolated to the grassroot level. In view of this the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution was passed. The amendment gives more powers to the Gram Sabhas. The Union Ministry of Panchayat Raj declared the year 2009-10 as Gram Sabha Year. Maharashtra has won the first national award in the National Gramsabha Felicitatation Competition.

Under the National Governance Programme, all Panchayat Raj Institutions have been computerized , to bring uniformity and transparency in their functioning, E-PRI/Panchayat Mission Mode Programme has been taken up. Accordingly, by computerizing all Panchayat Raj Institutions, SANGRAM- Computerised Rural Maharashtra Project has been launched.

The State Government has also put another feather in its cap by taking the historic decision of giving 50 per cent reservation to women in the Panchayat Raj system. This equal rights to women in the political system at the grassroot level. The woman that rules the roost in every household can now also hold the reins as member of Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Committee and Gram Panchayat; President of the Zilla Parishad, Chairman of Panchayat Samiti or Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat.

BETTER LIFE-STYLE

The Centre has launched the Suvarnajayanti Gram Swayamrojgar Yojana under the National Rural Livelihood Mission to uplift the life-style of the people below the poverty-line. Aim of the mission is bringing the BPL people in the national mainstream. On the same lines the State Government has designed the Maharashtra Rajya Gramin Jivanonnati Abhiyan (Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission). This mission aims at lending better life-style to the people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) by providing them self-employment. The people, who feel being deprived of the better opportunities in the rural area, migrate to the nearby cities for livelihood. It is therefore necessary to provide them financial aid, ex-gratia capital or training, technical know-how, marketing assistance, opportunity to develop skills or other infrastructure facilities to start a business on small scale.

Today, Panchayat Raj System is an important strength of rural development. In last few years the Rural Development Department has crossed important steps by taking important decisions regarding rural development and its implementation have strengthened the Panchayat Raj System. Integrated rural development will help to tackle the problems of increasing urbanization.

A powerful Maharashtra will only emerge if the equilibrium of rural and urban development is sought. ■

-As told to Satish Patankar

JEEVANONNATI CAMPAIGN

The Central Government has decided to transform Swarna Jayanti Gramin Swarojgar Yojana into Rashtriya Jeevanonnati Abhiyan [National Rural Livelihood Mission] for the people Below the Poverty-line. In the State total 45 lakh families are below poverty line.

- This campaign aims at bringing the BPL families in the mainstream of national economy
- Under the campaign 2.63 lakh Self Help Groups have been formed
- In all 26 lakh BPL families have come in the purview of the Self Help Groups
- 18 lakh families are still to be involved in the mission through the formation of Self Help Groups
- For the implementation of the mission the Maharashtra and 12 other States would receive financial assistance from the World Bank.
- This pilot project primarily being implemented in Ratnagiri, Nadurbar, Solapur, Jalana, Yavatmal and Gadchiroli districts

Strengthening the Rural Maharashtra

E-Panchayat is ambitious plan that will give a face lift to rural Maharashtra

Maharashtra, like our country is basically agrarian. It has 57.57 per cent rural population. Even as it is speedily going urbanized, its agrarian nature is still intact. It is obvious that in the development process the priority has to be given to rural area as more than half of the population is staying in villages. The Deputy Chief Minister **Ajit Pawar** tells about the Government's rural development plans.



Keeping in mind the significance of rural development the State Government has implemented and has planned to implement various innovative schemes. Some of them are the Sant Gadgebaba Village Cleanliness Campaign, Nirmal Gram Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme, E-Panchayat Project, empowerment of women.

The State Government also has some ambitious plans such as computerization of Gram Panchayats and strengthening of women's self help groups to transform rural Maharashtra. The Government is promoting various industries through the MIDCs to generate more

employment in the vicinity of villages. This will help check the exodus of villagers to nearby cities.

RURAL GROWTH PRIORITIZED

In the current budget of 2012-13 I have emphasized on the rural development. Agriculture, water resources, irrigation, water supply, cleanliness and social justice has been given much importance. Allocation of Rs. 138 has been made under State and District schemes for short term loans for crops through different schemes. Moreover, Rs. 2500 crore have been earmarked for the electricity subsidy to farmers.

The State has decided to implement the Yashwantrao Chavan Gram Sadak Yojana to commemorate the birth centenary of the architect of modern Maharashtra. This scheme is for the villages that are not covered by the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Under the project 5000 habitats will be connected to taluka headquarters or market places by all weather roads in next five years. The habitats in the hilly and tribal areas with less than 250 population and plain areas with population of less than 500 will get the benefits of the scheme.

In all 5754 villages will be provided the facilities under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme. This scheme will get the Central aid of Rs. 840

crore and Rs. 604.80 crore from the State Government. Rs. 179 crore has been earmarked for 36 schemes under the Maharashtra Sujal Ani Nirmal Abhiyan.

Cleanliness and health are two sides of coin. Hence our effort are to give impetus to village Cleanliness campaign. The State is at the forefront of the Centre-assisted Nirmal Gram Yojana. We are planning to make talukas, districts and ultimately the entire State clean and healthy in phased manner. Therefore the Government has launched the Sant Gadgebaba Village Cleanliness Campaign. Provision of Rs. 45.37 crore have been made for these schemes.

CRÈCHES IN RURAL AREAS

The State has planned to open 100 creches each in six predominantly tribal districts of Thane, Nandurbar, Nashik, Amaravati, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur to take care of the children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years. These crèches will be run by Gram Panchayats. Under the Food Guarantee Scheme villagers Below Poverty-line (BPL) and the beneficiaries of Antyodaya Yojana will be given three months foodgrains at a time in advance.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Mahatma Gandhi had dreamt of self-sufficient villages. Women's Self



Help Groups are playing important role in bringing Gandhiji's dream in to reality. These groups are strengthening rural economy. Women are now being given equal opportunities and rights to participate in the development process. Maharashtra is the first State in the country to reserve 50 per cent seats for women in the local self government bodies. This decision will go in long way in strengthening women and bringing them in social mainstream to take the decisions in the development process.

Gram Panchayats are being given special ex-gratia under the district annual plan to make them economically strong and facilitate to undertake local development projects. The Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme launched by the State Government aims

at village development with ecological balance. This will keep check on pollution and tree-felling in view of the global warming.

HEALTH SERVICES

It is pertinent to provide medical services for the villagers who have played leading role in producing milk and milk-based products. Therefore the Government has paid special attention in creating health infrastructure in rural areas. Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayi Yojana is one such scheme that aims at proving quality medical services at district level. Emergency medical services will also be made available in remote areas at a phone call. Special care has been taken to control malnutrition in remote tribal areas.

GROWTH CENTERS

Maharashtra has pioneered the three-tier Panchayat Raj System. The Government is now taking special efforts to strengthen the system. The local self government bodies of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad are the training institutes of democracy.

Rural Development is an integral part of the nation building. With a view to achieve the goal of the Super Power, rural development attains much importance. In the rural development the State Government has considered the villages as the focal point. Maharashtra is committed to make villages self-sufficient. It will not happen without everybody's cooperation. ■

- As told to **Vishal Dhage**

The Rise of Gram Swaraj

Maharashtra is leaping forward to make Gandhiji's dream a reality.

The vision of the Rural Development Department is to facilitate inclusive and sustainable growth of villages through Panchayat Raj Institutional system - i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad; has set new trend. Maharashtra's policy regarding Panchayat Raj is a step towards fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's dream of Gram Swaraj. As Panchayat Raj is celebrating its golden jubilee this year the Rural Development Minister **Jayant Patil** takes the stock of Maharashtra's achievement in the sector.

It sounds like a fairy tale to say that once upon a time rural Maharashtra was self-dependent, environmentally healthy, economically, socially and culturally well-developed;

moreover rich in natural resources. It is true. But today it is a history. Our villages are now in the clutches of urbanization. Exodus from villages to cities is rampant. Rural influx is taking toll on

both sides. It has put heavy burden on urban infrastructure at the same time villages are getting abandoned.

Gandhiji has aptly described India as the nation of villages. He used to appeal





youth to go to villages. With a view to bringing back the lost glory Panchayat Raj System was initiated in the country. Under the leadership of former Chief Minister Shri Yashwantrao Chavan and great notion of Vasantdada Patil gave a new dimension to the system and put Maharashtra at the forefront in the sector. The Panchayat Raj has strengthened the democracy and taken the benefits of the system to the grass root level.

Panchayat Raj System is rightly called the Local Self-government Body because peoples' representatives for Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad are elected through ballot in the democratic manner by the villagers. People can have Government of their choice in their villages. This facilitates to bring balanced development. The leadership of the State gets groomed up at village level.

REGAINING GLORY

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Panchayat Raj System has prospered villages in last 50 years, but the fact is that the system has created an opportunity to prosper villages. The State Government is committed to make every village environmentally rich. The self-sufficient villages of grand old days have lost their glory and we resolve to bring the glory back.

We have undertaken many schemes for the rural development that include research, administrative reforms, and community as well as individual growth. I have drawn a plan for integrated rural development.

Growth of rural population created imbalance in demand and supply. This changed the village economy, culture and tradition. There was good coordination between the people in the traditional villages. Villagers were bound by the common thread of 'my village'. Rural development has gained an importance in last decade. Even the Central Government has undertaken ambitious project for the development of rural India.

SELF-SUFFICIENT VILLAGE

The thrust of globalization and new economic reforms has transformed the basic nature of the village. The traditional villages drastically changed. Villagers started relying on the Government assistance. Below the poverty line people in villages started eyeing on the individual benefits. The village system that was being run by the people with self-discipline started blaming the Government administration. The village administration was taken over by the Government. Conflict between the Government and the village

arose. Villagers started undermining significance of local self-government.

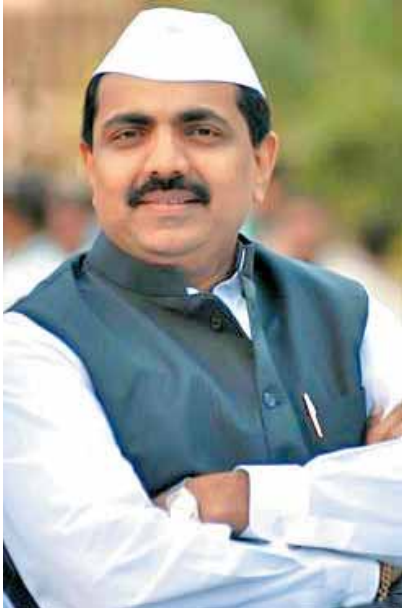
With a view to making every village self-sufficient in the next 20 years the State Government has initiated preparing development plan of every village for next 10 years. This will help the State sustain the growth to survive in the global competition. I am confident that in future there will be no difference in the lifestyle of rural and urban people. On one hand we are trying to bring in self-discipline and on the other hand make power decentralized. The local self government bodies are working effectively and efficiently. I assert that this was possible only because the State Government had closely monitored their activities. Uncontrolled powers at the grass-root level would have created serious problems.

Maharashtra, who is the pioneer in institutionalizing the three-tier local self-government bodies, has successfully decentralized democracy. The initiatives taken by Maharashtra to decentralize democracy, the concept envisaged the Constitutional framework has earned it the reputation as the trend-setter in the field. The State Rural Development Department has been bestowed with Rs. One crore award for its contribution in the Panchayat Raj development.

The decentralization of democracy facilitated create peoples' rule at the grass root level. Maharashtra has successfully created Mini Mantralaya in every village. Even the Centre has emulated Maharashtra. The significance of rural development grew only after the Centre applied the Panchayat Raj system to all the States.

RURAL REVOLUTION

My department has priority to inculcate self-discipline in Local Self Government bodies. We have also concentrated on speedy and transparent administration at the village level. The State Government has adopted an ambitious project named the SANGRAM of the Computerized Rural Maharashtra (Sanganakiya Gramin Maharashtra). This year total transaction of the Gram Panchayats in the State worth



Rs 56,000 crore have been done through computerisation. This is the beginning of the Rural Revolution.

We have also taken initiatives in the field of village literacy. It is important to create the feeling of 'it is my village' to get villagers' voluntary participation in development projects.

An innovative programme viz. Eco-Balanced Village Development Campaign is the dream project of my department. All the officials of the department have been pressed into. I am sure the results of the project will be seen in a couple of years and the county will feel envious about it. This has been launched to create quality physical infrastructure in rural areas, keeping environmental balance. As a component of the Eco-Balanced Village Development the State Government has decided to encourage use of non-conventional energy in rural areas, particularly for street lighting in Gram Panchayat. My department's resolve is to make every village self-reliant which includes beautiful village, green village and prosperous village.

VALUE-BASED EDUCATION

In rural areas we had emphasized on the quantitative education. Our efforts are to make more and more children attend school. But now the focus

has changed. Today value-based education is the key word. Quality education has taken the place of quantitative education. Recently, after malpractices were discovered in rural education system biometric attendance has been made compulsory. We plan to introduce assessment of schools and the grade of the school will be displayed publicly so that villagers will come to know where their school stands. This will encourage healthy competition among the surrounding villages.

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Caste system in ancient India that was predominantly rural, was based on the division of labour. It was also related with the professional skills. Over the

MAHARASHTRA'S HAT-TRICK

Maharashtra has recorded hat-trick by winning Central Government Award in last three consecutive years in the field of rural development.

- In 2009-10 and 2010-11 Maharashtra received Rs. one-crore award for strengthening Panchayat Raj System.
- This year on 24th April 2012 Prime Minister will give away Rs. 2-crore award to the State Government for implementing innovative schemes.

ages it becomes conservative and it confined people to their jobs creating division in the society. Annihilation of caste system became inevitable. Its abolition has led to the growth of the society as a whole.

Bara Balutedars are the 12 types professionals. They are the rural skilled artisans, mostly belonging to the cottage industry. In the globalization there is a wide scope for these artisans. We are aiming at elevating the skills of these artisans by modernizing their professions and imparting them necessary training. Women Self Help Groups are playing important role in this. It is a movement of women

empowerment. These groups provide financial help to start small business. They are gradually developing rural entrepreneurship.

Recently, the Central Government had suggested that Zilla Parishads should have urban representation. Some people misinterpreted it as recommendation to abolish the Zilla Parishad system. What the Centre meant was that there should be District Development Boards. The Gram Panchayats should not have absolute powers, there should be some control. To cope up with the politics of ambition at the village level, reservation for women and prospects of illiterate people getting elected training of the peoples' representatives has become must. We have put thrust on organizing training programmes.

Even today State is in forefront in fostering the Panchayat Raj. Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Gujarat have also done good progress in the field. But this should be considered from the territorial and population point of view. Yet Maharashtra has won the first award for its commendable contribution in the field of Panchayat Raj for three consecutive years. Maharashtra has several villages with over 10000 population. We have identified these villages as the growth centres. Under the 13th Finance Commission financial support will be provided to Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis for construction buildings and residential quarters. We are also building houses for homeless people in villages.

20 YEARS LATER...

I am confident that after two decades every village in Maharashtra will have facilities more than any city. Every village will be self-sufficient with cleanliness, greenery and pollution-free environment, value-based education, good roads, availability of drinking water in villages, more and more people will prefer to be in villages not only that but those who have gone to cities will start returning. The new-look villages will revert the urban influx. ■

- As told to **Sanjay Miskin**

Changing the Face of Villages

Now one can have the details of any village just at the click of the mouse

People flock to cities since there are no facilities in villages. This scenario has to be changed. There should be no difference in cities and villages, said the Minister of State for the Rural Development **Satej Patil**.

I want to change the face of villages in Maharashtra. The uncleanliness, scarcity of drinking water and power, insufficient transport facilities are still prevalent in villages. I want to make villages in Maharashtra self-sufficient.

Government is taking measures in this direction. If facilities like cities are made available in the villages then there will be no difference between the two. The influx of people from villages to cities will get reduced. This will help in reducing the pressure on cities. If one has to look at the aspect of overall development of the State, it is important to increase facilities in rural areas. The Government is formulating many schemes in this direction.

The Rural Development Department implements important 16 schemes, these include scheme for clean drinking water, good roads, houses, health facilities, etc. Some of the schemes are under the flagship programmes of the Centre. In such schemes sometimes Centre contributes 50 per cent or sometimes 75 percent. Some schemes are funded by the State Government with more assistance than of the Centre.

Today it is the world of computerization. This is the Information Technology age. The Rural Development Department has taken important measures. Soon Mahaportal will be launched. If you type name of any village you will get the whole information about the village at the

click of the mouse.

The website will provide the detailed information about the village including its geographical importance, its historic temples, important tourist places, crops produced in the village, population, their vocations, etc. and information about such other villages can be accessed through website. Soon we will be launching the website www.xyz.mahapanchayat.in said Satej Patil.

Informing about the scheme, he said we have given computer to each Gram Panchayat. We will also be providing permanent data operator and expert computer operator. He should put the whole information of village on the website and collect information regarding it.

Speaking about the more uses of computer Satej Patil said that we have to formulate working module of Gram Panchayats. Sarpanch of the village, Gram Sevak and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the concerned Zilla Parishad should work in co-ordination. For e.g. If there is 10 mt. long gutter in the village and village Panchayat has three safai karmacharis, then each karmchari will do cleaning in which area and at what time, should be decided by them and other works also. This all work can be put on website of the village, which will help in transparency.

Speaking about the changing face of the villages, Satej Patil further said that there are 27,920 villages in Maharashtra, of these 9000 villages



have become Nirmal. This number should be increased. By waste management in the village the picture of village will change. Sewage water in the villages should be treated at village level itself. Also, 5-10 villages together should put the machinery for garbage processing. Producing power from waste also should be given a thought.

Today cities are facing the problem of garbage, we are looking for the measures to solve it. On these lines we will have to find the solution to garbage of villages also. Today at least one person of each household in the village have mobile. The topics to be taken in the Gram Sabhas should be send to the people through SMS, this will definitely increase attendance in Gram Sabhas. ■

- As told to **Aniket Joshi**

Rural Development, Self-development

The concept of 'our growth in our hand' aims at giving more teeth to local self governments.

Maharashtra takes a step towards the complete rural development with a vision of 'Samruddha Gram Sampanna Gramastha' says the Rural Development Secretary, **Sudhir Thakare**.



Even as in the basic framework of the Constitution concept of decentralization of democracy was very much defined and in the due course of time it was put into practice through the three-tier Panchayat Raj System, in the changed circumstances while the Government needs to play the role of a facilitator and an advisor in the development of rural areas, villagers will have to take lead in the process. The Panchayat Raj Institutes need to be given more funds, authority and responsibilities. Minimum educational qualification for those who want to contest the Panchayat Raj elections and training for the elected representatives will have to be made compulsory. Effective measures for strengthening

of Gram Sabhas and social audit of the Panchayat Raj institute needs to be ascertained.

Maharashtra is aiming at making the complete development with a vision 'Samruddha Gram, Sampanna Gramastha' (Prosperous village, affluent villagers). This vision emphasizes on the three basic components of the programme that are: a) creating and managing quality physical infrastructure in rural areas, b) making available social infrastructure and c) providing proper and enough measures for livelihood.

Physical infrastructure comprises of community needs such as roads, drinking water, cleanliness, energy and individual needs of housing. Social

infrastructure includes education, health, food, and social security. Measures for livelihood consists self-employment and salaried employment opportunities to rural youth.

INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

Effective institutional measures are a must for the complete rural development. Institutional effectiveness depends on the Government machinery's efficiency, sensitivity towards the people, the people-centric vision, transparency and accountability. The Government set-up has to evolve the system that could provide the timely services to every villager. This system calls for better coordination of the Panchayat Raj institutes and participation of villagers

or their groups with different common interests.

Every villager must have to work for his or her development on one hand while on the other hand he or she must be assisted by social institutes and unbiased social system. The principle of social justice has to be implemented strictly as every individual is equal before the law. The Constitution in its framework provides for the equal opportunities for everyone irrespective of his or her personal capacities and social strata.

It is unfortunate that in the Indian civilization particular groups of the society were deprived of their birth right as the human being. The constitution of the Independent India provides for giving economic and social concessions to the people or groups of people who were traditionally suppressed for ages. In the development of rural areas it is pertinent and justified to give upper hand to these people.

CHANGED SITUATION

During the British Raj the administration used the oppressive tactics to keep control over the people. They provided some welfare facilities during the period of natural calamities or epidemics but this help far away from the real concept of rural development. However during the period people used to work together for the common community cause without the government help. Of course needs of the people were much lesser. The situation has changed after the

Independence. The Government and the administrative machinery started acting as the servants of the people. The administration became the welfare State. This led to dependency on the Government. People started expecting that the Government only should do all the development works. People's initiative was reduced to nil. They started shirking collective responsibility.

GROWTH OF PANCHAYAT RAJ

In the 1958 Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act many rights pertaining to the management of village and rural development were rested in the hands of the elected representatives. The Sarpanch used to play the role of the Chief Executive rather than the head of the Gram Panchayat. After the formation of Zilla Parishads in 1962 the village Government turned into the district Government.

The period of 1962 to 1971 has been the golden era of the Zilla Parishad administration and rural development. During the period almost 75 programmes such as social development, primary education, health, rural constructions used to be implemented by the Zilla Parishads. Even the land record related works and revenue department was looked after by the Zilla Parishads. The Zilla Parishad was under the control of the Chief Executive Officer and he was assisted by the heads of 14 different departments. Had the authority of the Zilla Parishad been widened and more rights been given to it, the concept of

'district rural government' could have been established in reality and the dream of 'prosperous village, affluent villagers' would have turned the reality.

In 1972 District Planning boards were established and with this Zilla Parishad's role as the 'district Government came to an end gradually. The State Government took back right to collect the professional tax and vehicle tax that was bestowed with the Zilla Parishad. Many responsibilities of rural development came to the State Government. During the period Zilla Parishad elections were not held for 11 years and after the attention of court, there was administrative rule for two years.

Later, the 73rd amendment lent the constitutional status to the three-tier Panchayat Raj System. The amendment paved the way for the 11th index of 29 subjects and made the provision whereby the State Legislature would make the law regarding human resources and funds of the Panchayat Raj system. Of the 29 subjects very few were left with the Panchayat Raj institutes.

OUR GROWTH IN OUR HAND

It is expected that the development projects of villages and districts have to be taken up by the respective Panchayat Raj institutes. This is the idea behind the concept of 'our growth in our hand'. It is based on the primary principle of democracy: 'for the people, by the people, of the people' as the Panchayat Raj institutes lay the foundation for the Parliamentary democracy. The State Government works in the broader framework; village level issues are, therefore likely to get back seat in the process of State development. The issues of development will get justice only if taken at the proper level. It means that issues of village, Panchayat or district have to be solved at the respective level.

The Eleventh Index of the Constitution subjects of state and centre are bifurcated for proper administrative functioning. Under the Index, Fund, Function and Functionary, the three aspects of Panchayat Raj institutes





have been well-defined. However, its implementation has not been done effectively. In some Western countries like Switzerland, if a foreigner has to settle in any particular area, the national governing authority asks for the consent of the local authorities. If we need to be the real developed country and vie for the Super Power status more powers need to be vested in the rural authorities. This will lead to sustainable growth in the rural areas.

PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

The State Government should no more act as the owner or donor. The responsibility of the local development is that of the Local Self Government and the State Government should play the role of a facilitator. This relationship will make the Panchayat authorities economically strong and institutionally powerful, which is the prerequisite of the steady development of villages.

The State Government has taken important measures in this direction by giving the rights of the natural resources to the Local Self Governments. The Gram Sabha will conduct the social audit and control Local Self Governing bodies on minor forest produce as well as minor minerals resources. In order to give balanced powers to local people 50 per cent reservation has been made compulsory for women in villages. Rights to distribute and manage funds are also given to village bodies and district authorities will only supervise. The State has promulgated the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Area

(PESA) Act and started implementing development schemes such as and Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) with a view to giving more powers to the Local Self Government. To promote peoples participation the Government has started some schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Eco-balanced Village Development Campaign, Dispute-free Village Mission and Sant Gadgebaba Village Cleanliness Campaign.

COMMUNITY DECISION

It is true that the funds for rural development are allocated on demands of peoples' representatives, but the decision to this effect is always taken by the outsiders. Thus the priorities of local people are more likely to be ignored. In the last 15 to 20 years a concept of 'competition for development' has been gaining grounds. The Sant Gadgebaba Village Cleanliness Campaign is the best example of this. In the campaign awards are given to the villages on evaluation after fulfilling the stipulated criteria. Naturally the village that gets better grade gets more funds.

However, it was noticed that that some villages always get good amount of funds due to their good performance and thus others are deprived of financial assistance, therefore stringent competitive criteria have been done away with. Every village that fulfills the guidelines is now eligible to get the funds. Awards for the Dispute-

free Village scheme and Central Government-assisted Nirmal Gram Yojana are being given keeping in mind this fact. The dispute-free villages or those who have abolished the practice of open defecation are being given the funds to facilitate them do their own development. Yashawant Gram Samruddhi Yojana has been devised on the principal that the development should take place through the economic partnership of the State Government and local community.

The experiments of rural development undertaken through initiatives mentioned above reveal that villagers who are united and enlightened only deserve development funds. Therefore, Eco-balanced Village Development Campaign has been planned in such a manner that every village should start with the development in their might and then continue it. The principle applied for it is: 'make reforms, show performance, get funds and continue development'. It is binding on the villages to continue the development process to get regular funds. This will lead the sustained growth. The development must be logical and rational. Protection of natural resources should always be on the mind. The positive sign in view of the State's better future is that the enlightened feeling of development by protecting nature is percolating in the villages. People have realized that development that ruins the nature will some day take toll of the human civilization. ■

Self-Reliant Villages

What Maharashtra tried and tested in micro planning has been accepted as a norm at the national level by the Planning Commission.

The Architect of Modern Maharashtra Shri Yashwantrao Chavan set the foundation of development and consolidation of rural Maharashtra which has been focus of planning in the State. The emphasis of micro-planning is to support and encourage self-respect and self-confidence of rural population.



A silent revolution is taking place in rural Maharashtra transforming quality of life for better for the people who struggle to cope up with the changes taking all around them. Since its inception, Maharashtra State has always given importance to development of rural areas in the State as majority of population lives in rural Maharashtra.

The Architect of Modern Maharashtra Shri Yashwantrao Chavan set the foundation of development and consolidation of rural Maharashtra which has been focus of planning in the State. For last one decade YASHADA and UNICEF have undertaken many projects in rural areas for ensuring planning of rural areas on the basis of inputs from the local people. The

emphasis of such micro planning is to support and encourage self-respect and self-confidence of rural population.

The micro level planning is based on the principle that projects implement by using local level expertise, experience and resources prove beneficial to the society and they last longer. Such projects also boost self-respect and self-confidence among people and generate

kind of positive energy which can be further utilized for development of the region.

Utilization of local resources boosts entrepreneurship and create confidence among people of the region. The planning is done in such a manner that the village and its people do not depend on any outside help or involvement in its development process. Such development on the path of self-sufficiency can lead to further boost the development of cluster of villages and its role in the overall development planning of the State in various sectors.

The micro planning at village level is done in such a manner that the schemes approved and implemented by Gram Sabhas (Village Committees) become integral part of the various development projects of the State. For example if a village prepares a plan to develop a road linking it with State highway or other nearby village, then same could be included at the State level and State funds could be made available for such road planned and executed at the village level micro planning. Gram Sabha may decide to use local labour and local raw material to reduce cost as well as provide jobs to rural population.

Depending on the experience in Maharashtra in micro-level planning during the last decade, the Planning Commission prepared a detailed document for planning at district level and circulated it throughout the country. It is really heartening to know that what Maharashtra tried and tested in micro-level planning has been accepted as a norm at the national level by the Planning Commission.

The planning commission has systematically developed the programmes under micro planning and it is for the population in the villages in the country to take benefit of such planning and develop villages by making them self-sufficient in many sectors like water supply, transport, agriculture and education.

The basic structure of micro planning is based on informed decision making process in which almost everybody in the village is involved in the planning process. The 15-year development plan



under micro planning is prepared in a very scientific and elaborative manner by ensuring involvement of local population at every stage.

The process involves innovative methods to ensure involvement of rural population, entertainment programmes to attract people, map showing what material is available for use, social map of the village, charts showing problems in implementing development projects, survey of families, visits to local schools, hospitals, Montessori schools,

and Anganwadis.

After such visits, people discuss and debate what is needed for the villages and set targets for coming 15 years. Then decide under what scheme what kind of work should be taken and a rough time-bound programme is prepared, discussed and voted. The Gram Sabha has to adopt the development plan under micro planning system. Then it is sent at various levels- tehsil, district and State level authorities for incorporating it in the final planning and budgeting





for actual support.

While making such elaborate planning at the micro-level, the basic concept of rural development involves consolidation of Gram Panchayat by way of people's participation, creating integrated information about Gram Panchayat, creating awareness among people, integrated development plan for the village through people's participation.

The six-day timetable prepared for integrated development plan for villages under micro planning system includes basic ingredients for people's participation for people's involvement in the micro planning only decides success or failure of the micro planning.

Village Map – Human habitat in a village, collection of data about below poverty line people in the village, the information is displayed at the main square in the village or at the office of Gram Panchayat so that everybody can see it, read it and correct it, if there is any need. So no one can show ignorance about the development plan.

Listing of Natural Resources – People visit various places in and around village and gather information about sources of water, soil, topography, trees, flora and fauna, wild animals if any. This helps to devise integrated development plan.

Seasonwise Changes – In rural area,

much depends on natural cycles of changes. So people collect information about malnutrition, migration, school attendance, availability of jobs, contagious diseases

Opportunities – A list is prepared of Government schemes which are available for the development of the village, water resources whether it is convenient or far from the village.

Target Groups – This generates discussion among groups – youth, women, senior citizens and find out group specific issues and problems and steps to be taken for resolving these issues. Information generated after people's participation is more authentic and accepted by all.

Introduction of group games are also used to popularize and awareness campaign for ideals of social equity, common target, communal harmony.

Integrated Information – People's participation help to gather ground level information about population, their social groups, available resources and records in Gram Panchayat books, revenue department's village book, family notebooks used for micro level planning.

Training Camps – Informing and educating Gram Panchayat members and villagers is assured by holding education conferences at village level using models for mass education by way of symbols, videos, graphs and charts.

The Constitution of the country has created Gram Sabha which is final and last body for planning at village level. On the last day, Gram Sabhas are held to give final touch to the integrated development plan for a village. Before this final meeting, group meetings of women, youth, senior citizens are held and various schemes related with these groups are discussed.

On the sixth day - the final draft for the 15-year Integrated Development Plan for the village is approved in Gram Sabha, after discussing salient points. This ensures approval and co-operation from all concerned to the development programme for the village.

Micro planning for villages also aims at developing trained manpower

for further development of the villages and region. Educated youths are involved in the micro planning as Gram Sevaks who can play a vital role in the entire planning process and ensure involvement of people in the micro planning.

Once the integrated 15-year development plan is prepared and approved by the Gram Sabha, then the details are digitalized at taluka centers. YASHADA trains youths for digitalizing the plan at taluka level. Once the village micro plans are entered into the system, then it becomes easier for the taluka level planners to prepare integrated development plan for the region. This is done after proper scrutiny and due diligence. Such taluka plans are later integrated into district level planning giving a wider picture for the State Planning Authorities.

MICRO PLANNING

Right from the beginning, the district level agencies are involved in the micro planning, at the tehsil level, Block Development Officer and others concerned with development programmes for Government schemes are also part of the process. They organize camps and training sessions for Gram Panchayat members who are benefited by such programmes and can contribute in proper way in micro planning for their villages.

Evolution of such micro planning for villages is a revolution itself. Such an activity give a sense of participation to everybody in the village and they can successfully participate and implement various Government generated schemes like afforestation, sanitation, Gram Swarajya Projects, soil conservation, cleanliness of the village, distribution of job cards and so on.

Encouraged by the response and results, the State Government has decided to implement micro planning in 12 backward districts to boost regional development. In the next step, the micro planning will be implemented in all the districts in the State taking the State on the path of total decentralization in planning for development. ■

- Prakash Joshi

Good Samaritans

The Central and State Governments' schemes aim at upgradation of the rural population.

The satisfaction derived by the innovations made by the Samaritans is immense but the relief they have been providing to the vast rural populace is immeasurable. Their work can be described as a beacon in the darkness.



Loakmanyia Tilak and later Mahatma Gandhi had given considerable thought to the rural poverty in India. Tilak had inspired groups of people to set up processing and manufacturing activities in villages while Gandhiji had a pan-India vision for turning villages into vibrant habitations. His concept of Ram Rajya speaks eloquently about this. In the intense freedom struggle Gandhiji's rural economics got back-staged. Today the global economy has gained significance from the point of view of

the development of a country as a whole.

As per the United Nations (2005 statistics) India ranked first among the 10 countries with most rural population. China even with the largest population in the world, surprisingly, was second followed by Indonesia. Bangladesh and Pakistan stood forth and fifth respectively. The other countries that follow were: Nigeria, Vietnam and Ethiopia. Japan had the least rural population followed by United States.

The Rural Population percentage in world was last reported at 49.15 percent in 2010. It was 49.57 percent in 2009 and 49.99 percent in 2008, according to the World Bank. The world Rural Population annual growth percentage was last reported at 0.28 percent in 2010, according to the World Bank. The Rural population growth in World was 0.30 percent in 2009 and 0.31 percent in 2008.

According to the latest national

census the Rural Sector is the area where over "25 per cent of the male working population" is engaged in agricultural pursuits; population is less than 5000 population and density of population is less than 400 per sq km.

While defining the Urban areas the Registrar General and Commissioner of Census in India laid some criteria such as: All places with a Municipality, Corporation or Cantonment or Notified Town Area; all other places which satisfied the following criteria; a minimum population of 5000; at least 75 percent of the male working population was non-agricultural and a density of population of at least 400 sq. km. (1000 per sq. mile).

Rural areas lack most basic amenities like clean drinking water, toilets and pucca roads. Most of these areas are remote. Various schemes and projects for the development of the area aiming at uplifting their standard of living often fail to reach out to them by crossing typical bureaucratic hurdles. Where Government machinery fails some Good Samaritans come to the rescue of these down-trodden. Their commendable contribution in nation-building must be taken into consideration and appreciated. Here are some of the case studies:

SWING OF POWER

Chandrakant Pathak has evolved a simple yet innovative product, known as the Magic Swing. Pathak has used the traditional swing to harness power. The swing has a pulley attached to it. The motion of the swing operates the pulley, attached to a single piston water pump which is capable of lifting water upto 30 meters height and has a suction depth of 10 metres. A sprinkler is attached to





the pump installed near the tank. The sprinkler can discharge 20 litres per minute of water.

On one side of the swing, another pulley is attached with a drum connected to a water pipe and a drain pipe. It acts as a washing machine. With the same to-and-fro motion, the drum revolves and within a short span, the clothes are washed.

The mounted bicycle revolves the drum attached to it and washes clothes. The cycling motion is converted into electricity by a generator. This cycle could create a water pump, sprinkler, juicer or cutter. The cost of these cycle driven machines is very low. The machines are currently being used in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karantaka.

National Innovation Foundation has awarded Pathak for his invention. He is planning to make more and more

simple applications, for the benefit of rural woman. He is reluctant to apply for patent owing to his passion for sharing knowledge. He hopes that through training students and making them think of other practical innovations will go a long way in developing rural folk.

An energy park created at Kanhe Phata near Kamshet along the Mumbai-Pune highway about 80 km from Pune has seen his dream become a reality. The park is open for school kids, tourists and all innovation lovers. Thankfully, Pathak is not alone. Here is a case of the youngsters who returned from the US to help their rural brethren.

ELECTRICITY FROM RICE HUSK

Electricity is the dividing line between the rural and the urban population. While power is an inevitable part of the people living in cities like Mumbai, millions of people living in villages have not even been aware of its existence. At this stage when Indian is vying for the Superpower position, lack of power in most part of the country is sure to bring the county disgrace. An estimated 400 million people have no access to electricity. Unarguably, the State that remains most in darkness is Bihar, where almost 85 percent population has no power connection at all.

However, the four-some Gyanesh Pandey, Manoj Sinha, Ratnesh Yadav

and Charles W. Ransler are playing the role of power angles. They have successfully developed a system to process rice husk and generate electricity without any pollution. It is affordable for poor families and could be installed anywhere. They have founded Husk Power to set up 65 power units that serve thousands of households. The demand for the system is only increasing.

Born in a Bihar village without electricity Pandey, an electrical engineer is the chief executive of the firm. Pandey emigrated to the US. In Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, New York, he earned a master's degree and joined the semiconductor manufacturer International Rectifier in Los Angeles. He specialized in getting the best performance from integrated circuits at the lowest possible cost. This inspired him to develop a Husk Power apparatus.

His patriotism and love for his society won over the handsome pay package he was getting and brought him back to motherland. He met Yadav here. Both spent several years experimenting. They tried organic solar cells, jatropa biodiesel and other ideas. But all proved unsuitable as businesses.

Pandey one day saw a salesman who sold gasifiers which were pretty familiar to many people. In fact, people sometimes burned rice husk in them to supplement expensive diesel fuel. But none had thought to use rice husk to run a power system, Pandey discovered.

Pandey and Yadav began devising an electric distribution system powered by husk. After many days' work, they developed a system that could burn 50 kg of rice husk per hour and produce 32 KW of power, sufficient for about 500 village families. Their first practical trial was in a village called Tamkuha in Bihar. The system took off on 15 August 2007.

Sinha and Ransler from the US pursuing the graduates at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business to create a business plan and raise money joined Pandey and Yadav. The company received a grant from the Shell Foundation and set up





three more systems in 2008. It has since raised \$1.75 million in investment financing. In 2009, they had 19 systems in operation; in 2010, they more than tripled that number.

In order to bring down costs, the company made many innovations. It stripped down the gasifiers and engines, removing everything non-essentials like turbo charging. They replaced an automated water-aided process for the removal of rice husk char (burned husk) from gasifiers. This device uses 80 percent less water and can be operated with a hand crank. They kept labour costs at a minimum by hiring locals, mostly belonging to very poor families and trained them to operate and load machines, to work as fee collectors and auditors, monitoring to ensure that the villagers weren't using more electricity than they paid for.

When they found out that villagers

were purchasing poor-quality CFL bulbs, they partnered with Havells India, a large manufacturer, to purchase thousands of high quality bulbs at discount rates. The income earned by the collectors was enhanced by making them suppliers of products like soap, biscuits and oil.

Extracting value from the rice husk char was their next innovation. A side business now turns the char into incense sticks. This business now operates in many places and provides additional income to local women.

PEDALING FOR POWER

Supriyo das, an electrical engineer with a cushy job, decided to devote his life to rural India. He started visiting villages in West Bengal to collect information about water contamination and realized that he could make good use of his engineering knowledge to help the rural

people.

Among the many issues they were facing on their daily lives, Das focussed on the lack of access to electricity. His first project, Firefly, was about capturing some of the energy the human-rickshaw drivers generated as they pedaled in the form of electricity for household lighting. The object was to provide an alternative to kerosene lamps.

Later, he turned his attention to the agricultural hand pumps, a hand-powered cell phone charger and, more recently, an automated chlorine doser that contains no moving parts.

The satisfaction derived by these innovators is immense but the relief they have been providing to the vast rural populace is immeasurable. Their work can be described as a beacon in the darkness. India needs more of the ilk. ■

- Dilip Chaware

Connecting the Hearts

The construction of road network is State's first and foremost priority .

Keeping in mind the need of good physical infrastructure, to speed up transport and create market places for agriculture produce, the Maharashtra has implemented the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the State.

Good physical infrastructure will speed up transportation and create market places for the agriculture produce. Keeping this in mind the State and the Central Government has started planning rural development making village the focal point. The Centre assisted Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana is one such being implemented in Maharashtra. The programme was initiated in 2000 under the aegis of Public Works Department. In 2001- 02 the programme was handed over the Panchayat Raj institutes as per the provisions of the 73rd amendment to the Constitution. Now it is being undertaken by Rural Road Development Institute. Presently works for 33 projects are going on at the district level. For the smooth functioning 1,091 new posts were created including the Chief Engineer at the State level and Executive Engineer at the regional level; State Quality Coordinator and Financial Controller for the work's quality control and coordination.

Since 2005-06 the programme has been included in the Bharat Nirman Campaign. Under the campaign villages with population more than 500 will be connected by permanent roads. In the adivasi areas this will be applicable for the villages with population upto 250. Under the programme 5368 villages are the incomplete road network.

In Gadchiroli and Gondia districts 350 human habitats have population less than 250. To connect 46 such habitats 468 roads are required to be developed and 96 roads are required up-gradation. Expenditure of Rs. 170 crore is expected. The State has put the matter before the Central Rural Development Department. The Ministry for Rural Development is positive in this regard.

Of the road network of 1,49,740 km length 98,639 km length road network comes under the Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana. The Centre has approved projects of 23,206 km length in 9 phases. The State has already received Rs 5260.60 crore from the Centre. The State has completed the road network of 21017.08 km in last four years. Maharashtra stands third in road development.

Initially roads in rural Maharashtra were constructed under the Employment Guarantee Scheme. The roads constructed under the EGS were not of permanent nature, hence the State has demanded that Centre should provide assistance to make these roads pucca. The decision is still pending. If Centre agrees to the demand most of the Maharashtra will be connected with the pucca roads. The State is pursuing the demand persistently.



Consistency in the Central grant is also missing. In the road development wherever there is need for bridges, the work gets held up due to lack of funds for such bridges. The incomplete bridge work makes the road network incomplete. The State Government has sent a proposal of worth Rs. 1,200 to the Centre. Construction of road network is on State's priority for road development is the first and foremost norm of the development. ■

- Deepak More

Budget Highlights 2012-13

Inclusive Development

The current fiscal year budget carries forward the legacy of the first Chief Minister and the Architect of Modern Maharashtra Shri Yashwantrao Chavan. What made Maharashtra, the progressive State, is its policies of integrated development with equilibrium of growth of agriculture and industry; rural and urban; science and technology. The budgetary allocations for these sectors corroborate this.

Economic Review

- During 2011-12 Gross State Domestic Product is expected to increase by 8.5%.
- For the year 2010-11 Net State Domestic Product estimated at Rs. 9,82,452 crore .
- For the year 2010-11 per Capita State Income estimated at Rs. 87,686/.
- For the year 2012-13 expected revenue receipts –Rs. 136711.70 crore.
- For the year 2012-13 expected revenue expenditure –Rs. 136559.21 crore.
- For the year 2012-13 expected revenue surplus –Rs 152.49 crore.

State Annual Plan

- Size of Annual Plan of the State -Rs. 45,000 crore.
- Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes –Rs. 4,590 crore.
- Tribal Sub-Plan- Rs. 4,005 crore.
- District Plan (General)- Rs. 4,950 crore. Increase of Rs. 630 crore over last year.

Agricultural and Allied Sectors

- For Rashtriya Krushi Vikas Yojana-Rs. 415 crore
- For Integrated Water Management Programme-Rs. 105 crore
- For various Agricultural Development Programmes- Rs. 284 crore
- Rs. 2500 crore for Concession in electricity bills to the farmers.
- The Target of 1,50,000 set for the



- Electrification of Agricultural Pumps.
- Outlay of Rs.185 crore for removal of Backlog in Electrification of agricultural pump set.
- The coverage of the Scheme of providing Agricultural Loan at low interest rate increased. An outlay of Rs. 138 crore proposed for the same.
- Rs. 40.50 crore State Share for the Implementation of Agricultural Development Project in 6 districts of Vidarbha.
- Rs. 65.56 crore proposed for The World Bank-assisted Maharashtra Agricultural Competitiveness Project to improve agricultural marketing infrastructure facilities.
- Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme- Rs. 850 crore.
- Maharashtra Water Sector Improvement Project –Rs. 400 crore for rehabilitation of canal and distribution works as well as dam safety works.

- Rs. 2129.13 crore for Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme.
- An additional outlay of Rs. 200 crore for dry land agriculture.

Industry

- For Industrial Promotion Subsidy – Rs. 1480 crore. 1,86,000 employment generation expected.
- Electricity Subsidy for powerlooms – Rs. 500 crore.
- For implementation of Textile Policy –Rs. 93.83 crore.
- New Industrial Policy of the State will



- be declared soon.
- Concession in electricity tariff, VAT and interest subsidy for the new small and medium industries.

Health

- Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandai Yojana- Rs. 324 crore.
- Construction of Hospital Buildings

and Residential Quarters- Rs. 260 crore.

- Maharashtra Emergency Medical Services- Rs. 73 crore.
- Necessary outlay for the preliminary work of New Medical Colleges at Alibaug, Nandurbar, Satara, Mumbai.



- Necessary outlay for the primary works of Highrise Super Speciality Hospital at Sir J.J. Hospital, Mumbai.

Education and Sports

- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan- Rs. 500 crore.
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan –Rs. 2,188.26 crore
- Supplementary Nutritional Programme- Rs. 1,534.52 crore.
- Strengthening of Industrial Training Institute –Rs. 28.75 crore .
- Skill Development Programme for the



Naxal Affected Districts- Rs. 16.98 crore.

- Construction of Sports Complex- Rs. 90 crore.
- Human Development Programme- Rs. 359.33 crore.

Tourism and Cultural Affairs

- Rs. 228 crore for various schemes of



tourism development.

- Provision for Conservation of Lonar Lake, Sea-world and Theme Park Project at Sindhudurg, Kas Plateau Development Project, House Boat Project.
- Necessary provisions for programmes for celebration of the Centenary of Indian Cinema.
- New scheme in the name of Bharat Ratna Pt. Bhimsen Joshi to promote classical singing.
- Substantial outlay proposed for special programme for Development of places of Pilgrimage.

Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation

- National Rural Drinking Water Programme- Rs. 1,444.80 crore.
- Maharashtra Sujal Nirmal Abhiyan- Rs. 179 crore.
- Programme of providing Individual Water Connections and Construction of toilets for the Dalit People in Urban Area –Rs. 50 crore.
- State Share of Rural Sanitation Programme and Sant Gadgebaba Village Sanitation Programme- Rs. 45.37 crore.



Infrastructure Development

- Road Development –Rs. 2,899 crore.
- Necessary outlay for the Railway Projects in the State.
- Rs. 438 crore for the development of airport and MIHAN project.
- Yashwantrao Chavan Gram Sadak Yojana –Rs. 100 crore.



Energy

- Capital for Mahanirmithi -Rs. 1,500 crore.
- State Equity Capital for Mahavitaran- Rs.615 crore.
- For development of non-conventional Energy Sources- Rs. 75 crore.



- Around Rs.1700 crore interest concessions on outstanding electricity bills by Mahavitaran. Details to be announced by Mahavitaran.

Urban Development and Housing

- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission- Rs. 2,200 crore.
- Maharashtra Suvarna Jayanti Nagaroththan Mahabhiyan –Rs. 250 crore.
- Maharashtra Urban Transport Project Phase-I completed. State share of Rs. 355 crore for Phase-II.

- Infrastructure Development Projects worth Rs. 350 crore in the Thane and Raigad District of Mumbai Metropolitan Region by MMRDA.
- For the Scheme of Basic Services to Urban Poor-Rs. 867.89 crore, Central and State Share.
- For Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme- Rs. 413.13 crore.
- Development of Basic Amenities to the localities with more than 50% population of Scheduled Caste Community –Rs. 60 crore.

Social Justice

- Various Pension Scheme for Senior Citizens in BPL families –Rs. 1310.37 crore.
- Various Scholarships for Backward Class Students- Rs. 1230.60 crore.
- Financial Assistance to Scheduled Castes under Gharkul Yojana- Rs. 425 crore.
- Construction of Ashram Shalas and Hostels for Scheduled Tribes Students- Rs. 400 crore.
- Gharkul Schemes proposed for Scheduled Tribes.
- An outlay of Rs. 25 crore proposed for Skill Development Programmes for Scheduled Tribe Youth.
- Training Programme for competitive examinations for Tribal Youths.
- New Scheme proposed for Development of Pardhi Community- Rs. 25 crore.
- Indira Aawas Yojana –Rs. 573.98 crore.
- Necessary outlay for the developmental schemes of minority community.

Labour Welfare



- Welfare Scheme for Maharashtra Domestic Workers -Rs. 6.50 crore.
- Project of Awareness Creation against Child Labour Abuse and other projects-Rs. 10 crore.

Home

- Police Modernization Scheme –Rs. 156.55 crore
- Residential and Administrative Building of Police –Rs. 256.75 crore.



Forest

- Forest Management Project- Rs. 77 crore.



Marathi Language



- Construction of Bhasha Bhavan in Mumbai proposed.
- Providing rare books online through e-books.

- Volumes of Vishwakosh will be available on internet.
- Outlay of Rs.5 crore to nurture Marathi language and culture in Maharashtra Karnataka Border area.

Building Construction

- Construction of Office and Administrative Buildings of Revenue Department- Rs. 140 crore.
- Construction of Administrative Buildings of Rural Development Department –Rs. 60 crore.
- Construction of Aanganwadis- Rs. 253.53 crore.
- Construction of Warehouses –Rs. 25 crore.
- Construction of Government and Semi Government Buildings –Rs. 215.32 crore.
- Construction of the Court Buildings- Rs. 262 crore.

Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

: Under Rural Employment Guarantee scheme an outlay of Rs. 850 crore has been proposed out of which Rs. 590 crore are towards the State share of State Employment Guarantee Scheme and Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme; Rs. 200 crore for Jawahar Wells; Rs. 50 crore for horticulture and Rs. 10 crore for farm ponds.

Rural Sanitation Mission: There has been constructive response from the rural population in the State to the concept of Open Defecation-free Villages which has proved to be important campaign for village cleanliness, health and environment. 9,082 Village Panchayats and 9 Panchayat Samitis from the State have received Government of India's Nirmal Gram Puraskar. An outlay of Rs. 45.37 crore is proposed as State share for the year 2012-13 for the Total Sanitation Campaign and Sant Gadgebaba Cleanliness Village Campaign.

Projects of liquid waste management costing Rs. 103 crore have been approved covering 94 villages with population more than 15000 in rural areas of the State.

Indira Awas Yojana : Those beneficiaries under Indira Awas Yojana who do not have their own land to construct dwelling unit are being provided with financial assistance of upto Rs. 12000 or the actual expenditure whichever is lower to purchase or acquire 100 to 250 sq metre plot. For this, an outlay of Rs. 573.98 crore is proposed for the year 2012- 13 from which 1,65,176 dwelling units are expected to be constructed.

Towards Rural Awakening

Agriculture is India's biggest employment generator as it employs 70 per cent population.

Markets must improve, and the customers must get the produce directly from farmers. If the rural infrastructure improves, urban entrepreneurs would turn to villages reversing the migration.



In the agrarian country like India during the British Raj farmers were going through several hardships and ordeals because the British who had came here as the businessmen were apathetic towards the farmers. But when the torch of self rule was lit in the hearts of Indians, Mahatma Jotiba Phule first brought to the fore the pathetic conditions of Indian farmers.

After the Independence Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made the issues of farmers

and the rural populace the centerpiece of the manifesto of Independent Labour Party .The main objective of the manifesto was the development of agriculture. It stated that agriculture-based industry needed to be set up in the rural areas.

The State Government has always put the emphasis on agriculture, industrialization and rural development. Thanks to Shri. Yashwantrao Chavan for having set the path as the first Chief

Minister, for which he is aptly called the architect of the Modern Maharashtra. Shri. Yashwantrao Chavan was keen that ordinary men and women must become a part of the Panchayat Raj System.

When the issue of chairmen of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis came up for discussion in the meeting of Congress Legislature Party a suggestion came forth that the posts should go to the members of the State Legislature;

but Shri. Chavan argued in favour of giving these posts to local people. He even offered to resign as the Chief Minister on the issue. He was of the view that leadership should develop at the grass root level. His budgets reflected the same thinking.

During his tenure the first MIDC in the rural area came up at Dhatav, in Rohe taluka. Erstwhile Union Finance Minister C D Deshmukh inaugurated it. More MIDCs were set up at Pimpri-Chinchwad, Butibori, Walunj, Satpur, Ambad, Islampur, Latur. This gave a boost to Industrialization in the rural area. Total 74; Industrial areas were recognized in the State.

Vasantrao Naik succeeded Chavan and his first decision was to order purchase of Jowar at an assured price to give relief to farmers as Jowar prices had crashed, and the farmers were in dire straits. He also started a campaign for growing hybrid Jowar which gave relief to the farmers having non-irrigated land. Naik knew that increasing the agricultural production was necessary for the transformation of the rural Maharashtra. Vasantrao Naik knew that farming was also the backbone of other ancillary industries. He encouraged the cultivation of hybrid cotton varieties. He toured the State and motivated the farmers. Maharashtra State Seed Corporation was founded during Naik's time.

It was during Naik's tenure Maharashtra implemented Employment Guarantee Scheme. Maharashtra is the pioneer of the EGS that has been emulated by the Centre of late. The credit for the EGS, however, rightly goes to V S Page for it is his brain-child. During Naik's tenure, some 14,000 villages in the State, a third of the total, were electrified. Power generation projects came up at Khaparkheda, Paras, Bhusaval, Pophali, Yeldari, etc. Biggest power generation project came up at Koradi. Naik felt that power supply to the agricultural water pumps was as important as that to the houses. He carried out massive rural electrification between 1971 and 1974.

Naik once said that if agriculture was to fail, so would the Indian democracy.



During his tenure, agricultural colleges were set up at Rahuri, Akola, Parbhani and Dapoli. Research on new varieties of jowar, cotton, wheat, tur dal, rice, groundnut, oranges, chikoo, etc started, and agricultural productivity as well as incomes increased.

Vasantdada Patil, as a Chief Minister, saw to it that cooperative banking and credit societies acquire financial stability. Today, the cooperative movement is crumbling, and therefore the migration from villages to urban areas has increased.

When Sharad Pawar, a son of a farmer, became the Chief Minister, he restructured Monopoly Cotton Procurement Scheme. He encouraged for research of new varieties of Jowar, sugarcane, fruits and also started agro processing industries in the State. One of his decisions was to award scholarships to the wrestlers for training and diet. He also set up an independent Sports Department, and built gymnasias and grounds in the rural areas.

Thus Maharashtra has a long tradition that favours farmers. The process of transformation of rural areas through budgets has been underway through successive Governments. The pace of development and flaws therein could be criticized. But there is no reason to play the opposition and dismiss outright the progress in the last 62 years!

The current year's Rs 152-crore

surplus budget presented by the Deputy Chief Minister and the Finance Minister Ajit Pawar has its virtues and vices. But we would focus on the rural Maharashtra. The budgetary allocation for the Yashwantrao Chavan Rural Roads Scheme that aims to connect hamlets in remote hilly and tribal areas with tehsil places is very significant. Nearly 5000 habitations having population less than 500 in plain areas and 250 in hilly and tribal areas which are not covered under PMGSY will be connected by all weather roads to a Taluka headquarters or market places under this scheme. Rs 100 crore have been earmarked for the scheme. Better roads would make it easier for population in tribal areas to commute to tehsil places for education and other purposes. Transportation of agricultural produce would become easier.

The provision for Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been enhanced from Rs 745 crore to





Rs 850 crore. But it is necessary that the scheme should be implemented with vigour and enthusiasm, as in the old days.

There are a host of schemes of agriculture sector: National Agriculture Development Programme, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, interest concession for crop loans, Maharashtra Water Sector Improvement Project, Electrification of Agricultural pumps, Development of dry land farming, Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme etc. A substantial sum of Rs 6,500 crore has been provided for this purpose.

At the national level, 45 per cent of the land under cultivation is irrigated. In Maharashtra, only 17 per cent of the land is irrigated. Ajit Pawar has devised some concrete programmes to improve the situation. A mere service sector cannot lift the economy, degradation of agriculture led the migration of people to the cities from rural areas in search of employment. If the State loses its self-sufficiency in food grain production, inflation will skyrocket, scalding the people.

In last decade, the rate of agricultural growth was 15 per cent, now it is down to half. Something, somewhere has

gone wrong. It must be acknowledged that especially Vidarbha, Khandesh and Marathwada have fallen behind to a great extent in the agriculture sector.

As per the Governor's directives, Vidarbha is supposed to get Rs 2,200 crore for irrigation development. Marathwada is to get Rs 1,027 crore. Rs 10,000 crore were given in the last five-six years under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Scheme. Farmers were given Rs 2,000 crore by way of compensation for loss of crops such as Soybean, rice and cotton. The Centre and the State together paid Rs 13,000 crore as compensation. The Chief Minister put together a package of Rs 1,065 crore for Vidarbha. The Prime Minister's Package was Rs 3,650 crore. However, had this money been disbursed properly, the situation would have improved a great deal.

The State is going to dig 18,000 new wells in the State. Around 3,000 farm-ponds would be constructed. It was essential to increase the irrigation capacity whichever way. Rs 228 crore have been earmarked for tourism, with a focus on Konkan. Millions of tourists will come to Konkan if we could develop the infrastructure. Not only would that transform Konkan into California, but it would benefit the entire State, because the tourists would spill over to other parts of Maharashtra too.

The agriculture in Israel is knowledge-based, empowered by hi-tech. On the other hand Indian graduates of agricultural colleges do not want to take up farming. They want jobs. They prefer 10 to 5 jobs rather than toiling in the sun. So the agriculture and the rural areas are in shambles. To change this picture, we need to put in place the transportation infrastructure. Israel has an Agricultural Export Company which acts as a unified agency for exporting the farm produce. Maharashtra needs an agency on these lines. Markets must improve, and the customers must get the produce directly from farmers. If the rural infrastructure improves, urban entrepreneurs would turn to villages reversing the migration. ■

- Hemant Desai



'Yashwant' Maharashtra

Maharashtra's Yashwant Panchayat Raj Campaign has been emulated by the Centre.

Maharashtra's contribution in the nation building started from the home. The visionary schemes conceived by the State have been adopted at the national level. The Planning Commission had called the State a Crowning Jewel of the country.



Yashwantrao Chavan can be described in many ways: an architect of modern Maharashtra, a visionary Chief Minister, a man who did pioneering work in myriad fields including the cooperation, industry, agriculture, education, rural development, art, literature etc. Chavan believed that Gram Panchayat was the foundation of the democracy, and its function was not just to run the village, but to fully develop the social life of the village. He took an important step of decentralization of power in order to make the villages self-sufficient, and to prepare the ground for a healthy democracy and development.

YASHWANT PANCHAYAT RAJ

Under the Yashwant Panchayat Raj campaign, deserving local bodies and their officials are given awards on the birth anniversary of Shri Yashwantrao Chavan for the last seven years. Motivation is necessary for development and progress. It creates a work-culture,

accelerates the development, which benefits the people directly or indirectly.

CROWNING JEWEL

Some years ago, the Planning Commission had extolled Maharashtra's performance, calling the State a "crowning jewel" of the country. How true it is! Maharashtra has pioneered quite a few novel schemes like the Employment Guarantee Scheme, Right to Information, drive against open defecation, etc. These schemes did not remain on paper, they translated into real work.

The Central Government emulated the schemes like the Right to Information and Employment Guarantee Scheme; and made them applicable through the country. Now Maharashtra has set a trend again through the Yashwant Panchayat Raj Campaign. The scheme too is being implemented at the national level. The Panchayat Raj Ministry has now decided to encourage and empower Panchayat bodies by initiating

the 'Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme'.

Under this scheme, the top-ranking Zilla Parishad in the State, the first two best-judged Panchayat Samitis (one of them from scheduled areas) and the first two best-judged Gram Panchayats (one of them from scheduled areas) and two each from each division (total of 14 Gram Panchayats) get grants from the Centre.

For a planned development, the Rural Development Ministry decided to evaluate the Gram Panchayats on their performance and grade them. Such classification highlights those who have excelled, as well as those who have fallen behind. The ministry has decided to evaluate the Panchayat bodies including Zilla Parishads and to grade them (A+, A, B, and C).

Panchayat bodies are expected to become more and more pro-people, more transparent and provide quality and speedy services. To decide to assess their performance objectively, and to accept the results and implications sportingly and make necessary improvement, needs courage. The Rural Development Ministry showed this courage, and has won kudos for the same. Following are the criteria for the gradation of the Panchayat Raj Institutes.

GRAM PANCHAYAT

- Profile of the Gram Panchayat
- Number of meetings during the year, attendance, resolutions passed, their implementation
- Schemes undertaken by the Gram Panchayat
- Gram Sabhas held through the year, women Gram Sabhas held, Attendance



of the people, attendance of the beneficiaries

- Social audit conducted by the Gram Sabha
- Training of the Gram Panchayat members, expenses incurred by Gram Panchayat staff on the establishment and management of expenditures
- Annual planning of Gram Panchayat and sanction from the gram-sabha, sanction from the Panchayat Samiti, provision for inevitable items in the budget
- Recoveries by the Gram Panchayat and efforts for increasing the revenue
- Civic amenities provided by the Gram Panchayat
- Audit reports, transparency, E-Panchayat
- Participation in various campaigns, awards

PANCHAYAT SAMITI

- Profile of the Samiti
- Attendance of members for monthly meetings, questions raised by the members, adjourned meetings, minutes of the meetings, resolutions passed or cancelled
- Training Programmes, review of the officials' performance, awards under Rajiv Gandhi Speedy Administration

Campaign, review of service books

- Annual action plan and budget
- Generation of income resources
- Achievements under the Central and State schemes, computerization of Gram Panchayats, family planning, malnutrition eradication

RURAL MAHARASHTRA AT A GLANCE

- Maharashtra covers an area of 3,08,000 sq km, of which the villages account for 2, 85,000 sq km.
- The State's total population is 11.16 crore (Census of 2011); 6.15 crore people live in the villages.
- Nearly 1.3 crore families live in the rural areas. 45 lakh families are below the poverty line.
- Maharashtra has 33 Zilla Parishads, 351 Panchayat Samitis and 27, 920 Gram Panchayats.
- In all 389 Gram Panchayats have population of 10,000 to 50,000. Only 1,326 villages in the State have a population of more than 5,000. These villages need special facilities, because they have the potential to become the hubs of development.

- Accounts, audit issues, redressal of grievances

ZILLA PARISHAD

- Profile of the Zilla Parishad
- Meetings held, minutes of the meetings, resolutions passed, general meetings Working of the standing and subject committees
- Recruitment, training programmes, officials' performance
- Redressal of staff's grievances, disposal of pension cases
- Planning of income, generation of new sources of income, recovery of dues
- Achievement of objects under various the Central and the State schemes
- Expenditure for scheduled tribes and women development, details of civic amenities, social initiatives, programs undertaken for education and information dissemination
- Accounts, audit issues, redressal of grievances
- Implementation of Right to Information, number of Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats which have internet facility, ISO certification
- Any award received by the Zilla Parishad at divisional, State or national level. ■

- Dr. Surekha Mulay

The Crusader

Any one with the strong will power can make the whole difference.

Several national and international organization have taken note of Anna Hazare's work conferring on him many awards as token of appreciation of his self-less work and service to humanity.

When the Indian Government appealed to the youth to join the armed forces after the Sino-India war of 1962, a young man from Maharashtra joined the army in 1963. But he felt frustrated with life and a thought of suicide was in his mind. As he was to board a train at the New Delhi railway station he picked up a book for causal reading on the train. The book was written by Swami Vivekananda. The soldier on the verge of ending his life was Kisan Baburao Hazare.

Today he is fondly known as Anna Hazare and is popular amongst all age groups, especially amongst the youth for his crusade against the corruption in the Independent India. When Hazare was in double mind he would not have thought that a book would change his life and that of many others in Maharashtra and in India. The book gave him an insight into Swami Vivekananda's teachings that the purpose of living should be service to humanity. Young Hazare decided to spend his life in the service of humanity. He continued for next 12 years in the army. On completing 15 years he took voluntary retirement and headed for Ralegaon Siddhi, a remote and backward village in Ahmednagar district. The village has scanty rainfall, leading to acute water shortage, making agriculture difficult and forcing most of the villagers to migrate to nearby villages in search of work, practically all through the year.

The women of the village had to cover long distances in search of water and their woes were aggravated due to the alcoholism prevalent among most men in the village. The women would often become the victims of the violence of their drunken husbands. Having studied the problems of the village, he

realised that he had several things to attend to in the village on an urgent basis, but priority had to be given to water management and an end to consumption of alcohol.

Hazare had heard of Vilasrao Sankhe's water management projects in some villages in Saswad taluka of Pune district and decided to replicate the project in Ralegaon Siddhi. His intention got a boost, with a positive geological survey report by local government officials, which stated that the topography of Ralegaon Siddhi was good for watershed development programme. Hazare got the local people to contribute their labour for the implementation of the watershed management programme. The programme helped conserve the rain water, which would normally be drained away. The collection of water also helped recharge underground water sources and helped improve the availability of water in the village.

This brought about a miraculous change in the village. The land under cultivation increased nearly three-folds and people were able to take two crops in a year, where earlier they barely got one crop. The labour situation in the village changed as a result. While earlier, residents of Ralegaon Siddhi migrated to other villages in search of work, after the improvement in the water situation, they decided to stay back in the village, yet there was a dearth of workforce, as over 1500 acres of land was now under cultivation. As a result, outside workforce started coming to Ralegaon Siddhi in search of work.

Till the date Hazare's efforts resulted in the construction of 48 bunds, five cement check dams and 16 Gabion structures. He also encouraged the



villagers to increase milk production, which has gone up over 11 times the production at the time when Hazare started his social work in Ralegaon Siddhi.

His efforts have helped the people to increase the per capital income of the village around ten times. Following the success of his programmes, Hazare replicated it in adjoining villages and in other parts of the state and the country.

While taking care of the needs of water of the village, Hazare also concentrated on making the village alcohol and tobacco free. It was not an easy task, but by mobilising the locals, especially the women, Hazare launched a frontal attack on the bootleggers and their customers. Today, no resident of Ralegaon Siddhi consumes alcohol or tobacco. Villagers revere him the most and he is now the Anna (head of the family) for all.

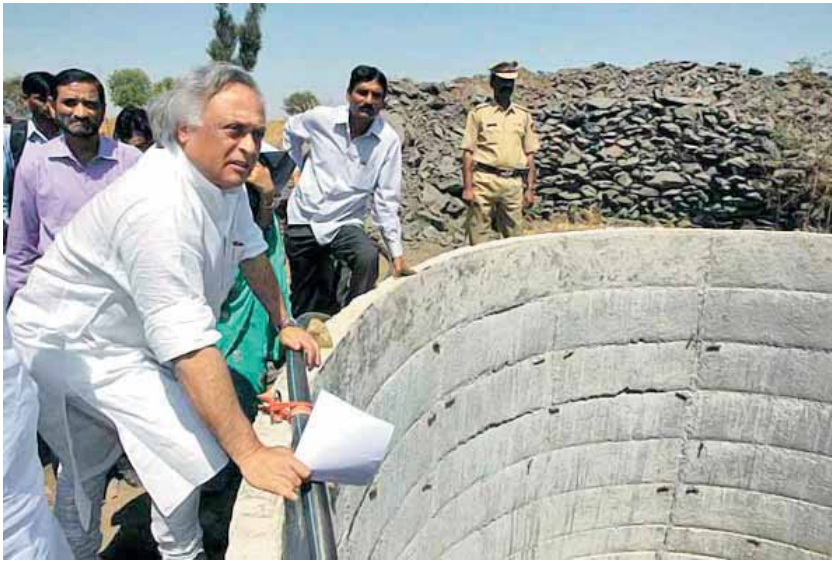
Several national and international organizations have taken note of Anna Hazare's work conferring on him many awards as token of appreciation for his self-less work and service to humanity. The highest national honours he has received till the date are the Padmashri and Padma Bhushan. ■

- *Abhay Mokashi*

Pilgrims of Progress

The Adarsh Gaon Programme is yet another feather in Maharashtra's cap

In the Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization's meeting held in New Delhi between 5 and 7 March 2012, Hivare Bazaar Sarpanch and Executive Chairman of the ideal village project **Popatrao Pawar** made a presentation on the project. African delegates got so much impressed that they decided to emulate the project in their country. Pawar gives the details about the project.



new proposals 36 villages were selected and actual training has been imparted and work has started.

Which are the ideal villages?

Of the 38 villages 8 are real ideal villages. Of these 3 are in Amravati division. Zambhrun Mahali (taluka Washim) has made progress from shed net to dairy. Rs. One crore three lakh were spent on Papal village (district Amravati) of Punjabrao Deshmukh. Chaldana (district Buldhana) a village of Bhoodan movement has been adjudged an ideal village.

These villages are dalit and adivasi dominated, Rs.70 lakh were spent on it. Here the crop pattern has also changed. These villages had never seen wheat. Now farmers are growing wheat crop on large scale. The village with 1200 population has scrapped the open toilets practice and has constructed toilets blocks for every house.

What efforts are being made to promote other villages to follow Hivare Bazar?

There is no need for people from Vidarbha to visit Hivare Bazar or Ralegan Siddhi. They should make their villages ideal, said Pawar. Maximum farmers who committed suicide were from Vidarbha, especially from Amravati district, hence we focused there. We have spent about Rs. 80-82 lakh for Pungla village in Parbhani district and Rs. one crore on Varand village of Mahad taluka, Raigad district. Rs.84-85 lakh have been spent on Pimpalgaon Koda in Nagar taluka to make it an ideal village.

How the idea of an ideal village came into your mind?

We celebrated Golden Jubilee of the August Kranti Day 20 years ago. I attended a meeting under the chairmanship of the then Chief Minister Sudhakar Naik in which senior-most Gandhian Achyutrao Patwardhan spoke. He appealed to bring Mahatma Gandhi's dream of Gram Swarajya into reality. He said on the lines of Ralegaon Siddhi in Ahmednagar district, each taluka of Maharashtra should have at least one ideal village. This was the inception of an ideal village.

How the actual work started?

In 1994-95, 350 villages were selected for the project. Of which 255 villages submitted proposals. Anna Hazare was selected as Chairman of Ideal Village Committee. My village Hivare Bazaar was adjudged an ideal village. It will be

completing 16 years on April 1, 2012. On January 1, 2009 I became the working chairman of Ideal Village Conception and Project Committee with its head-office in Pune. Under the old scheme in the last 16 years, funds of only Rs.41 crore have been received.

Unavailability of enough funds had put the Ideal Village scheme in doldrums. After conducting meetings, appeals were made. During 2010 two special workshops were conducted. Active villages were provided with funds. The funds were disbursed according to process, approval of ideal village project. In last two years Rs.14 crore have been approved for 36 villages.

Equal allocation of funds has been made for these villages. The tenure for old villages was set as March 31, 2012. Accordingly, 90-95 work is completed. During last year i.e. in 2011 of the 74

In last one-and-half to two years many villages have been given the status of ideal villages. Under the current new scheme, work for 36 villages has been taken up. Of these 24 villages are in Vidarbha. Within a year's time 35 villages will become ideal.

Meetings of Technical Group from Pune Office, technical Group of Institution and Gram Samitis' are organized. The discussions are held on budget received from District Committee, the proposal is forwarded to Pune office.

Does Centre give any Assistance?

Maharashtra is the pioneer in the Ideal Village plan that spans for three years. Hence all funds are provided by the State. Minister for Water Conservation, Nitin Raut and Minister of State Gulabrao Deokar are Chairmen of the Scheme. There is definite backing from the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister. In the first one-and- half year works of water conservation are undertaken. Next six months are devoted for development of agriculture and in remaining period of one-and-half years all other development works in the village are completed.

Watershed development is the focal point of Ideal Village Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to remove economic and social imbalance among villages. Presently three things 1) Mahatma Gandhi's Gram Swarjya, 2) Policy of Dr. Ambedkar to remove social and economic difference , 3) The three-tier Panchayat Raj System of Late Yashwantraoji Chavan are made possible through the scheme. The Gram Sabha takes all decisions of the scheme.

Which prominent personalities have visited Hivare Bazaar so far?

Union Minister for Agriculture, Sharad Pawar visited Hivare Bazar in 2009. Minister for Revenue every year visits Hivrebazsar. The Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Minister for Home R.R. Patil; Minister for Rural Development Jayant Patil; former Minister for Rural Development, Vijaysinh Mohite-Patil and others have visited the Hivare



Bazar. Many Union Ministers, have also visited Hivare Bazar. Union Minister for Rural Development Dr. C.P.Joshi, Raghuvansh Pratap Singh and others have also visited Hivrebazsar and have lauded it.

What is the thought you would give to other villages?

Everyone should take inspiration of ideal village scheme. Not only inspiration but they should actually work for it.

Your expectations from people's representatives?

People's representatives should vow to take efforts for making villages in their constituency ideal ones. Every Panchayat member should adopt at least one village, Zilla Parishad Member two villages, MLA five villages and MP 10 villages. If it happens soon the scenario of the State will change.

The society which is the outcome of people's co-operation is called as barrier-free society. A village cannot become ideal without solving the people's problem. First we have to solve problem of people, there is no other alternate to it. Problems of road, dam, family and all other problems are solved according to priority.

Work is taken up by keeping the

whole village in mind. Talathi, Gram Sevaks, Anganwadi teachers, wireman, agriculture examiner, all are imparted training at Ralegan Siddhi, Hivare Bazar. The training will prove useful while having dialogue with employees, people who have actually worked for ideal village scheme.

With the co-operation of people's representatives an ideal village can be created. Every village has Village Committee. Representative from backward class, women, farmer, educated unemployed and an intellectual person are included in it. They are imparted training at Hivare Bazar. With the experiences shared by the former chairman, former Sarpanch, water management planners, members of shepherd organizations and others with the members of the committee, the work of creating ideal village is taken up. Real country practical hard work is put into it.

This helps in transparency in Gram Sabha. Such villages develop speedily. Sarpanch, employee, anganwadi sevika and others with exemplary work are felicitated. The exemplary institution which earn fame for village by making it an ideal village, by verifying its merit, such institutions are permitted to make other villages as an ideal. ■

As told to Sheshrao Pathade

Develop Villages Prosper Villagers

Villagers of all age groups enthusiastically participate in the scheme

The Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme is implemented to facilitate environmentally focused inclusive growth of rural areas. In all, 810 Gram Panchayats in the State received 'Paryavaran Vikas Ratna' award at the hands of President Pratibha Patil.



The Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme for the holistic development of villages is an important step by the Rural Development Department. It covers all the important aspects which are necessary for the development of the villages. The scheme aims at making village prosperous so that villagers become affluent.

Considering the effect changing climatic condition on villages, a

plan for environmentally-balanced developed village scheme has been prepared. For which, in the beginning, innovative scheme such as one person one tree plantation and now one person, ten trees is being implemented. During the first year of the scheme 5.93 crore trees were planted and during the second year 3.25 crore trees are planted.

Right from children to elderly persons enthusiastically participated in

the scheme. Students in the villages gave their names to the trees and accepted the responsibility of nurturing these trees. These trees are planted by considering the local and geographical aspects and natural conditions of the villages. The work of acquiring the saplings is taken up at large scale. Nurseries are being developed in districts and villages.

Large scale people's participation is sought in nurseries developed by Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Committees

and Gram Panchayats. Social forestry, nurseries of Rural Development Department, private nurseries, Green Sena, schools-colleges, environment lovers and institutions nurture saplings. Developing nurseries under the Employment Guarantee Scheme is being completed speedily. Planning of tree-plantation is done through Gram Panchayats, the saplings are planted at dry lands, private lands, inside roads in villages, schools, colleges, private households, boundaries of farms, lands of institutes, industrial areas and pilgrimage places.

Under the scheme, priority has been given to villages with more than 10,000 population so that they can act as growth centres. After participating in the scheme, on the lines of town planning Gram Panchayats within a period of one year are inspired to prepare plan outlay for development of villages and for environment and its implementation. This includes environment development plan for 151 villages with the advice of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. While doing so a 24 member committee of technical experts is set up to guide in this regard.

The plan includes water resources management, flood water management, air pollution management, solid waste management, natural resource management, bio-diversity management, power management, holistic development of vastis and infrastructure, industrial and vocational development and management, environment friendly tourism, preservation of historical places, enhancing village capacities.

The steps taken in this direction of holistic development of the villages have received the huge success. Minister for Rural Development, Jayant Patil himself organized 101 sabhas in the remotest corners of the State, made people to understand the importance of implementation of the scheme have received large co-operation of the people.

In the first year of implementation of the scheme itself the success received by villagers increased the aspirations

of the administrative machinery. The criteria for first year were that every single village in the jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat have to plant trees, the number of which should be equal to at least half of the total population in the village and its preservation. The eco-village programme also demands villages to have at least 60 per cent houses with proper toilets and sanitation facilities, actual tax collection should be 60 per cent, the villagers must also refrain from using plastic bags with less than 50 microns thickness. Villagers should participate in Sant Gadgebhabha Village Cleanliness Programme and Yashwant Panchayat Campaign. With the implementation of the schemes, the transformation of the villages started taking place. Persons have taken pledge that till the village becomes eco-friendly, we will not wear the chappals and they are actively participating in the campaign.

There are total 27290 Gram Panchayats in the State, of these 18,630 villages have planted more than 50 per cent trees in their villages. The 60 per cent families of 16,166 Gram Panchayats have successfully fulfilled the condition of houses with proper toilets and sanitation facilities in the first year itself. 15,638 Gram Panchayats have recovered 60 per cent taxes as decided under the scheme. There are 12,193 Gram Panchayats have successfully fulfilled all criteria of the scheme. These Gram Panchayats have been disbursed with special assistance of Rs. Rs. 389.89 crore.

The specialties of the scheme encouraged villagers and administration machinery, so that some Gram Panchayats who had to complete the targets in third year were fulfilled during first year itself. Such excellent 810 Gram Panchayats were awarded with Paryavaran Vikas Ratna at the hand of President Pratibha Patil. The second year of the scheme has begun from October 2, 2011.

This year also the response received from Gram Panchayats is quite encouraging, so far 3.25 crore trees have been planted under planting equivalent number of trees to population and to

Provision of Funds for the Gram Panchayats based on their performance:

- Rs.30 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population more than 10000 (Rs.10 lakhs every year). Gram Panchayats with headquarter at Taluka will receive Rs. 36 lakhs (Rs. 12 lakhs every year)
- Rs.24 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population of 7001 to 10000 (Rs.8 lakhs every year)
- Rs.15 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population of 5001 to 7000 (Rs. 5 lakhs every year)
- Rs.12 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population of 2001 to 5000 (Rs. 4 lakhs every year)
- Rs.9 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population of 1001 to 2000 (Rs. 3 lakhs every year)
- Rs.6 lakhs will be granted to Gram Panchayats with population up to 1000 (Rs. 2 lakhs every year)

conserve criteria.

The efforts for holistic development of villages should remain continued, hence environmentally balanced, developed village scheme have been added with different criteria i.e. villages should not only make development for one year, the care should be taken that this development remains continued. For participating in the scheme, the criteria is make change and participate, show work and take funds for further development. Those villages with regular development are given special assistance.

In the first year of the Eco-balanced Development Village Scheme, 12,193 Gram Panchayats have fulfilled all criteria. ■

- R.G. Sayyed

Model Villages

Villagers have realized that change is a collective need and it can only be brought collectively.

In Maharashtra the process of progress in rural areas has started from hearts of people. The day is not far off when the influx from villages will revert. Each village will become an independent growth centre.

The path of progress is paved by the enlightenment; the enlightenment that comes from within. In the process of progress if the ultimate result is something that is tangible - that can be felt and touched, it initiates with something that touches one's heart; that one is moved by. In the progressive Maharashtra the process of progress in the rural areas has started from hearts of the people.

Maharashtra is the first and perhaps the only state in India that has given powers to women to participate in the process of development. In villages liquor is the demon that plays havoc in the family first and then in the village. The State Government has made a special provision whereby liquor shop in any village will be closed if majority of the women demand so.

Villagers have realized that change is a collective need and it can only be brought collectively. Realization that something is missing in our village, something that we are lacking in has marked a new beginning which resulted in an eco-balanced growth of the village, making it self-sufficient. It's happening in almost in every district of all the geological divisions such as Konkan, Khandesh, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha.

The day is not far off when the influx from the villages will revert. Each village will become an independent growth centre. Here are some of the footprints of progress - villages that have become role-models for others.



Village: Hivare Bazar
District: Ahmednagar

Highlights

- The first of its kind experiment in India carried out in the village through a blast in the underground rock to create more space for bed-water.
- Plantation done in the rocky area through bores
- Bore-wells, tree-felling, cattle grazing, plastic bags and cultivation of crops that consume much water banned unanimously
- A Memorial Garden developed, every person voluntarily takes care of one tree planted in the loving memory a deceased family member
- Waste management implemented by segregating dry and wet waste to create organic manure
- Of the 230 families, 98 families are using solar power for domestic purpose
- Each house has independent drainage system
- Solar power is being used for street lights



Village: Koregaon
District: Sangli

Highlights

- Specially developed guava specie planted over 4400 sq ft., 6 barrels purchased for watering the plants through community contribution
- Village earns Rs. 80,000 annually by selling fruits
- Recycled drainage water is sold for agriculture, income is used for the development projects.
- Gram Panchayat waste is used for organic manure for the plants
- The drain water after treatment is used for agriculture purpose and it is one of the sources of income for Gram Panchayat as they lease this water
- The village has got rid of open toilet practice completely
- All houses are connected to the common drainage system
- Solar energy used for street lights

Village: Shelgaon-Gauri
District: Nanded

Highlights

- The festival of Pola in adoration of cows and bulls is celebrated in rural Maharashtra with much fun and fervour, however, this village has started a practice of celebrating Pola by organizing health camps and vaccination drive for cattle stock in the village
- Villagers have also set yet another trend by naming every house after a woman
- The village has tap water for every house
- The communal harmony in the village has set a good example for other villages by creating common crematorium
- Won Ideal Village award for its integrated development efforts

Village: Anagar
District: Solapur

Highlights

- The village with 8000 population has developed the Anagar Pattern of underground drainage system
- Solar plant and drinking water tank for the village installed through community contribution
- All villagers are paying Gram Panchayat taxes
- The villagers made a vow to get rid of the problem of load shedding by installation of wind mill in the village
- Solar energy used for street lights
- Supplementary business of fruit plantation started

Village: Anthipada
District: Nandubar

Highlights

- The village with 741 population has completely banned use of plastic bags
- Every house has an attached toilet. The village acquired the position of open defecation free village.
- 1650 trees planted, biogas gas plants installed, increasing use of organic manure.
- Drainage water used for kitchen garden that made the village free from open drain water.
- CFL and solar bulbs used for street lights

Village: Basarapur
District: Pune

Highlights

- Use of plastic bags banned completely
- Soak pits used for sewage water
- Drainage water is being used for kitchen garden
- CFL and solar bulbs used for streets lights
- All villagers are paying Gram Panchayat taxes

Village: Khanapur
District: Sangli

Highlights

- 500 saplings planted, drip irrigation used, guards installed
- The village with 1375 population has surveyed all the trees in its periphery
- CFL and solar bulbs used for streets lights
- Use of plastic bags banned completely
- Drainage water planning and management implemented

Village: Dhamner
District: Satara

Highlights

- This village has set a unique example of communal harmony, mosque shifted with consent of Muslim brethren and rebuilt at another place from community contribution
- A boat club developed in the backwater of Krishna River
- Set a precedent of immersing idols in a special tank
- CFL used for street lights and bio gas being generated from solid waste from public toilets are some the peculiarity of the village

Village: Gadegaon
District: Wardha

Highlights

- Contrary to the natural demand by below the poverty line (BPL) people to get the benefits from the Government to get necessities of life; this village with a population of 629 has demanded removal of the BPL tag on them. The fact is that they have economically empowered themselves by using Vanrai type weir. The implementation of the Vanrai type weir scheme has increased the water level of the village which in turn increased their agriculture produce
- Use of organic manure created from solid waste has helped increase yield per acre
- Tree-felling has been stopped completely
- Every villager has paid Gram Panchayat taxes
- Every house is attached with a toilet block

Village: Dhaba
District: Akola

Highlights

- Paver Blocks laid in village
- Nearly 2500 saplings planted on both sides of roads
- Plastic bags banned forever
- All access roads are converted into tar roads
- Under ground drainage system and solar street lights are some of the peculiarities of the village
- The village gave emphasis on vermiculture and solid waste management

Village: Patoda
District: Aurangabad

Highlights

- 30 Solar heaters purchased through bank loan and installed in village
- 15 solar sets installed
- CFL bulbs and tubes being used in large number
- Village is enjoying pollution-free atmosphere through eco-balanced development
- Commendable contribution in the Sant Gadgebaba Cleanliness Campaign

Village: Hatnur
District: Sangli

Highlights

- Drain water treatment plant has been installed in the village. 8000 LPD drainage water recycled and used for trees through drip irrigation.
- One KV power generated through windmill. This electricity has been used for street lights and Gram Panchayat office.
- Solar energy used for 25 street lights
- Public toilets constructed with 24-hour water
- Organic manure created from waste



Village: Kalwadi
District: Pune

Highlights

- Probably the only village that has a register of planted trees
- Of the 4285 saplings planted 3636 have grown up well under Eco-balanced village development scheme.
- Biogas and solar energy sources have been well-utilized
- 3 solar heaters, 5 solar panels, 15 solar lanterns and 62 bio gas

- plants have been installed.
- CFL bulbs used for street lights.
- 100 percent solid waste management has been achieved.
- Solid waste is used for vermiculture.
- 10,000 nurseries have been created in the village under MREGS.

Village: Kasari
District: Gadchiroli

Highlights

- The village with a population of 1077 has demolished the practice of open defecation and instead has built toilet blocks for every house
- Soak pits constructed for every house
- Mission Plastic Ban launched
- Emphasis on waste management
- 5000 saplings created, to be planted throughout the village

Village: Kashti
District: Thane

Highlights

- Villagers have demolished open toilet practice
- Tree felling and plastic banned
- All idols are immersed in a special tank
- Solar energy generators launched in the village that saved the power.
- Gave emphasis on plantation of medicinal plants. The village celebrates a special day for tree plantation.

Village: Khaparkheda
District: Hingoli

Highlights

- This village, located in hilly area with predominantly adivasi population has banned use of plastic bags
- Emphasis is on tree plantation
- 90 per cent of the saplings planted are well-grownup

Village: Kikwari (Khurd)
District: Hingoli

Highlights

- Different projects of water conservation successfully implemented
- Vanrai type weirs, under ground type weirs, clay weirs, constructed through peoples' participation
- Tree felling and cattle grazing banned
- Solid Waste management and 100 percent tax collection are some of the peculiarities
- Increase in the land under horticulture
- The agriculture labourers receive employment in the village.

Village: Limbgaon
District: Latur

Highlights

- The 657-population village has 2 biogas generator plants
- Increase in the livestock that resulted in the milk production.
- The village received 90 irrigation wells.
- CFL bulbs used for street lighting
- Village banned use of plastic bags
- Creating organic manure from solid waste and drain water treatment are taken on priority

Village: Manyachi Wadi**District: Satara****Highlights**

- Prominent use of solar energy has lent it the identity as the Solar Village
- The project Saurgram [Solar Village] has been implemented in the village with the help of 10 women Self help groups.
- Chemical fertilizers have been banned, emphasis is on organic manure
- Villagers have accepted the principle that every one should plant five saplings
- The village implemented some innovative projects like every house has independent vermiculture project etc.

**Village: Pinguli****District: Sindhudurg****Highlights**

- The only Gram Panchayat in the district to provide drinking water by meters system and billing is computerized
- 125 bio-gas units installed before implementation of the Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme
- These units have helped to refill 152 cylinders every month and save over Rs. 60,000.
- Use of solid waste has helped generate power
- Curbs on fuel wood has created pollution-free atmosphere

Village: Sawale**District: Raigad****Highlights**

- The effective implementation of construction of soak pits and bio gas plants.
- Villagers have demolished open defecation practice
- Solar power used for water heater, solar cooker and street lights
- Dry waste used for power generation
- Use of wet waste has created organic manure.

**Village: Shir****District: Ratnagiri****Highlights**

- 17 women Self Help Groups have been formed under the Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme
- These SHGs brought 10-acre barren land under cultivation of vegetables using drip irrigation
- School children named Paryavaran Doot planted trees
- Shir and other three wadis come together to implement an independent water supply scheme.
- Gram Panchayat constructed 20 Vanrai type weirs through people's participation.

Village: Yelur**District: Sangli****Highlights**

- Under the Eco-balanced Village Development Scheme this village has planted 7000 trees
- 20,000 trees planted in Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme
- All cooperative societies involved in the plantation drive,
- Premium given to beneficiaries in the form of trees
- Villagers have emphasized on use of solar power for water heater, street lights
- Plastic bags have been banned

Village: Rajgad**District: Chandrapur****Highlights**

- Eco-park developed on the bank of lake
- Liquor sale banned in the village
- Tree felling and cattle grazing banned
- Open defecation practice demolished
- All internal access roads concretized
- Cultivation of nursery with 40,000 medicinal plants
- Kitchen gardens developed on drainage water
- Solar power and CFL bulbs used for street lights
- 1100 teak wood trees planted
- 305 families have constructed toilet blocks
- Village has 3 generators for drain water treatment.

Village: Wazar**District: Buldhana****Highlights**

- All villagers are paying Gram Panchayat taxes
- Employment generated through deepening of lake construction off weir and tree plantation to stop migration of villagers to other villages
- CFL bulbs used for street lights
- Tree plantation drive undertaken on wide range

(Reference: Paryavaran Ratna Booklet of the Rural Development Department)

Malnutrition-free Maharashtra

Tackling malnutrition is Maharashtra's mission and aims to achieve quantifiable goals in stipulated time

The reduction in the incidence of severe malnutrition has been possible due to intensive training and motivation programme at all levels and the sustained monitoring of the results. Regular medical check-ups of children has also indicated distinctive improvement in the stage of malnutrition.



Maharashtra has been engaged in a hands-on war to eradicate malnutrition in the State for last three decades. The State health workers as well as volunteers of non-government organizations have joined hands to fight the problem predominant in the tribal areas of Gadchiroli, Amravati, Yavatmal, Chandrapur, Bhandara and Melghat. In recent years malnutrition has also been noticed in urban areas, slums of Mumbai due to the increasing food prices and extremely low income flow.

Persistent initiatives and the sustained mission have failed to eradicate the problem. It has been an

uphill task to educate the tribals to control malnutrition in children of the 0 to 6 age group hence success of the Malnutrition Removal Campaign has been moderate. Community taboos of the tribals do not make it easy for a complete penetration of the various schemes chalked out by the state to tackle malnutrition.

Child marriage amongst tribals is also a major cause for the continuance of malnutrition. It is common to find child-mothers as young as 10 and 11 years in tribal areas. Since the child-mother is unable to look after or understand nutritional requirements of her own body she cannot comprehend

the requirements of her newborn or an infant. Though numerous attempts have been made to educate the tribals against child marriage the practice still persists. The root cause of the malnutrition is the practice of child marriage and success of the malnutrition eradication depends on the stringent measures to stop customs of child marriage.

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) implemented by State Government includes: Survey of all children in the age group of 0 to 6 years, 100 per cent registration of all such children, 100 per cent weighing of all such children, classification of children of 1 to 4 age group, special concentration on children in grade 3 and 4 stages of malnutrition, initiating measures for ensuring good health and nutrition of pregnant women in a bid to reduce incidences of low birth weight in children.

The reduction in the incidence of severe malnutrition (grade 3 and 4 stages) has been possible due to intensive training and motivation programmes for staff at all levels and the sustained monitoring of the results. Regular medical check-ups of children in the 0 to 6 age group have also indicated a distinct improvement in the stages of malnutrition.

Given the extreme importance of tackling malnutrition the Maharashtra Government treats it as a mission and aims to achieve quantifiable goals in a specific time frame. One of the State's successful programmes currently being



implemented is the Rajmata Jijau Mother-Child Health and Nutrition Mission. It functions under the overall supervision of the Chief Minister, indicating the highest political sanction for this important initiative. This programme, started on September 26, 2011 came to a close on April 7, 2012. The success of this programme must be immediately quantified and if found successful, must be reimplemented for a longer duration.

Experts who have closely observed the implementation of the various

schemes to combat malnutrition feel that there should be a mission steering committee headed by the Chief Minister and comprising Ministers of other departments concerned such as Women and Child Development, Health, Tribal Development, Rural Development etc., should review the progress of the mission on a regular basis. Strong attempts must be made to resolve bureaucratic bottlenecks in the effective implementation of the programmes.

Strengthening of the primary health centres and filling up vacancies of the

staff dedicated to the cause of fighting malnutrition is also very important. This is relevant as an effective and a complete medicare system will reduce the dependency of the tribals on their witch-doctors commonly known as the bhagats. Attempts have to be made to release the tribals from the stranglehold of these bhagats through education and awareness about its ill-effects. Since, the livelihood of these uneducated tribal witch-doctors depend on the offerings made by tribals, the former ensures that the latter does not sway too much towards self-development. The stumbling block in the successful implementation of the Government's programmes is also due to the half-hearted attempts of the social and health workers. The incentives given to these workers must be high as motivation is directly proportionate to the salary or stipend.

There must be regular review of all the malnutrition schemes being implemented. Those programmes which have not yielded the desired results must be scrapped or reworked to make it more productive. Since





the tribal areas have been witnessing change there is a need to also look at existing models and its feasibility. The bitter truth is that the State's Health Department needs rejuvenation and a strong purpose.

Since it is a crucial department it needs a strongly driven and focused person to head it. The basic requirement for the success of any programme is a motivated field force. There is a need to upgrade the skills and capabilities of the staff at various levels. The entire machinery has to be sensitized to the human aspects of the malnutrition issue. Training modules have to be area-specific and community specific for the programme being implemented in Gadchiroli may not hold good in Thane even as both are tribal areas.

The State must consider seeking help of corporate India to tackle malnutrition. Let corporates or NGOs adopt these malnutrition-afflicted areas and develop the human resource here. The escalating living costs call for better employment and training of the tribal skills as it will fetch them a better income. Now, the parents leave behind infants in the care of siblings as young as three year old and travel long distances in search of daily

RAJMATA JIJAU MISSION

The Rajmata Jijau Mother-child Health and Nutrition Mission aims at reducing the mal-nutrition deaths and infant mortality rate mostly in adivasi area.

- Weight loss is the vital factor in child suffering from malnutrition
- The immediate measure is to increase weight through the nutrition received from parents, basically breast feeding
- Weight increased through outside nutrition is not permanent; chances are that the child might reduce the weight again
- Three basic needs: Food, time (for proper cooking) and timely update of changes.

MELGHAT PATTERN

Rigorous surveys and research in the Malghat region has revealed that under-weight child is more prone to die; under-nourishment mars brain's development.

- Efforts by the Government and NGOs led to a solution that is known as the Melghat Pattern
- Feeding timings: Two to three times a day
- Nutritional Diet: Rice with two tablespoons of oil or ghee on roti with salt, sugar
- The Next Step: upma, sheera, pohe or peanut ladoos
- The pattern is being followed throughout the State.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

The State Government campaign to control malnutrition deaths in Adivasi-dominated areas has yielded good results. About two lakh children have been malnutrition-free this year.

- Till February 2012, in all 3005 villages have become totally malnutrition-free
- In rural areas about 50 percent Anganwadis don't have children with less or acute less weight.
- Gram Bal Vikas Kendras look after malnutrition-prone children
- Children sick due to malnutrition are taken care at the Bal Upchar Kendras
- Recently State Government has taken decision to open crèches for the children of families in distress.

employment. All that the young mother has time to cook is nachni gruel, which the children eat through the day leading to malnutrition. Efforts must be made to provide employment in their areas itself as it will be the first concrete step in ensuring the involvement of the parents in the nutrition programmes of their children in the 0 to 6 age group.

Personal hygiene is also compromised as the parents are unable to adhere to its demands given the grueling work schedule. Community participation holds the key to the success of any programme. Time has come when the State has to work in tandem with the corporate as development is the key to fighting this problem. Divide the area and let willing corporates adopt villages,

Wadis and Padas and operate under the vigil of the State.

While data is gathered at field level and transmitted regularly to the levels above there is very little analysis of this data which is aimed at corrective action. Consistent evaluation of block-level data can form the basis of meaningful policy interventions. It can also help in identifying crucial gaps or deficiencies in the service delivery systems.

The need of the hour to combat maternal health, child malnutrition and mortality is low-cost viable strategy while ensuring that the State evolves a coordinated and integrated approach in its efforts to significantly reduce child malnutrition and mortality. ■

- Abhay Deshpande

The Fairy Tales with a difference

Women's participation in local self governments is changing Maharashtra's rural landscape

Public water taps in villages have substantially reduced the workload for women folk who had to trek long distances to fetch water. More infants and pregnant mothers are getting medical aid as the awareness of and services at the primary healthcare centre have improved. When a woman is at the helm of affairs in a village, other women feel confident to talk about issues concerning them.



Lahani Tandel is a 31-year-old mother of two from Sogawe village in Thane district. Like many of her pals she has studied only up to Standard Eight. Lahani, today, is the Sarpanch of her village. Thanks to 50 per cent reservation for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions. For the past four years she has been striving hard to bring about a change in her village.

Water supply is a common concern of most villages. Sogawe is no different. Tandel has experienced it at close quarters as a child and a young adult. So, she rallied the women in the village around her and doggedly kept at the authorities to get the water connection sanctioned. Tandel has been preoccupied with the issue of school dropouts. A reason for school dropouts is that the villagers migrate

to urban areas in search of work. Fewer people would migrate to the cities if employment opportunities were created in the village. So she finds out about Government schemes that would create jobs in the village and goes after the authorities to get them implemented.

Maharashtra has been at the forefront for the emancipation of women. Back in the 19th century social reformer duo Jotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule led the movement for social and political upliftment of women in Maharashtra. In 1993, the State Government set up an independent department for Women and Child Development and a year later. A comprehensive policy for Women was formulated and implemented subsequently with the aim to make women economically independent and self-reliant.

But bringing about a change is never easy. This is what Meena Dodade, first woman Sarpanch of Kondan Group Gram Panchayat (2006-2011) in Palghar taluka found out. Even though she is well educated and can hold her own in any gathering, she faced opposition. Her efforts to exercise power and effect a change were met with deplorable attacks, sometimes of a violent kind, from those opposed to development.

Women's participation in local self governing bodies is slowly metamorphosing Maharashtra's rural landscape. It is heartwarming to see children, often barefoot but always neatly dressed, walking to their school. Public water taps in villages have substantially reduced the workload for women folk who had to trek long distances to fetch water. More infants and pregnant mothers are getting medical aid as the awareness of and services at the primary healthcare centre have improved. At the public distribution scheme shops, essential food items are now more often available. The picture is far from perfect but the situation is changing. Importantly, when a woman is at the helm of affairs in a village, other women feel confident to talk about issues concerning them. Lack of toilets is one such issue that concerns womenfolk in the rural area that endanger their health and security and a woman Sarpanch can empathize with the issue.

Maharashtra has 33 Zilla Parishads,

351 Panachayat Samitis, 27,896 Gram Panchayats with 1,955 elected members in Zilla Parishads, 3,910 in Panchayat Samitis and 1, 79,337 in Gram Panchayats. With 50 per cent seats reserved for women there is a substantial force of over 92,600 women in rural governance.

Bhim Raskar, programme director, Resource and Support Centre for Development, that runs the Mahila Rajsatta Andolan for education and enhancement of women in governance, shares some of the findings of studies on impact of women's participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions. The culture of Village and Gram Pamchayat is changing because of women's participation, he says. Meetings are conducted on time. The way meetings are conducted and the very conduct (of Councillors and participants) within the meeting is changing for the better. He further points out that the issues addressed by women representatives are different. Panchayats where women are active tend to take up issues that are relevant to women like water, proper toilets, sanitation and schools. Thirdly, the concept of gender equality is being furthered subtly when women are seen hoisting flags or conducting meetings.

Mahila Rajsatta Andolan has devised a course called BOSS for the elected members simplifying and explaining Budget, Orders, Schemes and Services like ensuring the working of public distribution system, Anganwadis, primary health centre, schools. This translates into good governance and winning the confidence of the people that can be used to tackle bigger issues.

The flip side of this development is that interpersonal equations within the community and the family are undergoing a change. Financial, political and, thereby, social power has traditionally rested with men in the villages. Women are self effacing and reluctant to enter a field dominated by men. Often they do not have the exposure or the education to deal with the issues of governance. This sometimes leads to proxy women councillors occupying the offices reserved for women. These women become mere rubber stamps



and do the bidding of the men who get them elected. This defeats the very purpose of reservation for women.

It is in the fitness of things that the State Election commission, under the aegis of Neela Satyanarayan, has launched 'Krantijyoti Programme' for the socio-political empowerment of women councillors of local self governing bodies for effective decision making and governance. These empowered women councilors would become role models and, in turn, instill confidence in aspiring women candidates in the ensuing elections. This would ensure the fulfillment of the constitutional mandate of free and fair conduct of election and would also go a

long way in addressing not only social problems (such as female infanticide, illiteracy, gender discrimination, domestic violence, alcoholism, superstition, violence against women, environmental issues, social evils etc) in the rural areas but also strengthening the functioning of local bodies by effective and participative involvement of women councilors in decision making process.

After the success of pilot project in Selu taluka in Wardha district, the training has been extended to Thane, Nashik, Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Sindhudurg, Nanded, Solapur, Amravati and Wardha. ■

- Mini Zachariah

SANGRAM for Citizen-centric Administration

E-Panchayat, marks the beginning of an era of computerization in rural Maharashtra

The Sanganakiya Gramin Maharashtra project aims at bringing Panchayat Raj Institute administration under computer domain with a view to making available all documents, certificates and allied facilities under one roof.



‘SANGRAM’, the word used in Marathi, Hindi and Sanskrit in its positive connotation means the crusade, a fight against the evil. The programme launched by the State Government is aptly named as it aims at weeding out evils of inefficiency and lethargy in the Government administration. The objective is to provide a transparent, progressive and

quality service to the people in rural areas. SANGRAM is the acronym coinage of Sanganakya Gramin Maharashtra. It marks the beginning of the E-Panchayat era in rural Maharashtra. Gradually all the necessary works of Gram-Panchyats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads will be brought in the gamut of computerization.

The sole objective is to make

Gram Panchayat administration people-oriented and make available all documents, certificates and allied facilities at one place using this software. Facilitating bill-payments for electricity, telephone, mobile phone etc. as also reservation of bus and railway tickets, etc. through E-Payments, in stages, is also envisaged under the programme. Currently about 20,000 youth in rural areas are engaged in these jobs. Almost all, i.e. 27,840 Gram Panchayats out of a total of 27,920 in the State have gone on-line, thanks to PRIYA.

A survey of online working of Gram Panchayats between April 2011 and 19th March 2012, revealed that as many as 56,04,684 computerised entries of credit and debit were made all over the State during this period and it included entries for about Rs. 35,029 Crore to the credit side and Rs. 31,222 Crore to the debit side.

The three-tier Panchyat Raj System of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zilla Parishads is most challenging for administrative management. The Rural Development Department has accorded priority to speed up and bring in transparency to the working of these institutions. As part of the exercise, transfers of Additional Chief Executive Officers, Deputy Chief Executive Officers and Block Development Officers were done this year on-line, on experimental basis. Separate software has been developed for this purpose, which may be suitably

revised for effecting transfers of other Zilla Parishad employees also.

EACH SCHOOL ITS TEACHER

The moment we speak of schools in rural environs in villages and that too of Zilla Parishads, a different picture comes to our mind. The Rural Development Department is striving hard to raise the standards as well as quality of these schools. A report of a taskforce, appointed specially to study the issue, has been received by the State Government and is under consideration. One of the ambitious projects under the programme to be implemented is Bio-metric attendance for students and teachers, alike.

About 984 Zilla Parishad schools in six different talukas of six revenue divisions in the State are selected for implementation of biometric attendance system on experimental basis. More than One lakh three thousand students and 4,061 teachers will be covered by the programme. It will make the Zilla Parishad school working more transparent and highlight the actual number of students and teachers attending the school regularly. Besides, it will also specify the number of students in each class, facilitating effective implementation of various student-oriented Government schemes. Transparency in the implementation of these schemes will be an added benefit!

It has been observed on time and again that there are enough number of students in the schools but the teachers in proportionate number are lacking. Appointing requisite number of teachers would be possible, only if, exact number of students on the rolls of the school can be ascertained at the very beginning of the academic year. The biometric system of attendance might be a help to this end. It is the reason why Rural development Department accorded priority to this programme. It will also help appointing an alternate teacher in place of a teacher on long leave. The department is endeavouring to create a pool of Leave Reserve Teachers at Panchayat Samiti level. It will enable the department to depute a Replacement Teacher within



'SANGRAM' - A Unique Crusade

The State Government has launched a programme called SANGRAM, which literally means a war, a crusade.

- It is a crusade for transparent administration of Panchayat Raj system
- It aims at paper-less administration to provide all services under one roof
- The programme will generate employment for 20000 youths in rural areas
- This facilitates to make all certificates including land records available to people at just a click
- Gradually villagers would be able to pay electricity and other bills online
- Villagers could even do online booking for ST and railway tickets in advance
- Administration of 27840 out of 27896 Gram Panchayats has been computerized and could be seen online
- Accounts worth Rs. 56,4684 have been computerized

Priya Disciplined

PRIYA is the Panchayat Raj Institution Accounting Software used for keeping accounts of the local self government bodies of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad.

- PRIYA aims at maintaining financial discipline of Panchayat Raj System
- In 2010-11 Maharashtra has bagged Rs. 30-lakh award for computerizing Panchayat Raj system
- It helps updating accounts on the day-to-day basis
- This has brought accuracy and coordination in administrative accounts
- It has brought transparency and credibility to the Panchayat Raj system
- Maharashtra stands first amongst the 8 states to get the grants from the Finance Commission for computerizing accounts of Panchayat Raj system

half an hour or so, at the required school, to avoid 'Education – Loss' to the students.

The Rural Development Department also envisages extending this programme of biometric attendance in stages to all those officers and employees rendering their services in rural offices. It will enable the department to know when the concerned employee or the official

visited the village in his/ her jurisdiction and left it, how long the officer stayed in the office at the village, etc. The objective is, that all those concerned officers and men in the machinery should provide their services to the people in time, transparently and devoutly and should also provide necessary inputs to the Rural Development Department. ■

- Eknath More

Putting Smiles on All Faces

The MREGS gives guarantee for at least 100 days' employment to rural unskilled workers.

In implementing the MREGS Nanded district has played a leading role in Maharashtra. In last three years the district has provided the work for maximum man-hours and has spent large amount on the works.



Maharashtra feels proud to see that the Employment Guarantee Scheme which it pioneered has been emulated by the Central Government and is being implemented through out the country by the name the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MREGS) from 1st April 2008. Besides providing jobs for the livelihood and elevating the standard of living, the scheme aims at developing social infrastructure in long run to create the state property.

In Maharashtra the scheme is being

implemented from 2nd February 2006. In the first phase it has been made applicable to 12 tribal-dominated districts. It was further extended to 6 districts from 1st April 2007 and from 1st April 2008 15 more districts will be included in the plan. With a view to avoiding the duplication of administration, the State Government has renamed the Maharashtra Gramin Rojgar Hami Yojana as the Mahatma Gandhi Rashtriya Gramin Rojgar Hami Yojana.

The MREGS fund gives guarantee for at least 100 days' employment to

unskilled workers in the rural areas. The State Government provides funds for more than 100 days employment to these villagers. The Gram Panchayats are entitled to get the works done under the scheme to the tune of at least 50 per cent amount sanctioned. Making the scheme a success is the entire responsibility of Gram Panchayat. Right to select, prioritize and plan the works is vested with the Local Self Government bodies. Villagers must register themselves to get the jobs under the scheme. He/she would get the job within 15 days from the date of his

registration. Stipend is guaranteed to the registered villager if job is not given in the stipulated period.

It is mandatory to give the job to the villager within the 5 km area from his/her residence. The scheme also provides facilities such as clean drinking water, place for rest, shelter for children, first aid etc. Every worker gets Rs. 127 per day for the nine-hour work, including the one-hour rest. The contract system has been barred in the scheme. This measure has been taken to avoid corrupt practices. Making the scheme transparent and more people-oriented, wages are given to workers through bank or postal department. Payment of wages in cash has been completely banned. Social audit of every work has been made compulsory.

A yet another step towards the complete transparency a Management Information System (MIS) has been developed. The MIS is a computer-based system that helps to organize, evaluate and efficiently run the scheme. The scheme has already been put on the internet through the website: www.nrega.nic.in. All the details from the entire county are available here. The scheme is run under the guidance of the Collector who is also the district coordinator.

NATURE OF THE WORKS

- Afforestation and tree-plantation
- Creation of bunds and canals
- De-silting of lakes
- Irrigation works for SC/ST/beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana, BPL families
- Repairs to the traditional water bodies
- Flood control
- Road development
- Land development work

STORY OF NANDED

In implementing the MREGS Nanded district has played a leading role in Maharashtra. In last three years the district has provided the work for maximum mandays and has spent large amount on the works. Following the aspects of the meticulous planning:

CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE

Knowing that Nanded, the economically



backward district, is agrarian in the nature the authorities implementing the scheme created a proper atmosphere and developed the psyche of the people that the scheme was the good opportunity for their development in the absence of service sector or industries. The district being agrarian is economically backward. They were encouraged to take up the jobs under the scheme by taking in to confidence that it was their right to get employment and their wages are guaranteed.

Year	Mandays (in lakh)	Expenses (Rs. In Cr.)
2009-10	191.66	253.49
2010-11	188.94	345.95
2011-12	456.75	1021.69

STRENGTHENING GRAM PANCHAYATS

Emphasis was on strengthening of Gram Panchayats. The district has 1309 Gram Panchayats. All Gram Panchayats appointed Gram Rojgar Sevaks who helped in all administrative works. Since the villages did not have qualified work force, civil engineers and agriculture graduated were appointed on the contract basis to assist Gram Panchayats. In every taluka a full-time assistant programme officer having MSW degree is appointed on contract.

COMPUTERIZATION

Each taluka has been provided with two computer sets with broadband connectivity. Day-to-day administrative

and necessary data was regularly fed to the computers and MIS was applied to the data. With this it was ensured that no worker should get deprived of the guaranteed daily wages in the absence of feeding the details regularly. Every day's data was filled in and uploaded on website.

DISTRIBUTION OF WAGES

As per the norms of the scheme daily wages of the workers are not given in cash. Therefore, workers accounts were opened in banks of in post offices. In all 1,26,943 workers have their accounts in post offices and 2227 workers have their accounts in banks. Messengers have been appointed on contract basis to deliver the attendance sheet and wage records.

THE RESULTS

In last three years Nanded district has made remarkable progress in implementing the Maharashtra Gramin Rojgar Hami Yojana and stood first in the State.

In 2009-10 amount spent on the works is Rs. 41.21 crore, in 2010-11 amount spent on the works is Rs. 72.62 crore, in 2011-12 (till 20th March 2012) amount spent on the works is Rs. 122 crore.

This has created a situation that is more conducive to stay in the villages and work. As a result those villagers who had migrated to Mumbai, Pune or Hyderabad have started returning home. ■

- Dr. Shrikar Pardeshi

Gramgeeta



**Maha Samadhi of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj at Gurukunj Ashram,
Taluka Tiosa, District Amravati**

Their first step is to attend to their own household duties in a proper way. The second step is to sweep and clean the front courtyard at the entrance of the house. Further they should form liking for cleaning the village and enjoy pleasure in doing it ||

Every individual of the village should be an expert artist in some art or other. They should become hard workers. Adorning and beautifying their own houses and making their life happy, they should develop the comeliness of village also ||

It is the eternal truth that Lakhshmi(The Goddess of wealth and prosperity) always exists there, where the cleaning hand is active. Considering this truth all should try to make their village clean and more beautiful than the cities ||

The village organisation must be strong and powerful. The affected sufferers should lodge their complaints with their organisation. This village organisation must be very alert and watchful so that none should suffer the consequences of

injustice ||

This will put an end to the practices of charging at the higher rates of interest of multiplication of one and one fourth or one and a half. When the village fund will be well maintained, the unfair dealings of traders and money lenders will be subdued ||

All things produced in the village should be necessarily used by the villagers. It will help to maintain the wealth of the village in itself and increase the powers of the village ||

Therefore all should maintain cleanliness. They should keep their behaviour pure, clean and well disciplined. They should maintain co-operation with each other. Then only the village will be complete in all respects and with considerations in all aspects. It will be full of heavenly pleasures a happiness ||

To achieve the effective and successful implementation of the graamsena, the good saintly persons with ideal moral behaviour, should exert their all efforts to

root out the addiction and bad habits. They should draw up plans that will help developing and growing excellent virtues in the villagers ||

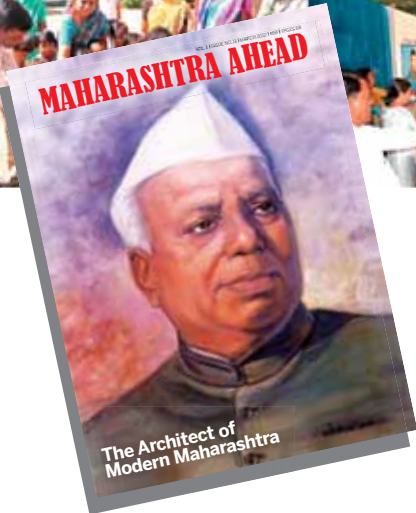
A few four or five noble good gentlemen should try hard to stop the harmful bad rituals and traditions completely; so that whatever is harmful in the interest of the village, will all come to an end ||

To achieve the effective and successful implementation of the graamsena, the good saintly persons with ideal moral behaviour, should exert their all efforts to root out the addiction and bad habits. They should draw up plans that will help developing and growing excellent virtues in the villagers ||

Shree- Sant Tukadojee says.) Go from village to village. Alert people about this revolution through canvassing and advising. Tell them about the dire need to meet out the class struggle forever. When the villages become prosperous, every town and village will become brilliant like a flame of a lamp ||

MAHARASHTRA

From cleanliness to prosperity



O.I.G.S. Presented by The Government of India

MAHARASHTRA AHEAD

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