

ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENT MODEL VILLAGES FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH: A CASE OF RAMCHANDRAPUR

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ABSTRACT

According to 2011 census, 68.84 per cent of Indians live in about 638,691 villages. However, rural India's share in total national income is less than 45 per cent. Rural India is characterised by low income levels, poor quality of life and weak human capital base. Although in the post-economic reform period, India has grown economically faster, the performance in reduction of poverty, employment and economic disparity remained dismal. This is due to inability to extract and utilise rural people's potential through their participation in the government at the local level. The need of the hour is the convergence of all development interventions at the grassroots level which can be possible through effective governance within villages to convert them into Model villages- a concept which was not new but have been neglected in the mirage of worldly development. This paper presents a case study on a successful model village of India- Ramchandrapur (a village in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh) and evaluates Ramchandrapur's unique governance system, which has made Ramchandrapur village a self-sufficient and autonomous village. This village has shown that inclusive growth can be achieved by local people by their combined and honest initiatives. Ultimately, India is a land of villages and India will only prosper if it's all villages prosper with equal socio-economic and inclusive growth.

Introduction

"If the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost."

- M.K.Gandhi

According to 2011 census, 68.84 per cent of Indians live in about 638,691 villages. However, rural India's share in total national income is less than 45 per cent. Rural India is characterised by low income levels, poor quality of life and weak human capital base.

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Although in the post-economic reform period, India has grown economically faster, the performance in reduction of poverty, employment and economic disparity remained dismal. This is due to inability to extract and utilise rural people's potential through their participation in the government at the local level. 37 per cent of population remains below poverty line not able to meet basic necessities of life. Nearly half the rural population is still illiterate (50.56 per cent). On the health front, the situation is far worse. The infant mortality rate is 63.19 per thousand live births and less than five mortality rate is 98 per thousand live births. The under-weight children are 53 per cent. Population with access to sanitation is only 31 per cent. More than half of the children between one and five years in rural areas are undernourished and 60 per cent of the rural households do not have electricity connection (Mathew, 2003).

In the State of Andhra Pradesh, 72.7 per cent of people live in rural areas. Therefore, rural development is one of the thrust areas of administration. As Mahatma Gandhi said, *"India lives in villages and the development of the nation cannot be achieved without the development of the villages"*. The need of the hour is the convergence of all development interventions, at the grassroots level which can be possible through effective governance at the village level. The movement towards decentralisation of the National and State governments through the Panchayati Raj system needs to be strengthened through lessons learned from the successful stories of 'Model villages' around India. Village of Ramchandrapur is an example of innovative governance that is involved in solving its problems through participation and it is exercising its voice in

the planning and implementation schemes offered by National and State governments. This study examines if the village has reached its political and financial degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency through raising its own revenue allowed by the Constitution. It further explores the future sustainability of the current scheme without National and State governments interventions.

Area of Study

'Ramchandrapur' village of Hyderabad was purposively chosen to conduct study on model village as a part of IARD (International Agriculture and Rural Development) course offered by Cornell University, Ethaca, USA in India (2012). Village Ramchandrapur was selected because it has emerged as a self-sufficient model village by adopting its own innovative governance system. Ramchandrapur has shown significant positive changes in finance, education, nutrition, and infrastructure and has been recognised as model village by State Government. Ramchandrapur has also got many recognitions including Nirmal Gyan Puraskar (2006) for full sanitation coverage in village and outstanding contribution in rural sanitation.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was done to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To study the unique governance system of Ramchandrapur model village under following aspects
 - Financial Aspects in Ramchandrapur
 - Social Development in Ramchandrapur

- Education and literacy levels
 - Nutrition and Health
 - Infrastructure development
2. To compare and contrast the pre and post-condition of Ramchandrapur village with respect to adoption of model village governance system.
 3. To know the relationship between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and socio-economic characteristics of villagers (Extension agency contact, Mass media exposure and Innovativeness).
 4. To know the perception of villagers about model village governance system of Ramchandrapur.

villagers were taken with the help of questionnaire and validated in village during study time. To know the relationship between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and socio-economic characteristics of villagers (Extension agency contact, Mass media exposure and Innovativeness), Correlation between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and socio-economic characteristics of villagers were calculated at 1 per cent significance level.

To know the perception of villagers about model village governance system of Ramchandrapur, Likert's five point scale was used for various opinions of villagers under the category (highly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed and highly disagreed with score of 5,4,3,2 and 1, respectively).

Methodology

The authors studied the village by case study method of Social Science. Data were collected from 100 randomly selected villagers of Ramchandrapur village to understand the relationship of Ramchandrapur governance system with their socio-personal characteristics.

To study the unique governance system of Ramchandrapur model village under aspects viz. Financial Aspects in Ramchandrapur, Social Development in Ramchandrapur, Education and literacy levels, Nutrition and Health and Infrastructure development, personal interviews of villagers and officials of governance system were conducted. To compare and contrast the pre and post-condition of Ramchandrapur village with respect to adoption of model village governance system, primary data from

Current State of the Village

The village of Ramchandrapur is located in Karimnagar district, 110 km North East of the capital of the erstwhile United State of Andhra Pradesh. The total population in the village is about 2200 persons who make up about 500 families. A large part of the population is occupied in agricultural activities from which they derive their income. The majority of the population is small to medium landholders who are primarily subsistence farmers. The use of irrigation is important in complementing food produced from rain-fed agriculture. The transformation of the village is a result of structural innovations in the governance systems that have created a participatory approach to planning and development.

Like most villages in India, the village of Ramchandrapur was no exception with its

high rates of unemployment, low literacy levels, under-nutrition and poor health and agriculture infrastructure. Before the conception of the model village framework of development which is highly dependent on a decentralised form of governance, Ramchandrapur had literacy level of 47 per cent; about 20 percentage points lower than the national average literacy rate of 64.8 per cent. School drop-out rates were high with most drop-outs turning to liquor consumption. Some lucky few left for the city and became involved in the informal sector as petty-traders. Those who remained had few options but farming. The lack of irrigation infrastructure meant little yields and constant food insecurity. Furthermore, the lack of education and low literacy levels made it impossible for individuals to acquire information about new technology that could help in raising their yields. This inability to access information made them backbenchers in development matters that concerned not only their communities but their livelihood and well-being. Water and land resources were either over or under-utilised across the village through monocropping, poor irrigation practices and inadequate water management initiatives. The local public health status of the village was equally poor with villagers prone to many infectious diseases due to a lack of proper sanitation facilities.

The adoption of the model village framework helped in transforming a once destitute village onto a path of development. Currently, the village has a revitalised education system with zero per cent drop-out rate, a functional irrigation and potable water system and an electricity station. The present sanitary conditions available in the community earned the village the

prestigious 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar' (NGP) Award. This infrastructure development helped in increasing agricultural production annually with tremendous increases in livestock population and dairy milk production. The livelihood diversification activities extended from just crops to include semi-formal income generating activities. The village is home to 27 Self-Help Groups (SHG) and 7 Farmer clubs which helped in consolidating the new found autonomy of the village by encouraging participation in decision making.

Governance System of Ramchandrapur Model Village

Governance in the Ramchandrapur model village represents the standard governance system. The same as at national level, Ramchandrapur model village governance consists of lower house and upper house (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). The structure follows a village cabinet system that consists of members elected among the citizens of the village. The village cabinet system is divided into the ministries headed by a minister. Further, under each ministry, committees are elected among the population of the village to address particular challenges. Gram Sabha is a public forum that can be attended by all elected officials and public participants. It is considered a grassroots democracy, and according to PRI, this meeting is to be held at least twice a year. The forum encourages citizen participation in addressing issues and challenges of concern to each citizen. One role for participation emphasised in the literature is to improve the flow of information into the political process beyond that available by elected officials (World Bank, 2005). At the Gram Sabha meetings

elders are elected to form the village legislative council and elect ministers.

Tables 1 and 2 show Ministries under the governance system of Ramchandrapur

and their respective responsibilities and Committees under the governance system of Ramchandrapur with their responsibilities, respectively.

Table1: Ministries in Ramchandrapur Village

Ministry	Responsibility
Chief Minister (Sarpanch)	Supervise all ministries and committees and head the administration of the village
Minister of Power, Public Distribution and Revenue	Financial regulations and tax collection
Minister of Animal Husbandry	Management of farm animals and by-products
Minister of Minority Welfare	Representation of minorities within the village
Minister of Women , Child and Self-Help Groups (SHG)	Women empowerment, child nutrition and SHG's regulation
Minister of Legal Affairs	Management of all legal affairs including land records but excluding criminal justice
Minister of Family Planning	Management and ensuring healthy families

Table 2: Committees Under Various Ministries in Ramchandrapur Village

Committees	Responsibilities
Water Committee	Management of irrigation and quality regulation of potable water
Environment and Sanitation Committee	Management of sanitation in each household and tree plantation
Revenue Committee	Collection of taxes and management of village revenue and expenses
Roads and Building Committee	Transportation and housing
Cultural Affairs Committee	Festival celebration and marriage regulation
Employment Committee	Employment generation

Once every three months in Ramchandrapur, members of the committee identify problems related to respective ministries by the help of a survey. The head of the committee, members and villagers identify the problems in monthly meetings held at a common place called chaupal within the village. After this, the chief minister (Sarpanch) assigns the problem to its specific ministry to solve it. This system is strictly followed and is corruption free. This model differs with the PRI system as the village legislative council has its own House of elected representatives. Instead of working under the Zilla Parishad, the village is headed by the Gram Panchayat who also chooses the head of various committees under the legislative council. The aim of the PRI system is development of the village by concept of democratic decentralisation. However, it lacks grassroots contacts with villagers. With the model village, its aim is development by concept of leadership through participation.

Sarpanch has managed to structure unique governmental arrangement and revitalise the village within very short period of time. Further challenges that the village might face are inherently rooted in the current governmental institutions. Indian society is hierarchical based on caste system, patriarchal in nature and feudal in character. Administration within PRI is influenced by existing governance system of the country and power of authority lies in hands of people of certain caste or region. This is detrimental for the welfare of minorities. Some level of conflict is based on caste, religion, region, culture and language in villages and it makes governance vague and unresponsive. Further, an organic linkage between Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat

is yet to be forged. Gram Panchayats do not constitute viable administrative units due to their geographical areas and physical distances from potential growth centres and sheer inaccessibility due to lack of proper infrastructure such as roads. Another area of concern is interference of middleman, brokers and other external agents in production process that results in degradation of margins of villagers. Inefficient Central and State administration with top to down approach complicates the concern further.

1. Financial Aspects in Ramchandrapur

Besides all the constraints, Sarpanch of Ramchandrapur has been able to manage financially and bring about some major capital improvements to the village, such as: uninterrupted water supply for irrigation and potable use; piping to every house in the village; the power sub-station to provide each habitant with a certain amount of hours of electricity per day; improvement in education and health facilities; and pucca roads for a better connectivity to the rest of the State. Financially, this was possible through a combination of self-collected revenue, use of already existing Central and State schemes and innovative approach to NGO's to fill in the missing funds.

In the past, the village depended on the water supply from the nearby river and used water pumps for irrigation. Once the dam was constructed upriver, the village was left with no water supply for irrigation and daily use. In collaboration with the department of Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP), specifically the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department (RWSS), an innovative solution was implemented to

solve the water problem for the village. Since there was no running body of water nearby but groundwater was plentiful, an effort was made to construct a trench 3' wide and 15' deep in the dry river bed to act as a wall and collect rainfall and underground water. The innovative solution still allowed the surface water to flow downstream, while capturing only the water below the surface. This ensures ample water for the village to use year round for irrigation and for the households. At present, the village is served by 21 handpumps, 1 community well and 4 borewells. Two overhead storage reservoirs (with the capacity of 40000 lts and 60000 lts) are used to distribute the water through pipes in the village. Almost all households have tap connections. Similarly, water supply system is extended to schools in the village, as a welfare measure (Ram, 2012).

Majority of this cost (83 per cent) was borne by RWSS, GoAP. Gram Panchayat in collaboration with a NGO Bala Vikasa shared about 15 per cent of this cost. In Ramchandrapur, the local contribution was clearly visible for the capital cost of the project. The population saved and contributed to the capital expense in the form of purchasing land required for the reverse osmosis plant in order to have clean, potable water delivered to their homes. The experience in other parts of India according to "Wash Coast India" is limited to population contributing to operation and system maintenance only. In Ramchandrapur, however, the citizens actually contributed to the capital expense.

Once the project was underway and village gained some acknowledgment, a government institution for capacity building of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development

(APARD) also extended financial help to Ramchandrapur. APARD sponsored support costs that comprised about 3 per cent of total expenditure of the water project. The cost subsidised visits to two other model villages, Gangadevulapally and Gudur, in order to observe and learn about their success stories. These visits were considered to be critical and a turning point for the water project in Ramchandrapur.

Before the water project could have been realised, the need for uninterrupted power had to be satisfied. The village invested in separate dedicated transformer for uninterrupted power in order to run the drinking water supply systems. The village collaborated with the electricity department on this project. The citizens of Ramchandrapur collected ₹ 40,000 rupees and bought an acre of land for electricity department to set up a power sub-station. The sub-station was crucial to provide continuous water supply to the village allowing water pumps to run as needed by the user. Each household now receives about 7 hours of electricity a day for agricultural purposes. The investments made by the village are about 13 per cent of the total cost and the rest of the cost was borne by the schemes from Irrigation Department and RWSS, GoAP (Ram, 2012). Current maintenance and service fees for water and electricity are allocated from the Gram Panchayat's own revenues. Own revenue collected includes tariffs and income paid by the citizens for utilisation of the water and electricity.

The water delivery piped system was developed through the combination of local contributions and government funds. Since the water system was put in place, it allowed

for uninterrupted irrigation of the crops. 1900 acres of land is cultivated now, up from 700 acres that used to be cultivated just few years before. Besides the increase in the cultivated land, the crop diversification was viable as well. In the past, the village grew only rice and groundnuts; however, today they have diversified into growing cash crops and vegetables. Annual turnover from all agricultural activities is ₹ 3.5 crore.

Another viable source of revenue for the village today is taxation from the 29 self-help groups (SHG) that exist in the village. The concept of self-help groups became popular during the 90's, as a primary tool for poverty alleviation and empowerment. The model was very successful in Andhra Pradesh as it suited socio-economic context of this State (AMR-APARD, 2008). Today Andhra Pradesh is home to more than 50 per cent of all self-help groups in India.

The SHG evolves as a group of people with homogeneous social and economic background voluntarily coming together to save small amount regularly, operate a small scale business and to meet their emergency needs on mutual help basis. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper use of credit and timely repayment (AMR-APARD, 2008). Further, SHG enhances the capabilities of poor to develop collective decision making, provides a broad range of social benefit to members and even to the entire village and motivates poor taking up social responsibilities particularly related to women development. The concept encourages the habit of savings among poor and facilitates the accumulation of their own capital and improves their ability to mobilise local resources (AMR-APARD, 2008).

The poor have different needs for financial services. The SHG provides access to finance while equally distributing the risk for payment amongst the members. According to the Sarpanch of the village, repayments of all SHGs in the village are 100 per cent. The peer pressure within the SHGs serves as a substitute for collateral (AMR-APARD, 2008). Further, the sarpanch has instituted private savings for the population as well as introduced insurance policies. Today more than 1700 people hold an insurance policy totaling the annual premium for the entire village between ₹ 30-40 lakh. The savings accounts amount to about ₹ 40-50 lakh. Between the insurance policy and savings, the village has combined annual savings around ₹ 1 crore.

While the sarpanch together with the village council and the ministers was able to truly uplift the village within a decade of time, the issues of sustainability and further development of the village arise on the State and National scale. Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) study on status of finances of PRIs in 10 States across India reveals that share of own revenue in total income of Panchayats at all levels is declining. It is suggested that misbalance mainly exists because the self-collection of the revenue by Panchayats has not kept with the pace with increasing governmental grants (PRIA, 2000). The situation in Andhra Pradesh is in much better position than in other States of India, where self-collected revenue is up to 50 per cent of the Gram Panchayat's budget comparing to some other States that are below 1 per cent indicating almost total dependence of GP's on State and Central government funds. However, in no State have Panchayats been able to generate enough own revenue to reach financial sovereignty (PRIA, 2000).

While government programmes are forthcoming and can accommodate many of the basic requirements in areas such as health and education, locating funds for larger capital investments has been an issue. In case of Ramchandrapur and funding of the water project, both in the case of the drinking water project as well as the irrigation, efforts were not possible within the existing government programmes. The village had to raise funds from other sources, and this was difficult given its past reputation and the lack of information on possible sources. The drainage system still awaits such funding possibilities, though a plan has been drawn up (GoI-UNDP, 2011).

2. Social Development in Ramchandrapur

The social reality of individuals in the village of Ramchandrapur changed significantly in the last decade or so. Through the efforts of the Mayor, the village moved from bad to progressive. The Sarpanch conducted a census like survey to take an inventory of the population and their social status. Initially the data were recorded manually making it difficult to establish population needs. He collaborated with APARD in order to digitalise the database. Once the database was computerised, they were able to generate reports. With this information, the leadership in the model village is able to determine the needs of its residents and determine which National and State programme fits the specific need of each villager. This efficient use of information means that the leadership is able to be more receptive.

The high rates of alcoholism which were common among school going children have been reduced through the introduction

of fines and the improvement of the education system. The poor amenities have been replaced with sub-surface water irrigation system which improved the overall sanitation and health of the community. The once isolated community which was accessible by a kutchra road is now connected to the neighbouring villages and towns by pucca roads that have opened access to new markets for the community. These indicators give a picture of the transformation that has occurred in Ramchandrapur. As stated earlier, changes in education, health and nutrition and infrastructure development will be the main focus of this social reality.

3. Education and Literacy Levels

The Mayor (Sarpanch) of Ramchandrapur who is credited for the achievements of the village spearheaded the transformation of the education system within the village after recognising the limits of illiteracy. The starting point was to reduce the drop-out rates and the literacy rates which had crippled agricultural productivity. With half of the population illiterate, spreading of new knowledge and technology was almost impossible. As part of the ICDS programme, he initiated the development of two anganwadi centres which would cater to pre-school children. These children are 'collected from their homes by the anganwadi staff to ensure regular attendance'. The aim of these centres was to stimulate learning among the children from a young age as well as make their mothers able to participate in other self-development activities (Self-Help Groups) while their children were in the care of other experienced mother. This programme also helped facilitate supplementary feeding programmes that aid

under-nourished children recover from malnutrition.

For the older school going children, an experienced retired teacher from the community was hired to lead the transformation of the school system. This visionary leadership and commitment helped in reducing the school drop-out rates to zero. It is certainly evident that the transformation of the education system helped in improving other social indicators within the village.

4. Nutrition and Health

Nutrition and health are some of the social indicators that benefited from the gains made through education. The school feeding programmes which are a part of the national agenda in decreasing under-nutrition helped in attracting and retaining students. As such it was also easier to administer vitamin supplements to under-five children in anganwadi centres and general vaccinations for the older school going children. Given that the feeding programmes are mostly funded by government grants, it remains uncertain of their lifespan and/or their future. The current financial status of the model village only allows for adoption of programmes with guaranteed funding from the Central government as part of the implementation process of their policies.

The sanitation issues in the village were addressed by first creating soak pits near discharge points. The members of the governing body canvassed from house to house to encourage people to adopt this new system that would divert the water overflow from the pits to kitchen gardens. Adoption levels were eventually high and

these changes helped the village win the 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar '(NGP) Sanitation Award. This award is given to communities that have managed to become 'open defecation free' by having sanitary toilets in houses, schools and anganwadis.

The village of Ramchandrapur has also managed to build a clinic using government grants and local resources. This clinic has been crucial in acting as a centre for community health workers to disseminate information on hygiene, balanced diets and feeding practices for pregnant and nursing women.

5. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development certainly plays an indispensable role in helping a developing nation to achieve economic and social prosperity. India is no exception to this trend with Central government initiatives augmenting infrastructure in the areas of telecommunication, road and agriculture (Bhattacharyya & Chakraborty, 2010).

Before the innovation of the model village, infrastructure in Ramchandrapur was minimal. The new leadership tackled the problems of infrastructure systematically by beginning with water development projects. At the time, the source of water for the village had high fluoride concentration which many times caused fluorosis. By using government grants and local contributions, they developed a piped water system which drew water from the river through pipes to two water tanks that were constructed near the village. This enabled the supply of uncontaminated water to the homes of individuals and helped in reducing the spread of infectious diseases.

The leadership in the model village discovered that power supply was important for irrigation purposes. The village was able to raise funds to buy a plot of land on which power generating activities were implemented. With power supply assured, it was easier to explore irrigation possibilities. Unfortunately the river that was close to the village had dried up due to a dam construction that occurred upstream. Thus, it was necessary to construct a sub-surface dike to hold the necessary water. With the help from government grants and other donors, they were able to put pipes that connected the river to farms and supports irrigation through sprinkler systems.

After this achievement, the leadership discovered that irrigation alone without management systems was a waste of resources as it became more apparent that the management of the operation and maintenance would determine the level of success. The local community organised itself into branches that were responsible for inspecting the pipes to ensure timely maintenance. These changes improved the overall efficiency and equity in the use of water. Currently the model village lacks the capacity to be genuinely independent and

to generate income from local sources. As such it remains imperative on how long they will be able to sustain these rates of development.

The unique features that have helped the village of Ramchandrapur achieve such success are exceptional leadership, decentralised governance through the creation of sub-committees and community participation. However, it remains uncertain on how long the model village will survive in future given its dependence on government grants for development projects. While we celebrate the success in utilising the programmes available for the rural communities in India, it will be necessary for the village council to find alternative ways of generating funds and maintaining the autonomy of the village.

Pre and Post-Condition of Ramchandrapur Village with Respect to Adoption of Model Village Governance System

Table 3 summarises the specific achievements of different committees after adoption of Ramchandrapur model village Governance.

Table 3: Specific Achievements of Different Committees Under Ramchandrapur Model Village Governance

Committees	Specific achievements
Water Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solved Fluoride problem in drinking water by constructing two treated water tanks Construction of 21 handpumps, 1 community well and 4 bore wells for irrigation purpose

(Contd...)

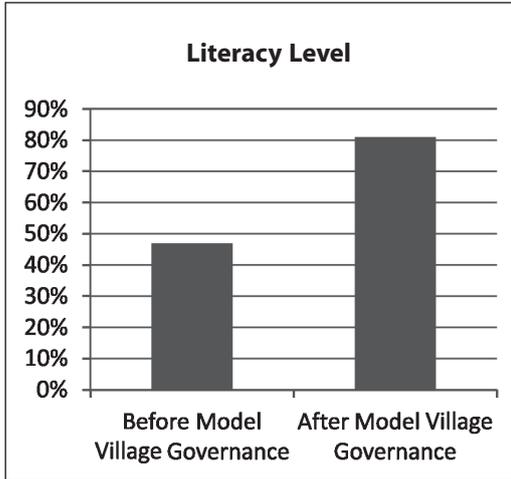
Table 3 (Contd...)

Committees	Specific achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of sub-surface irrigation system on Moithuma river which solved the entire irrigation problem of village
Environment and Sanitation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sanitation management system for each house ● Sanitation management system for schools, Panchayats and other social infrastructure
Revenue Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual turnover achieved in 2012 is ₹ 3.5 crore with annual savings of ₹ 1.0 crore ● Successful management of taxes and other revenues
Roads and Building Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction of roads in all four directions of village ● Management of marketing for agricultural produce
Education Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensured 100 per cent schooling of children (no dropout)
Women and Child Welfare Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 27 SHGs are formed to work in different aspects. ● Two anganwadi centres are formed for successful management of ICDS and mid-day meal programme.

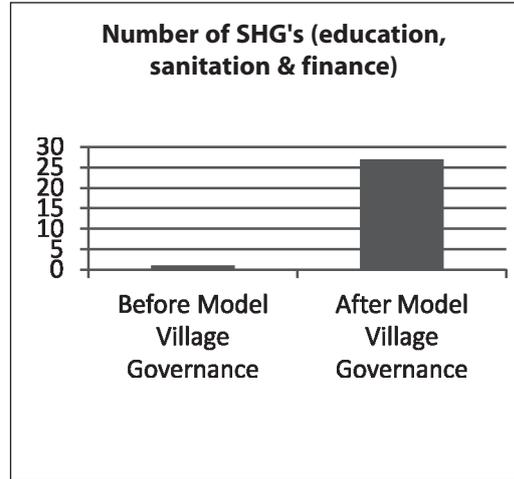
After adoption of model village governance system in Ramchandrapur village, there has been a huge positive shift in literacy level, self-help groups formation, irrigation facilities (number of tube wells, working home taps and bore wells), health status of villagers (health insurance cases), area under agriculture, annual turnover and overall saving of village. Histograms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 show specific achievements

of Ramchandrapur model village governance after its inception in the village w.r.t. literacy level, SHG's, irrigation, home taps, health insurance, cultivated area, annual agricultural turnover and annual savings of the village, respectively. (Pre and post-condition of Ramchandrapur village with respect to adoption of model village governance system).

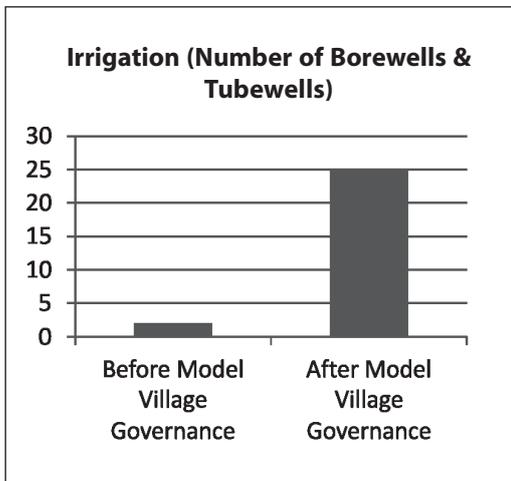
Histogram 1 : Pre and post-literacy level



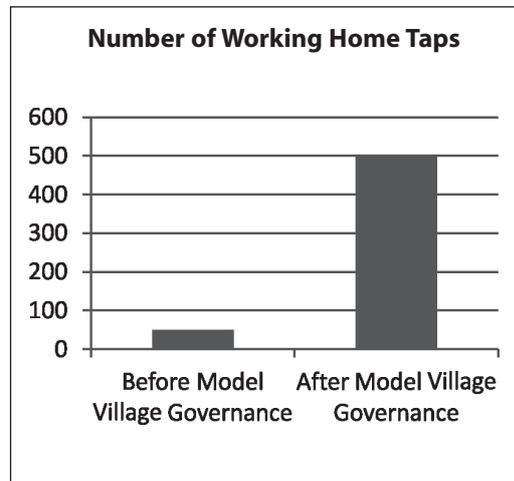
Histogram 2 : Pre and post-SHG's numbers



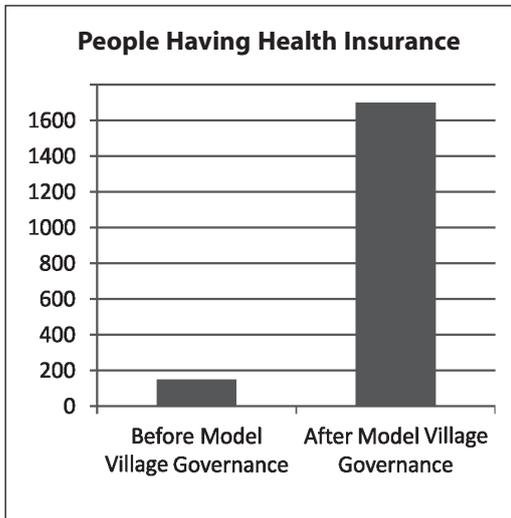
Histogram 3 : Pre and post-irrigation status



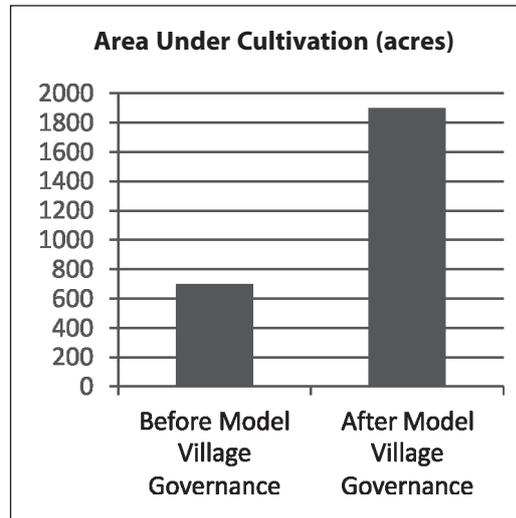
Histogram 4 : Pre and post-home taps status



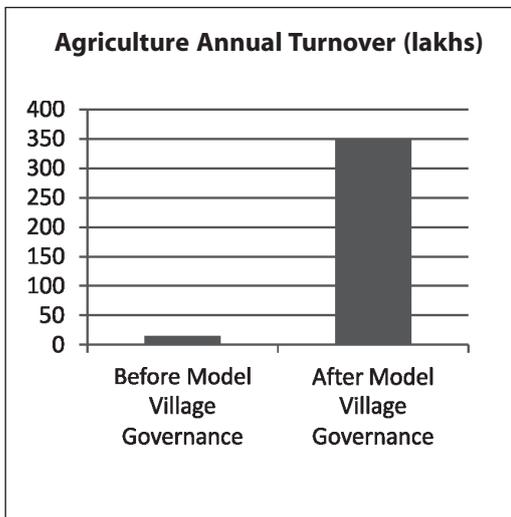
Histogram 5 : Pre and post-health insurance



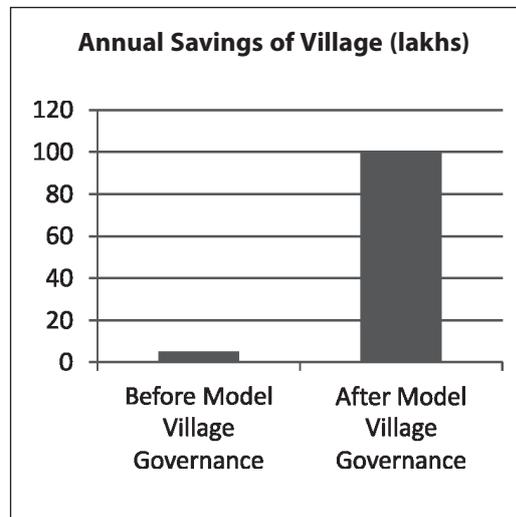
Histogram 6 : Pre and post-cultivation area



Histogram 7: Pre and post-Agri. turnover



Histogram 8 : Pre and post-annual savings



Relationship Between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and Socio-economic Characteristics of Villagers

After adoption of Ramchandrapur model village governance system, villagers got an opportunity to participate and discuss during meetings. Various developmental programmes launched by Government of India were discussed at many village

discussion forums. Villagers became members of different committees and took responsibility under model village governance system. This increased their extension agency contact, mass media exposure and innovativeness. Table 4 shows relationship between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and socio-economic characteristics of villagers.

Table 4 : Relationship Between Governance System of Ramchandrapur and Socio-economic Characteristics of Villagers

Socio-economic characteristics	Governance System of Different Departments/Committees			
	Education	Health	Agriculture	Finance
Extension agency contact	0.227**	0.226**	0.217**	0.221**
Mass media exposure	0.212**	0.232**	0.234**	0.230**
Innovativeness	0.219**	0.228**	0.235**	0.233**

**-Significant at 1% level.

Selected socio-personnel characteristics, namely extension agency contact, mass media exposure and innovativeness of Ramchandrapur people was found significant at the one per cent level based on t test with Governance System of different departments/ Committees,

mainly Education, Health, Agriculture and Finance Department of Ramchandrapur Village. This indicates that, this governance model of Ramchandrapur developed extension agency contact, mass media exposure and innovativeness among the people of the village.

Perception of Villagers About Model Village Governance System of Ramchandrapur

Table 5 : Perception of Villagers About Model Village Governance System of Ramchandrapur

Statement	No. of farmers (N=100)					Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	HA	A	NAD	DA	HDA			
Model village governance system is a cheap source of information to the villagers	300	80	-	30	5	415	4.15	4

(Contd...)

Table 5 (Contd...)

Statement	No. of farmers (N=100)					Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	HA	A	NAD	DA	HDA			
Officials of Model village governance system are easily accessible by farmers	225	60	-	50	15	350	3.50	6
Model village governance system made villagers knowledgeable about developmental schemes of government	250	84	-	22	18	374	3.74	5
Model village governance system fulfils the various informational needs of the villagers	230	64	-	36	20	350	3.50	6
Model village governance system is an efficient system of solving villagers' problem	360	88	-	14	3	465	4.65	1
Model village governance system involves villagers in decision making	345	84	-	16	4	449	4.49	2
Model village governance system improved wealth of villagers	325	88	-	14	6	433	4.33	3
Model village governance system improved the innovativeness of the villagers	205	44	-	70	14	333	3.33	7
Model village governance system created employment opportunities	245	88	-	24	17	374	3.74	5
Villagers implement the recommendations of Model village governance system	195	48	-	74	12	329	3.29	8

It is evident from Table 5 that respondents have given first and second rank to the statements 'Model village governance system is an efficient system of solving villagers' problem' and 'Model village governance system involves villagers in decision making', respectively which indicates that model village governance system which Ramchandrapur adopted is involving local people and solving their problems efficiently. Respondents have

given third rank to statement 'Model village governance system improved wealth of villagers' which indicates that the model village governance system is finally benefiting the villagers to increase their wealth. If we analyse the mean score of statements 'Model village governance system made villagers knowledgeable about developmental schemes of government', 'Model village governance system fulfils the various informational needs of the villagers',

'Model village governance system created employment opportunities', 'Model village governance system improved the innovativeness of the villagers' and 'villagers implement the recommendations of Model village governance system', then it is evident from Table 5 that mean scores of these statements do not have much variance and all are above 3.20 (with minimum 3.29 and maximum 3.74) which shows that model village governance system which Ramchandrapur adopted has positive effect on all dimensions mentioned in statements which respondents ranked. Thus, villager's perception towards model village governance system is positive and thus they actively participated in all activities of model village governance system which Ramchandrapur adopted.

Conclusion

Although the figures show that India is progressing in the right direction in reducing education inequalities and increasing literacy levels, there is still a lot that needs to be done. An understanding of social issues is important for effective planning and policy development. A systematic approach of decision-making that involves stakeholder input is necessary for effectively addressing issues that are significant locally.

The advent of self-governance ensured that Indian citizens, even the previously marginalised, can participate in decision-making. With the Panchayat

elections, it is encouraging to see increased participation of women and minorities. This is an important step towards improving the governance. However, the full potential of utilising the Gram Sabha as an instrument of participatory governance has not been realised.

Ramchandrapur village serves as a model, showing the initiative and investment of local people. If more villages can run like it, India would likely experience an improvement in livelihoods. Ramchandrapur village has shown the strengths of the system to be a dedicated and corruption-free Gram Sabha system that decides its own governance structure (ministers), dedicated leaders and members of various committees, and an overall participatory method of problem solving that includes the villagers. Ramchandrapur has proven that the concept of the model village has potential to make Indian villages self-sufficient and autonomous with good and transparent governance. In a Parliamentary Democracy like India, citizens elect their leaders.

India showed its interest in this in the 73rd Amendment to its Constitution where it sought to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. The government should take it further to ensure that like Ramchandrapur, all villages in India are aware of these programmes and use it to their benefit.

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