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PRIA

case study

August, 1999

Village Information Centre: Haryana Visit

Village Information Centre (VIC)

This VIC is in Dhana Village that comes under the Salhawaas block of Jhajjar district in Haryana. The VIC has been functional for almost a year now. It is interesting to mention the process that took place in Dhana and led to the formation of the VIC. PRIA started its intervention from here through a micro planning exercise. During the exercise villagers, panchayat representatives, Yuva mandal, Mahila Manda! and PRIA members sat together and listed the main problems in the village. Various problems were identified, out of which the ones who got priority were electricity, water tap, lane construction, community centre for both men and women, school etc. Once the problem was identified and prioritised the villagers start working in the problems one by one. The first was to get an additional transformer as the existing one could not take all the load. This work was done by community contribution as the government was not very responsive to their request. Similarly, the lane was also constructed through community contribution. Barring a few almost all the issues have been catered to by the villagers. The others are in the pipeline.

This exercise helped in increasing the bargaining power of the people. building their confidence and increased representation in the Gram Sabha meetings. This process raised the concern for lack of information in the village regarding the various schemes and procedures to be followed to avail the schemes. This led to the need to open a VIC in the village that would cater to the interest of all in the village. The VIC was first opened in a Chaupal but could not succeed as women were not allowed in the Chaupal. It shifted to the Angadwadi centre but had to be again shilled as they required permission from the government etc. Finally, a retired army officer of the Village. Roshan Lal volunteered to give one room in his house for this purpose. He is also a member of the Centre for Advancement of Village Economy (CAVE).

Kosli

This village comes under Nahad Block in Rewari district. The unique characteristic of this village is that three women of the same village represent all the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj Institution. The Sarpanch of this village is Urmila Yadav. Block Samiti Chairperson is Kailash bai and Zila Parishad member is Shashi Yadav. Out of these the sarpanch and the block Samiti Chairperson have received awards for the best performance in Rewan district. The main contribution of these women were as follows:

Urmila Yadav

Her highlighted contribution to the village was the construction of about 30 shops in Panchayat land. The contribution for the construction was taken from the Panchayat funds (30%) and the rest 70% from the Directorate of Panchayat in Chandigarh. These shops were given on rent to the village people specially youth. The rent is given to the Panchayat who takes charge if repair and maintenance of development activities in the village. Besides this she has been an active player in the developmental activities resolving disputes among villagers, taking stands on various issues like dowry, violence at home, divorce etc.

She has shown immense confidence in relating with government officials at all levels and acquiring funds for the panchayat at village Level also she has been a great motivator to generate participation of people in all the activities.

Kailasho Bai

Her highlighting contribution was to acquire the Sarniti land from Truckers who had encroached on this land. She was constantly threatened by the truck's union, was put under political pressures but she was adamant and finally after a long struggle got the land back. On this land, a shopping complex was constructed. The loan for this was taken from government and financial institutions. The shops are on rent and the income generated every month is used to repay the loan. After the loan is paid back, this money will be used for the development of the area.

She has also facilitated the construction of a Primary Health Centre (PHC) and a road around the village.

Jhakala

This village comes in Nahar Block of Rewari district. The Sarpanch of this village is Soni Devi who belongs to the Scheduled Caste. She has actively contributed in development of the village. She helped in solving the drinking water problem by ensuring water connection to all houses. She used the Panchayat money for this purpose and now collects rent from all the houses to pay the water bill and for the maintenance. She approached the local Member of parliament (M.P) and arranged funds for lane construction. She has also solved electricity problem with the help of the villagers. The villagers gathered in front of the electricity department and pressurised them to arrange transformer within short a time. She has been frequently visiting the various government departments and facilitated development work for the village. She is illiterate, but illiteracy is not a deterrent factor for her.

Balaycha

The village comes under Block Mahendergarh of Mahendergarh District. PRIA initiated micro planning exercise here along with a Local Field Base Voluntary Organisation, Jan Sewa Kendra, Mr. Shri Pal of this organisation has been associated in this process from the very beginning. Participatory Bottom up Planning was carried out in Balaycha Gram Panchayat. The panchayat members, community members, local organisation's representative along with PRIA were involved in this exercise.

Water supply to all leases was the priority issue identified through this exercise. After identifying the issue, through the involvement of all a design was formulated and then resources mobilised. For this purpose, financial resources were mobilised from the Panchayat, Community members, PRIA and the government. On August 15, 1999 the foundation stone was laid down and the construction will start in the near future. The implementation process is being carried through villages themselves with the facilitation of the local voluntary organisation. The government department has encouraged this initiative and demanded an action plan by panchayat, so that other problems can be solved in the near future. The panchayat here is being headed by a woman Sarpanch Smt. Murti Devi.

Tentative Itinerary

August 26, 1999

8a.m	Leave for Dhana
11.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. -	Visit to VIC, meeting with Sarpanch-and lunch
1.30 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.	Kosli
3.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	Jhakala
4.30 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.	Journey to Roh1ak
6-00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. -	Refreshments and break
7 00 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.	Visit to SRC (To participants feel the need)

August 27, 1999

8.00 a.m.	Leave for Balaycha
11.00 a.m. - 12.00	Meeting in Balaycha ·
12.00-2.00 p.m.	Visit to Khori · ·
2.00 - 3.30 p.m.	Lunch at mid-way
3.00 p.m.	Leave for Delhi

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