



Sustainable Rural Development And Intervention: A Case Study

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Abstract

India is the land of villages. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian Economy. Hence “rural development” is an important focal point. It is important to understand the needs and necessities of the rural population. Without the rural development it is impossible to count on India's progress. Poverty and the lack of infra-structural facilities are still the issue of concern in villages. And the rural poor are striving hard to meet the livelihood and basic necessities. Only government policies and programmes will not suffice the need of rural development. But also other developmental agencies are important to take a lead in this respect. Hence sustainable rural development is needed to eradicate the problems in Indian villages.

This paper aims to study the sustainable rural development in the light of Non- Profit Organization intervention. It also introduces some strategies to tackle the problems of rural poor. This work is of great relevance both theoretically and practically as it gives insight to sociological research.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, Rural Areas, Poverty, Developmental Agencies

“The key to Swaraj is not with the cities but with the villages.

When I succeed in ridding the villages of their poverty.

I have won Swaraj for you and for the whole of India.”

- Mahatma Gandhi (Harijan: Nov. 11, 1936)

Introduction

Rural development is an important issue of concern in India today. As India's economic growth largely depends on its agriculture. The repercussions arising out of the changes affect the development of the nation to a great extent of particularly in the context of rural India (Varga and Varga, 2008). It is also important to cater the needs of rural poor. These needs are not only limited to farming but also to the lack of infra-structural facilities and generating income for the rural poor. It will be unfair to confine one's thinking about rural areas only to agriculture. There are many untapped opportunities and avenues which should be focused on while thinking of sustainable development in rural India (Akgun, van Leeuwen and Nijkamp, 2012). It can be observed that it is not possible to deal with these problems only by government intervention. Solving problems at a superficial level will not lead the country to attain sustainable development (Tuzin, Aliye and Peter, 2015). But the community has to take the initiative in providing services to the rural poor. We can observe that in almost all aspects of human life the non-profit or community based organizations are working efficiently to cater the needs of people. As being part of the social structure and system it is easy for them to implement and monitor the schemes.

After the Brundtland Commission's (1987) definition of sustainability the community has begun to take initiative to deal with the various environmental issues in India. In this 17 goals were laid for sustainable development by the UN ie; no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals etc.

Under which the major concern for sustainable rural development can be seen. It can be observed that several non-profit organizations actively participated in the sustainable rural development. “Vanarai” is one these non-profit organizations who actively participates in the environmental cause. With the help of companies or corporate sector, Vanarai initiates need based project schemes for the rural areas. The Companies Act, 2013 provides for Corporate Social Responsibility under Section 135. Thus it is mandatory for the companies covered under section 135 to comply with the CSR provisions in India.

Companies are required to spend a minimum of 2% of their net profit over the preceding three years as CSR. Hence, substantial rural development is observed in the Athwad village of Maharashtra. With the strategic working plans of Vanarai and the CSR Partners CROMPTON CSR FOUNDATION, DBL (Desai Brothers Limited) and LTTS (Larsen & Toubro Technology Services Pvt. Ltd) the impacted sustainable rural development is achieved.

Sustainable Rural Development

Sustainable Rural Development is improving the quality of life for the rural poor by developing capacities that promote community participation, health and education, food security, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth, thereby enabling community members to leave the cycle of poverty and achieve their full potential.

Key themes found in Sustainable Rural Development are:

1. Community Participation
2. Water and Sanitation
3. Health and Hygiene
4. Poverty Reduction and Disease control
5. Food Security and Agriculture
6. Greater survival prospects for mothers and their infants
7. Education and equal opportunities for women

8. Conservation and protection of natural resources and the environment
9. Economic growth and infrastructure development
10. Science and Technology policy and administration

Objectives of Paper:

Given above background, the present paper aims to highlight, the following objectives:

1. Understanding the inter-relationship between Rural Community and Sustainable Development.
2. To explore the Alternative Community Services for Sustainable Rural Development.
3. To recognize the role of Non-Profit Organization in providing services for the Development of Rural Community ie; Vanarai an NGO.

“Vanarai”People’s Movement For Green India, (Pune) – In Brief

VANARAI People’s Movement for Green India, Pune was registered under the Charitable Trust Act on 10th July 1986. Honorable Founder Late Padma Vibhushan Dr. Mohan Dharia contemplated to start a non-profit organization with the motto to avoid the destruction of our ecosystem, environment and water.

Vision and Mission: Creating Sustainable Rural Development Since 1986

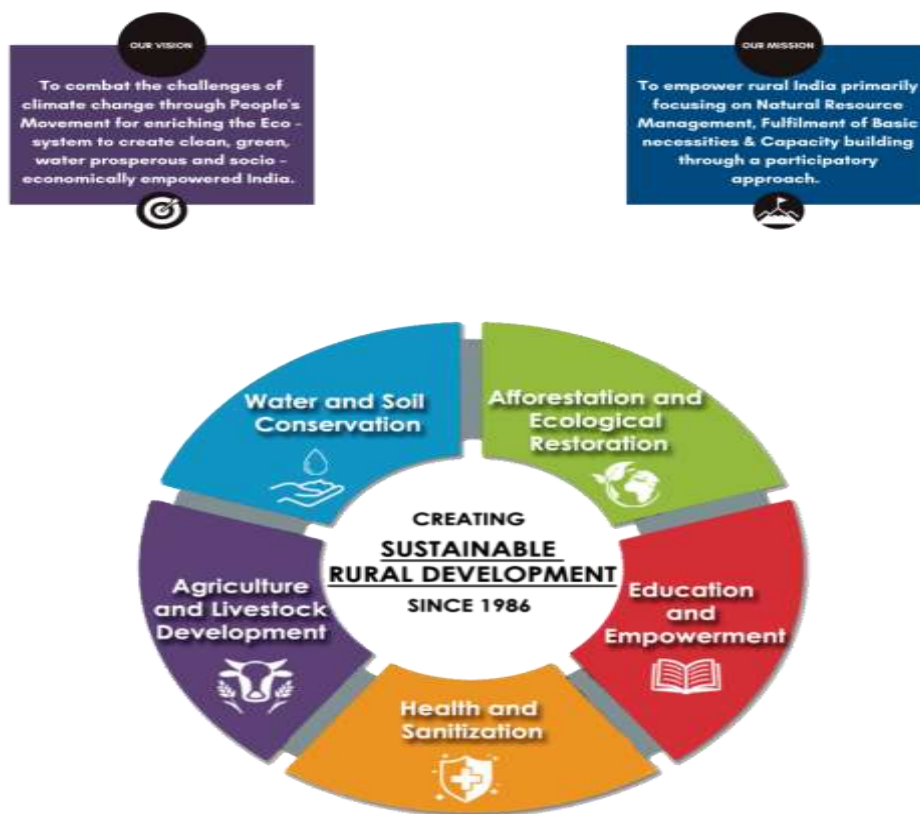


Diagram No. 1 Vision and Mission of Vanarai

Case Study Of Athwad Village, Nagar Taluka, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra Background

Particulars	Athwad Village
No. of Households	320
Total Population	1513
Total Village area	751 Ha.

Table No. 1.1 Demographic Data of Athwad Village (As per Vanarai Records 2018-19)

Initially Vanarai, received a letter from Athwad village Grampanchayat in the year 2018-19. Where they requested assistance from Vanarai on improving various aspects which were lagging from the point of community development and Natural resources.

After receiving the letter, Vanarai officials visited the village and validated the problems. Also added and adjusted as per priority for creating Sustainable Village/Rural Development. Following problems were identified in Athwad Village:

1. Lack of water resources, especially for agriculture in post winter.

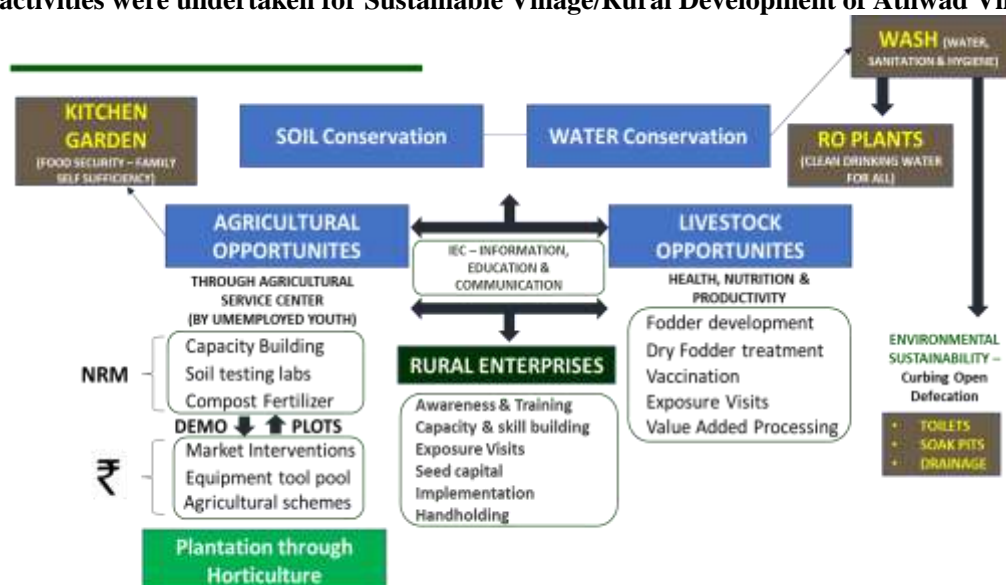
2. Agricultural Lands undergoing degradation.
3. Unsafe drinking water.
4. Lack of livelihood opportunities.
5. Sub-optimal health and productivity of livestock.
6. Lack of participation and opportunities for youth.
7. Scope for Women empowerment.
8. Partial open defecation.

Taking into consideration the above problems, a Phase-Wise plan was designed for addressing these problems.

PHASES	FOCUS AREAS	YEAR
PHASE 1	SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION	2019 – 2021
PHASE 2	WASH + LIVELIHOOD (AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES, LIVESTOCK, SHG'S & RURAL ENTERPRISES)	2021 – 2023
PHASE 3	ECOLOGY + ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME + INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT	2021 – 2023

Table No. 1.2 Phase-Wise Plan

Following activities were undertaken for Sustainable Village/Rural Development of Athwad Village:

**Diagram No. 2 Phase-Wise Action Plan**

The above detailed action plan was prepared; and a holistic proposal was drafted by Vanarai officials. It was important to pitch this proposal to Potential CSR partners based on their geographic and thematic alignment.

1. For which, Phase I – Soil and Water Conservation was pitched to CROMPTON CSR FOUNDATION, which was accepted by them.
2. Similarly DBL (Desai Brothers Limited) who are dedicated towards curbing open defecation

and improving rural infrastructure, picked up construction of toilets.

3. The remainder of the project (Phase II and III) was taken up by LTTS (Larsen & Toubro Technology Services Pvt. Ltd)

The project is almost completed for all the III phases. Following are the details on activities and the impact that it garnered till date:

Activity	Description	Output	Impact
Soil and Water Conservation – Drainage Line Treatment	Desiltation – 1786 meters. Cement Nala bunds – 2 was constructed.	Storage capacity 10.3 Cr Litres was created.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 123.5 acres of existing land benefitted. • 185.3 acres of new land • Approx 700 benefitted.
Agricultural Improvement – Demo Plots were undertaken.	73 demo plots (10 guntha each) were adopted.	18.25 acres of land for demonstrating agricultural improvement was seen.	73 farmers were selected, to enable them to scale it up for their entire land and land of other farmers.
Livestock – Core focus area	75 animals for improving health and productivity: animals were selected who were weak and who were less productive.	Improved health and Milk production by fodder treatment and seed support was observed.	Increased milk yield + SNF (Solids not fat) content for 20 dairy farmers were seen.
Livestock – Overall development	800 animals (all cattle from Athwad) was taken for vaccination especially for protecting against Lumpy disease and other vaccination as per requirement.	Prevented from Lumpy disease.	This region had majority villages where cattle suffered from lumpy. Due to Vanarai's proactive efforts not a single cattle suffered from Lumpy disease.
Nutritional Kitchen Bags	180 bags of backyard vertical kitchen bags were given to fulfill nutritional deficit.	90 families were given these bags to ensure fulfillment of their nutritional needs.	Chillies, Tomato, Lemon, Brinjal etc. were grown which helps in cutting down of Rs.300 expenses per month and gives the families organic food to eat – 2700 Rs saving per month.
Toilet Construction	18 Households were given new toilets.	These households were from socio-economically backward section of the villages and didn't have access to toilets.	Now whole of Athwad has become open defecation free village.
Digital Soil Testing Lab	Activated by mobilizing a community to empower youth.	Technical approach towards farming and soil conservation practices.	6 individuals have got a source of income from this and serve the farmers on taking decisions of choosing crops, fertilizers, and soil management.
Drinking Water Treatment Plant	Community based potable drinking water solution for the village.	Every month around 5000 litres of water is used for the villagers' drinking water needs.	55000 + litres of water used till now (in 11 months) from December 2021.
SHG (Self Help Group)	Dal Mill business for women of the village.	10-12 women can generate income from this venture.	Possibility to earn a profit of around 10,000 per month from April 2023.
Equipment Tool Pool	Supporting marginal and small farmers to reduce	2 people from tribal and landless family got	45 acres (70 hours of machinery work for cultivation ie; tractor

	input cost on agriculture.	employment.	etc) from 10 th Nov 2022 – saving 200rs per hour with the help of new technology – i.e. 14000rs savings can be done.
Cattle Feed Factory	For supporting village cattle with nutrition and for selling outside.	10-12 people are targeted to run this as a business.	Starting from Mid Feb. 23 up till Feb. 24

Table No. 1.3 Activities and Impact**Concluding Remarks**

Rural development is an important aspect for a country's economy. It consists various aspects of environment, technology, socio-economic, political, infrastructural facilities required in villages. The rural development can no more be considered as an intricacy. But it can be observed that sustainable rural development can be met with the intervention of both governmental and non-governmental organization. Through strategic working and planning their needs and necessities can be fulfilled. With the help of non-profit organization it is easy to impinge the depths of villages. Furthermore if we are looking for sustainable rural development such strategies revealed in this paper can be practiced in long run.

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