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राष्ट्रीय विधायक सम्मेलन भारत 2023

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For CMs, MLAs & MLCs

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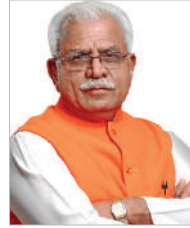
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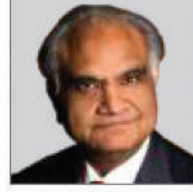West Bengal

राष्ट्रीय विधायक सम्मेलन
भारत 2023

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FOREWORD

NLC Bharat, 2023 provides the canvas for experiential learnings, thematic workshops and group discussions that are supplemented with thought-provoking plenary sessions and show casing of commendable democratic and governance initiatives and practices. All these aspects are carefully curated to see that the NLC Bharat, 2023 will be the manifestation, reflection, celebration and rejuvenation of democracy, governance, and leadership, contributing towards nation building.

This is the context of the 'Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives'. This compilation of 75 short cases is drawn from the length and breadth of the country and classified broadly under different sectors - Productive, Service and Infrastructure. Each case study is a short document that captures the background, rationale, features, impact, challenges, etc. Each case study also provides a few references and contact details for anyone who wishes to gather additional information and explore the possibilities of replicability and scalability, by making relevant contextual and temporal changes.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Academic Research Committee in general and Dr. K Gireesan, Director, MIT-SOG and his team of researchers, for capturing and compiling the case studies by using appropriate methodology and keeping the professional standards of social science research. I am very happy to present this Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives to the legislators as one of their important takeaways from the Conference. I earnestly believe that this shall be treated as a 'drop in the ocean' of our sustained efforts towards good governance, vibrant democracy and empowered political leadership.

Rahul V Karad
Convener, NLC Bharat
and Founder, MIT-SOG

Chapter - I
INTRODUCTION

Background

National Legislators' Conference Bharat (NLC Bharat) is visualized with the core objectives of cross-learning among the legislators and enhancement of their legislative effectiveness. The Conference provides the platform for the legislators from the length and breadth of the country to meet each other; exchange their dreams, aspirations, ideas, initiatives, interventions, and experiences; as well as share their concerns, issues, problems, and priorities.

The legislators participating in the NLC Bharat, 2023 would have experiential learnings, thematic workshops, and group discussions. That will be supplemented with thought-provoking plenary sessions and show casing of commendable democratic and governance initiatives and practices. Our earnest endeavour is to see that the delegates of NLC Bharat, 2023 shall not be the participants of conventional conferences who witness the proceedings and occasionally participate in the deliberations rather they engage themselves in all the sessions as 'active subjects'. We are committed to organise the NLC Bharat, 2023 as a festival of celebration and rejuvenation of democracy, governance, and leadership, contributing to nation building.

Objectives of the Compendium

The initiative to bring out a 'Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives' has the core objectives of identifying, verifying and documenting the unique, commendable and replicable governance practices from different parts of the country. It is an effort made to capture and showcase the commendable governance initiatives as well as to make them available to the legislators for possible replication/scaling up, depending upon the interests and preferences of the key stakeholders and the resource envelope. It is with a sense of commitment, conviction and seriousness that all the legislators participating in the Conference, irrespective of their demographic features and legislative experience, shall have some important takeaways from the programme.

The Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives provides the compilation of 75 short cases drawn from almost all States/ UTs of the country. The cases are further classified broadly under Productive sector, Service sector and Infrastructure sector, in line with the latest development terminology. Each case study is prepared as a brief document that captures the background, rationale, features, impact, challenges, etc.

Each document provides a few references and contact details for anyone who wishes to gather additional information. These details are expected to provide certain useful inputs for exploring the possibilities of replicability and scalability by the legislators, if they found it beneficial to be taken up in their constituency by making relevant adaptations as per the availability of resources, contextual parameters and temporal dimensions.

Chapterisation

After the introductory chapter, Chapter Two provides an overview of the research methods and the process followed towards the making of the compedium. Chapter Three provides the compilation of case studies in the productive sector which includes unique initiatives from the domains of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Industries, etc. Chapter Four captures the case studies from the service sector that incorporates unique initiatives from Education, Health, Children, Adolescents, Women, etc. Chapter Five provides the case studies from the infrastructure sector that includes the initiatives from the domains of Energy, Irrigation, Sports facilities, Tourism, etc. Last Chapter provides the opportunities and possibilities available to the delegates, organisers, and other key stakeholders in the post-Conference period. Details of the members of the Research and Academic team contributed towards the Compendium follows the Last Chapter.

Chapter - II
RESEARCH METHODS AND THE PROCESS

Research Methods adopted and the Process followed in making of the Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives are highlighted here.

Research Methods
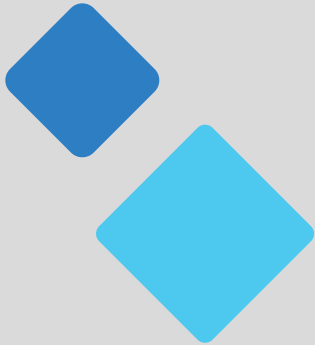
Here, a brief of the research design, rationale adopted in the selection (criteria for inclusion and exclusion) and sources of data used in the study are mentioned. It is with the objective of allowing other researchers to familiarise with the patterns, rationale and strategies followed in the study to enable them to reproduce similar results based on the methods documented here.

Qualitative research design was adopted as the expected outcome of the study is about gaining a detailed understanding of a commendable governance initiative and then to prepare a compendium of 75 short case studies. In addition, this allows the researcher(s) to be more creative and flexible in designing the study.

Among different types available in the Qualitative research design, Case study was chosen. Case Study has the features: 'detailed study of a specific subject (e.g., a place, event, organisation, etc.); data can be collected using a variety of sources and methods; and focuses on gaining a holistic understanding of the case' (McCombes, 2023).

Regarding the rationale adopted for the selection of cases to be included in the compendium, the attributes such as uniqueness, simplicity, cost-effectiveness, scope to address a burning issue, adaptability, replicability, scalability, sustainability, etc. were given prominence. Another important aspect was its Impact in terms of success rate in quantifiable terms for Government programmes, schemes and projects. Changes recorded in individual/ family incomes; improvement in the livelihood patterns/ practices/ diversity; progress in quality of life/ living style; benefits to environment (tangible/ intangible), etc. were also considered during the identification of cases.

For the purpose of shortlisting from the preliminary inputs, it was decided to give priority to the cases which are not widely studied, documented and disseminated before.

In addition, it was decided to capture the case studies, preferably from the last five years. News/ short write-ups in the dailies, research articles from peer-reviewed journals, brief reports from magazines, box news reported in the research studies / project reports, etc. provided the major source of base inputs. Subsequently, search for additional sources of data from websites, research reports, journals, etc. were made to enable the core research team to gather as much information as possible within the limited time frame. In addition, an appeal was made through the official website of NLC Bharat as well as in other related websites, inviting submissions about commendable governance initiatives from the key stakeholders.

While capturing the inputs to develop a case study, it was decided to prioritise the commendable initiatives made during the operationalisation of Government programmes/schemes/projects with thrust on State Governments, significant initiatives made by the Local Governments and unique initiatives made by the legislators in their respective constituencies. In addition, few initiatives by the civil society and others in collaboration with different spheres of Government were also considered.

The Process

Adoption of qualitative research design provides large flexibility to the research team during the process of data collection as well as documentation. At the same time, it was a challenging task to identify the commendable governance initiatives, gather relevant details for the formulation of the case study, analyse its operationalisation, verify the details and then to proceed with the documentation.

In many cases, one or two column news or a short write-up in the dailies (mostly in the English dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Times of India, The North East Times, etc.) during the last six months provided the initial trigger. After a brief discussion among the core research team, the decision to look for additional sources of data by surfing through websites and scanning through research journals, study reports, popular magazines, etc. were made. In certain cases, telephonic conversation with the key stakeholders behind the initiative was also carried out towards seeking additional details as well as to verify the details already gathered.
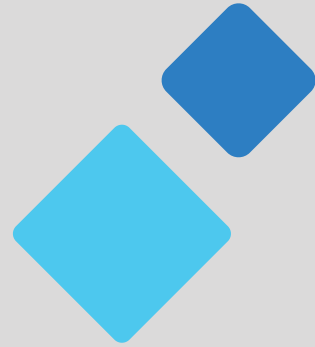
After the collection of 'reasonable data' from multiple sources, the members of the core research team proceeded with the documentation of the case. A flexible template was prepared by the Research Lead and circulated among the core team members to ensure a uniform pattern of documentation. It included the aspects like background, significance, features, impact, replicability, challenges, and a short conclusion. It was decided to keep the maximum word limit to less than 1000 words for a case study, as far as possible.

After the preparation of the first draft, the Research Lead used to go through the contents and then give comments and suggestions to bring in additional information, rectify the conceptual and factual errors, as well as to improve upon the syntax and semantics of the document for value addition. After the completion of the second draft, the document is put through a 'Plagiarism check' by using standard software available to the faculty. Wherever the similarity index was more than 10 %, those documents were redrafted before bringing within the limits by a second round of plagiarism check.

Subsequent to the running of the draft case study through the plagiarism check, the manuscripts were sent to a team of Peer Reviewers, who are senior Professors (serving / retired) of Central University/ ICSSR Institutes/ Practitioners with rich field experience. The peer reviewers were specially requested to comment upon the utility, replicability, and scalability. They were also requested to bring out any glaring errors and omissions in the manuscript. The commitment, willingness and pace of reviewing the manuscripts, without any compromise to the quality in the review manifested by the Peer Reviewers, need a special mention here. It is also noted that all the reviewers gave scholarly inputs, constructive criticism and value additions that enabled us to improve upon the manuscripts. Most of the comments made by the Peer Reviewers were incorporated in the manuscripts. Further, the final draft of the Compendium was made available to the IT team for designing, proof reading and printing.

Note: List of members of the Core team, research inputs, academic support, Peer Reviewers and Overall Co-ordination is attached after the last chapter.

References

McCombes, S. (2023, March 20). What Is a Research Design | Types, Guide & Examples. Scribbr. Retrieved June 4, 2023, from https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-design/

Chapter - III

Commendable Governance Initiatives in the Productive Sector:

This chapter showcases the commendable governance initiatives in the Productive Sector such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Cottage/ Village Industries, etc. drawn from different parts of the country. In the documentation of each study, a brief background, features, impact, challenges and a brief conclusion, followed by references. Wherever possible, contact details like name, mobile and E-mail ID are also provided. This chapter captures about ten case studies from across the country.

1   Pashu Sakhi (Jharkhand)

Background

Over 70% of marginal and landless farmers in Jharkhand are responsible for the majority of the state's livestock production (World Bank, 2022). The price of meat and eggs has increased nationwide anywhere from 70% to 100% during the last ten years. During the pandemic and post-pandemic period, the price of milk, ghee, egg, and meat has gone up exponentially. Yet Jharkhand's low-income cattle farmers were unable to take advantage of the chance to boost their income. They had little access to high-quality healthcare and breeding assistance as well as limited access to acquire appropriate knowledge about cost-effectively managing the cattle. All these get reflected in their income and livelihood, where they do not get the requisite technical and professional support in reducing the input cost for the production of primary products as well as enhancing the output cost by bringing out value-added products.

To further complicate the scenario, the State of Jharkhand had one of the lowest ratios of veterinarians to livestock in the nation. Data suggests that for every 15,704 cattle units, there was only one veterinary doctor (Singh, 2022). As a result, livestock mortality was significant (about 30% in goats, and around 80% in pigs and poultry), which resulted in reduced egg and meat production in the State. This in turn affects the farmers' income, who could only earn up to Rs. 800 per month (World Bank, 2022).

The JOHAR Project

The livestock is often raised and bred in the backyards of the farming community, especially by women in rural areas. Hence, it is only natural to consider that capacity building of rural women such as Pashu Sakhis would increase farmer income by boosting livestock productivity and thereby enhancing the family income. These Pashu Sakhis, most of whom are semi-literate and illiterate women, could be considered 'barefoot veterinary assistants' after putting them through a scientifically structured, systematically operated, and intensive capacity-building programme.

The Jharkhand Opportunities for Harnessing Rural Growth (JOHAR) is a World Bank-supported project administered by the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) under the aegis of the Department of Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand. The project is functional across 68 blocks in 17 districts of the State (JOHAR, n.d.). One of the import-ant objectives of the project is to build the capacity of rural women as community livestock health service providers to augment and support the services of veterinary doctors in the State. As part of the project, the Pashu Sakhis, drawn from different villages across the State, are trained to take care of goats, pigs, poultry, etc. as the 'first respondent veterinary assistants'.as the 'first respondent veterinary assistants'.

The Pashu Sakhis are given training by an accredited Agency for Health and Extension of Livestock Production (A-HELP). After the training, the Pashu Sakhis counsel farmers by offering the requisite information about how to take care of cattle as well as about the financial advantages of raising livestock for sale. Additionally, they help the farmers to link themselves with different producer groups and trade associations, to improve their access to markets for the sale of their produce.

The capacity-building sessions organized as part of the JOHAR project resulted in ensuring basic veterinary services with a thrust on quality and guarantee to the farmers. As part of the project, about 1000 Pashu Sakhis are trained, out of which more than two-thirds (about 70%) have received certification from the Agriculture Skill Council of India (ASCI). The Pashu Sakhis arrange regular field training to the farmers which enabled them to become entrepreneurs by enhancing their sales and services (JOHAR, n.d.).

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

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Case Study 1:
Smt. Hasiba Khatun

Ms. Hasiba Khatun (30) is a Pashu Sakhi from Khanbita village, Ranchi district, who used to sell chickens to farmers. She breeds about 3000-4000 of them for which she earns close to Rs. 1 lakh in profit from their sale. She is also a Master Trainer having completed 45 days of additional training in livestock management. Hasiba used to do odd sewing jobs earlier for raising three children, adding about Rs. 4000-5000 a month to the family income (World Bank, 2022).

As a Master Trainer, she often travels to other districts in the state. She says, "I have been lucky enough to have the support of my husband throughout, as a Pashu Sakhi earlier, and now as a Master Trainer. My training has also helped me increase my income exponentially" (World Bank, 2022).

Case Study 2:
Smt. Somati Oraon

Somati Oraon (32), from Tengariya village of Gumla district, is a trained Pashu Sakhi since 2018. She guides and supports about ten goat-rearing families and assists them

with timely animal health checks, such as vaccines, deworming, and first aid. She offers them guidance on maintaining the farm's cleanliness, breeding and feeding cattle, and the proper disposal of animal waste. She says, "My husband and I owned four goats and did not have any knowledge of their upkeep, feeding, and breeding. The goats were also a meagre livelihood and we struggled to make ends meet. Now, with my training, not only am I able to take care of my livestock well, but I can also help others in need." She used to earn about Rs. 3,000 – Rs. 5,000 per month only (World Bank, 2022).

Somati is now able to earn between Rs. 10,000 and 20,000 per month, as she started working part-time. She is pleased that she can now support her family financially without relying on her spouse. She currently sends two of her kids to private school. With a deep sense of satisfaction, she says "I feel gratified when villagers refer to me as 'Bakri doctor'. I want to work even harder and double my income in the coming years" (World Bank, 2022).

Impact of Pashu Sakhi

As part of the JOHAR project in Jharkhand, 29 Master Trainers were certified by the ASCI. It is significant to note that the project financed by the World Bank has been helping about 57,000 farmers out of which most of them (90 %) are women. There is a huge rise in the monthly income of farmers, some of them even earning more than Rs. 45,000 per month from small backyard livestock production which is an increase of over 55 to 125 times of average income (World Bank, 2022).

This has been substantiated by an independent monitoring and evaluation carried out by the UK's Oxford Group. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have named the Pashu Sakhi under the JOHAR project of Jharkhand as one of the top eight global best practice models for farmer service delivery by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

End Note

The Pashu Sakhi model of community-based veterinary services may be regarded as a successful governance initiative. The effectiveness of this initiative has been significantly influenced by elements such as the high density of small livestock, lack of awareness by the farmers, and low access to essential veterinary services. Significance of regular and continuous monitoring as well as organising periodical capacity building sessions for Pashu Sakhis shall be considered.

The JSLPS is now investigating the market potentials, fostering market connections, and developing the capacity of the Pashu Sakhi for estimating and evaluating the live body weight of the animal, pricing of small cattle, etc. Though successfully tried with poultry, the model remains to be tested for upscaling for use with large ruminants.

Contact Details

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Email id: jslps.ranchi@gmail.com

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Singh R. (2022.) "State-wise cattle to veterinarian ratio in India". Pashudhan Praharee; for details; also see,
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https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/12/13/jharkhand-s-pashu-sakhis-the-community-animal-healthcare-workers

Shelter for Cows
(Maharashtra)

Background

In November 2018, Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, then Chief Minister of Maharashtra declared 112 talukas in the state to be suffering from a 'se¬vere drought' (Khapre, 2018). Mann Taluka in Satara District was one of those Talukas in Maharashtra, severely affected by drought. The villagers in the area were resorting to desperate measures as they did not have enough food and water for even human consumption. There was not enough fodder for the animals. Farmers were forced to sell their cows and buffaloes due to the poor harvest, which was further accelerated by the drought conditions. Some of the Local Governments took certain measures to reduce the impact of the drought situation. This case study sheds light on the unique initiative carried out by the Mann Deshi Foundation.[1] This organization is famous for erecting cow shelters or Chavnnis as they are known locally.

Smt. Chetna Gala Sinha, the founder of the Mann Deshi Foundation, decided to launch the first rural bank for women in 1996. She was motivated by Kantabai, a welder from Mhaswad, Maharashtra, who recounted how she attempted to open a savings account with a bank but was repeatedly turned down. The Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank was created to address rural women's lack of access to formal financial institutions and to serve as a safe facility for them to save money.

The Mann Deshi Foundation aids rural women by addressing requirements other than financial support. They work to improve business skills and market access for women

business owners and their communities. By 2024, the Mann Deshi Foundation hopes to reach one million women. It currently operates in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka.

About the Initiative

In the shelter for cows constructed by the Mann Deshi Foundation, about 20,000 cattle can be sheltered. There were 40–50 cattle in each row and each row was neatly arranged with sufficient space between each animal. The milk farmer families were housed in smaller tents made of cloth and flimsy canvas that were constructed alongside the livestock sheds. For storage of water, 6 water tanks were provided out of which four had a storage capacity of 20,000 litres each. The remaining tanks could hold 10,000 litres of water each (Shantha, 2018). The drinking water was arranged by the Local Government Institution. In addition, a veterinary doctor was present round the clock to look after the animals.

Every morning and evening, private dairy owners came to the camp to collect milk from the centre that has been set up nearby for the benefit of the farmers who live there. In an interview with the Wire, a camp villager said that "My four jersey cows would give nearly 20-22 litres of milk, which has come down to just 14 litres now. But I am glad I still have them and they are surviving" (Shantha, 2018).

As the drought worsened, villagers from places as far as the Maharashtra-Karnataka border sought refuge in the camp. Smt. Chetna Gala said, "The real challenge would be in the months of April and May when the summer is at its peak. We are afraid most villagers would be displaced in the coming months" (Shantha, 2018).

Challenges

However, the camp suffered from a lack of availability of basic necessities. There was an enormous burden on the villagers to maintain hygiene. In the absence of adequate toilets, children would defecate in the open. A few others fell ill due to inclement weather conditions. Sunita Wirkar from Masaiwadi village conveyed that "Back home, I did not have to worry about their [children's] food and health. The village Anganwadi took care of them. My daughter has been catching a cold ever since we moved here. But I do not have a choice" (Shantha, 2018). Sympathetic to the demands of the camp villagers, the Mann Deshi Foundation also sought to set up an Anganwadi near the camp.

Conclusion

Disasters in the 21st century, be they natural or manmade, are known for magnitude and intensity. Their spatial reach is far and wide. This becomes evident when we look at the history of the SARS outbreak (2003), the Swine Flu (2009), the Ebola outbreak (2015), Bird Flu (2017), and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). In such circumstances, community-Based Organizations are crucial for risk mitigation. The Mann Taluka's 58 villages' residents were being served at one time by the Mann Deshi Foundation. Also, there were the farmers who moved from the districts of Aurangabad, Beed, and Sangli. The significance of private institutions also cannot be ignored in mitigating disasters. The Mann Deshi Foundation's operations were aided by the Bajaj Foundation by way of material support and voluntary monetary contributions. This case study acknowledges the joint efforts of CBOs, corporates and Local Government Institutions for their active involvement to safeguard the lives and livelihood of the drought-hit farmers from the Satara district and other parts of Maharashtra.

Contact Details

Mann Deshi Foundation
Phone: +91 23 7327 0660
Email id: info@manndeshi.org.in

Note

To read more about the activities of the Mann Deshi Foundation see,
https://manndeshifoundation.org/

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Khapre S. (2018). "Severe drought declared in 112 talukas in Maharashtra". The Indian Express; also see,
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Bamboo is not Simple Any more
(Meghalaya)

Background

Bamboo is referred to as a 'miracle plant' because of its many advantages. Bamboo trees produce more oxygen and absorb more carbon dioxide than other hardwood trees, which helps us battle climate change more effectively. After harvest, almost every component of the plant can be used to create a wide range of products including furniture, cradles, haversacks, containers, mats, jewellery, musical instruments, traps for animals, hats, etc. It is also widely utilized to construct houses. The walls of the houses are made of thin strips of bamboo that are formed into mats.

Bamboo is abundantly cultivated in the Northeast and Himalayan states of India. The state of Meghalaya is popular for its bamboo products. Before exploring some of the difficulties experienced by the producers, we will first assess a few products in this Case Study.

Bamboo Products in Meghalaya

In Meghalaya, bamboo products may be found everywhere. The bamboo basket comes in countless varieties and shapes, depending on how they will be used. Typically, the bamboo baskets are woven by the men of the household. Every district has a unique aesthetic. Conical baskets are typically used for transporting goods, whereas those with square or round bottoms are used for storage. Locally, the creative baskets are referred to as "Meghum Khoks". Perishable items are usually stored in Khoks, Thugis, and other baskets.

In Meghalaya, bamboo baskets are also used to store valuables and clothing (GoI, 2009).

The traditional, social, and economic landscape of Meghalaya is heavily reliant on handicrafts. A significant number of handicrafts are still present in people's daily lives, especially in rural areas of the state where it has long served as the pillar in the production of a range of household goods such as domestic tools and decor. Items made from bamboo and cane, such as baskets, furniture, mattresses, floor mats, wood carvings, and flower pots, are some of the highlights of what the people of Meghalaya are capable of producing.

The following image shows the use of Bamboo for making

1. Winnowing tray
2. Basket
3. Small basket
4. Round winnowing tray
5. Bamboo house
6. Bamboo ladder
7. Water pipe
8. Fencing bamboo

whereas the table shows the market prices of handicraft products.

Items	Local name	Market price
Bamboo stool	Mula	Rs 200-300
Bamboo shoot	Lungsiej	Rs 80-100 per bundle
Basket	Shang	Rs 150-250
Basket	Polo	Rs 100-200
Bamboo bag for carrying swords	Ruh wait	Rs 100-150
Bow and arrow	Khnam	Rs 200-300
Broom	Synsar mator	Rs 20-50
Cone basket	Khoh	Rs 100-200
Fish trap	Ruh khnam	Rs 100-150
Fishing trap	Kriah tong doh	Rs 80-!50
Fish container	Rymwiang khwai	Rs 100-150
Fishing rod	Kriah thep doh	Rs 500-1500
Khasi comb	Snat	Rs 20-40
Khasi Flute	Besli	Rs 500/Piece
Khasi musical mouthpiece	Mieng	Rs 300-400
Kite	Kot kudi	Rs 10-20
Poultry basket	Khoh Syiar	Rs 150-300
Water pipes	Pipe um	Rs 20-50
Winnowing tray	Prah	Rs 200-400

Tynnai's Story of Reviving Old Traditions and Empowering New Generation

Tynnai with 86 households is a small village in Meghalaya's South West Khasi Hills District. The community was well-known for its bamboo and cane crafts. The talented craftsmen from the village could produce a wide variety of practical and distinctive handicrafts, and they passed on their expertise to their offspring who would eventually succeed them. In this way, the activity persisted, and the information was passed down from one generation to the next. At one time, Tynnai's products were so well-liked in the surrounding villages that residents would travel there to purchase them for use in their homes. Their handmade goods were in high demand not just in the neighbourhood weekly markets but also at larger, farther-off marketplaces like Iewduh in Shillong, Nongstoin, Mairang, Mawkyrwat, and Riangdo (MBDA, 2019).

Bah (Mr.) Twolding Jyrwa, the village headman, decided to step up and do something to elevate the dying art out of concern that handicraft, which was once the glory of the village, was in danger of disappearing. He contacted the ladies who remained engaged in handicrafts to examine the prospects that still existed in this field. He was determined to revive this ancient practice. As a result, Mr. Twolding Jyrwa served as their advisor when 26 female craftsmen came together in 2010 to form the Women's Cane and Bamboo Industrial Cooperative Society (MBDA, 2019).

The Society was clear about what it was supposed to do which helped to crystallize its five specific goals as follows: (1) to improve their economic situations and statuses; (2) to exhibit their crafts at trade shows and exhibitions; (3) to advance their skills and abilities; (4) to seek government assistance in the form of appropriate aid and schemes; and (5) to further expand their market (MBDA, 2019)

They visited Assam, Tripura, Kolkata, and other states that have had success with the commercial production of cane and bamboo with the assistance of the District Commerce and Industries Centre. There, they learned new skills for producing novel goods including table lamps, showpieces, table mats, and other cane and bamboo decor. They then enrolled with the Mawkyrwat Enterprise Facilitation Centres which assisted in further promoting their goods by setting up their participation in numerous events and exhibitions held throughout the state.

According to Meghalaya Basin Development Authority, Bah Twolding was able to expand his network and boost society sales with each occasion. In Meghalaya's Police Bazaar, a bustling commercial district, he was able to connect the ladies with handicraft stores and negotiate transactions with traders from Kolkata. The society was able to get additional bulk deals as a result, greatly enhancing its income. But if current restrictions are addressed, this income might increase. The lack of a dry shed to store their handicrafts is one of the main obstacles preventing them from growing output.

So, the members were already putting together a plan to construct a shared work shed so they can all collaborate in one location. The shed will allow for quality control and monitoring of mass-produced goods.

Bah Twolding and the artisans of the Society have worked incredibly hard, which has not only improved their living conditions but also steadily turned the tide for this long-standing custom that was on the verge of vanishing from their community. Even the males who had previously given up on this pastime are now starting to go back to their roots, which shows how well these amazing people have done their work (MBDA, 2019).

Challenges

The handicraft industry contributes significantly to the creation of jobs and exports, but it has been adversely affected by its inherent lack of organization as well as other factors like a weak institutional framework, lack of education, lack of funding, lack of exposure to new technologies, and lack of market intelligence.

Conclusion

Handicrafts make up a large percentage of the decentralized or unorganized sector of our economy. It is based mostly in rural areas and has spread to impoverished and hostile regions. In rural areas, it has grown into a thriving economic activity because of increasing market demand over the years. The potential for handicrafts is immense since they hold the key to sustaining both the millions of artists who already exist across the entire country and the numerous entrants to the crafts sector. Through initiatives like those taken up in Tynnai village, the locals are serving as an example for other communities to come together and stand united to revive old traditions and empower new generations. Similar initiatives could be found in Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, etc. These Initiatives are eco-friendly, sustainable and provides scope for more livelihood opportunities.

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'Saagu Baagu' Project – Application of Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture (Telangana)

Background

Since the invention of settled agriculture, human beings are making constant changes in their practices as per the need of the time. The industrial revolution was a revolutionary step in human history. It touched almost all aspects of life and had a significant impact on agriculture too. To provide the raw material for the factory, there was a shift from food crops to cash crops, and from the use of traditional agriculture equipment to the use of machines. Then, with the population explosion, there was a need to bring huge changes in agricultural practices. Here again, there was an introduction of a new and high-yielding variety of seeds, and extensive use of new technologies, fertilizers, and pesticides, to enhance agricultural productivity and meet the consumers' demand.

In the vast rural areas of India, agriculture and allied activities are the main source of employment. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also significantly impacted by it. According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, 65 percent (2021 data) of the country's population lives in rural areas and 47 per-cent of the population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood (PIB 2023). In terms of food security, rural employment, and environmentally friendly technologies like soil conservation, sustainable natural resource management, and biodiversity protection, sustainable agriculture is crucial for the overall development of rural areas.

In this information age, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize agriculture by boosting output, optimizing resource use, and reducing the effects of climate change on agricultural yields. In this case study, we are going to explore the collaborative efforts of the Government of Telangana and the World Economic Forum (WEF) in this direction and see how Indian farmers are using modern technology to boost productivity sustainably.

About the 'Saagu Baagu' Initiative

Telangana State is prioritizing the agricultural sector through digital transformation to increase the farmers' revenue. It acknowledges that cutting-edge technology like artificial intelligence, blockchain, remote sensing, drones, and others can significantly contribute to the sector's growth. Emerging technologies would benefit several stakeholders including farmers, governance organizations, market participants, start-ups, and the agricultural ecosystem.

Telangana became the first Indian state to adopt a framework for scaling up innovative technologies and enhancing productivity, efficiency, and sustainability in the agriculture sector when the piloting of the 'Saagu Baagu' project was introduced through the WEF's Artificial Intelligence for Agriculture Innovation (AI4AI) in collaboration with the Government of Telangana. AgNext, Krishitantra, and Kalgudi are three agricultural technology companies working with the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India, the Government of Telangana, and Digital Green to lead the pilot program. According to the report of the WEF, by January 2023, more than 7,000 farmers had enrolled in the pilot project, which primarily catered to chili growers. These farmers are receiving assistance in the form of several AI technologies, including tillage estimation, window prediction, crop health monitoring, sowing quality testing, soil testing, as well as access to new customers and suppliers in various regions (WEF, 2023).

The Saagu-Baagu project is considered India's first-ever public-private agritech venture, and it aims to make innovation in agriculture and horticulture by integrating cutting-edge, modern technologies into agriculture. The goal is to improve farmers' incomes, protect the environment as well as raise trust and transparency in the government.

Shri. S Niranjan Reddy, agriculture minister said, "A new revolution in agriculture has already started with the adoption of emerging technologies in the sector. With this project, Telangana will be at the forefront and lead the revolution in our nation to improve farmers' lives" (Telangana Today, 2021).

The AI for Agriculture framework for public-private partnerships was developed by the C4IR India in 2021 after consultations with the national government of India and the state government of Telangana, with assistance from the Forum's Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Platform. C4IR India sought input from a variety of parties in this project, including academics, emerging as well as established agricultural firms, trade associations, and civil society (WEF, 2023).

The Saagu-Baagu pilot is based on the AI4AI framework. In the initial stage, Telangana's chili producers and related value chains were the focus. Over 36% of the world's chilies are produced in India, and Telangana accounts for nearly 23.5% of the nation's total production. To expand the digital agriculture ecosystem even further, more tools such as "sandbox" which will permit secure testing and assessment of AI technologies in a controlled setting, are being developed (WEF, 2023).

Telangana State Technology Services Limited (TSTSL) mentioned in its tender notice that Saagu Baagu envisioned that the benefits would reach 100,000 farmers, 1,000 villages, and 100 Farmer Collectives to alter the state of agriculture through the deployment of emerging technologies in a scalable, inclusive, and sustainable manner (TSTSL, 2021).

TS to unleash farm innovation

Releases EoI for selection of Project Implementation Partners for 'Saagu-Baagu'

Challenges

India is struggling to feed a growing population while managing threats including pandemics, climate change, and supply chain disruptions. The agriculture industry must improve its adaptability and efficiency to meet these challenges. According to World Economic Forum, more than 1,000 Agri-tech start-ups are already operating in India, providing a variety of tech-based services such as market connect platforms, micro-insurance, access to agricultural inputs, quality testing, digital finance, etc. Although they have the potential to dramatically improve productivity and sustainability, their adoption is constrained by a lack of data access, a fragmented technology infrastructure, high operating costs, and a lack of technical experience (WEF, 2023). However, a challenge could be to disseminate IT skills to farmers and to capture the traditional knowledge on interactive IT systems.

Conclusion

A green revolution, a white revolution, a yellow revolution, and a blue revolution have all occurred in India. Now it's time to witness the Information Technology (IT) revolution in Indian agriculture. Application of IT to agriculture can be a significant productivity enhancer as bought out by the case. It could have a multiplier effect on the rest of the economy. Integrating the agriculture's supply chain and distribution chain could augment farmers income substantially. In a digitally integrated environment this could certainly be possible. The Saagu Baagu initiative has facilitated collaboration and produced a unified strategy to introduce the Fourth Industrial Revolution to Indian farmers by bringing together a variety of stakeholders.

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Millet Cafe (Kerala)

Background

In India, Millet was a common ingredient across all states long before rice and wheat came to our plates. Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Jhangora, Barri, Kangana, Kodra, etc. are among the millets that are frequently produced in India. From Jolada rotti (Sorghum bread) in Karnataka, Mandia (Finger millet) roti in Odisha, to zan (Finger millet porridge) in Arunachal Pradesh, millets have remained a staple of the Indian diet, likely since the Indus Valley Civilization in 3000 BC where the earliest traces of these were discovered (Shah, 2023).

According to Indian Millets Research Institute, ragi i.e., finger millet has good calcium content. Finger millet contains 364 milligrams of calcium per 100 grams. The amount of iron in ragi is also higher than that of wheat and rice. Therefore, finger millet has the potential to naturally treat calcium deficiency. India is on the path to becoming a food-surplus country. So, to shift the focus from food security to nutritional security, the revival of the millet is very important.

With the rapid changes in lifestyle in this fast-paced world, people are relying more on fast foods consequently, facing many health issues in the absence of foods with high nutrients. On the other hand, millet is also known as a superfood because they contain a relatively high amount of nutrients. So, for rejuvenating this superfood in our daily diets, the government is taking efforts. One such initiative is taken by the Chhattisgarh government to promote the use of millet as well as empower women economically.

About the initiative

Rohini Patnaik and Deepa Singh launched the Millets Cafe in the Chhattisgarh region of Raigarh. According to Deepa Singh, the concept for Millet Cafe emerged because several women from the Women and Child Development department were sent for training in Odisha to learn how to make ragi-based savory dishes. Later, this café materialized with the assistance of the administration. A cooperative society oversees the operation of the cafe (Bali, 2023).

In this one-of-a-kind cafe, millets are used to prepare delectable dishes that combine flavor and nutrition. The millet cafe has also achieved the status of the first café in the state that is being operated by women. The district administration worked with the Vikas Sangh Women's Group to launch the Raigarh café (The Pioneer, 2023).

The cafe quickly became popular in the community after Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi mentioned it in 'Mann ki Baat', a monthly program on All India Radio. So, with the national recognition of the State government's initiative on millet, it becomes a matter of pride for Chhattisgarh. To experience the local cuisine, the Prime Minister also advised the audience to go to the cafe anytime they had the chance to travel to Raigarh. "Pasta, cheela, idli, Manchurian, momos, pizza, noodle, dosa made from ragi and biryani made from Kodo can be tasted in this cafe," he said (The Pioneer, 2023).

Deepa Singh stated, "We had never thought that our effort will reach this high and after our mention, more people have started pouring into our café" (Bali, 2023). Visitors can choose from a wide range of delicacies, including ragi pakoda, ragi papad, ragi roti, millet momos, millet cheela and dosa, millet Manchurian, millet pizza, and Kodo biryani. "Our millet cheela, veg lollipop, and Kodo biryani are top-selling items," added Deepa Singh (Bali, 2023).

The Raigarh district administration started the campaign in May 2022 to raise awareness about how often overlooked millets provide significant health advantages in addition to assisting the state government's "Millet Mission" initiative. As a result of the Indian government's advocacy, the United Nations has designated 2023 as the International Year of Millets (Kaiser, 2023).

Impact

For the first time, Chhattisgarh-based millet cafes have been started for women's groups to promote women's self-employment and entrepreneurship. Technical assistance is being provided by the Department of Women and Child Development and the Transforming Rural India Foundation.

According to The Pioneer report, the area planted with millets in Chhattisgarh has risen by an additional 1.5 times because of this endeavour, and production has increased dramatically as well (The Pioneer, 2023).

Similar Initiatives

To promote millet entrepreneurship and millet awareness campaigns through the Women Self Help Groups (SHG) in 14 districts of Odisha, Mission Shakti (Directorate of Women SHGs, WCD Department, Odisha) and Odisha Millets Mission signed a memorandum of understanding. 70 lakh women are involved in Mission Shakti's Women SHGs in Odisha (Balam, 2020).

Challenges

India is working to increase the consumption of millet, but obstacles include a lack of incentives for farmers to convert from producing rice and wheat as well as a lack of awareness among consumers to drastically alter their diets (Shah, 2023).

Conclusion

The initiative highlights the ways and means in which the engagement of local community and volunteers for the millets in changing dynamics of food habit. It should come in bigger cities and become part of healthy food mission across country. The genuine effort is required to meet the demand at a reasonable price and also the volume of café should spread.

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Introduction

More than 15 million farmers live in Maharashtra which constitutes more than 50% of the arable land in the State (WEF, 2021). However, climate change has reduced agricultural productivity in many drought-prone areas of the state. A $600 million Maharashtra Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture (PoCRA) financed by the World Bank was initiated to lessen the negative impacts of climate change in these drought-prone districts (WEF, 2021). The project's main goals are to help small and marginal farmers boost their income sustainably, expand agri-business prospects, and encourage farmers to adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices.

In this case study, we will learn about the 'Open Sky schools' in Maharashtra which provide small and marginal farmers with a learning environment. In addition to learning about the most recent developments in science, hydrology, and crop productivity, they also study to implement the best agricultural practices to more effectively adapt to climate changes.

About the initiative

As part of the initiative, the landowners in Marathwada's drought-prone regions have prepared their farms to demonstrate sustainable farming practices. Here, farmers are taught how to choose crops wisely, prepare the land properly, employ low-cost organic agricultural methods, and conserve water.

Additionally, a smartphone App developed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai (IIT-B) provides data on the availability of water (Samantaray, 2021).

The App uses real-time weather forecasting data to give farmers information on the condition of the village's surface and groundwater as well as the actual demand and supply of water during the cropping season.

The farmers create micro-plans for their crops with this information in hand. Having received instructions in moisture conservation and water harvesting techniques learned from the open-sky classrooms, they can balance the demand and supply at the grassroots. The Village Climate Resilient Management Committee, which has been established under the project to approve and oversee plans developed by beneficiary households, analyses these micro-plans (Samantaray 2021). The micro-plans formulated by the farmers go through several stages of implementation, and project funds are sent directly to the bank accounts of the recipients. These timely and well-integrated finance distribution procedures have enabled small farmers to benefit from the initiative in the short and long run.

The story of Shri. Rajabhau Yadav and his wife Smt. Vimal Yadav

Shri. Rajabhau Yadav and his wife Smt. Vimal Yadav in the Osmanabad District, known to be drought-prone, are cultivating horticulture crops. They created a micro-plan for a short-term guava plantation on their half-acre of land based on the instruction they received from the open sky school. They were given a financial contribution of Rs. 73,000 as part of the project. With the of limate-smart techniques, they were able to get Rs. 65,000 from the first crop (WEF, 2021).

Conclusion

Through an Integrated Computer Technology platform and mobile network, the 'Open Sky Schools' project has developed a feedback mechanism for research and extension agencies to respond to the climate risk challenges presented by farmers. Those farmers who were engaged in farming practices with various crops, the application of technology to create climate-smart agronomic practices has reduced input costs by around 20% and increased farm earnings by about 30% (WEF, 2021).

This shows that small and marginal farmers in Maharashtra's drought-affected districts could gather benefits from the bottom-up knowledge upgrading method, which could also increase the demand for goods and services.

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Haritha Haram
(Telangana)

Background

Telangana is rich in plant and animal diversity with over 2,939 plant species, 365 bird species, 103 mammal species, 28 reptile species, 21 amphibian species, and many invertebrate species (Deccan Herald, 2023).

According to the flagship green campaign, Telangana Ku Haritha Haram, the State Government of Telangana has set a target of planting 230 million seedlings statewide between 2015-16 and 2022-23. Hyderabad was recognized as the 'Tree City of the World' by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Arbor Day Foundation for two consecutive years in 2020 and 2021 (Kumar, 2022)

NITI Aayog Report on Sustainable Development has placed Telangana in the first position, based on the improvement of greenery. The 'World Green City Award-2022' was awarded to Hyderabad by the International Association of Horticulture Producers in South Korea..

About the Program

Telangana Ku Haritha Haram is the Govt. of Telangana's flagship program launched in the year 2015. This program aims at increasing forest cover in the state from the current 24% to 33% of the state's total geographical area. The main goal of the Haritha Haram program is to make Telangana a green city covering at least one-third of the state's geographical area.

Availability and supply of quality seedlings are essential to the success of reforestation campaigns. There are around 15,000 nurseries statewide, with at least one per Gram Panchayat, apart from 500 nurseries operated by the Forest Department. They are managed by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development. Targeted efforts have been made to water the plants regularly.

All seedlings are prepared for planting and distribution two months in advance. In addition to the tree planting campaign, the life of the young trees is equally important. The physical inspection of some planted tree saplings is conducted by the Officials of the Forest and Panchayat Raj and Rural Development departments in their respective limits and the same are geo-tagged. According to the State Panchayati Raj Act, each village must have a working incubator and the village must have a 'green action plan'.

Impact

The State Forest Department planted 20.25 crore saplings under the Haritha Haram program, whereas the target was 19.54 crore. According to the India State of Forest Report (IFSR) 2021, there is an increase of 632 sq. km between ISFR 2019 and 2021 in Telangana, which is the second-highest increase in forest cover in the country (Kumar, 2022). Forest cover in Telangana increased by 6.85 percent during the 2015 to 2021 period, according to the Telangana Socio-Economic Outlook 2023 (Deccan Herald, 2023).

Among the megacities, during the 10 years from 2011 to 2021, Hyderabad had the highest level of forest cover. Andhra Pradesh did even better and recorded an increase of 647 sq. km, ranking first among all states. Having hit the target, the department is now aiming to plant 20.02 crore saplings next year. To this end, district goals were shared with the district authorities for planning and effective implementation of tree-planting campaigns. Regular checks help ensure the authenticity of afforestation data as well as limit illegal tree cutting. After a physical check, the service staff uploads the data online. All these efforts have achieved about 85% survival rate of young plants (Kumar, 2022).

The survival rate of seedlings in Gram Panchayats is high, around 80% to 90%. Efforts to protect forests have resulted in a dramatic increase in wildlife populations. While tigers are 26 in number, leopards affect 341. Many birds on the brink of extinction have returned to their habitats.

Challenges

Additionally, some states are reducing their existing vegetation cover without trying to lose the gap due to construction issues. These reforestations may not help with forest cover and do not help alleviate the climate change crisis. These are monoculture plantations that impact local ecosystems and biodiversity.

There have been cases where trees have been uprooted from the wild and replaced with seedlings distributed through the Haritha Haram program.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the program can be challenging due to the large scale of the initiative. Finding suitable land for afforestation can be a major challenge. In many cases, acquiring land and securing the necessary permissions can be time-consuming and complex. However, in some areas, water scarcity poses a significant challenge, especially during the initial stages of afforestation.

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Direct Benefit Transfer for Seed Transaction
(Odisha)

Background

The agriculture sector has significantly less potential to advance quickly in conjunction with available technology in the period of continuous technological evolution by Manufacturing, Services, and numerous other sectors due to a variety of factors. DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) was adopted in various sectors, including agriculture, under these conditions. This programme was launched in 2013 and has received positive feedback from all stakeholders, including farmers. In this case study, we shall try to explain how different stakeholders fit into the full value chain, starting with the transfer of subsidies from the central government's treasuries to the farmer's account.

About the Direct Benefit Transfer

The Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme was introduced by the Government of India (GOI) on January 1, 2013, to modernize the government delivery system by changing the current welfare programme procedures for precise beneficiary targeting and introducing transparency in the flow of information and financial support. IT tools and current technologies were used to do this. DBT is being used to implement 310 programmes from 54 Ministries and Departments as of January 2022 (PIB, 2022). These include a variety of subsidies that affect the population, such as the LPG subsidy, pensions, LIC, PDS, scholarships, grants, stipends, etc. (Shrimali & Hiremath, 2018). Because they give them access to easy loans during the agriculture sector's busiest seasons, such as Kharif, Rabi, and Zaid, subsidies make life for farmers simple.

The method for allocating subsidies has changed throughout time, and each new system that has been developed comes with costs (transaction costs/operational costs) that place a significant financial burden on the government. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) was therefore introduced to simplify the delivery of subsidies.

Scenario Before and After the DBT

The initial price at which the seeds were sold to farmers was determined by subtracting the subsidy from the total cost price. The authorised seed dealers received the sale rate from the Government of India and other state governments, and upon submitting the necessary paperwork at the end of the season, they were then entitled to the subsidy (Shrimali and Hiremath, 2018).

The DBT System, which was implemented in the seed industry, was designed to address the previously mentioned shortcomings of the previous system. The primary reasons for the adoption of DBT in the seed transfer as per Shrimali and Hiremath (2018) are listed as follows:

- To electronically transfer input subsidy to the bonafide farmer's account.
- To eliminate bogus dealer payments through wrongful inclusion and wrongful exclusion of beneficiaries.
- To make available the real-time price as well as stock information to seed dealers.
- To provide quick and convenient methods for grievance redressal.
- To prevent any misuse of subsidy by putting in place a robust MIS.
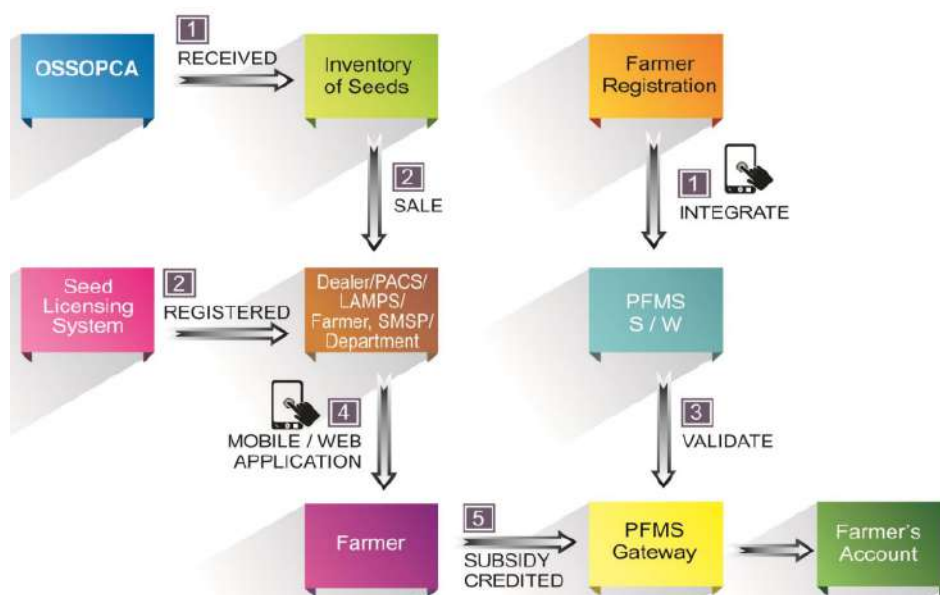
Generally, registered dealers and societies either conduct seed transactions through mobile or web-based apps. Alternatively, they do offline transactions through the specifically developed mobile App, the Seed DBT App. Any authorized merchant in a farmer's territory may sell them certified seeds. The dealer keeps a sales register with the farmer's signature and records information about farmers and seeds acquired in the sales register. The dealer sells the seeds to farmers on a "first-come, first-serve" basis at an all-in-cost price (Full price). The specifics of the seed purchase are fed into the mobile app or online application, which uploads the information to the main server and determines the farmer's allowable subsidy. Within seven days, the Ministry of Finance's PFMS (Public Financial Management System) transfers the permissible computed subsidy directly to the farmers' accounts. The dealers might choose to record seed transactions using a mobile or online application if they have current seed licences (Shrimali and Hiremath, 2018).

DBT in seed transactions in Odisha

Beginning in Kharif 2016, DBT was made available in the state of Odisha. The results of using DBT up till 2017 calculated by Shrimali and Hiremath (2018) are as follows:

- 18.00 lakh farmers (HOF) and 59.30 lakh family members have registered thus far via web and mobile interfaces.
- Information about bank accounts, family members, photo IDs, and Aadhar numbers (optional) is gathered throughout the registration procedure.
- Sharecroppers are not treated unfairly while registering.
- About 628 AAOs and 2719 Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) / Large Area Multi-purpose Societies (LAMPS) participated in the registration of farmers.
- Farmers registered with the FS & CW Department for paddy purchase have also been added to the list of registered farmers.
- The AAOs and PACS/LAMPS are still accepting registration on the seed portal at http://odishaseedsportal.nic.in and http://agrisnetodisha.ori.nic.in

The result was not entirely positive. Against a target of 30,000 quintals, farmers only bought 2000 quintals of certified groundnut seeds from OSSC for the 2017 Rabi season. Before DBT, the Corporation was selling more than 100,000 quintals of groundnut seeds. Moong and biri seed off-take were poor, according to OSSC. Major setback for the corporation, which suffered a loss of roughly Rs 30 Cr. OSSC was saved by the State Government, which gave them a subvention of Rs. 7.5 Cr (Shrimali and Hiremath, 2018). .

Integrating seed-related processes in Odisha

Six seed-related verticals are being planned in Odisha: Seed Certification, Seed Licencing, Seed Inventory, Farmers' Registration, Dealer-to-farmer transaction, Mobile/Web module, and Public Financial Management System (PFMS) Integrated Subsidy Disbursement System. These verticals will be integrated into a comprehensive strategy to handle all seed-related transactions with the farmers (GoI, n.d.).

Only those lots with assigned tag certificates by the certification agency are merged in real-time with Seed Inventory System as the first level of system integration. As part of the second level of integration between the Seed Inventory and Seed Licencing systems, the supplier only provides the certified seed lots to seed dealers who have registered with the system for seed licencing. The Seed Inventory System offers lot number traceability from the source to the dealer level (GoI, n.d.).

As the technical partner, National Informatics Centre (NIC) developed a methodology based on the most advanced artificial intelligence to fuzzy match the names, simplifying the laborious job of a human match. Nearly 18 lakh farmers were registered as a result of this online integration.

Farmers above 3.5 lakhs received subsidies (GoI, n.d.). Sustainability and scaling up of this initiative may have challenges such as non-availability of smart mobile sets, low internet connectivity in remote areas, and the issue of quality seeds to the farmers.

Conclusion

Subsidy pay-out through DBT mode is now a fully automated, integrated, and hassle-free option. A farmer can now receive a subsidy in just three days, while a dealer can now receive his commission right away. Each seed bag can be traced back to the seed producer who generated it as well as the dealer who sold it, the supplier who provided it, the godown where it was held, the lab where it was tested, and the dealer who delivered it at the farmer's end. Thus a scientific system of Seed Management could be realised as a fall-out of the DBT in Seed transactions in Odisha.

Contact

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Revival of traditional arts & crafts during the COVID-19 pandemic (Assam)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on various sectors of the economy worldwide, and the traditional arts and crafts industry in India is no exception. The overall economic downturn can be observed in the graph below.

With widespread lockdowns, restrictions on social gatherings, and economic downturns, artisans, as well as craftsmen, faced immense challenges in sustaining their livelihoods. However, several state governments in India recognized the significance of preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of traditional arts and crafts and implemented various initiatives to support and revitalize this sector. In this case study, we will explore some of these remarkable initiatives undertaken by different state governments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the Initiative

To revive traditional art and craft that had been severely damaged by the disastrous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, many states actively took steps to preserve the work of traditional artisans. In this case study, the Artisan Entrepreneurship Development Programme of the Assam Government has been analyzed.

The Assam government launched the Artisan Entrepreneurship Development Programme (AEDP) to empower artisans and craftsmen with entrepreneurial skills. The program is aimed to enhance the income generation capacity of artisans and preserve traditional crafts such as weaving, pottery, and bamboo craft.
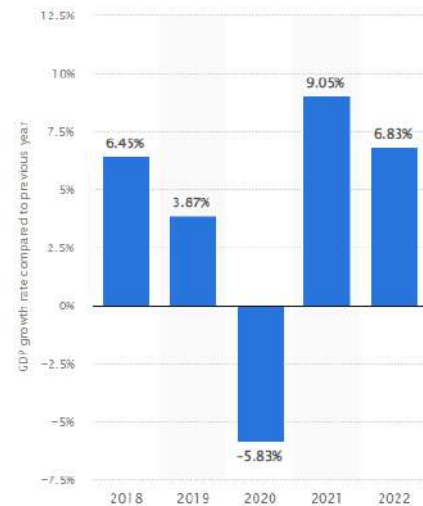
The Programme provides training in design innovation, product diversification, and marketing strategies, enabling artisans to adapt to changing market trends. It also extends financial support through low-interest loans and grants, allowing artisans to upgrade their infrastructure and procure raw materials.

The Asom Handloom Production Centre is run by 10 active Self-Help Group members of Bishnupriya, Tarali, Nabajyoti, Monikanchan, Moromi, and Brishti SHGs (Deka, 2022). The center, which started with a modest loan of Rs. 1,00,000 in 2019, in a work area of 480 sq. ft. The Centre produces six different types of weaves at present and earns an average monthly profit of Rs. 40,000 (Deka, 2022). The table below shows the items and the cost of each item produced at the handloom center.

Table 1: Items and cost of each item

Sl. No	Item	Cost Range (INR)
1	Gamosa	180-2000/-
2	Tongali	300-400/-
3	Handkerchief	40-50/-
4	Eri Shawl	2000-4000/-
5	Noon Sador	1000-2000/-
6	Sador Mekhala (Jur)	1000-3000/-

Similar initiatives

The Bihar government established artisan clusters to provide a platform for artisans to collaborate, learn from each other, and collectively address challenges. These clusters acted as hubs for skill development, shared infrastructure, and access to market linkages. By fostering a sense of community and encouraging knowledge exchange, the government aimed to enhance the competitiveness and market appeal of traditional arts and crafts.

Rajasthan, known for its vibrant arts and crafts, launched several measures to support its artisans during the pandemic. The Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIDCO) provided financial aid and interest-free loans to artisans through its Artisan Welfare Fund.

Tamil Nadu, renowned for its intricate textiles and handlooms, took significant steps to support its weavers and craftsmen. The state government launched the 'Craftsman in Every Village' initiative, which aimed to identify and train artisans in remote villages. This initiative not only provided employment opportunities to skilled artisans but also ensured the preservation of traditional craftsmanship.

Uttar Pradesh, famous for its intricate embroidery, woodwork, and pottery, implemented various initiatives to support artisans during the pandemic. The government launched the 'Hunar Haat' initiative, which provided a platform for artisans to showcase their crafts and directly connect with buyers. This initiative not only helped artisans earn a livelihood but also contributed to the promotion of traditional arts and crafts on a larger scale (PIB, 2021).

West Bengal, known for its intricate terracotta work and handloom sarees, introduced several measures to support artisans during the pandemic. The state government provided financial aid to weavers and craftsmen through the 'Banglar Haat' initiative. Additionally, the government promoted e-commerce platforms to help artisans reach a wider audience and sustain their businesses during challenging times (Millennium Post, 2021).

Impact

The initiatives undertaken by Assam and various other state governments to promote traditional arts and handicrafts during the COVID-19 pandemic have proven to be crucial for the survival and growth of artisans and their crafts. These initiatives have not only provided economic support but also fostered innovation, skill development, and market access for artisans. By embracing technology and leveraging online platforms, states have successfully connected artisans with a wider audience, both domestically and internationally. However, being a state-driven initiative, such initiatives can be sustained only if the project works in association with the private sector for value addition and marketing.

Conclusion

The success of these initiatives offers valuable lessons for other states in India and beyond. First and foremost, recognizing the cultural and economic significance of traditional arts and handicrafts is essential. By providing financial aid, skill development programs, and marketing assistance, states can empower artisans and ensure the preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, embracing digital platforms and e-commerce can open up new avenues for artisans to reach customers, transcending geographical barriers. By adopting similar strategies, other states in India can harness the potential of their unique traditional arts and crafts, generating employment opportunities and contributing to the overall growth of the economy. The Union Government, State Governments, and Local Governments must work in collaboration to develop a comprehensive framework that supports and promotes traditional arts and handicrafts.

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Note

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Have Pure Naturally Yours
(Uttarakhand)

Background

Smt. Rekha Devi was unaware that the red rice cultivated in the fertile fields of the Salyu river valley in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand had the potential to be sold for over Rs. 100 per k.g. She soon realized that the rice had transformed into a highly sought-after 'superfood' which is cultivated, processed, and packaged by the women farmers of the region's 850 Van Panchayats (Forest Panchayats) uniquely. It is known that demand for red rice from the Bageshwar and other parts of Uttarakhand has been rising for several products. This was made possible by the 'Have Pure Naturally Yours' initiative implemented by the state forest department under the Uttarakhand Forest Resource Management Project (Upadhyay, 2020).

About the scheme

Have Pure Naturally Yours, the initiative made by Uttarakhand Forest Resource Management Project, was launched in 2018. This is a forest-related livelihood project supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) of the Government of Japan. The Project is implemented in 850 Van Panchayats spread across eight hill districts of Uttarakhand. The Project is run by a Project Management Unit (PMU), which is under the administrative control of the state forest department, Government of Uttarakhand
.
The project focuses on enhancing the livelihood sources and income generation of marginalized farmers, particularly those dwelling in forest-fringe areas. It is expected that the economic empowerment of those communities living in the forest-fringe areas will bring down their dependence on forests, leading to sustainability in the management of forest resources

All products sold by Have Pure Naturally Yours are grown naturally using traditional farming methods in the Himalayan landscape, crisscrossed by lush, snow-fed rivers. The produce grown by SHG members in the project villages absorbs the purity of these pristine waters. These products are complete with valuable minerals and nutrients in their original (Natural) form as they satisfy the taste buds. They provide technical assistance and coordination related to training, production, post-harvest assistance, processing, and marketing.

Impact of the scheme

The project provides comprehensive and integrated support to 1,500 Self Help Groups (SHGs) reaching up to about 15,000 women. These 1,500 SHGs are aggregated into 19 cluster-level federations with a state-level federation at the apex, registered under Uttarakhand Self-reliant Cooperative Act, 2003.

The support for these community-based institutions is usually received in the domains of institutional building including collection, value addition, and marketing of their farm produce. Smt. Neethu Lakshmi M, Deputy Project Director said that many of these products are of high dietary value with countless benefits (Upadhyay, 2020).

JICA helps in developing irrigation facilities, value addition, and marketing their products. The project is providing all-encompassing and integral support to the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) reaching up to about 15,000 women (Upadhyay, 2020)

Female farmers often receive an additional 5-10% premium above the government's minimum subsidized price for crops, grains, or sorghum. These products are sold both online and offline including local markets such as Dilli Haats. Products such as Saryu red rice, Munsiyari Rajma, yellow chili powder, bhang, jeera jakhya, Mandwa flour, Jhangura rice, hand-churned ghee, walnuts, Kala Bhatt or Black Soyabean, multi-flora honey are high in demand (Upadhyay, 2020).

This initiative has helped in reducing the pressure on forests by making people depend upon agriculture and allied activities such as dairy, apiculture, animal husbandry, and poultry. This has resulted in improving the livelihood of the people. Also, the refill store has been opened in Uttarakhand and Delhi. These Re-Fill stores aim at generating zero waste and conservation of the environment through sustainable practices.

Challenges

Although this project has several benefits and improved the livelihood of people living in hilly areas. But there are certain challenges faced by such projects. The products require careful monitoring of plants, and identifying pests & diseases early, as the products are highly susceptible to them. Maintaining nutrient-rich soil can be challenging, especially in the long term. Natural weather patterns, including temperature fluctuations, rainfall, and extreme weather events, can affect plant growth and productivity. This may further reduce the farm produce and thus reduce income.

Conclusion

The Have Pure Naturally Yours products offer a range of organic and naturally grown products that cater to the increasing demand for healthy and sustainable options. With a commitment to produce and promote only natural and environmentally friendly methods, it was ensured that their products are free from synthetic chemicals, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms. In addition, its focus on promoting soil health, biodiversity, and fair-trade practices not only benefitted the consumers but also contribute to the ecosystem.

Have Pure Naturally Yours products provide individuals a chance to enjoy the goodness of nature while contributing to a more sustainable and ethical way of living. Such schemes need to be implemented in all states of India which will help in improving the income of people by producing products resourced from organic natural farms.

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Commendable Governance Initiatives in the Service Sector

This chapter showcases the commendable governance initiatives in the Service Sector such as Education, Health, Social Security, Marginalised Sections, Waste Management, etc. drawn from different parts of the country. In the documentation of each study, a brief background, features, impact, challenges and a brief conclusion, followed by references. Wherever possible, contact details like name, mobile and E-mail ID are also provided. This chapter captures about 35 case studies from across the country.

11

Mobile Office of the MLA (Punjab)

Background

In Punjab, for every one lakh population, there are 0.42 MLAs. The data indicates that elected representatives are under pressure to represent more citizens from their constituency. It is more challenging for the residents to contact their legislators due to the large size of the Assembly constituency. Many benefits do not reach the intended recipients because the District Collectors' Office functions as the administrative centre for managing government programmes and schemes for the beneficiaries. Many public-spirited officials have started programmes like 'File to Field' to enable identification, efficient service delivery, and grievance settlement. But this case study highlights one such initiative of an elected representative from Punjab and provides lessons on governance for the readers.

About the 'Mobile Office of the MLA'

Sri. Kulwant Singh Sidhu, MLA representing Atam Nagar constituency in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, has come up with a novel idea to address the concerns of the citizenry. To move about his constituency, he frequently employs a van that has been transformed into a 'Mobile office of the MLA'.

Shri Sidhu has developed a reputation among his supporters as a result of this notion, and people now call him 'Aap Ka Neta'. Government officials such as the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), the Station House Officer (SHO), the Station in-charge, the Patwari and others travel in the same vehicle. The team works together to quickly and amicably resolve minor issues and complaints raised by the citizens of the constituency represented by him.

Shri. Sidhu spends 5 to 6 hours each day traveling across his constituency in his van. As an Advocate, he is liked and respected by the people, especially for his efficiency and strategy to settle domestic and civil lawsuits, pending with the courts. During his short time of service as an MLA, he has settled several pending legal matters from his constituency. He has personally intervened in settling disputes related to marriages in the area. Many of his admirers are pleased with his proactive approach to settling the pending issues as he listens to their grievances at their doorsteps. Members of civil society, social activists, and advocacy groups have occasionally met their MLA in his mobile van to offer suggestions and recommendations on various pending issues that are both affordable and sustainable.

Talking about his initiative, Shri Sidhu said, "I had promised good governance to the people of my constituency and I am trying my level best to fulfill every promise. Aam Aadmi Party is trying to ensure a quality life for the people. We are working to improve the facilities of the citizens, to implement the law and order properly, to ensure that health facilities and children of all sections get higher education."

The mobile van has been run by the MLA using his own money. He has told his constituents that they can contact the dedicated mobile number (9781800002) to voice their complaints if they experience any difficulty during their visit to government offices on any count. After the registration of the complaint, the same will be addressed by the MLA at the earliest. It was known that on several occasions, the MLA personally took up the matter, listened to the complaint, and resolved the issue on the spot.

Impact

Key functionaries of Local Governments have started providing services with lightning speed from the start of this initiative. Police excesses, defective electricity bills issued by the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL), and pending representations with the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation turned out to be the major segment of the complaints by the constituents. The Zonal Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation frequently travels with Shri Sidhu. Many complaints are addressed by the MLA in consultation with the concerned officials, straight away. Those complaints that take longer, need the authorities to submit status reports at each stage to demonstrate that the redressal of the issue has been progressing well and will be addressed per the rules, in a time-bound manner.

Challenges

Though the initiative made by the MLA has achieved success by bringing solutions to the citizens for many of their pending issues, it appears to have several challenges.

Firstly, even the modest cost of a second-hand Mobile Van shall be about Rs. 5 lakhs, which is presently met from the personal savings of the MLA. When we factor in the additional operational costs for salary to the driver, fuel charges, and maintenance of the vehicle, it becomes a costly affair. Hence, this initiative may not be possible for those MLAs, especially those from middle-income or low-income families.

Secondly, this initiative required adequate coverage by the media. If things are not well managed, those who are aware of the facility only may benefit from it. The benefits to the community from the project could be enhanced to a great extent with extensive social media publicity through diverse forms of media - print, visual, and social.

Thirdly, the officials might not always accompany the MLA. After the initial hype and publicity, some of them may start avoiding to accompany citing official meetings and other excuses. When the MLA is not accompanied by officials, the effectiveness of the programme may come down as no early decision might come even with the mobile service facility.

Fourthly, the commitment, willingness, and political affiliation of the officials in supporting the MLA in the operationalization of the initiative is very crucial for the sustainability of the initiative.

Conclusion

While the empathy and the initiative made by the MLA are commendable, sustainability of such interventions is doubtful. After the initial success, it may lose its shine and steam in the long run. And such initiatives cannot be operated out of personal expenses by all the legislators. A more scientific way of collecting grievances with rigorous periodic follow up by the MLA could be more effective.

Contact Details

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Background

India is a nation of young people. Compared to the global average of 30.3 years, the country's median age is 27.6 years (World Economics, n.d.). The workforce in India has the potential to propel global prosperity in the future. While experienced workers will leave the country in search of greater economic possibilities in Europe, the Middle East, and America, a sizeable portion of the young workforce will stay back in the nation. In addition to fostering growth and changing India into a capital-intensive, skill-infused, and futuristic society, they will act as the foundation of our economy. To make this happen, the country must simultaneously produce both new jobs and work-ready workers. Nonetheless, there is a crisis in finding work.

According to the Period Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, the annual unemployment rate for 2021–2022 was 4.2% (PIB, 2022). The states like Telangana (7%), Kerala (10%), Delhi (8.6%), Assam (7.9%), Punjab (7.3%), and Uttarakhand (7.1%) are struggling with the unemployment problem (TOI, 2022). Though the situation is frightening, several states are making significant efforts to transform this catastrophe into an opportunity. Here, we shall concentrate on the commendable efforts undertaken by Telangana-based Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLAs and look for lessons in governance for a better India.

The Initiative

On April 26, 2022, the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) released a notification to fill 503 vacancies.1 This was in addition to the 80,000 job vacancies that Telangana Chief Minister Shri K. Chandrasekhar Rao had promised to fill (The Hindu, 2022). After the CM's announcement, a number of BRS MLAs have started tutoring centers for job seekers. The sponsors will offer registered students complimentary lunch in addition to books, library services, and stationery kits.

Several MLAs also offer free coaching to job candidates who are taking the Group II, III, and IV exams. For the Teacher Eligibility Test, District Selection Committee, Sub-Inspector of Police, and Police Constable Examinations, only a select few others offer to coach. In this regard, the work of MLAs from Nalgonda, Kancherla Bhupal Reddy, and Miryalaguda Nallamothu Bhaskar Rao is praiseworthy (Srinivas, 2022). The latter has invited students to enroll for availing coaching services by submitting photocopies of educational certificates, and Aadhar card to encourage only genuine applications. To do so, Bhaskar Rao has turned to his NBR Foundation.

According to the Deccan Chronicle, Adilabad MLA Jogu Ramanna has provided free tutoring for aspiring students who are interested in applying for one of the 10,321 open positions in the district (Srinivas, 2022). Armoor MLA Jeevan Reddy and Wardhannapeta MLA Aruri Ramesh quickly followed. The latter addressed the students, saying, "They [the pupils] can also visit my office on Hunter Road in Hanamkonda and enroll their names. They should submit two passport-size photos, a copy of their Aadhar card, and ration card" with their application (Telangana Today, 2022).

The long list of other MLAs includes Bollam Mallaiah Yadav, Padma Devendar Reddy, Janardhan Reddy, Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, Jaipal Reddy, and Sunke Ravi Shankar. This list also includes Minister Jagadeesh Reddy who started free coaching under Guntakandla Savitramma Memorial Trust.

Challenges

The BRS legislators' free coaching programme was an instant success throughout the State. The initiative, however, has number of challenges.

Firstly, the lawmakers in their respective capacities run these study centers. If they lose interest (or elections), the centers may not remain operational.

Secondly, the MLAs' promises of free lunches, library services, and stationery packages will add financial pressures meaning that the overall operating expenses are still very high.

Thirdly, the necessary infrastructure, teachers, and teaching resources are missing from these centers. The effectiveness of these centers could be seriously hampered by these shortcomings.

Finally, questions have been raised regarding the timing of the Chief Minister's announcement, as the State was to go to polls in 2023. Quoting a senior BRS leader,

the Times of India reported, "There is a feeling in TRS circles that unemployed youth are unhappy with the government and voted against the party in Dubbak, Huzarabad, and GHMC elections. These coaching centers will help bring them back into the party's fold" (Mahesh, 2022).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that free coaching for job seekers helps the less fortunate the most, despite challenges and criticisms. A similar project by the non-profit Abhyudaya for 250 Secondary school pupils in Bengaluru revealed that 60 kids scored more than 85% marks. Several of these students are from incredibly underprivileged backgrounds and come from families of vegetable merchants, weavers, auto-rickshaw drivers, and painters (TOI, 2019). There is no doubt that our society will succeed in its aspirations and the country will grow stronger if more such initiatives are carried out by the political fraternity and government officials with the active participation of civil society. This initiative by the BRS MLAs can be used to illustrate the strength and willingness of the political class to bring about changes in the domain of education. However, there shall be a public scheme for coaching. If no such scheme is available, then the Executive shall be persuaded to have it. If the existing scheme is not working properly, the problems needs to be highlighted by the legislators through their interventions in the house and outside the house.

Notes

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- This information was drawn from various online sources titled "KCR issues job notifications, TRS MLAs start coaching centers" and "Choppadandi MLA launches free coaching to job aspirants".

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Amma Unavagam
(Tamil Nadu)

Background

Amma Unavagam (Mother's Canteen) is a government-subsidized meal programme in Tamil Nadu. Late J. Jayalalithaa, former Chief Minister of the State of Tamil Nadu conceived, planned and operationalized the programme in 2013. At present, the programme is overseen by the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Tamil Nadu. It has sustained its functioning, despite the concerns that it would end amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This case study seeks to highlight the rationale and uniqueness of the programme as well as to showcase its success story.

About the Initiative

There were about 1.15 crore below-the-poverty-line (BPL) cardholders in the state of Tamil Nadu as of June 2022 (Anbuselvan, 2022). It is observed that the BPL population, especially in the urban and semi-urban areas, spent a significant portion of their income on food and nutrition. Amma Unavagam was initiated to give a balanced meal to the urban poor at a discounted rate to address this issue. The chain of canteens has expanded to over 400 restaurants, and these canteens are run by Self-Help Groups (SHG) consisting of 12-16 members. On average, each member of Amma Unavagam was able to receive a monthly salary of INR 7500 per month (Mahendran and Indrakant, 2021) which is a decent income for sustainable living in the urban and semi-urban areas. As part of the expansion plans and also to stay up with technology advancements, options for placing online orders also were made possible through food delivery services like Swiggy and Zomato.

These canteens, across the State, provide a standard menu. The canteens serve Idli and Pongal for breakfast; four varieties of Rice like Lemon Rice, Curd Rice, Sambar Rice and Curry Leaves Rice for lunch; and Chappathi for dinner.

The display board (written in the Tamil language) indicates the timings for the distribution of breakfast, lunch and dinner. It shows that breakfast is served from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.; lunch from 12 Noon to 3 p.m.; and dinner is served from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It also displays the quantity and cost of each item in the canteen. It shows that each Idli cost Rs. 1 and Pongal Rs. 5 for breakfast; for lunch, except the curd rice that costs Rs. 3, other varieties of rice cost Rs. 5; and chappathis (a set of 2) cost Rs. 5 for dinner.

On average, these canteens cook about 4.5 million Idlis and 1.2 million plates of Pongal for breakfast, 2.5 million plates of Sambar Rice, and 1.1 million plates of Curd Rice for lunch (Mahendran and Indrakant, 2021). The variety, quantity and spread of the food products served through these canteens demonstrate the increasing acceptability as well as popularity of the programme. These canteens serve commuters, local vendors, and visitors in addition to serving sumptuous meals to daily wage earners, casual labourers, and more importantly migrant workers.

It is very significant to mention that the cost of each food product served in these canteens has been kept quite very low (about one-tenth of a moderate hotel in Chennai) to make it affordable even to the rag pickers and beggars. It is also important to note that the cleanliness and hygienic conditions in which they are functioning and serving the food, make these canteens a place of attraction for all sections of society.

The concerned officials make regular visits to these canteens and carry out constant supervision. It is to ensure that the day-to-day requirements of the SHGs to run these canteens, cleanliness of the kitchen, washing area and dining place as well as the working conditions of the staff working in these canteens are maintained. It is not a piece of news any more in Chennai that the celebrities from cinema, media and other glamorous fields take time to have food at Amma Unavagam.

Replicability of the Programme

The unique initiative of Amma Unavagam and its smooth functioning for several years has attracted visitors from within the country and outside. Egypt sent an official delegation to study the functioning of the programme in a bid to replicate it in their country (PTI, 2014).

Drawing inspiration from this, several States made similar initiatives within the country. The state of Odisha launched the Ahaar centres across 30 districts of the State couple of years back to serve hot Dalma with rice at a very low cost. The programme has gathered pace and it has become immensely popular throughout the state.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh also launched 100 NTR Anna Canteens in 2018 to provide subsidized cooked meals to daily wage workers, and small-time employees of the State. The NTR canteens provide three meals a day which include Idli, Upma, and Pongal for breakfast. The canteens in Amravati became particularly popular when several government employees made extensive use of these canteens during the relocation of the State capital, (Hindustan Times, 2016).

In Telangana, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has been running 50 kiosks in the city that dispenses meals at the cost of Rs. 5. About this initiative,

former Mayor of Hyderabad Shri B. R. Rao said that "At present, they feed to 15,000 people daily and the subsidy per plate works out to Rs. 15."

The Government of Jharkhand launched a similar initiative known as Mukhyamantri Dal Bhat Yojana way back in the year 2011, about two years ahead of the launching of Amma Unavagam. However, the initiative ran into multiple troubles and the canteens were closed down due to the want of funds. However, drawing lessons from the Amma Unavagam, the scheme was revived in the State of Jharkhand in January 2016 (Hindustan Times, 2016).

The Government of Madhya Pradesh launched the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Rasoi scheme to provide meals at subsidized rates of Rs. 10 per plate (Tomar, 2020).

In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi Government led by Sri. Uddhav Thackeray launched the Shiv Bhojan Thali Yojana in 2020 aimed at providing nutritious food to the urban poor at affordable prices (TOI, 2020).

Challenges

While some critics have opposed the Amma Unavagam programme as a cheap and populist scheme, others have drawn attention to the growing losses resulting from its inefficiencies, which accumulated into several hundreds of crores. In the year 2021, the Greater Municipal Corporation of Chennai suffered a loss of Rs. 786 crores from the scheme since its inception in 2013 (DT Next, 2022).

Similar issues are faced by other states as well. The subsidised meal programme has received significant subsidies from the Telangana government.

In the canteens, breakfast is served at Rs. 5, and lunch is served in the price range from Rs. 6.50 to Rs. 7.50. It is noted that a subsidy of Rs. 40 is provided for every meal served through these canteens by the Government.

Despite a serious cash shortage, the Government of Jharkhand spends Rs. 25 crore annually for feeding over 22.5 lakh people. The scheme that was launched in 2011 had to be discontinued for a while, only to be reintroduced in 2016.

Serious concerns were expressed by the leadership about the continuity, feasibility and sustainability of the programme, with the change in political regime in the States. Concerning Anna Unavagam, there were worries that the scheme will be discontinued after the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by Sri. M. K. Stalin assumed power in the State of Tamil Nadu in 2021. Despite several hiccups, the state has managed to keep Amma canteens open and functional to a great extent. But at the same time, many other states were not able to continue the initiative for various reasons, be it political, administrative or financial. For instance, the Deendayal Antyodaya Rasoi scheme, introduced in the State of Madhya Pradesh by the BJP government in 2017, was discontinued by the successive Government led by Indian National Congress in May 2019. However, the programme was reinstated subsequently when the BJP assumed power in 2020. (Tomar, 2020).

Conclusion

When we look from the perspective of social development, the merits of a programme like Amma Unavagam far outweigh its financial drawbacks. The programme has been made more sustainable even though it appears to be heavily subsidized as was evident with the introduction of the 'take-home' provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is significant to note that differential pricing has been in practice now in rural and urban areas of the State.

Amma Unavagams are spread across all the districts of the State, but there is still a need to accommodate customer preferences by ensuring a wide variety and supply of food items. As the nation urbanizes, the prevalence of urban poor would further complicate the growing demands for food and nutrition security. In such situations, schemes like Amma Unavagam would go a long way to guide our policies on achieving sustainable development goals like 'Zero Hunger'.

However, Innovative ways may be found to bridge the viability gap in such initiatives. It could be done by bringing a differential pricing for those above BPL. Incorporation of corporate/individual donations also could ease some constraints. In this age of religious consciousness, more people could be motivated to offer donation though ease on an IT platform. Free food could also be linked to some community service activities like planting/watering trees, cleaning streets/beaches etc. by the beneficiaries at least once a week.

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Veenapani Pathshala
(Jharkhand)

Background

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," Nelson Mandela said. In a world that is undergoing fast change, education is crucial and cannot be undervalued. The literacy rate in India was 74.04% as per the 2011 Census. While the literacy rate for men was higher (82.14%), it was still very low for women (65.46%). The variation in educational standards among regions is one factor in the low literacy rates (Census, 2011).

The states with the worst literacy rates are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. According to the 75th NSO Survey from 2017, the literacy rates in the three states are, respectively, 73.0%, 70.9%, and 74.3% (NSS, 2018). It is therefore impossible to overstate the importance of formalizing primary and secondary education in these states. In this context, an MLA from Jharkhand has decided to move quickly to address the issue of formal education in his constituency. The work of Shri Sarayu Roy, who has been offering free coaching opportunities for youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds in his Constituency has been documented in this case study.

About Veenapani Pathshala

Shri. Saryu Roy, Independent MLA, Jamshedpur East Assembly Constituency of Jharkhand launched the 'Veenapani Pathshala' on July 13, 2022, to provide a free coaching center for poor high school students of classes 8 to 10. The convenor of this school is a retired Regional Educational Officer (REO) of Kolhan Shri S. P. Singh.

The centers are offering subjects like English, Mathematics, and Science (Bisoee, 2022). The coaching will be provided by a panel of retired teachers at a nominal fee. The classes will take place between 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Every Saturday, a test will be conducted and students will be informed about their performance on Monday (Hindustan, 2022). Each batch of the coaching center will carry 25 students, and 4 such batches will be held throughout the year (The Avenue Mail, 2022). Additionally, food parcels, books, and study materials will be provided to the students at a subsidized rate.

So far, the response has been excellent. Shri Sarayu Roy informed the Telegraph Online that 75 students have enrolled on the very first day, and 3 batches are full. Admissions for the 4th batch are in progress. Shri Roy also informed that if need be, he will request the state and district administration to provide high schools in the Jamshedpur East constituency for running the Veenapani Pathshala initiative during non-school hours.

Though such local initiatives are able to address immediate demands of specific target groups from a locality, the reach, extent and sustainability of such initiatives may find lot of operational challenges.

Conclusion

The situation of secondary school education in Jharkhand needs special attention. As per the Education Ministry Report, up to 2015–16, Jharkhand is home to only 3372 secondary education schools (MoHRD, 2018). The Gross Enrolment Ratio also remains poor in the state. For the general category, the GER is 73.65 whereas, for the Scheduled Castes, it is 72.12. However, it dips to 62.84 for the Scheduled Tribes, it is 62.84 (MoHRD, 2018). With more students to look after, the pupil-to-teacher ratio is one of the concerns in the state. Till 2015–16, it was 62 (MoHRD, 2018). Initiatives like 'Veenapani Pathshala' could contribute significantly towards achieving the goal of 'Education for All and for Ever' in educationally backward areas/ regions and places with geographical limitations.

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Purple Fest
(Goa)

Background

The biological principle of 'Survival of the Fittest' does not apply to human beings in the normal sense. Because according to this principle, only high-class, high-caste, white masculine men are fit to survive and no one should care about the poor, underprivileged, and vulnerable sections of the society. So, as human beings, it is imperative to think about inclusiveness to make society a better place for everyone to live in. Nature makes diversity and human beings attach certain notions to it and start differentiating in it as per their convenience and preferences, ultimately leading to discrimination at multiple levels with multiple layers. The humanitarian collective consciousness and empathy for others make humans different from other animals. 'The Right to life with dignity' is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of India. It is also the human right to live peacefully. So, how can someone attach the stigma based on another person's physical disabilities?

All humans are not the same, they come with differences. Nature makes all humans very different, special, and unique. Each person has different skills, talents, attitudes, and abilities to perform any action. So, in this sense, it is only right to mention someone as 'differently abled' and not as disabled! There is a need to change this mindset first and accept diversity. Some of the initiatives in society are appreciable as they spread positive messages through the celebration of diversity. One such initiative is Goa's Purple Festival; this case study is about celebrating diversity.

About the Initiative

India is also known for the celebration of many festivals throughout the year. This is one such important aspect that adds colour to the lives of Indians. The government of Goa has come up with a novel festival called the 'Purple Fest'. It is the first-ever inclusive festival in India to celebrate diversity. The festival took place from 6 to 8 January 2023, at the Entertainment Society of Goa in Panaji. According to Guru Prasad Pawaskar, the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), Purple has become more and more connected with disability in recent years, representing a new, positive narrative about the contributions of PwDs to the workforce and the broader community (TNN, 2023).

While speaking at the inauguration function of the festival, Dr. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa said, "Goa Government is the highest pension payer for the person with disabilities with 80 percent disability, which is Rs. 3,500 per month, and for the rest of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) we are paying 2,500 per month. We also have the highest reservation for Persons with Disabilities amongst other states. We have made Panaji city a disability friendly city and we plan on making the public buildings disabled friendly too" (ANI, 2023).

While speaking on the occasion, Shri Subhash Phal Dessai, Minister for Social Welfare, Govt. of Goa expressed that 'how society disables persons with disabilities is the largest challenge for them. Daily struggles for those with impairments include discrimination, stigma, and misconceptions. We must engage with the disabled community to remove barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society. The disability should be viewed as the socially constructed psychological, physical, systemic, communication, and technology barriers. We acknowledge the effects of an individual's impairment, but as a society, we must make accommodation to those who live with disabilities rather than expecting them to make accommodation to the society' (TNN, 2023).

During the festival, an artist with a locomotor disability named Alpna Kale facilitated a community painting on canvas at the Purple Kaleidoscope. The art gallery was divided into three sections. The first section featured artwork created by artists with various disabilities. To make it easier for visually impaired people to appreciate the art. The second segment included tactile paintings

with QR codes. Products created by talented children were kept in the third section (TNN, 2023).

It was reported that around 6,000 students were invited to this three-day film festival to attend, engage, and view movies about disabilities to develop awareness and sensitivity (ANI, 2023).

In addition to many other engaging activities, the Purple Fest featured a variety of entertaining live events, including music concerts, dance performances, etc. Moreover, there were exhibitions showcasing the most recent assistive technologies created by and for PwDs (TNN, 2023).

Impact

During this festival, 21 ambassadors of the 21 recognized impairments in India were introduced to the public. To empower PwDs in the workforce, NGOs and PwDs signed an agreement under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 on stage.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) announced that it will shortly host a program on workplace accommodation for people with disabilities and also introduce the CII Award for Excellence in Inclusion. Along with it, there were 120 competitions organized for PwDs and 90 stalls were set up to show their innovations (TNN, 2023).

"Through the Government of Goa, this Purple Fest has brought together People with Disabilities from across the country. The Union Ministry has been taking the right steps to empower the community, through skill training, education facilities, etc.," said Dr. Virendra Kumar, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India (ANI 2023). It is reported that the Chief Minister of Goa is taking an effort to make this Purple Fest an annual event so that PwDs can unite, demonstrate their skills, and share their ideas (TNN, 2023).

Conclusion

In India, about 4% to 8% of the population constitutes persons with disabilities (Janardhana et al., 2015). Having a person with a disability at home causes a lot of stress and difficulties for their families and caretakers. All over the world in general and in the Indian scenario in particular, there is a social stigma attached to the notion of being differently abled. As a result, families suffer from discrimination and human rights violations. The effects on these people can be disastrous when poverty, physical neglect, and social exclusion come together. Organizing and celebrating such kinds of festivals becomes significant in this context. It is a great way to overcome this stigmatization and celebrate diversity with inclusiveness.

It is suggested that steps shall be taken by putting the PwDs in the leadership position not only in organising such festivals but also by putting them in leadership positions in the Ministries/ Departments/ Programmes run for PwDs.

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Background

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." So, to achieve the dream of a progressive, modern, prosperous, equal, just, and healthy society, empowering the powerless is very important.

In our country, the minimum age requirement for marriage varies depending on gender. It is 21 years for a male and 18 years for a female. But unfortunately, several people still perform child marriages, and especially the girl child are the victims of such cases. Approximately, there were 650 million child brides worldwide as of 2021 (UNICEF, 2021). Thus, the issue is prevalent almost everywhere and is linked with the traditional sociocultural norms as well as the current socioeconomic aspects of the nation. So, in this 21st century, first, we need to come out of such a patriarchal mindset and empower women in a real sense. Therefore, we believe that by understanding the gravity of such problems, it is important to highlight the efforts of those who are addressing the issue at the ground level.

Efforts are being made in this direction at various levels, and the Advika initiative of the Govt. of Odisha for adolescent girls is worth praising. We can consider it as an example of the highest level of political commitment to reducing child marriage, and violence against women, children, and adolescents.

About the Initiative

`The Government of Odisha was making some efforts to the improvement of adolescent girls' education, health, and general well-being. However, most programs were only intended for certain age groups. On October 11, 2020, on International Girl Child Day, the State Government in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA introduced the 'Advika - Every Girl Is Unique' program to maximize the impact of all its programs among all adolescent girls (UNICEF, n.d.).

The word 'Advika' means uniqueness. Thus, the initiative is based on the principle that believes every girl child is unique and should be educated to empower her to take life decisions.

"The program aims at empowering girls to understand and practice life skills in their own lives thereby preparing them to face all odds, giving them courage, empowering them to voice their opinions and live on their own terms," said Smt. Tukuni Sahu, Minister for Woman and Child Development, Odisha.

The initiative serves as a platform for connecting all programs aimed at adolescent females in Odisha aged 10 to 19, across all schools and regions. It strives to make 'Kishori Diwas' lively and teen-friendly by teaching life skills to deal with their daily challenges and issues and by providing a platform for females

to express themselves and find answers to their problems. It gives individuals the chance to learn about and connect with pertinent social safety programs for themselves and their families. Anganwadi centers will execute it in 30 districts and municipal corporations of the state. Resourceful Advika package includes Anganwadi Pocket Book, Kishori Barta, Tiki Mausi Multimedia Package, Kishori Calendar, Commonly Asked Questions, etc.

Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF representative to India notes, "Advika is really a noble way of bringing all the departments together to make the best impact for young people. Today we are here to renew our commitment to adolescents in Odisha, especially young girls. We are committed to translating it into actions and all the sectors we work in will come together for that. UNFPA and UNICEF are really looking to partner with the State Government even stronger and we look forward to continuing to support the State Government's amazing work" (UNICEF, n.d.).

Impact

Advika contributed significantly as several girls in the state have benefited from the scheme so far. In the first year of its launch, Advika prevented 1,620 child marriages (PNS, 2021). Additionally, 7,000 villages (approx.)

in the State have been designated as child marriage-free (PNS, 2021).

According to the report of the pioneer, the campaign has reached at least one million adolescent boys and girls, identified around one lakh Sakhi Sahelis, and created more than 200 project-level WhatsApp groups of Sakhi-Sahelis within a year. Sakhi-Sahelis are playing a crucial role in the initiative by raising their voices, forbidding their marriages, organizing the communities, aiding frontline workers in-home visits and counseling, taking pledges for "no to child marriage," resolving gender issues, preventing child marriage, and exploring career opportunities, among other things. In addition, a technology-based ADVIKA.

Moreover, efforts are being made to establish and institutionalize a State-level adolescents forum. Links with skill and livelihood-based vocational and skilling opportunities for adolescent girls would be enhanced and expanded in the coming days with the help of Panchayati Raj, the Skill Development and Technical Education Department, Skilled Odisha, ORMAS, DDU GKY, etc.

Conclusion

Girls with early marriage frequently lack the power to decide whether to postpone having children or use contraception, which increases their chance of being pregnant before they are prepared physically as well as mentally. As a result, such girls are more vulnerable to health problems. According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-21, 14.7% of urban and 27.0% of rural women between 20-24 years married before the age of 18 years (IIPS, 2021). Therefore, the Advika initiative, through its socio-political commitment, is doing a great job of empowering the girls and ultimately helping achieve the SDGs. This initiative is worth replicating in other states as well.

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Mission Drishti and Mission Muskan (Rajasthan)

Background

"To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear," said Gautam Buddha. Today's society is catching up to the rapid speed of technological innovation. As a result, lifestyle changes have occurred. For the middle class, working long hours, getting little sleep, eating fast food, and lacking time for exercise have all become the new standard. The younger generation is also expected to bear the weight of this change because the speed of societal transformation is relatively quick. Because of this, it is normal to see kids as young as 3-5 years old with serious medical issues. To address the threat of the health crisis affecting the area's school children, we will examine the health efforts implemented in the Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and draw lessons from Mission Drishti and Mission Muskan in this case study.

About the Initiative

Since the Sri Ganganagar district collector, Shri Sourabh Swami launched the Swasth Ganganagar Mission campaign in November 2022 to speed up operations under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, more than 5 lakh children from government schools have been screened for various ailments, and many have received treatment (Roy, 2023).

Pupils had screenings for conditions that could affect their eyesight, hearing, haemoglobin, dental health, and more. According to officials, the goal is to create a health report card for every student with partnerships with Charities and hospitals where they would receive free care for the rest of their lives.

Following an initial screening, kids were assigned to Mission Drishti for vision-related concerns, Mission Muskan for dental issues, and Mission Awaaz for hearing or ear-related issues. As on 28 March 2023, officials estimate that 10,000 students have received treatment in these three programmes (Roy 2023).

The Swasth Ganganagar Mission's first phase, which began on November 14, 2022, involved the examination of more than 1.90 lakh pupils throughout the district (Roy, 2023).

Observations

The list of illnesses that were discovered to be common among schoolchildren during the examination is as follows. The district administration took fast action by ordering more tests and performing operations on children wherever required (Patrika, 2023).

- Anaemia : 102,003
- Dental issues : 7,600
- Visual impairment : 5,979
- Skin disease : 1,763
- Staggering : 1,132
- Mental retardation : 808
- Difficulties in Learning : 939
- Malnutrition : 694
- Hearing impairment : 740
- Weak bone density : 544
- Tuberculosis : 185
- Ear damage : 788
- Congenital deafness : 322

Smt. Ranjana Sethi, the Director of Jagadamba Blind School informed that "if proper treatment of these students is not done, then their eyesight may even go away. Surgery will be done for such children with the consent of the family members on the

instructions of the District Collector" (Patrika, 2023). Under Mission Drishti, spectacles will be made available to the students who need them.

The Story of Roshni and Manju

Manju lives in Ganganagar, whereas Roshni lives in the Raisinghnagar tehsil. Roshni and Manju informed their family members about the Healthy Ganganagar Mission. After arriving at the camp, both these girls have undergone a thorough investigation. When Roshni and Manju's ocular disorders were discovered after an investigation, the family members claimed that their financial situation was precarious. The inability to receive treatment was expressed. The District Collector had a detailed interaction with both the girl students at Jagadamba Blind School, and it became clear that, if they did not receive treatment immediately, both of the girl students' eyesight might be lost. With the parents' consent, these two girl students are now receiving treatment at Jagadamba Blind School (Patrika, 2023).

Conclusion

The out-of-pocket expenditure on health in India has come down in the recent past. The Economic Survey (2022-23) highlights that it stood at 48.2% in 2018-19 in contrast with 64.2% in 2013-14 (Porecha 2023). Nonetheless, the government spends only 40.6% on health as a percentage of the total health expenditure. "In states such as Uttar Pradesh, the out-of-pocket estimates were as high as 71.3%" (Porecha, 2023). However, the Economic Survey (2022-23) also mentions that the budgeted expenditure on the health sector by the central and state governments increased to 2.1% of the GDP in 2022–23 and 2.2% of the GDP in the revised estimates of 2021–22 (Porecha, 2023).

With programmes like Mission Drishti and Mission Muskan, it is anticipated that out-of-pocket health expenses will decrease even more. Furthermore, it can shield life from lasting harm through prompt therapeutic measures. The nation's goal of "zero visual impairment" and "zero dental disorders" can be achieved with the replication of Mission Drishti and Mission Muskan.

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Swaraj and Tribal Development
(Maharashtra)

Background

The concept of Swaraj and the idea of tribal development are closely intertwined. As the tribal people are marginalized and excluded from the mainstream political and economic systems, Swaraj strives to empower them by giving them more control over their own lives and resources. The Sanskrit word Swaraj signifies 'self-rule,' 'self-government,' or 'self-determination.' It frequently refers to M. K. Gandhi's idea of a bottom-up, decentralized system of governance that allows people to take charge of their own lives and communities. This case study on Mendha Lekha village will illustrate how Swaraj could be used to promote tribal development.

Mendha Lekha is a small tribal village located in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, India. The estimated size of the village is 1900 hectares. Around 80% of this land is covered in trees. The Gond tribe has long lived in the region mostly without any hierarchy of caste or class distinctions (Kalpavriksh, 2009). Since all its decisions are taken by the Gram Sabha rather than the government, the village has become known for its distinctive, Swaraj-inspired approach to self-governance and sustainable development.

However, this journey wasn't easy. The village leader, Shri Devaji Tofa recalls, "I haven't taken formal education much, but I learn from nature itself. Since my childhood, I am growing and learning with birds, animals, fish, etc. I was born and brought up in Mendha Lekha. My ancestors lived here for ages. 40-50 years back, when people with police uniforms

used to come, the villagers ran in the forest. They were afraid of uniforms, not humans" (Project Nomad, 2020).

Back in the late 1970s, the Indian government had proposed a large-scale hydroelectric project in the neighbouring state of Madhya Pradesh. The fight against the dam reinforced and deepened the tribal people's resolve to make local decisions for matters that directly touch their daily life. The restoration of tribal cultural identity and increased control over resources and land led to a significant drive toward self-rule in the area. Mendha Lekha was one of the villages where this process picked up speed. Those who had been involved in the anti-dam movement kept pushing for a process toward increased village self-rule and group accountability.

The conversations that followed over a period of four to five years focused on important village issues, such as achieving gender equality, lowering alcoholism, encouraging more individual and group responsibility, and developing methods to safeguard and control the use of the surrounding forests (ETV Bharat, 2020). Since it is largely a Gond tribal village, mostly, the residents relied on the forest for their subsistence. Because the government controlled the forest, they were not permitted to use the resources in it at will. According to the Mendha Lekha villagers, the 1950s State

takeover and the start of the fight for self-rule in 1989, were a period of unhappiness and humiliation (Kalpavriksh, 2009).

As per the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006, it became one of the first villages in India whose rights and obligations to use, manage, and conserve the 1900 hectors (approx.) of forests falling within its traditional boundary were formally recognized as Community Forest Resources (CFR) on August 28, 2009 (ICCA Consortium, 2018). The community forest management program is one of its major initiatives. The village has built a system for the sustainable harvesting and management of these resources and has successfully obtained a legal acknowledgment of its customary rights over the local forest resources. The earnings from the sale of forest goods are shared among the villagers and used to support programs for local development.

The focus on traditional knowledge and traditions is a key component of the village development approach. A village-based seed bank that maintains and encourages the usage of regional seed variants has been developed. The village also promotes adopting conventional agricultural techniques suitable for regional agroclimatic conditions, such as crop rotation and intercropping. The villagers also have implemented several programs to conserve soil and water, including constructing an earthen dam to hold onto water for longer. This has been especially important during the summer months when water is in short supply (Kalpavriksh, 2009).

Impact

The unauthorized use of forest resources in the area for commercial interests has been significantly restrained and the forests are guarded against industrial activity like the extraction of bamboo for paper mills (Kalpavriksh, 2009).

According to the report of the Kalpavriksh organization, some of the significant social impacts have been noticed such as participation in decision-making, building a solid reputation as trusted collaborators in development and forest preservation, establishing informal but reputable and powerful institutional entities, and also increased livelihood security for everyone based on the principle of equity, etc. (Kalpavriksh, 2009).

The Forest Rights Act of 2006 grants community forest rights and according to the Hindu, Mendha Lekha become the first village in the nation to use those rights because the village has long been at the forefront of community forest management. Shri Devaji Tofa and social activist Shri Mohan Hirabai Hiralal have been advocating for a quiet revolution in consensus-based decision-making, which has led to Mendha receiving community rights to manage an 1800-hectare forest in 2009 (Menon, 2011).

Conclusion

Mendha Lekha village illustrates how combining the Swaraj principles with a focus on tribal development results in a model of just and sustainable community development. Giving local communities the freedom to manage their resources is a practical way to build a more just and sustainable society. The villagers were able to control their resources and develop a just and sustainable way of life by asserting their right to self-governance. Their quality of life has improved as a result, and other indigenous groups have been inspired to take similar steps toward sustainable development and self-governance.

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Arogya Sahayavani 104
(Karnataka)

Background

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi said, "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold or silver". However, many persons continue to ignore the importance of health. Rapid urbanization and lifestyle changes have made this situation worse. Many citizens don't receive prompt medical care. Therefore, small abnormalities develop into serious diseases. According to the global burden of disease study, this percentage comes to 32% for India. (Ghosh, 2018). Nevertheless, the state of Karnataka has made clear efforts to lessen this load. In this case study, we shall examine the Karnataka government's Arogya Sahayavani 104 helpline, which connects callers to telephonic support and assistance.

Arogya Sahayavani 104 is a Health Information Helpline (HIHL). As a health contact center, its primary goal is to make sure that individuals receive basic information about health disorders and ailments, common treatments for them, and the nearby medical facilities. Any citizen may call the toll-free number 104 to have their health concerns addressed or resolved, as well as to receive advice on medical issues or to file a complaint against a government health facility. This service, which was launched in Hubballi, Karnataka, in June 2013, manages 20,000 calls per day from a 100-seat facility. Till December 2018, the facility has assisted more than 1.44 crore customers (Nagaraj, 2018). The report also shows the Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) during a specified period in different Districts of Karnataka which analysing the call trends. The Health & Family Welfare Services Department is running this scheme in association with the Piramal Swasthya Management and Research Institute (PSMRI), Hubballi.

S.No	District	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	Share of total Calls in 2016-17	CAGR 2014-15 to 2016-17
1	Yadgir	12403	30915	122338	548044	12%	321%
2	Vijayapura	40241	112556	336179	795735	18%	166%
3	Raichur	19271	52921	198022	268325	6%	125%
4	Bidar	11116	42618	156522	198002	4%	116%
5	Belagavi	33084	80207	229118	354204	8%	110%
6	Kalaburagi	43106	120957	387775	497591	11%	103%
7	Ballari	18835	53675	151249	197445	4%	92%
8	Gadag	12244	29750	66823	107208	2%	90%
9	Koppal	17159	50594	134159	179104	4%	88%
10	Bagalkot	27855	85180	236869	296846	7%	87%
11	Haveri	15757	33351	80415	113288	3%	84%
12	Davanagere	20385	64261	168215	217044	5%	84%
13	Shivamogga	7183	23005	52062	72656	2%	78%
14	Dharwad	20712	36881	80812	112373	2%	75%
15	Chikkaballapur	3618	4634	13915	14059	0%	74%
16	Chikkamagaluru	6366	14295	33476	42734	1%	73%
17	Udupi	2741	3639	6891	9929	0%	65%
18	Tumakuru	14062	29301	60807	72963	2%	58%

19	Chitradurga	25431	72987	165861	180903	4%	57%
20	Hassan	8070	15335	29684	36484	1%	54%
21	Mandya	6135	8663	16327	19547	0%	50%
22	Uttara Kannada	4017	9199	13226	19663	0%	46%
23	DakshinKannada	5640	6766	13181	14321	0%	45%
24	Mysuru	11321	15285	28449	31609	1%	44%
25	Bengaluru Rural	2104	5373	10627	10138	0%	37%
26	Kodagu	2594	4300	7112	7570	0%	33%
27	Kolar	4204	6246	11576	10221	0%	28%
28	Chamarajanagar	2946	3000	5052	4851	0%	27%
29	Bengaluru	21092	37488	48709	53903	1%	20%
30	Ramanagara	3418	7218	8607	8792	0%	10%
	Total	**4,23,110**	**10,60,600**	**28,74,058**	**44,95,552**		**106%**

Writing for the Times of India, Sunitha Rao R. (2021) has reported that the Arogya Sahayavani 104 helpline has "handled 42.6 lakh calls pertaining to mental health issues since its inception in 2013, preventing 2,062 suicides and providing counselling in nearly 7,000 cases of depression". Over the years, the number of calls has increased from 8.22 lakhs (2013) to 63.07 lakhs (2016). In 2013, the number of female callers was 12.53%. By December 2016, the number fell to 7.20% (Nagaraj, 2018). In addition to the Arogya Sahayavani 104 helpline, the state of Karnataka has a number of helplines to address issues with mental illnesses and suicide prevention. One such project is the SAHAI helpline, which Shri K. K. Rajagopal established in 2002. Another similar programme that helps people with suicidal thoughts and other mental illnesses is the Arpita helpline.

Analysis of Conditions

The top 20 medical issues of the callers were examined as part of the Karnataka Evaluation Authority's review of the Arogya Sahayavani 104 initiative. Insights into it are provided in the table below.

Similar Initiatives

An incoming call center was established by the Maharashtra government and NRHM for the convenience of the medical staff. This call center serves as a help desk, dispensing advice on healthy living and medical treatment. The toll-free 3-digit number 104 can be called from a landline or any mobile phone to receive health advice. Through specially educated paramedical and specialist professionals, the call center guides ANMs, ASHAs, other health staff, and MOs at PHC (Nagaraj, 2018).

S.No	Query	No. of Calls Received	Percentage of Total Calls Received
1	Acne	301645	7%
2	Cold	195249	4%
3	Nocturnal Emissions	166212	4%
4	Pain with Sexual Intercourse	164321	4%
5	Migraine	99978	2%
6	Masturbation	99355	2%
7	Heart Burn	96789	2%
8	Headaches (Chronic Daily Headaches)	92609	2%
9	Erectile Dysfunction	91730	2%
10	Hair Loss (Alopecia)	91554	2%
11	Fungal Infections	88292	2%
12	Abdominal Pain	80655	2%
13	Influenza	80353	2%
14	Fatigue/Body Pains	78973	2%
15	Body Mass Index, Exercise and Fitness	69671	2%
16	Diarrhoea	68852	2%
17	Height (Stature)	63889	1%
18	Premature Ejaculation	60729	1%
19	Sinusitis	58060	1%
20	Body Mass Index	56257	1%

The Assam State Government's National Rural Health Mission has been placing more and more emphasis on illness prevention. Dialing the number '104' will connect you to the Sarathi '104' - Health Information Helpline Service, which is available round the clock to answer any health-related questions. The program uses an integrated, cutting-edge Health Helpline to connect with Assam's three crore residents. The effort intends to give health information in Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and English, four different languages. In addition to healthcare advice and counselling services, patients can avail of directory information and precautionary advice (Nagaraj, 2018).

The GVK-EMRI, Chennai, which also runs the 108-ambulance service, operates the '104' helpline in Tamil Nadu. Students can also receive counselling and assistance from the helpline regarding suicide prevention, and it also organizes the scheduling of organ and eye donations. Awareness campaigns have been organized in all 32 of the State's districts and talukas to increase public awareness of the facility. It receives 2,600 calls every day on average. The '104' helpline operated by the Health Department fielded 918,688 calls in total from December 2013 to June 2017 (Nagaraj, 2018).

Conclusion

The initiative seeks to reduce the burden of minor ailments. The general awareness of the public on health services has a significant Improvement. The Arogya Sahayavani 104 helpline has proved to be a blessing for the callers especially from the far flung areas of the State, where the medical services are still lagging.

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Mukhya Mantri Sukh Ashray Scheme
(Himachal Pradesh)

Background

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), transgender, and orphans are our society's most socio-economically vulnerable sections. The lack of resources excludes them from mainstream society on various levels. India suffers greatly from a large number of orphans. According to Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), an estimated 29.6 million orphaned, abandoned, and stranded children are in India. Of them, only around 4,000 are adopted each year (Prabhudesai, 2022). According to the Lancet study, it is estimated that more than 19 lakh children were orphaned between March 2020 and October 2021 in India (Unwin et al., 2022). Against this backdrop, it becomes the responsibility of the governments to come up with some policies, and schemes that address the needs of such a huge but deprived section of society. To this end, an effort is being made by the Himachal Pradesh government through the Mukhya Mantri Sukh Ashray scheme. In this case study, we shall discuss the scheme in detail.

About the scheme

At the beginning of the new year 2023, the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Shri. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced the Mukhya Mantri Sukh Ashray scheme, in which the state government had made the decision to adopt orphan children, and the provisions had been made for their higher education, self-employment, pocket money, and allocation of land, as well as the assistance of 3 lakhs for building a house, etc.

The Chief Minister claimed that during its brief tenure of two months, his administration has moved to alter the system and has plans to extend help to all the eligible beneficiaries (Hindustan Times, 2023).

The state government has established the Mukhya Mantri Sukhashraya Sahayata Kosh (fund), to which each MLA has contributed Rs. 1 lakh from their wealth. To support the fund, the Chief Minister took the initiative by undertaking a cut in his emoluments (Bhatnagar, 2023). The Chief Minister visited an orphanage to begin his five-year term shortly after taking the chief ministerial oath of office and emphasized the value of caring for orphans and those without guardians. The sentiments were developed into a policy, and the state recently approved legislation putting children into the legal purview of the welfare system. According to PTI, a bill referring to orphans as state-adopted children and requiring them to receive food, shelter, education, and pocket money was approved by the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly. The CM has also claimed that Himachal Pradesh would become the first state to pass such a law (PTI, 2023).

Orphans and people with special needs will be considered 'children of the state'. according to the Himachal Pradesh Sukhashraya (Care, Protection, and Self-Reliance of Children of the State) Act, 2023. Those who are between the ages of 18 and 27 will receive financial and institutional benefits from the state government.

The Act makes it possible to give these children and adults the vocational training, skill improvement, and coaching they need to integrate into society as contributing members. The Chief Minister said that the State itself will serve as a parental figure for the orphans, ensuring that they do not have to rely on the generosity of others (Bhatnagar, 2023).

According to the Act, orphans are either currently without biological parents or whose parents have been medically determined to be incapable of caring for them. The scope is expanded to include children who have been given up by guardians or parents due to social, emotional, and physical reasons (Bhatnagar, 2023).

Children in need of care and protection, such as those who are found to be homeless or employed in violation of labour regulations, will also be eligible for the benefits of the Act. The state will also look after children who are forced to ask for alms or whose parents have harmed, assaulted, or threatened to hurt them physically or emotionally. The Act will also apply to children who are at risk of getting married before they are old enough, who have been affected by crime, or who are susceptible to drug usage, etc. The beneficiaries will also receive Rs 5,000 in the seasons like summer and winter to purchase clothing, Rs 4,000 monthly allowance for living expenses while attending college, as well as some allowance for other expenses (Bhatnagar, 2023).

It has been praised as a visionary scheme that looks to include the most underserved group in society by the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. While talking with The Indian Express, he expressed, "Children are the backbone of society. Orphans often have to look up to other people for even basic needs. We want to tell them that they are loved and respected. Bringing a law for this only establishes our commitment. The opposition may play petty politics, but we only want children to progress, and no other government has taken such concrete steps" (Bhatnagar, 2023).

Each child and orphan will have their recurring deposit accounts. Contributions to these funds will be made by the state government at current rates. In each district, a child welfare committee will be established to examine the demands of children in need. In addition to conducting surveys to find orphans, the committee will oversee admissions to facilities providing aftercare (Bhatnagar, 2023). As the scheme has a short self-life, assessing its outcome will be pre-matured.

Conclusion

The first Latin American woman, Gabriela Mistral to receive the Nobel Prize in literature declared, "We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now, is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow,' his name is today" (Dobbs, 1979).

No child, no matter how frail, can be weaker than a child without parents, struggling to survive alone in this vast, noisy world. Orphans deserve to get all forms of support from their parents- the State. Orphans and vulnerable children do not even have separate legislation in India, they are part of the Juvenile Justice Act. This historical neglect could have arisen for many reasons. In India, there are always more beneficiaries and claimants than funds, and orphans and destitute children have no one speaking for them (Pavinim, 2019). Against this backdrop, the new initiative turned-Act of Himachal Pradesh can be considered a ray of hope and a milestone in preserving the rights of the most deprived section of our society.

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Give Plastic, Take Gold
(Uttar Pradesh)

Background

"Cleanliness and order are not matters of instinct; they are matters of education, and like most great things, you must cultivate a taste for them," said Benjamin Disraeli. India has grown to be a significant producer of plastic waste over time. According to Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, the country produces about 34.7 lakh Tonnes of plastic garbage annually. Additionally, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report from 2019, 35 million metric tonnes of plastic were produced in India each year (The Mint, 2022).

The Himalayas and other ecologically delicate areas have been devastated by plastic waste. A whopping 36% of all plastics made are used in packaging food and drinks. The waste is then disposed of in landfills or as uncontrolled trash in 85% of cases (UNEP, n.d.).

Of this, over 51,000 Tonnes of plastic waste was generated in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (The Kashmir Walla, 2023). To combat the growing problem of plastic pollution in the union territory, the local administration has taken a series of measures. There are 254 plastic manufacturing and recycling facilities in the union territory. A fine of 4.83 lakhs was levied on the defaulters in 2020–21 after 20.17 metric tonnes of illicit polythene and 01.35 metric tonnes of single-use plastic (SUP) were seized (The Kashmir Walla, 2023). Awareness campaigns, collection drives, and a ban on SUP in ecologically sensitive zones are some other measures undertaken by the administration.

However, this case study examines the special effort made in the Sadiwara Panchayat to gather plastic waste and improve the environmental situation in the village. The "Give Plastic, Take Gold" campaign is a low-cost initiative built on community involvement and is the first of its kind in the country.

About the initiative

Sadiwara is a village Panchayat in the Hillar Shahabad block of Anantnag District located in the South of the union territory. The village came to the limelight in January 2023 when Shri Farooq Ahmad Ganai, a lawyer by profession and the Sarpanch of Sadiwara Panchayat launched the "Give Plastic, Take Gold" campaign in the locality. According to this campaign, the donor must hand over 20 quintals (or 2000 kg) of plastic waste to the panchayat and a 10-gram gold coin shall be issued back to the donor (Qureshi, 2023).

Within two weeks, the campaign's effects would become apparent. The Deputy Commissioner declared Sadiwara Panchayat plastic-free 15 days after the campaign was launched. Sarpanch Shri Farooq Ahmad Ganai informed WION News that "I started a slogan in my village, give polythene and get a reward. I took the initiative to clean the rivers and streams. Everyone in the village helped us to clear the sites. And finally, on January 7, the deputy commissioner announced the area to be plastic-free. The gold that we are giving is from the plastic we are collecting. We will soon be a green village. I will not stop at my village but also take it to all districts of the Union Territory and later from Kashmir to Kanyakumari" (Lone, 2023).

Implementing such innovative programmes requires the involvement of the community. The Sarpanch of Sadiwara village made sure that the community's women, children, and activists took part fully. Slugs and loose plastic

garbage were removed from all the village streams to clean them. Fields were cleaned of plastic trash such as polythene bags, and dustbins were placed adjacent to culverts and along roadways.

"The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and launched in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was our starting point. The Sarpanch is a brilliant leader who takes us all on board to carry forward such initiatives. We took two weeks to make our village plastic-free. We will take it forward to other districts," said Shakeel Wani, youth leader, and activist (Lone, 2023).

Highlighting the role of women's participation in making this initiative a grand success, Sakeena Begum, an Anganwadi worker said, "We have been working with the Sarpanch for four months now, and he is hardworking. He (the village woman) made sure our village was clean and he did it. You can see it with your eyes. He comes from a good background but despite that, you can see him cleaning the drains in the area. It's his hard work that is making sure our village is clean. We will give plastic and get gold. It has worked wonders in the area" (Lone, 2023).

Talking about the initiative in Sadiwara village, Shri Riyaz Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Development in Anantnag, said, "Under Swach Bharat Abhiyan 2.0, we have to make our village polythene and garbage-free and in this regard, Sadiwara Panchayat along with the District administration have started this model. This is not a government scheme to motivate people to clean their villages" (The Daily Guardian, 2023).

Conclusion

Many countries have established zero-tolerance regulations for plastic pollution. India has been intensifying the fight plastic pollution during the recent past. In addition to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, 2015, several initiatives including the adoption of the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, and the ban on single-use plastics have earned the nation, accolades on a global scale. Nonetheless, simple campaigns like 'Give plastic, take gold' is what the country needs. The moment has come to reproduce the Sadiwara experiment in other Indian villages.

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Background

The problem of drug abuse is growing in India. To address this issue, the Government of India has taken several steps like launching and running awareness campaigns and establishing drug treatment centers, etc. However, considering the magnitude of the problem, these efforts are not enough, and more must be done to tackle this issue effectively.

First, the analysis of its existence across all the age-group, gender, and socio-economic status is necessary. Demographically speaking, India is one of those few countries with the world's youngest population. As a developing nation, if we want to take advantage of this demographic dividend, we need to channel the energy of these youth. For that, we first need to overcome social evils like drug abuse to utilize this great resource of youth power properly.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, the level of drug use among young people continues to be larger than that of older people (UNODC, 2022). On 14th of December 2022, the government informed the Supreme Court that 1.58 crore youngsters in the country between the ages of 10 and 17 are drug addicts, citing statistics from a study that was carried out in response to a high court ruling (NDTV, 2022). Therefore, for saving these youth some serious measures should be taken at both state and central levels. One such initiative was taken by Shri. N. Brien Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur.

About the initiative

Immediately after taking office as Manipur's Chief Minister in 2017, Shri. N. Brien Singh has launched several initiatives to eradicate the problem of drug abuse from the state. One such key initiative is the 'War on Drugs' campaign. Under this campaign, to eradicate the problem from its roots he declared a "war" against the state's poppy plantations (PTI, 2018).

The Chief Minister said, "Thousands of hectares of land are used for poppy cultivation in areas near the international border with Myanmar". While highlighting the depth of the issue, he said, "We shall never compromise on the issue since it is a question of survival or extinction of human beings" (Laithangbam, 2022).

Poppy cloaks denuded Manipur hills, Biren declares 'war' on tribal chiefs

CM launched a campaign against drugs when he took over in 2017, and provided cash incentives to tribal village chieftains this year, but vast areas of the State are still planted with poppy. In a video message, he says no question of compromise

Yirendra Laithangbam
IMPHAL

A furious Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has issued a "last warning" to tribal village chieftains in Manipur, urging them to stop poppy cultivation in the vast mountain slopes immediately or "face life imprisonment".

He was speaking in a video message posted on social media on Thursday night. "We shall never compromise on the issue since it is a question of survival or extinction of human beings," he thundered in the video message.

Gone astray

The Chief Minister has good reasons to be angry and distraught since he feels that the tribal leaders have backed out of their commitments and assurances. Soon after becoming the Chief Minister of Manipur in 2017, Mr. Singh had announced a "war" against poppy plantations.

For such a campaign to be successful in the tribal areas of the hill State, it was critical that the village chieftains, whose word holds sway in their own domain, were on board.

Early this year, Mr. Singh had announced that the positive response from the tribal chieftains was overwhelming. He distributed substantial cash to several chieftains to help them switch over to other non-poppy plantations after destroying the verdant poppy plants.

Almost a year later, the reality is disappointing. The Chief Minister's video showed vast areas planted with poppy in some hill districts.

"What is this? The mountains are bereft of trees and other vegetation which means that the mountain streams are choked, triggering mud and landslips. Without water, nothing can be grown, which threatens the lives of human beings," said Mr. Singh, on the video, as it showed poppy plants concealed behind consumable vegetation.

Sounding his last warning, the Chief Minister said that his government would now declare war against the tribal chieftains. There is no question of compromise with those drug lords who are out to earn a fortune at the cost of the lives of the ordinary people, he added.

Mr. Singh had announced that as part of his anti-drug campaign, the raiding parties would be supplied with drug testing kits to establish that the seized items were actually drugs.

Wielding the stick: Anti-drug activists and policemen destroy poppy plants on a mountain slope in Imphal. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As Manipur is a hilly state with a considerable tribal population, it was essential to involve the village chieftains in this campaign against the drug. For this, Shri Singh had distributed substantial cash to several chieftains to help them switch over to other non-poppy plantations after destroying the verdant poppy plants. Despite this, its result was disappointing as the vast areas of the state were still planted with poppies. It was clear that the tribal leaders hadn't fulfilled their commitments and assurances. So, the Chief Minister issued a 'last warning' for facing life imprisonment if they do not stop the cultivation of poppies on the vast mountain slopes immediately (Laithangbam, 2022).

Furthermore, the Chief Minister has also instructed the state administration and security services to take rigorous actions by cracking down on tribal leaders, drug peddlers, traffickers, and suppliers, and to carry out regular raids and seizures of drugs. According to him, strict action against these drug lords is a must because they earn a fortune at the cost of the lives of ordinary people.

Challenges

The 'anti-drug' initiative has faced several challenges as it progressed. First, the priorities change with the change in government, therefore running an initiative for a long time is a challenge. Since stakeholders from outside of the country are also involved, the central government must interfere in the issue. In addition to this, the growing drug-abuse culture among the Manipuri youth is a huge challenge as it is mighty close to the 'Golden Triangle'. Finally, tackling the drug menace requires huge resources including time, money, and manpower. The financial position of the State makes it reliant on the Union government for financing such novel but ambitious programs.

Conclusion

The poor enforcement of the laws that are related to drugs, inadequate drug rehabilitation facilities, corruption, lack of awareness, and other socio-economic factors make it difficult to tackle the issue in India. In addition, it also leads to other issues like black marketing, drug trafficking, disturbing the law & order situation, etc. Against this backdrop, the initiative of the Chief Minister of Manipur is important as he has set an example by taking strict measures against drug dealers with the help of state machinery. The issue has existed in the entire county across all socioeconomic statuses, but the states with international borders like Punjab are facing the issue for a long time with more magnitude. Therefore, such initiatives can be replicated in other states to prevent the escalation of the drug problem in India.

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India's First Fully Digital Literate Panchayat
(Kerala)

THE PULLAMPARA GRAMA PANCHAYAT HAS LAUNCHED 'DIGI PULLAMPARA'

A campaign to ensure total digital literacy among the people of the panchayat

- The panchayat will be educating around 4,500 people from fifteen wards
- The target age group is from 14 to 65
- The campaign aims at teaching the basic usage of smartphones and its applications

Background

The Government of India has been gradually digitizing services like permits, licenses, certificates, and tax payments while also improving the efficiency of governance outcomes through initiatives like Digital India. The creation of the centrally controlled Government eMarketplace (GeM) for procuring products and services, and the creation of the Unified Payments Interface are some impressive examples of digital intervention in India. During the Covid outbreak, 20 crore people registered on the CoWin platform within the first four months of its launch by the government (Chandna, 2021). It is obvious that the digitization of government services is occurring at a record rate across industries like business, payments, health care, and education.

Though local governments are also undergoing digitization. This Case study celebrates the accomplishments of the Pullampara Panchayat in the Thiruvananthapuram District of Kerala which holds the distinction of being the first Panchayat in the country to be totally digitally literate.

About the Project

The DigiPullampara project was launched on August 15, 2021. The project was driven by the vision of panchayat president Shri. P.V. Rajesh and a core committee consisting of Smt. Sajina Sathar, District Women Welfare Officer; Shri. Dinesh Pappen, MGNREGS District engineer; Shri. Sanob S., KAS trainee, and Shri. Shamnad, Employee of Dept. of Technical Education.

It aims to teach digital literacy to all panchayat residents under the DigiPullampara project that got underway (The Hindu, 2022).

Under this project, digital education was provided to 3,300 residents of Pullampara village. All the residents within the age group of 14 to 65 were covered under the project (Jagran Josh, 2022). To find the potential trainees, a survey was conducted in 15 wards of the panchayat. A total of 3,917 people were located, and the volunteers trained 3,330 of them. Due to their advanced age and ongoing medical conditions, the remainder were unable to engage in the training. All of the trained residents had to pass evaluation tests before being deemed "digitally literate" (Arora, 2022).

About 250 students and faculty members from 5 engineering colleges were involved in the DigiPullampara project. Additionally, members of the Kudumbashree units, Self Help Groups, National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers, and Panchayat members were also involved in the implementation of the DigiPullampara project (Singh, 2022). The technical expertise was provided by the Kerala Technological University (KTU).

രാജ്യത്തെ ആദ്യ ഡിജിറ്റൽ സാക്ഷരത
പഞ്ചായത്തായി തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തെ പുല്ലമ്പാറ

മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി പിണറായി വിജയൻ പ്രഖ്യാപനം നടത്തി

Conclusion

Kerala saw a transformation after making a foray into digitalization in the 2000s. Digitization was essential to deliver information and services to the citizens as a result of the adoption of internet technology and rising levels of e-literacy. The Gram Panchayat was a pioneer in the nation when it came to investing in the creation of essential digital infrastructure for the provision of e-Government services. The state's determination to encourage digital literacy has resulted in the complete digitization of the Pullampara Panchayat. It will make it possible for villagers to fully utilize the 800-plus digital services provided by the Kerala government (The New Indian Express, 2022). The 'Pullampara Model' is sustainable, and hence, there is a need to replicate the same.

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Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

India's First 'Smart Village'
(Rajasthan)

Background

The Government of India has been gradually The Government of India launched the 'Smart City Mission' (SCM) in 2015 to bring world-class facilities using 'smart solutions' in selected 100 cities. Attention was given to the overall development of the cities to make them modern in the real sense. Using smart solutions, SCM aims to support communities with basic infrastructure, a respectable standard of living for its residents, and a clean and sustainable environment. Since then, several cities are on the way to being smart. But have you ever thought about a Smart Village? Sounds interesting, right? In this case study, we shall look at the story of Dhanora village from Rajasthan which has earned the distinction of being India's first 'Smart Village'.

About the Initiative

Dhanora, a small village in Rajasthan's Dhaulpur district and situated 250 km away from Jaipur, has undergone a massive transformation. Earlier, the village community lacked access to necessities like electricity, water, roads, sanitary facilities, a decent educational system, and employment. However, all of this changed when Dhanora began its journey to becoming the first Smart village in India. At present, the village has its skill development center, a meditation center, beautifully painted residences, clean streets bordered with lovely green trees, solar street lights, and even a public library, etc (Kaushik, 2022).

Being an Adarsh Gram, every house in Dhanora has a toilet with running water, access to concrete roads, a sewage treatment plant for waste management, and property lines. Even the production and sale of alcohol are forbidden in the village. (Aranha, 2020).

The first person to call for change was Dr. Satyapal Singh Meena, an IRS Officer, and a local of the village. He was stirred when he saw an elderly woman being carried to the fields while ill with dysentery. He set out on a mission to change Dhanora. Meena had attended an eco-revolution conference held by the non-profit organization Eco Needs Foundation while he was stationed in Aurangabad.

He requested their assistance after being impressed with their vision of a smart village. After that, the NGO's founder, Prof. Priyanand Agale, and his staff joined forces to begin this path toward change. In an interview with The Better India, Prof. Agale reveals that his team created a model that promotes sustainable development by offering amenities like sanitation, clean drinking water, internal roads, water conservation, tree planting, and means of subsistence (Aranha, 2020).

If the village satisfies the criteria for each of the five fundamental categories—Retrofitting, Redevelopment, Greenfields, e-Pan (electronic planning), and Livelihood—so it is deemed to be a 'Smart Village'. This was made possible for Dhanora village by the Eco Needs Foundation with the assistance of the residents and the state government of Rajasthan (Rongmei, 2022).

Through community participation, shramdaan, and fundraising by the villagers, every household built a toilet. The families that couldn't afford the expense were adopted by the village. One of the biggest outcomes of this was that the State Government declared the village as the first in the district to be Open Defecation Free (ODF). This was prioritized because the women in the village had spoken about critical issues related to health and hygiene in the first meeting. Then district collector Shri Kumar Gautam Pal sanctioned the construction of 822 toilets in a single order (Aranha, 2020).

Reaching the village was difficult due to the bad road conditions. However, roads were soon fixed. In addition to new roads, community halls, parks, and schools were also renovated, and decent housing was built. As part of Greenfield initiatives, new areas were identified for tree plantations, and setting up wastewater treatment plants, waste disposal plants, etc. The village was connected to the rest of the world using e-Pan via the internet. Moreover, public libraries, and schools all have access to electricity on an uninterrupted basis through solar energy (Rongmei, 2022).

The success of Smart Dhanora lives up to the famous English idiom 'Rome was not built in a day' as the story of Dhanora is based on cooperation and harmony. The solution to the problems is the result of continuous efforts for the development of the village and endless courage. It all started when the villagers decided to take charge of making a lasting difference. With the significant awareness campaign, the enthusiasm of the villagers turned these ideas into reality.

While talking about the success of a village, Prem Singh, a resident of Dhanora said, "Earlier, the women in our village would have to walk few kilo metres to fetch water. After the Smart Village Mission, we have running water in our taps at home. Our youth who lacked motivation now look to the future with renewed hope. What makes this incredible is that people donated lakhs to make their village an Adarsh Gram. That is the power of ordinary villagers" (Aranha, 2020).

The Union and State Governments are now paying attention to Dhanora's accomplishments and appreciated its efforts with a smart village award. Now, the village has developed into a hub for researchers who are interested in re-creating the idea of the smart village, including academics, students, and officials from other nations. A program called 'Soch Badlo, Gaon Badlo' (Transform Thoughts, Transform Village) was started in 100 additional villages in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh because of the transformation of Dhanora.

Challenges

The community needed to be mobilized as a first step, but it wasn't easy. Initially, the people had doubts about the intentions of the plan. However, after having lengthy sessions and outlining the strategy to the villagers in the Gram Sabhas, they recognized the motivations and supported the initiative wholeheartedly.

Another challenge was to raise huge funds to implement the five elements of the Smart Village plan. According to The Better India report, the approximate budget for transforming Dhanora was close to Rs 2.5 crore (Aranha, 2020). The fund was also collected through the door-to-door collection as well as from the CSR division of Sun Pharma and Coca-Cola Foundation. In addition, donations from the local MLA, MP, Eco Needs Foundation, etc. were also used in the project.

Conclusion

It is a fact that the cities are overburdened with huge populations residing in their slums and facing several issues. According to Sri. Parameswaran Iyer, CEO of NITI Aayog, 50 percent of India's population will live in urban cities by 2047 (PTI, 2022). So, with such rapid urbanization, we must rethink our development paradigm. The road to cities passes through villages. For sustainable development to take place, we will have to think first about our villages. With the thrust on change, replicating such an idea is possible to lessen the burden of migration in cities by working to make our villages smart and self-sufficient.

Dhanora experiences show that the significant transformation can be brought when individuals, community and governments work together for a common goal. The synergy of all the key actors makes the outcomes of such initiatives much beyond the results of arithmetics.

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A smart village in the Chambal heartland

चंबल के बीहड़ों से निकला देश का मॉडल विलेज, मोदी ने किया धनोरा को सम्मानित

Project for Widowed, Deserted, and Separated Women (Chhattisgarh)

Introduction

Modern societies are plagued by numerous problems, and our Indian society is by no means an exception. To map the current weak points and address the core causes, numerous policies and programmes have been developed. The measures that have been outlined are made to either close these gaps or reduce the existing vulnerabilities. The vulnerability of a woman to her husband's death or her abandonment owing to the drunkenness of her husband, domestic abuse, or extramarital affairs has, incidentally, never been understood. Only those who have gone through this stage or closely experienced it can fully explain the severity of its impact on living and quality of life.

The institution of marriage is relatively flexible in North Chhattisgarh's tribal regions. As a result, couples frequently fail to cohabitate. It has been generally recognized that spouse desertion is more frequent, and it is a setback for the life of economically disadvantaged women who are frequently left with young children to care for. In addition, their burden is further increased by their illiteracy, lack of awareness, and lack of motivation, which traps them in a never-ending cycle of poverty. The Surguja District Administration and other line departments, however, decided to address the problems faced by Widows. This case study discusses the project for bringing smiles into the life and living of Widowed, Deserted, and Separated (WDS) women of Surguja.

About the 'Mobilization-cum-Awareness' Campaign

The intervention for widowed, divorced, and separated (WDS) women in rural Surguja between the ages of 18 and 60 has two main objectives. According to Darcy Gibson, the objective is "to objectively understand the socio-economic-livelihood-health-social security and legal aspects of these women. The Second was to provide facilitation, assistance, and handholding support to such women by linking them with an income-generating activity" (Gibson, n.d.).

With the above-stated objectives, the district administration surveyed the village to identify WDSs. It was discovered that just 21.3% of Widowed, Deserted, and Separated women had access to agricultural land. 73.8% of WDSs made less than INR 2000 per month. The top 3 reasons for abandonment were infidelity (29.1%), alcoholism (23.7%), and harassment (20.3%). More than 60% of the women reported feeling lonely and finding it difficult to deal with day-to-day issues on their own (GoI., n.d.). With this data, the administration conducted a capacity-building exercise, and line departments were requested to provide the necessary support. All the stakeholders have been listed below. "Almost 9,000 WDS women, aged between 18-60 years, were identified in Surguja" (GoI., n.d.). Based on their needs, line departments enrolled WDSs to receive government benefits.

Table 1: List of the line Departments involved in the WDS project

SI No.	Project
01	Women and Child Development
02	Sakshar Bharat
03	Zila Panchayat
04	Health Department
05	Agriculture Department
06	Horticulture Department
07	Sericulture
08	Tribal Welfare Department
09	Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Agency
10	Social Welfare Department
11	Food Department
12	Revenue Department
13	Banks/ Cooperatives
14	Fishery Department
15	Veterinary Department
16	Common Service Centre
17	Education Department
18	Biotech Labs

Outcomes

Through the WDS survey, it was realized that 37% of women were not receiving any social welfare benefits under schemes like Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension. In addition, 14% of the women were not having ration cards. As a result, they were deprived of food rations. Approximately 97.6% of women lived in kachcha houses. Nearly 50% of women were out of the insurance net. It was also noted that 40.8% of women were not covered under Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) / Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Bima Yojana (MSBY) therefore depriving them of getting health benefits. Finally, a total of 44% of the respondents worked as wage laborers,

while 32.4% were involved in activities related to agriculture. Nearly 15% of the respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey, making them even more vulnerable to outside influences (Gibson, n.d.).

After interventions through the WDS project, we find remarkable improvement in access to government programmes. Approximately 2196 women found social security through pensions, 786 women gained food security, 911 women gained housing security, 3548 women benefited from improved sanitation, 2426 women obtained an Aadhaar card, 2300 women obtained a labour card, 6737 women received insurance coverage, 2722 women advanced towards literate status, 1218 women received LPG connections, 2491 women benefited by starting bank account, and 1587 women gained health security (GoI., n.d.).

Conclusion

In addition to the impact already mentioned, 3636 women eliminated their loneliness and isolation by joining self-help groups, and 1528, and 1927 women took steps towards sustainable livelihoods, and skill development respectively. Another 4345 WDS women in total benefited from bank connection, Aadhaar, ration, toilet, and pension benefits (GoI., n.d.). Given the strong impact that WDS created, the Chhattisgarh government acknowledged the high likelihood of this project's replication in 2015 and released necessary instructions for prioritizing its implementation across the State.

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Universal Health Coverage
(Meghalaya)

Holistic approach of 3- Dimensional Positive healthcare model of Meghalaya

Background

World Health Organization (WHO) refers to Universal Health Coverage as a situation where all people have access to high-quality healthcare services wherever and whenever they require without facing financial hardship. It includes every aspect of necessary health services, from disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care throughout life (WHO, 2023).

Due to the enormous out-of-pocket costs associated with health care, 55 million Indians are forced into poverty each year. More than 17% of households experience annual catastrophic costs (Kumar, 2023). This happens because most of the time an unexpected illness forces people to spend all their savings, sell off their possessions, or take out loans. Therefore, if they are protected from the financial repercussions of paying for healthcare out of their own pockets, it is less likely that people will fall into poverty. In this multicultural country with wide variations in geography and socioeconomic status, equity is the guiding premise for achieving UHC. Therefore, there is a need for localized solutions. When it comes to determining policies and their implementation, health is a state subject in India, which allows the government to develop solutions specifically to meet the requirements of the people. Against this backdrop, the North-East Indian state of Meghalaya is setting the bar for UHC through its State Health Enhancement Project (SCEP).

About the Initiative

Meghalaya, a mountainous state with a huge number of residents in remote areas faces geographical difficulties in providing healthcare to its residents. According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5), Meghalaya has a rate of 32.3 fatalities per 1000 live births, which is far higher than developed states like Kerala, where the infant mortality rate is 4.4. Almost 100 percent of births in Kerala were delivered in a health facility whereas only 58% of the births in Meghalaya were delivered in health facilities. Again, compared to Kerala's 98%, just 83.7% of mothers received antenatal care from trained practitioners. Only 64% of children aged 12 to 23 months in Meghalaya have received all recommended immunizations, compared to 78% in Kerala (IIPS, 2021).
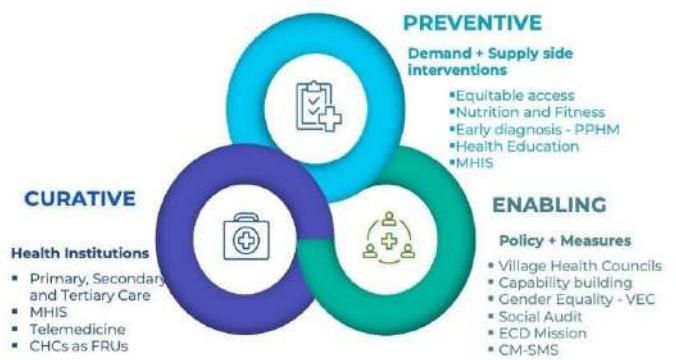
However, the State dug deep into the issues using the Programme Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) technique, which indicated that short birth spacing contributes to high maternal mortality, anaemia, teenage pregnancies, remoteness, poverty, and a lack of faith in health systems. This prompted the state to create and publish the State Health Policy in 2021 declaring its commitment to providing its citizens with UHC. The policy attempts to address the important health indicators by establishing a good healthcare model that would consider the socioeconomic factors that influence its citizens' health. In this way, the State is leading the way to ensure UHC through its State Health Enhancement Project (SCEP) (GoML, 2021).

Meghalaya State Capability Forum was also initiated under the ongoing SCEP. Appreciating the launch of the Forum, Shri. Conrad K. Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya said, "Although we do not know how long the process of building State capacity would take, this is certainly a step in the right direction, provided, a focused approach is adopted, and specific programs are brought under its ambit".

The health policy of the State is based on a three-dimensional model illustrated in the above image above. Equal attention is paid to (1) Preventive Component, which includes promotional care, (2) Curative Component, and (3) Enabling Component, which includes palliative and rehabilitative care.

The positive health model will help the State and give communities the knowledge they need to properly look after their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. A long-term decrease in illness risk and healthcare expenses will be achieved via a positive health model, which will lead to people living longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

Impact

According to the Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Meghalaya, the State's attempts to increase immunization rates have been successful by using the Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach. Earlier, Meghalaya had the lowest immunization rates in 2018–19; however, after implementing the PDIA strategy, the State has now reached 90% immunization (Immunisation Dashboard, July 2020), placing it second highest in the nation (GoML, 2021).

Apart from this, the health workforce now feels strongly motivated to do its job because there has been a 23% decrease in infant mortality and a 33% decrease in maternal fatalities between 2020 and 2022 (WEF, 2023).

Conclusion

The health outcomes of Indians have significantly improved over the years. However, there are disparities between states based on several factors, including geography.

India has a mixed system for delivering healthcare. Almost 60% of all hospitalizations and 70% of out-patient services, about 58% of all inpatient episodes, and approximately 90% of medicines dispensed, and diagnostic facilities are delivered by the private sector in India (Selvaraj et al., 2022). So, it becomes difficult to find healthcare services, medications, and tests that are of high quality, easily accessible, and affordable. Additionally, there are variations in state-level health outcomes. Therefore, according to the World Economic Forum, the long-term success of India's reform toward Universal Health Coverage depends on how it is linked with an efficient and adequately staffed primary healthcare system. It also needs to extend beyond curative care to encompass broader health promotion and prevention efforts. By using a comprehensive strategy of preventive, curative, and enabling healthcare, Meghalaya has demonstrated the way forward.

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs
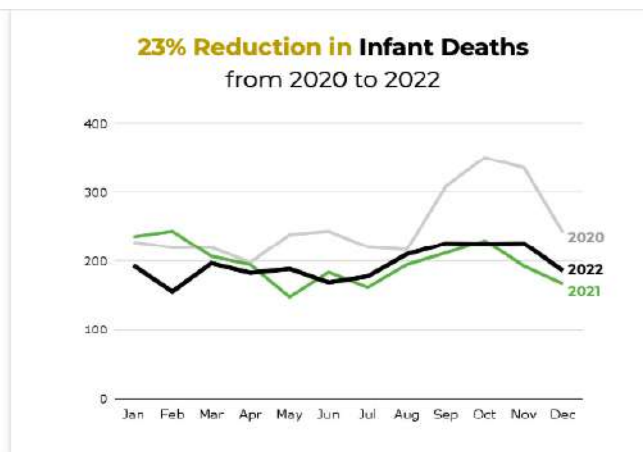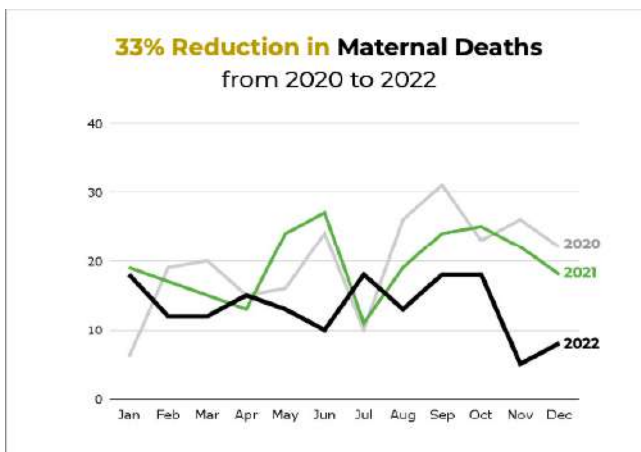
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Happiness Curriculum in Schools (Delhi)

Background

According to research by the World Bank Group and UNICEF (2016), India is home to more than 30% of the nearly 385 million children who live in severe poverty worldwide. The absence of health and education opportunities has led to poor mental health among children. Recognizing its presence is an important first step. However, there is an increasing call for well-being to be taught in classrooms all over the world. According to statistics, approximately three children in every classroom in the UK, for instance, have a diagnosable mental health issue. This equates to one in ten children. Approximately 75% of adult mental health issues, however, have childhood origins (Beitrag, 2018). Therefore, it is imperative that we transform our educational system so that it prioritizes the child's mental health over his educational outcomes. In this case study, we shall examine the distinctive Happiness Curriculum of the Delhi government unveiled on July 2, 2018.

About the Initiative

The happiness curriculum is the brainchild of Shri Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi. The teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jiddu Krishnamurthy, and other thinkers form the foundation of the happiness curriculum. The idea is based on the "happiness triad" that renowned Indian philosopher Agrahar Nagaraj Sharma. proposed. Nagaraj's concept centers on three aspects of happiness: momentary, long-term, and sustainable. The curriculum also incorporates 'Madhyasth Darshan' (Co-existential thought), which is centered on ideals like simplicity, frugality, kindness, benevolence, and the pursuit of happiness (Sisodia, 2019).

Chapters on enhancing human-nature relationships, interpersonal relationships, and fostering a positive self-image are also included in the happiness curriculum. The programme uses strategies like mindfulness, reflective stories, interactive activities, and expression to equip pupils with the necessary skills and mindsets to answer the following questions: What makes me happy? How can I be an instrument in other people's happiness? (Gray, 2018). The learning outcomes of this course include awareness and focus, critical thinking and reflection, social-emotional skills, as well as a confident and pleasant personality, even if there is no exam to assess the students on the happiness curriculum. From nursery through grade 8, these outcomes are built as the kid advances.

However, there are many who oppose these type of educational reforms. Many parents who firmly believe that such reforms may dilute the seriousness of the students in studies and examinations. According to them, this may dilute the competitive spirit of the students itself where there are limited opportunities for higher education and employment whereas the society consist of unlimited seekers.

Impact

About 1000 Delhi government schools are teaching the happiness curriculum to 1.6 million pupils daily (The New Indian Express, 2020). Several media outlets, including Le Monde, and NPR, and Forums like the World Economic Forum, praised the curriculum and referred to it as a "reformative step" for Indian schooling. Many institutional leaders, academics, and representatives from other state governments in India and abroad have attended happiness classes. Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand in India have both adopted versions of the curriculum (Mishra, 2019).

The United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, and Nepal are all getting ready to start similar programmes (Online Daily, 2020). The state government of Maharashtra instructed the government schools to start the day for children with mindfulness in a circular that was issued on June 30, 2022. The circular states that the pupils' self-awareness will be developed within the first 35 minutes of class. The happiness syllabus was also introduced in the state-run schools by the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government in August 2022. The government first intended to implement the happiness course — known as the Realisation Curriculum — in 15 districts and 10 schools, including Ayodhya (Nazir, 2022).

Conclusion

The initiative by the Delhi UT Administration focused on building mental health and spiritual strength of young students. To enhance the thrust on holistic development and psycho-social health of the students, application of the Arts Based Therapy (ABT) techniques may be considered. 'ABT tools and techniques, being non-judgemental and non-intrusive in their approaches could be used widely in the field of educational guidance and counselling.   Incorporation of ABT in counselling sessions may enable the students to be more expressive as well as share their thoughts, feelings and emotions effortlessly' (Parvathi, 2017).   While more structural changes, educational reforms are needed, introduction of happiness curriculum in schools is a welcome addition to the educational system.

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Background

"Health is the greatest of human blessings," said Hippocrates. In India, 2.68 crore individuals, or 2.21 percent of the population, are differently-abled. Males make up 56 percent of the differently-abled population (1.5 crore), while females make up 44 percent (1.18 crore). India is ranked 178th out of 195 countries in the world and last among the BRICS countries for access to and quality of healthcare. India continues to have a low ranking in terms of access to healthcare, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study that was published in the Lancet. India has failed to meet its healthcare objectives as evidenced by its ranking below nations like China, Sri Lanka, and even Bangladesh (DTE., n.d.).

The nation's ranking in the healthcare index has improved by 14.1 points. In 1990, it was 30.7 vis-à-vis 44.8 in 2015. (DTE., n.d.). This has become possible partly because of continued budgetary interventions in the health sector, and partly because of unique initiatives of the governments. In this case study, we shall examine the utility of the famed 'Mohalla Clinics' of the Delhi government and understand its impact on the people of Delhi.

About the Mohalla Clinics

Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics (AAMC), sometimes referred to as Mohalla Clinics, are primary healthcare facilities in the Indian states of Punjab and the union territory of Delhi. They provide a minimal set of complimentary basic healthcare services, such as prescription drugs, diagnostic testing, and consultations. These 'neighborhood or community clinics' provide prompt treatments, operate as the

population's initial point of contact, and lower the state's high referral rates to secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities. The Mohalla Clinics offer 212 tests (Mohalla Clinic). Some of the tests include Stool routine, Total Leucocytic Count (TLC), Platelet count, Blood gas analysis with electrolytes, Tests for Sickling/Hb HPLC, etc. In addition, the Mohalla Clinics also offer 110 types of medicines and ointments (Mohalla Clinic). Some of them include Tab - Chlorpheniramine maleate 4mg, Tab - Iron Folic Acid (A), Acyclovir oint, Syrup Antacid, Calamine lotion, Tab - Thyroxin 25 mg, etc.

Numerous outside experts, opposition parties, and journalists were interested in these institutions, so they visited the clinics, looked at how they ran, and spoke with patients. Most of the visitors applauded the concept and mentioned that there was a high demand for the services provided by these clinics. In a December 2016 editorial, the top medical journal The Lancet noted that there was "a network of local mohalla clinics that are successfully serving populations that are otherwise deprived of health services." The clinics were praised by a number of international and Indian newspapers, who claimed that they would fulfil the fundamental requirements of universal health coverage, increase access to high-quality healthcare for the most vulnerable populations, and reduce the financial burden associated with that

₹500 - ₹2000 / month
Avg. money saved / household of 5

1 productive business day
Time in traffic saved

1.6 Crore OPDs in hospitals avoided
Hospital footfall reduction

1 per 20000 Target. 1 per 60000 achieved
Clinic / population

₹500 Crore worth of economic boost
Economic growth (savings, doctor's hiring, rental income)

10000+ Jobs created
Jobs creation

access. According to the Delhi government's unpublished figures, 40–50% of all patients who visited these clinics were first-time visitors to a government hospital (Lahariya, 2017). The lower patient load is acknowledged by many unqualified health service providers who operate 'illegal clinics' in the locations where Mohalla Clinics have now been established.

Replicability of the Initiative

The Mohalla Clinic initiative of the Delhi government has been widely replicated across other states of India. Information regarding the same can be found on the Mohalla Clinic website.
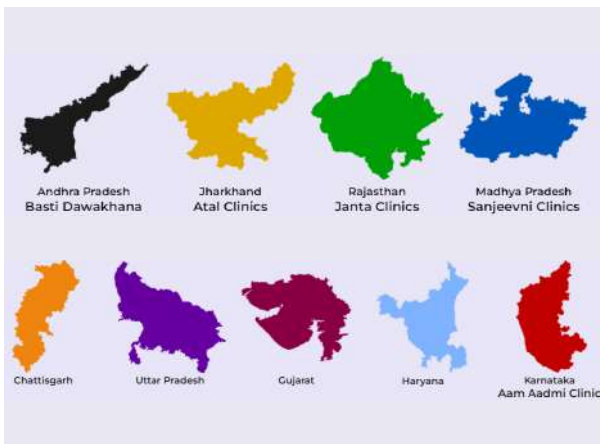
Conclusion

To monitor and augment the efforts in the heath sector, the NITI Aayog has been preparing the National Health Index. It is reported that 'The efforts, research, the commitment and the hard work involved in constructing a National Heath Index since 2017 is commendable. The Index has the potential to serve as an instrument in improving population health and understanding the variations in the complexity of the nation's improvement in health' (Chathukulam, 2023).

With a high level of attention from Indian states, mohalla clinics have elevated health in Delhi states' political discourse and agenda. These clinics provide services for the individual's (diagnostic and curative) health; however, enhancing PHC would need a comprehensive strategy and more focus on population - and/or public health services through targeted initiatives. While some people would like to think of mohalla clinics as an alternative healthcare facility, the idea has the potential to start a revolution in the Indian healthcare industry. It is suggested that in addition to creating new facilities, much can be built upon the infrastructure already in place for the health system, such as dispensaries, and the convergence of how these clinics operate with other current or planned mechanisms, such as U-PHC under NUHM.

Contact Details

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Background

According to the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report for 2020–21, the total number of students enrolled from preschool through higher education has exceeded 26.44 crores ((GoI, n.d.), This Ministry of Education figure is noteworthy because enrolment has been constant for the last three years. Similarly, there has not been much of a shift in the number of teachers by classes taught at the Higher Secondary level from 6.3 lakhs to 6.6 lakhs. However, there has been a huge improvement in the proportion of schools with particular infrastructure facilities. The bar graph below highlights this trend.

Even while we can be proud that the government has been spending a large amount of money to upgrade school facilities, the public-private partnership model has not yet been completely investigated. We will examine the 'Nadakkavu model' of Kozhikode, Kerala, in this Case Study and gain intriguing insights into the growth of the education infrastructure.

About the Initiative

A Higher Secondary School for girls has been operating in the commercial locality of Nadakkavu in the Kozhikode district of Kerala for more than 120 years. Over the years, the school's condition deteriorated to the point of being almost completely wrecked. But in 2012, when the school rose to prominence as a shining example of the public-private partnership (PPP) model of development,
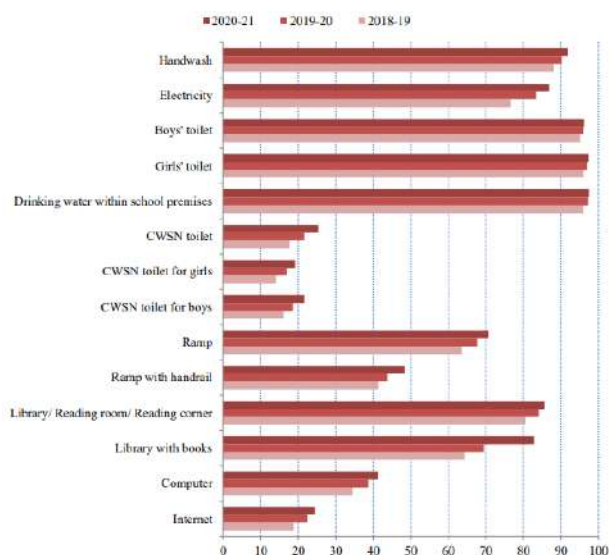
everything began to change. The United Arab Emirates-based Faizal and Shabana Foundation (FSF) funded the construction of the school, which also benefited from the technical know-how of Infosys, a global leader in Information Technology, and the educational know-how of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K).

Shri. Faizal EK and his wife Smt. Shabana started the FSF as a Non-Profit Organization. They are the owners of KEF Holdings, a company with extensive commercial interests in infrastructure, healthcare, education, metals, and investments. Shri. Faizal recalls that the story behind the renovation of the Higher Secondary School in Nadakkavu involves a remarkable coincidence. "The Nadakkavu School project was a coincidence. I was in Kerala for a few days where I was told about the government schools in the region. There are 1.2 million government schools in India and almost all of them have poor infrastructure and fail to make a big impact. Upon my return to Dubai, I received a call from Mr. Pradeep Kumar, MLA, Calicut. He expressed his concerns and plans for the Nadakkavu School and we decided to revamp it over the next few weeks," recalls Faizal (Kargeti, 2016).

The reconstruction, which was initiated in response to concerns raised by Shri Pradeep Kumar, MLA, is a pioneer in offering top-notch amenities to kids in the State. The project's overall cost was 17 crores, and it was known as Promoting Regional Schools to International Standards through Multiple Interventions (PRISM). New classrooms, a well-stocked library, a modern kitchen, a canteen, an AstroTurf stadium, restrooms, a multipurpose hall, and an interactive science center are some of the amenities that have been included in the long list of interventions. Spread across 150,000 square feet area, the Nadakkavu School was turned over to the Government authorities in December 2013 after barely 10 months of repair work (Kargeti, 2016).

Students are particularly happy with the new developments. "Earlier when I left for school, no one bothered, not my mother, not the people on the roads, nor the staff of the private bus I took. I was just another girl. But today, when I come to school in this wonderful uniform it makes me stand out as a Nadakkavu student" said a student from class XI (Kargeti, 2016).

Another important indicator of the pupils' growth was thought to be the improvement in the quality of teaching. PRISM included teacher training as an essential component. Shri Joseph Sebastian, the head of FSF, informed YourStory about the teaching faculties and noted that "We have teachers who are working long hours and beyond their normal call of duty to make a difference in the lives of children. The teachers in the government schools are the best of all teachers as they go through the Public Service Commission tests. So we do have good teachers of high calibre. The challenge has been the opportunities, ambiance, and motivation. PRISM project and involvement of Foundation has been able to bring this aspect among the teachers" (Kargeti, 2016).

Impacts

The outcomes have been encouraging - from a failing institution, Nadakkavu has grown to become one of the top three public schools in the nation, with enrolments increasing by more than 100% and academic performance improving by more than 400%. This approach has been used in more than 70 schools in Kerala, and many more are in the planning and execution stages. The school has gained a reputation as a case study in education transformation and similar initiatives are now replicated in other States like Tamil Nadu and Jammu Kashmir.

Similar Initiatives

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir signed a Memorandum of Undertaking with the Kozhikode-based FSF to introduce the Nadakkavu Model in the Government Higher Secondary School for Girls in Kothibagh, Srinagar. Expressing confidence in this endeavor, Shri. Tassaduq Hussain Mir, the Director of the School of Education, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir said "We are confident that this collaboration between the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and the Faizal and Shabana Foundation will create a brighter future for the students of Kashmir and contribute to the development of a robust educational system" (South First, 2023).

Conclusion

In the state of Kerala, the Nadakkavu model has experienced tremendous success. For roughly 350 vacancies, the school received more than 1000 applications between 2013 and 2016. According to reports, at least 65 schools have replicated the Nadakkavu model, and more than 250 schools have visited the school to learn about its success. The Government of Kerala decided to emphasize Higher Secondary education, drawing inputs from this initiative. The government earmarked 1000 crores specifically designated for the development of 1000 more Government schools along the Nadakkavu model (Kargeti, 2016). As the model is being widely imitated, High-quality education has been given priority at a time when public scrutiny of school facilities has increased. Indeed, such initiatives are a source of deep satisfaction for every Indian.

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kerala-to-modernise-government-schools/

Door-Step Delivery of Services (Delhi)

Background

The Government of Delhi established the doorstep delivery of public services to ensure an equally accessible public service delivery system and to assist individuals in dealing with the aforementioned difficulties. The initiative was started in three phases: 30 services in September 2018, 40 services in March 2019, and another 30 in September 2019, totaling 100 services. This new governance reform has completely altered the model of public service delivery. Instead of citizens needing to go to government buildings, the Government of Delhi chose to deliver public services to their homes (DDCI, 2023).

About the Initiative

Generally, citizens in India perceive accessing government services as a challenge. Long lines at government offices, inconsistencies in documentation, and minor bribes as a courtesy charge have historically been major barriers to accessing public services. A survey conducted during the project's feasibility stage revealed that more than half of respondents had to visit an office more than once to obtain a single service, while around 30% had to rely on intermediaries to obtain public services.

The Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) has advised the Administrative Reforms Department since the project's conceptualization phase. Since its inception in 2019, DDC has provided advisory support to the project's implementation and has addressed emerging challenges (DDCI, 2023).

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government of Delhi plans to resume home delivery of services under the Sarkar Aapke Dwar (Doorstep Delivery Scheme).

Citizens will now be able to access 100 public services from 14 different departments through this scheme. People can now simply dial the 1076 number, register their information, and a facilitator will arrive at their door with the necessary paperwork to complete their work. One could check out the whole list of doorstep delivery services notified by the Government of Delhi through Phases 1, 2, and 3.

The individual who comes to deliver the service would charge Rs. 50 and would complete all of the formalities on his tablet at the people's doorstep itself. Citizens no longer have to visit government offices. People can now schedule appointments at their homes at any time they want. As a result, the Doorstep Delivery Scheme eliminates the need for middlemen to get welfare services. Approximately 25 lakh people applied for these services in 2017. This scheme has been on hold for the past five months owing to Coronavirus, but it has recently resumed (Chhabra, 2023).

Currently, Doorstep Delivery offers 100 services from 14 departments, including services from the departments of transport (such as license renewal), revenue (such as caste certificates), and women and children's development (such as widow pension scheme), among others. The Government of Delhi intends to broaden the project's scope to include 200 more services during the period 2022–2033 (DDCI, 2023).

According to a government announcement on February 9, 2022, the Government of Delhi would introduce a redesigned version of its popular doorstep delivery of services programme after hiring two commercial organizations for field work and increasing the number of services from 100 to 300. The Delhi government is getting ready to introduce a brand-new paradigm of doorstep public service delivery, with new organizations joining for field services. The former agency VFS Global will be replaced by the personnel agencies CSC e-Governance and Core Doc2. The two private organizations will meet 70% and 30%, respectively, of the demand. Around 150 Mobile sahayaks, supervisors, and coordinators are available to guarantee efficient doorstep delivery of services.

With 80 devoted call center agents, the Doorstep Delivery Scheme has a strong infrastructure. To date, these representatives have answered more than 25 lakh phone calls and handled more than 5 lakh service requests. For the doorstep delivery of public services programme, the Government of Delhi is also creating a new and improved software application.

The Government of Delhi hopes to scale up and improve service efficiency with the addition of two additional contractors, but it also wants to solve even the smallest operational issues. The motive behind the initiative is to ensure that no Delhi resident has to spend extra time, money, or effort to access any government service.

Replicability of the Initiative

On average, the initiative presently serves 10,000 residents every month on average and plans to expand the system's capabilities. The project's ability to overcome obstacles and perform better in each phase has been greatly aided by DDC. The DDC offered research assistance at the preliminary stage to evaluate the project's viability. It also assisted in facilitating communication between the various departments during the development phase to determine which services would be most appropriate and beneficial to include in such a model. In addition, the members of the DDC offered consulting assistance in the creation of the software, in the evaluation of call center vendors, and in the service's grievance redressal procedure.

Doorstep Public Service Delivery adheres to good governance principles and embodies democratic, transparent, responsive, effective, and accountable governance. States including West Bengal and Chhattisgarh have drawn inspiration from Delhi's Doorstep Delivery of Public Services model, demonstrating its widespread acceptability as a good governance model (DDCI, 2023). Govt. of Kerala also initiated Vaathilppadi Sevanam (Door step delivery of services) as a pilot project in 50 Local Government Institutions across the State in September, 2021.

Challenges

The biggest obstacle that the Government of Delhi faced was the delay in receipt of approval from the head of the State, the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi. In most cases, when any proposal is presented to the LG, either it gets rejected or returned for reconsideration. The LG's office objected to this initiative as the addition of another layer of human contact with its attendant issues, including concerns about the safety and security of women and senior citizens, the risk of corruption, delays, bad behavior, document loss, breach of privacy, and so on. It was also commented that the initiative was an unnecessary expense to the Government of Delhi and its citizens.

The opposition from the numerous departments that offer this service was another difficulty. There were about 400 such services, which fell under the purview of around 35 departments. These divisions objected to having their services consolidated under a single umbrella. The program's implementation was significantly delayed due to departmental and service-related quirks. Despite some resistance, the departments eventually aligned with the initiative because the Government of Delhi fully supported and endorsed it. The doorstep delivery of services received some unfavorable feedback from the public in the beginning. Some have criticized the mobile sahayaks for not being fully trained to understand the details and procedures surrounding the service. The opposition party slandered the services by alleging that the helpline was inoperable (Claudia, 2022).

Conclusion

The Door Step Delivery Scheme is an important initiative made for providing quality services to the public with lesser cost, lesser time, and lesser difficulties. Residents will be able to access hundreds of services from the comfort of their own homes at a low cost. The Government of Delhi intends to expand the scheme to include more services, with the ultimate goal of providing greater home delivery of food rations, and entitlements (rice, wheat, and sugar) for the needy. In a country like India, where the penetration of computers and digital literacy is still very low and expanding slowly, such a project might save time, money, and effort for the most disadvantaged groups while also improving their access to government services.

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Giving Wings to the Dreams of Civil Service Aspirants (Kerala)

Background

Even though education is a fundamental right, many children in India still find it a distant dream. Numerous communities and groups, including women and members of underprivileged sections, have historically been denied access to education. To address this issue, Shri. Najeeb Kanthapuram, MLA of Perinthalmanna Assembly Constituency in Kerala started the initiative, Knowledge Resource Empowerment Activities (KREA). This case study outlines the initiative of Giving wings to the dreams of civil service aspirants by the MLA.

About the Initiative

Shri. Najeeb Kanthapuram, MLA and a former Journalist had the idea to encourage education among his supporters, the majority of whom come from marginalized groups. Immediately after getting elected to the Legislative Assembly, he started working on the Knowledge Resource Empowerment Activities (KREA). Underprivileged pupils in the first grade of primary school received the training first, followed by middle school students who wanted to join the National Maritime Services.

He established a residential institute in 2022, named after Hyder Ali Shihab Thangal, to prepare candidates for the civil service. It was established in a record-breaking period of less than three months and presently offers free coaching to civil service aspirants, who are chosen through a scientific process. The students attending the sessions were also provided food, at no cost. The MLA mentioned that "I don't charge them even for basic food" (Shivani, 2023).

Every month, Shri. Najeeb invests around Rs. 16 lakhs towards the functioning of the residential institute. Many people came forward to offer support to the functioning of the Institute. He mentioned "There are many good people in this world who have stretched out their hands to help the poor. I was overwhelmed by the response I got. People from as far as UAE chipped in when they learned about my initiative" (Shivani, 2023). Free iron rods and cement were supplied by some and free cement by others. Few others offered free land, while many others gave financial contributions.

At the KREA, Shri. Neeraj Nachiketa serves as a visiting faculty. He also teaches science and technology in addition to the environment. He says, "Most institutes across the country, be it in Delhi, Mumbai or any other place are money-minting machines. People earn crores but don't give back anything to society. This is the first institute that I teach in that is based on the concept of giving back to society" (Shivani, 2023).

Before selection, pupils are screened rigorously. Five thousand applications were received for the initial batch, out of which only 100 deserving candidates were chosen. Shri. Najeeb says, "There were two students whose families had zero annual income. There are children of poor fisher folk, daily wagers. Each has a dream. I wanted to be their stairs to fulfil their dream" (Shivani, 2023).

However, the economic viability of initiatives like KREA could not be ignored in view of its sustainability. Donations from philanthropists, corporale social responsibility (CSR) support, etc shall be explored in addition to ensuring the honorary services of educationists, retired teachers, professionals and practitioners to handle the sessions.

Conclusion

In India, there are over 300 entrance exams, and the government holds roughly 50 exams for employment in the government. Our vast population, which is continually expanding, is one of the key causes of these examinations being so competitive. The exams are difficult since it becomes difficult to select deserving people from among the millions of other applicants. This also implies that many worthy candidates fall short of passing examinations because of challenges like high study costs, lack of tutoring, and socio-economic circumstances. Given this, Shri. Najeeb Kanthapuram's KREA initiative assumes significance as such initiatives have been giving wings to the dreams of those young aspirants for civil services, in a nation where employment with the government continues to excite many.

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Plastic-Free Village

Background

Many times, it is noted that a woman's career in politics is either underprivileged, underestimated, or ends up with character assassination. The traditional stereotype backed up by the patriarchal culture of Indian society is mostly responsible for it. Even though there is provision for not less than one-third reservation of women for their representation in Local Government Institutions, the situation on the ground has not been satisfying. In many villages, the 'Sarpanch Pati' overlooks all the activities. But the picture is now changing, and many young, educated, and dynamic women are coming forward and breaking such stereotypes. One such example is Smt. Priyanka Tiwari from Rajpur village in Uttar Pradesh.

About the Initiative

Smt. Priyanka Tiwari, the young and educated sarpanch from Rajpur village of Uttar Pradesh is breaking the traditional gender stereotypes and developing her village as well as establishing herself through development politics.

Smt. Priyanka was born in Rajasthan and raised in Delhi. She is graduated in mass communication. She did not have any great ideas and aspirations when she moved to Rajpur village in Uttar Pradesh, after getting married. The village was tough to live in since it lacked effective administration and functionality. Some of the problems were poor waste management, broken drains, and the absence of a crematorium.

Smt. Priyanka, as a socially conscious person, frequently spoke with her in-laws about her desire to make improvements in the village. Her husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law are also well-educated. They agreed to support Smt. Priyanka and encouraged her to pursue her journey. The father-in-law believed that the 2021 Panchayat elections would provide the perfect platform for her to demonstrate her skills and commitment. He said to Smt. Priyanka, "If you want to bring about a change in this place, this is a golden chance." Subsequently, she contested the election for the post of Sarpanch and eventually got elected (Manoj, 2022). As soon as she became the Sarpanch of the Rajpur village, the first step she took was to issue a notice to ban the use of plastic in the village. It shows her long-term vision as she understood it takes time to reduce plastic consumption.

For this battle against plastic, she came up with some novel ideas and innovative practices such as giving rewards in terms of money for collecting plastics from the village, constructing plastic banks to collect the waste, conducting awareness sessions in schools and colleges, as well as distributing cloth bags to shopkeepers, roadside vendors, and houses. Additionally, sessions were organized for raising awareness among the villagers regarding the hazardous effects of plastic use. At the same time, several strict measures were also taken such as imposing a fine on shopkeepers who violate the plastic ban. There was a fine of Rs. 500 for first-time offenders and Rs. 1000 for second-time offenders; if they repeat the offense, the shop's license would be cancelled (Manoj, 2022).

Along with this initiative, the Panchayat's notable accomplishments include establishing a library in the Panchayat, creating a crematorium, and establishing community soak pits. Ms. Priyanka Tiwari was invited to National Conference on Water Sufficient Panchayat, Clean & Green

Panchayat, and Healthy Panchayat that was held as recently as 24th April 2023, where she gave a presentation that highlights the unique initiative to transform Rajpur as a 'Plastic-free village' through sustained efforts and community participation.

Impact

All these activities taken up under this initiative resulted in the reduction of plastic use by 70–75%. Smt. Priyanka said, "My dream is to bring this number to 95 % in the upcoming two years. I hope the awareness programs for the elders and children will help these processes to continue even after my tenure as the sarpanch" (Manoj, 2022).

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has also established a plastic collection center after being inspired by the Rajpur village initiative. The collected waste is converted into granules, which are then provided to the Public Works Department (PWD) for mixing with the bitumen in the construction of roads.

Conclusion

The case study on Plastic Free Village highlights the process of women empowerment at the village level in Hindi heartland. The initiative has enormous potential for replication keeping in view the health hazards of plastic. Within a year of assuming charge as the Sarpanch,

this enthusiastic young woman made significant efforts to transform the panchayat. Recently, Rajpur Village Panchayat earned Rs. 9 lacks as part of the Chief Minister's Award. She intends to use that prize money to build a Reverse Osmosis Drinking Water plant in the village. This manifests the level of change that can be triggered when passionate young people get a chance to become elected functionaries. Being the most populous nation in the world, the participation of young people irrespective of their social identities like religion, caste, class, gender, etc. in formal political and governance processes is the crux of healthy and meaningful democracy which ultimately leads to development from the grassroots levels.

Contact

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Ladli Laxmi Yojana
(Madhya Pradesh)

Background

The Ladli Laxmi Yojana is a scheme by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to promote girls' education and welfare. The scheme provides financial assistance to needy families for the education and marriage of their daughter(s). After assuming the office of Chief Minister in 2005, Shri. Shivraj Singh Chouhan conceptualized the Ladli Laxmi Yojana and the scheme was launched in 2007. The scheme aims to curb female foeticide and to create a positive attitude towards the birth of a girl child. Also, the scheme aims to prevent child marriages. The program is designed for girls born on or after January 1, 2006. Several lakhs of Ladli Laxmi girls were enrolled under the scheme along with their family members.

About the scheme

Under the Ladli Laxmi Yojana, the Government of Madhya Pradesh provides financial assistance to families of newborn girls in the state. The scheme covers families who have an annual income of less than Rs. 120,000. The scheme provides a grant of Rs. 6,000 to families at the time of the birth of a girl child. This grant is deposited in a bank account opened in the name of the girl child and can only be withdrawn when she turns 18 years of age.

In addition to the grant provided at birth, the State Government also provides financial assistance for the education of the girl child. The scheme provides a scholarship of Rs. 2,000 to girls who pass their class 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th examinations. The scholarship amount is increased to Rs. 4,000 for girls who pass their class 10th examination. Additionally, a sum of Rs. 1,000 is provided for purchasing school uniforms for girls from class 1 to class 8.

To avail themselves of the benefits of the scheme, families must apply for the scheme within a year of the birth of the girl child. The application can be made at any government office or online. The scheme has been successful in promoting the education and welfare of girls in the state of Madhya Pradesh and has received widespread appreciation for its effectiveness..

During the initial phase of the Ladli Laxmi Yojana, the benefits under the scheme were offered only up to the 12th standard for girls who were registered under the program. Today, many of these girls are pursuing higher education after completing their 12th standard. To support their bright futures and promote self-reliance, the government has launched Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0. With this, the Government of Madhya Pradesh aims to cover the costs of girls' education upon completing 16 years of Ladli Laxmi Yojana.

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh announced that the state government would pay the tuition fees for female students attending colleges of Medicine, Engineering, and Law as well. Shri. Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in the speech, "We have decided that under the Ladli Laxmi Yojana, Shivraj 'Mama' will pay the tuition fees for Engineering, Law, IIT, and medical colleges instead of the parents."

'Ladli Utsav' is being celebrated in every city and panchayat across the state of Madhya Pradesh from May 9 to 15 under which various competitions, programs, and health check-ups are organized. Special efforts are also made for women's empowerment across the state.

Impact of the scheme

As of April 2022, the Ladli Laxmi Yojana has successfully registered approximately 42 lakh girls in Madhya Pradesh. The scheme has disbursed scholarship amounts totaling Rs. 231 crores to over 9 lakh girl students. The state has also witnessed an increase in the birth rate of girls, with the number rising from 927 to 956 per thousand (News on Air, 2022).
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Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0

The launch event of Ladli Laxmi 2.0 was held at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal. The girls registered under the scheme are eligible to receive an incentive amount of Rs 25,000 in two installments for pursuing higher education.

Ladli Laxmi 2.0 aims to encourage daughters to pursue higher education and make them financially independent. Gram panchayats that have demonstrated exceptional work towards economic empowerment, skill development, and protection of rights, as well as promoting nutrition, health, and education of girls, will be recognized as "Ladli-friendly" panchayats. This initiative aims to boost the self-confidence of girls and encourage their overall development. These panchayats will be honored for their remarkable contributions to the betterment of girls and the Ladli Laxmi Yojana (ANI 2023).

Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh inaugurated the 'Ladli Laxmi Vatika' at the Smart City Park in Bhopal. This unique garden has been developed with a theme-based approach and is dedicated to the girls registered under the Ladli Laxmi Yojana. This vatika can be used for celebrating birthdays and other events related to girls which will help in reducing the financial burden on the parents of the girl child. The Chief Minister instructed all the District Collectors that one road in each district shall be named as 'Ladli Laxmi Path,' which has not been named after any other person in the past (ANI 2023).

Recently, a study was conducted on Ladli Laxmi Yojana by the Institute of Financial Management Research with the support of UNICEF and the Department of Woman and Child Development, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh. The study highlighted that 98% of the sample respondents were keen to educate the girl child. About 89% of respondents shared that they intended to treat both genders equally. Almost two-thirds of mothers (65%) agreed that their daughters can get married without a dowry. The report also provides recommendations on cash plus to further strengthen the scheme (GoMP., n.d.).

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Challenges

While the Ladli Laxmi Yojana has been successful in promoting the education and welfare of girls in Madhya Pradesh, there are also some challenges associated with the scheme. Many families in rural areas are not aware of the scheme, and hence, do not take advantage of the benefits. The State Government is required to undertake awareness campaigns for greater reach to rural families. Often, there are delays in receiving funds for the families. Also, many times, the funds under this yojana are misused or not disbursed according to the rules.

Conclusion

The Ladli Laxmi Yojana has been a significant step towards promoting the welfare and education of girls in the State of Madhya Pradesh. It has provided financial support to many families for their daughters' birth, education, and marriage. It has encouraged many families to invest more in the education of their girl child. It has made a huge positive impact on the lives of many girls in Madhya Pradesh. However, there is a need to address the challenges and continue improving the scheme's implementation. It is essential for ensuring greater reach to intended beneficiaries for creating a greater impact on gender inequality in the state.

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Gondi Language Dictionary
## (Multiple States)

Introduction

The six states of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh are home to about 12 million Gond Adivasis who speak Gondi (Bhuyan, 2018). None of them, however, speak the same standardized Gondi language. There are various dialects and variants, each unique to the location in which it is spoken and infused with regional influences. A standardized dictionary for the Gondi language is being created by 80 to 100 members of the community, and this case study highlights their innovative project.

About the initiative

On March 26, 2018, at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), 80 Gond tribe members launched the first-ever standardized Gondi dictionary. More than 3,000 words are in the dictionary (The Quint, 2018). CGNet Swara, an Indian voice-based internet platform that enables tribal people in the forests of central India to report local issues founded by Shri. Shubhranshu Chowdhary oversaw the innovative project when it was first introduced in 2014 (The Quint, 2018).

In July 2014, the inaugural meeting was supported by the Ministry of Culture (YourStory 2018). Despite being spoken in more than six states, Gondi has a variety of dialects with regional language influences.
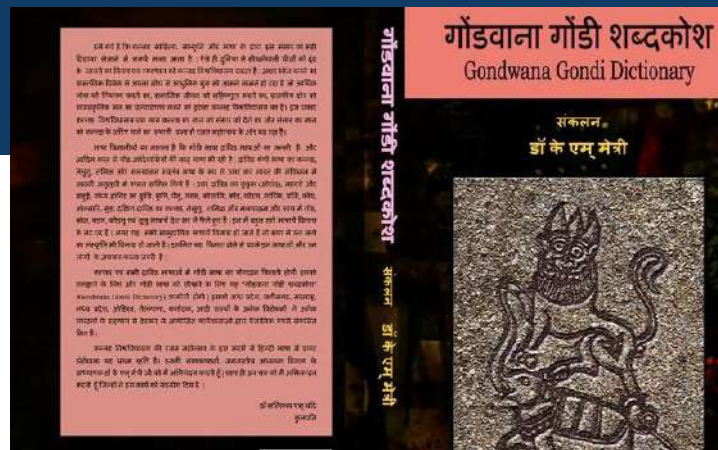
As a result, it becomes challenging for people who speak Gondi but come from various places to converse with one another. Members collaborate for hours on end in a room during the meetings, which are weeklong courses. People from many walks of life attended the eighth meeting, from retired school teachers and reporters to forest inhabitants and farmers.

Professor K. M. Metry of the Tribal Studies department of Kannada University in Hampi remarked. "This is a project for the Gond Adivasis by the Gond Adivasis, thus making it one of the most unique public participation projects" (YourStory, 2018). The audio dictionary is another project that has begun. According to Shri. Shubhranshu Chowdhary, this project will include the recording of the standardized word. Additionally, a partnership with Microsoft Research for an oral dictionary and a device that converts words from Hindi to Gondi and vice versa may be possible (Bhuyan, 2018).

Shubhranshu Choudhary, the creator of CGNet Swara, comments on the long-term advantages of developing a standard lexicon for Gondi, saying, "The community will be able to talk to each other. Before they became a part of this workshop process, the participants from different regions could barely communicate with each other. We hope there will be genuine cooperation with this initiative. People from Chhattisgarh also need to know how Adilabad, which was once a Naxal hotbed, abjured violence and embarked on a path of peace and reconciliation" (Bhura, 2018).

Presence of uninterrupted power, internet facility with adequate bandwidth, availability of voice-based Net connectivity, Voice/Speech to Text software, etc. could contribute positively to enhance the reach and extent of this initiative.

Conclusion

According to some estimates, there are around 12 million Gonds, making them one of the largest tribal groupings in the world. They are classified as scheduled tribes in the following states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, and West Bengal (Bhura 2018). They are thought to be of Dravidian ancestry. But most of them are centered in central India, which is also known by the name Gondwana among indigenous peoples. The standardizing project is a significant step towards the formation of India's scheduled language. Similar initiatives could be considered for other tribal languages and dialects as well.
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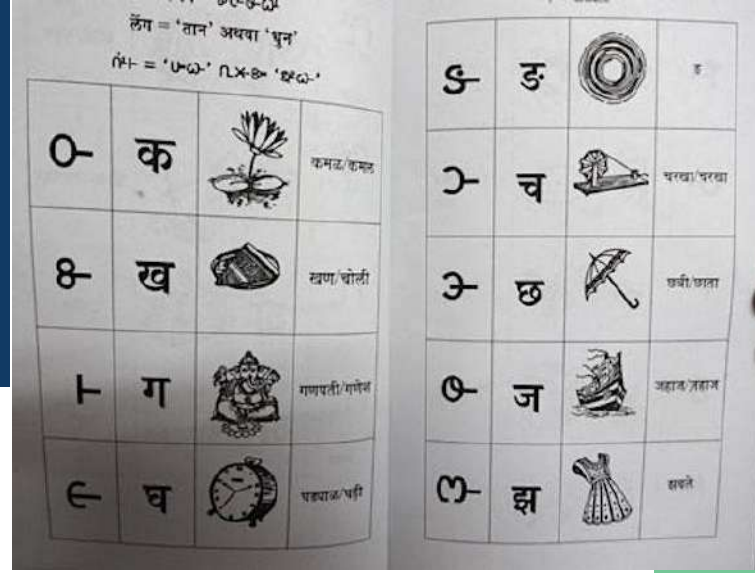
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Initiative to Re-enrol the School Dropouts
(Uttar Pradesh)

35

Background

Education is important to develop an overall personality as well as to prepare the next generations for their roles and responsibilities in society. It is also an instrument to achieve individual mobility in society and live a life with dignity and propriety. As mentioned in the preamble, the Indian constitution also secures all its citizens' equality of status and opportunity. So, it is the fundamental right of every citizen in our country. Education has long been seen as a means of promoting social mobility, particularly for underprivileged populations in India. However, the issues like school dropout restrict this vital aim of education. This complex issue has negative consequences on individuals, society, and the overall nation's progress.

Despite the efforts by the various stakeholders including the government, the issue has remained continually high in several districts of Uttar Pradesh (Hindustan Times, 2021). Currently, the state is facing the issues like the migration of its huge youth population to other states of India to work in unorganized sectors. The high dropout rates from schools and colleges might be one of the reasons behind this. Being the most populous state in India, it has the potential to use human resources in a better way, and the recent initiative of the state government to mitigate the school dropout rates in the state can be considered as a right step in this direction.

About the Initiative

To ensure that every child in the state, particularly those between the age group of 6 and 14 years, has access to education, the State Government of Uttar Pradesh government is considering re-enrolling school dropouts. Along with other awareness-raising initiatives aimed at encouraging parents to educate their children, the government is acting to re-admit pupils who had left school at some point.
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An 'Early Warning System' (EWS) has been developed in the Netherlands to prevent students from dropping out of school. As per this system, a child is tracked by the authorities if she/he misses school for more than 40 days. To ensure that the child returns to school, the parents or guardians are then contacted.

According to the State Govt. spokesperson, Uttar Pradesh is also preparing a framework for re-enrolling school dropouts on the same line as the Netherlands' model (IANS, 2023). The state also intends to launch several awareness programs to persuade parents to send their children to school in addition to using the 'Netherlands model'.

To learn about their creative strategies for reducing school dropouts, the 15-member delegation led by Shri. Sandeep Singh, the Basic Education Minister, traveled to the European country in April 2023. The education authorities' main takeaways from this visit included freedom for schools and giving children the greatest amount of flexibility to continue their education with a variety of options along with academic and vocational studies. A report on the lessons learned will be presented to Chief Minister Shri. Yogi Adityanath by the team accompanied by UNICEF officials (Jain, 2023).

Children are given special attention to ensure they develop the skills necessary to function in the workforce. The team also gained knowledge of the leave approval mechanism. According to Ardito Aurelia, an educator in Delhi and a specialist for UNICEF, "The Netherlands has a system of excused and unexcused leaves. Children are supposed to take leaves from schools and schools only grant leaves as per government-authorized excused leaves. Unexcused leaves are considered absences from schools. Schools are penalized if excused leaves are granted for reasons not authorized by the state. For excused leaves, schools must inform authorities" (Jain, 2023).

"While UP has already introduced EWS in 150 schools of the Devi Patan division, there are some good practices in the Netherlands that can be adopted to enhance the program," said Ritwik Patra, an education specialist at UNICEF (Jain, 2023).

Challenges

The issue of dropout has several factors including socioeconomic background and other identification markers including gender, caste, and religion. According to Devi and Ray (2022), "In the absence of control over material resources historically, education offered promise in liberating socially excluded groups for its instrumental link with modern occupational structure". Dalit youth are primarily educated in low-quality distance learning and social sciences programs (Devi & Ray 2022). Therefore, it becomes important to consider all such societal factors while addressing the issue of school dropouts and making education an instrument for social mobility.

Conclusion

The cornerstone of a prosperous and empowered society is education. A nation's development depends greatly on its level of education. But officials and educators have been very concerned about dropout rates in Indian schools because there is a big problem when a child doesn't go to school. Therefore, the nation adheres firmly to the legal obligation to ensure that no child is left behind, and both schools and parents have equal responsibility for this. Here, with this initiative, the government of Uttar Pradesh seems to be taking the responsibility on its shoulder. Such initiatives could be visualised and operated under the No Cost/ Low Cost projects' under the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and could be effectively implemented and monitored with the ownership of the Local Governments.

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Waste is wealth at the wrong place
(Multiple States)

Background

India has serious problems with trash generation, inadequate garbage collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal, which have a negative impact on its economy, ecology, and health. Numerous projects have been launched to address the threat of waste. Improper waste management in India has a severe negative influence on the environment and public health. A long-term plan must be created in order to meet the challenges that solid waste management in Indian cities will face in the future, in addition to resolving the immediate environmental and public health issues caused by the current solid waste management system.

Waste Management in India

Solid waste, e-waste, liquid waste, plastic waste, metal waste, and nuclear waste are the main categories of waste. These can be divided into two categories: wet waste and dry waste (both of which degrade). According to the Municipal Solid Waste Management handling guidelines from 2000, it is the responsibility of the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to collect, transport, dispose of, and separate solid waste. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), India's Sewage Treatment Facilities (STPs) can only manage slightly more than a third of the sewage produced every day. Most landfills in India are bigger than their permitted 20-meter height limit and capacity. These locations reportedly encompass more than 10,000 hectares of urban land.

Additionally, a lot of communities are turning to waste-to-energy facilities, which are waste management facilities that burn waste to make electricity. In India, 11 facilities that convert garbage into energy are currently in operation. These plants need segregated waste to operate properly, yet even then they don't generate enough energy.
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Waste to Wealth Mission

The Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC) has nine scientific missions, one of which is the Waste to Wealth Mission. The Government of India's Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) is in charge of the mission. In order to create energy, recycle materials, and extract valuable resources from trash, the mission intends to identify, develop, and implement waste treatment technologies.

Significance of Waste to Wealth

The Indian 'Waste-to-Energy' and Waste Management market is anticipated to be worth $14 billion by 2025. Every year, India's 1.3 billion people generate 62 million tons of municipal solid waste (Satish, 2022).

If garbage is not managed, landfills about 90% of the size of Bengaluru will be required for dumping at the current exponential population and urban growth pace. Though growing urbanization is a huge concern, with the correct policy framework and effort, it may be turned into a magnificent opportunity.

Benefits

In many waste management sub-sectors, including municipal solid waste, electronic waste, bio-medical waste, agricultural waste, and others, India offers opportunities. By 2050, it is anticipated that India would be able to produce 3GW of power from waste (Satish, 2022).

Conclusion

Building waste-to-energy facilities requires financing. This support must be given to fledgling businesses and innovative ideas. All municipal governments should have access to landfills in proportion to the waste they produce after recycling. Producers might be assessed a new tax based on how much waste they generate.

Innovative ideas and emerging businesses require financial support to construct waste-to-energy facilities. In proportion to the waste they produce after recycling, all local governments should supply landfills. It would be possible to enact a new tax that would assess producers based on how much waste they generate.

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Background

The incidents of violence against women and children have been on the rise across the world, which is quite alarming. While giving the reasons behind this, Kamala Bhasin noted that the archetypal patriarchal ideas, which are hard for males to accept, have been shattered by changes in gender roles and relationships brought about by socio-economic changes in modern times. Erosion of male supremacy, power, and privileges especially in education and employment has led to psychological and social problems leading to frustration and anger manifested as the increase of violence against women, violent crimes, and higher incidences of drug abuse and alcoholism (Bhasin, 2004).

In various forums, including those of international and national conventions and conferences, the causes, effects, and potential remedies are being explored. It is important to note that sincere steps are being taken at the national and international levels to address this serious injustice. The report of the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB, 2019) shows that most cases of crime against women under IPC section 498 A, were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (30.9%) followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (21.8%), 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (17.9%) and 'Rape' (7.9%) (NCRB, 2019).

In Kerala, Local Government Institutions (LGI) established the Jagratha Samithi (vigilant committee) as an oversight organization to handle such problems. So, considering the rise in gender-based violence in society, it is critical to see how Jagratha Samithi is addressing women's issues and removing the underlying causes of discrimination against women in Kerala. This case study examines the potential of LGIs in addressing issues like violence against women through the Jagratha Samithi in the state of Kerala.

About the Initiative

Despite Kerala having a greater literacy rate than the rest of the country, it is apparent that various forms of sexual harassment, child marriage, and domestic violence continue to be barriers to the advancement of women in Kerala. State regulations fall short of their goals when it comes to preventing violence against women and girls. There were 9381 crimes against women in 2007 in the state. By the end of 2019, that number had increased to 13925, and by October 2020, it had decreased to 10124 (Varghese, 2021).

Such offenses can be avoided with the aid of governmental regulations, financial assistance, and cultural developments in favour of gender equality. As a result, safeguarding and fostering the development of women and children is one of the government's most crucial duties. So, to stop all forms of violence against women, the Govt. of Kerala created a vigilant committee in 1997, which was run by the Kerala Women's Commission at the Local Government Institutions.

The primary responsibility of the Jagratha Samithi is to strengthen local support networks and coordinate various networking systems to find the best solution. Women's difficulties are being treated at the local level, and the follow-ups are also trouble-free, providing a chance for an easy resolution of the problem.

Jagratha Samithis were established in the framework of the three-tier decentralized governance structure to help more women in all areas of the State. They were meant to assist close the gap between the services the Commission offered and the women in the communities. Hence, every local government in Kerala has established such committees that operate under their supervision and function as a quasi-judicial body to defend the rights of women and children.

Jagratha Samithi was founded on the ideals of gender equity and justice and takes proactive measures to safeguard the safety and security of women by resolving issues connected to the violation of their rights as well as by reacting to complaints. So, it is authorized to carry out a variety of tasks, primarily receiving complaints against women in various forms. Even if the victim did not complain, the Jagratha Samithi has the full authority to

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

prosecute any crimes against women that take place in their panchayat.

Overcoming Challenges

When the Panchayat leadership and officials changed in several of the Panchayats where the Jagratha Samithi was founded, the initial motivation declined. In Panchayats where freshly elected legislators or transferred officials showed no interest in the Jagratha Samithi's operations, the effort eventually lost steam. The Jagratha Samithi can only operate effectively if the Panchayat committee has a strong political will because it is the judiciary of the underprivileged (Deepthi, 2015). Accordingly, the Dept. of Social Justice, Govt. of Kerala formulated a new set of guidelines to regulate and standardise the operations of Jagratha Samithi. As per the guidelines, the Samithi ceases to fall under the jurisdiction of the Kerala Women's Commission and begins operating as a Panchayat mechanism reporting directly to the department with no other restrictions. Together with the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) Supervisor, the Panchayat secretary is responsible for convening meetings. A school counsellor and a member of the Samithi were included in the revised guidelines in addition to other current members. When this becomes an ordinance, Jagratha Samithi will become an obligation of the Panchayat under the Panchayati Raj Act, and interestingly, the ward member has to hold the Samithi once a month as a requirement (Deepthi, 2015). Similarly, the Hindu (2021), also reported that the Jagratha Samithis would be reconstituted at the district, panchayat, and ward levels to monitor domestic abuse and dowry cases at the local level.

According to the report of the National Family Health Survey, women's experience of violence declines sharply with women's schooling and wealth. By schooling, the percentage of women who report physical violence declines from 41 percent among women with no schooling to 17 percent among women with 12 or more years of schooling (NFHS-4, 2015-16). Similarly, the experience of physical violence ranges from 40 percent among women in the lowest wealth quintile to 19 percent among women in the highest wealth quintile (NFHS-4, 2015-16). Similarly, Agnes (2019) also claimed that education lowered women's risk of spousal violence. The probability of domestic violence was significantly decreased by having at least 10 or more years of schooling.

Conclusion

Violent behaviour is the expression of insecurity, male ego, acceptance of submissiveness of the women by themselves, normalization of the issue, patriarchal structure and its supporting social norms, personal matter, doubts over the characters of women, sexuality, personality disorders, own experience of facing it in childhood, gendered socialization, etc. So, it's critical to address gender inequality and consider imbalances in a populous nation like India. Men's proactive engagement is also essential in Indian society to eliminate gender violence and stop violence against women and girls. In this context, it will be significant to analyse the 'Gender Paradox' in the backdrop of 'Kerala Model of Development'. The unique initiative of Jagratha Samithi needs to be analysed from the experiences of its operations from the past and then could be replicated by others.

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Organizational Structure of Jagratha Samithi when it was formed

Kerala Women's Commission
↓
District Jagratha Samithi
↓
Panchayat level Legal Cell   Panchayat Jagratha Samithi   Panchayat Legal support Group
↓
Ward Jagratha Samithi

38 Mission Shakti
(All States)

Background

The 'Mission Shakti', initiated as an integrated women's empowerment program is an overarching step made towards ensuring women's safety, security, and empowerment by the Government of India. This program has the aim to fulfill the government's commitment to 'women-led development' by tackling issues impacting women throughout their lives. It also aims to make women equal partners in nation-building through convergence and citizen ownership. 'Mission Shakti' was initiated on April 1, 2022, and will be in operation till 2025-26 (PIB, 2022). The program may be continued, subjected to further analysis and review.

About the Initiative

The initiative is expected to concentrate on outlining tactics for enhancing convergence between Ministries/ Departments and at various levels of government. In addition, it has its thrust towards enhancing digital infrastructure support, last mile tracking, and Jan Sahabhagita (People's participation). It is expected to encourage increased participation and support of Local Government Institutions and other grassroots institutions.

Mission Shakti has two sub-schemes such as Sambal and Samarthya. The Sambal is for the safety and security of women whereas the Samarthya is for the empowerment of women. The initiatives such as One Stop Center (OSC), Women Helpline (WHL), and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) have been modified and integrated into the 'Sambal' sub-scheme. In addition, a new component called Nari Adalat is also included in the Sambal sub-scheme, which incorporates Women's Collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in every society and within families (PIB, 2022).

Existing programs such as Ujjwala, Swadhar Greh, and Working Women Hostel have been included in the Samarthya sub-scheme, with modifications. Additionally, the existing schemes of the National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under the umbrella of ICDS, are made part of Samarthya. In addition, a new component of Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment has also been included in the Samarthya Sub-scheme (PIB, 2022).

The overall cost of Mission Shakti is Rs 20,989 crore. The Nirbhaya Fund/MoWCD budget will provide 100% of the central funds for the implementation of the sub-scheme 'Sambal' as a centrally sponsored scheme (The Print, 2022). Except for Northeast and Special Category States/UTs with the legislature, where the fund ratio will be 90 : 10, the sub-scheme 'Samarthya' will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a funding ratio of 60:40 between the Center and State Governments/UTs with the legislature (The Print, 2022).

Challenges

Domestic violence is an important issue in India, where there are currently 4.4 lakh cases of domestic assault pending throughout 801 districts. Mission Shakti, a government program that includes one-stop centers to help victims of violence, has been put into place, but it is yet unknown how many of these centers have protection officers to aid survivors.

To address domestic violence in India, protection officers must be available to assist survivors in reporting incidents, seeking protection, and navigating the court system. These officers shall be appointed as per the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, and they are crucial to aid the victims of domestic violence. Protection officers should ideally be female and have the ability to help with complaint filing, information sharing with the police, immediate protection and support, educating victims about their legal rights, and supporting them during court procedures. Protection officers are essential in offering comfort and support to victims of domestic abuse as well as ensuring that they get the right kind of medical and legal care. But according to recent reports, there aren't enough protection officers to do the job (Yadav, 2023).

To ensure the protection, security, and

empowerment of women throughout the nation, the Supreme Court of India has requested further information about Mission Shakti from the government. The court emphasized the need to safeguard women and girls from violence and ensure they have access to the services and support they need to live secure and empowered lives (Yadav, 2023). As the programme, which was very carefully crafted, has a broad sweep covering several previous programmes/ schemes/ projects, resources may be spread too thinly among the several sub projects.

Conclusion

The Government of India initiated the Mission Shakti to empower women and girls and solve concerns about their rights, legal obligations, and low knowledge about government programs and policies. In addition, policymakers are now prioritizing and concentrating on addressing problems like lowering the high mortality rate for girls and women, eradicating gender-based barriers to education, assisting them in accessing economic opportunities, increasing their earnings and productivity, granting them an equal voice in households and societies, reducing the transmission of gender inequality across generations, etc. The scheme is expected to be a game changer for the empowerment of women.

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Dayanand Social Security Scheme
(Goa)

Background

The nature of life is such that people living on the margins of society must deal with extreme difficulties. Despite their best efforts, individuals in harsh existential conditions can't rise or help themselves out of the situation. As such, it becomes imperative that society, in general, step in and support our community's unfortunate element. We often see generous individuals take such initiatives and help the underprivileged.

Shri Dayanand Bandodkar, the first Chief Minister of Goa, was one such individual who took the initiative to help the poor and underprivileged. Inspired by the veteran leader's work, the State Government of Goa has created the Dayanand Social Security Scheme.

About the Initiative

According to the Govt. of Goa's notification papers, its objective is to provide Financial Assistance to the most vulnerable sections of society, including senior citizens, single women, disabled (differential abled) persons, and HIV/AIDS patients. The person entitled to financial benefit in this scheme is qualified based on different considerations. One primary consideration is Disability (differential ability). Beneficiaries can benefit from the scheme if they have the following disabilities (differential abilities): blindness, hearing/speech impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, mental illness, disability due to neurological problems, autism, etc.

Under this scheme, a differently abled person suffering from not less than 40% of any disability indicated above could be benefited. People with disabilities are not the only ones living on society's margins. Single women also face severe hardship in our community. Such women are also considered worthy and legitimate to receive help from the government. This scheme defines single women as any woman above the age of 18 years and includes widows, divorcees, deserted or judicially separated women, and unmarried women above the age of 50.

Senior persons are defined as being above 60 and considered valid scheme beneficiaries. The argument behind this benefit is that the person above 60 has already contributed to society and, as such, should benefit from the wealth generated by the community.

The scheme requires that the beneficiary submits the birth certificate, income certificate, residence certificate, medical certificate, marriage certificate, and the death certificate of the spouse (if applicable), etc.

In addition, attested copies of the Aadhar card, ration card, and election photo identity are also required. The beneficiary is expected to open a bank account in a nationalized bank.

Challenges

The major challenge faced by the beneficiaries was that there used to be delays in release of the financial support at times for various reasons. In such cases, the beneficiaries have to wait for the amount to be deposited in their accounts or manage money to meet urgent requirements.

Conclusion

Dayanand Social Security Scheme can bring positive changes in the life of many deprived sections of society. The scheme justifies the role of the Government of Goa as a 'Welfare state', which could be emulated by other states by coming up with their own unique social security measures.

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40 Mukhya Mantri Sustho Shaishob Sustho Kaishore Abhiyaan
(Tripura)

Background

The campaign was implemented under the banner of Mukhya Mantri Sustho Shaishob Sustho Kaishore Abhiyaan (MSSSKA) which was held from September 1-15, 2021. The campaign was implemented across all 58 blocks of all 8 districts in Tripura through an extended implementation schedule through a community-based approach where ASHAs and AWWs undertook door-to-door visits to reach all children and adolescents in the age group of 0-19 years.

The cost of the campaign was managed from the available budget from all four programs as per the approved RoP 2021-22. There was no additional cost incurred for the joint implementation of four programs such as National Deworming Day (NDD), Vitamin-A Supplementation (VAS), Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) Supplementation, and Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF) Program.

About the Initiative

The program has the important objective to ensure gains made through previously routine interventions are sustained during COVID-19. It is expected to carry out a joint implementation of programs such as NDD, VAS, IFA Supplementation, and IDCF Program under the banner of MSSSKA. It is expected to ensure uninterrupted access to drug and nutrition supplements to the beneficiaries at their doorstep.

During the operationalization of the program, an integrated approach has been followed to cover overlapping target populations with reduced frequency of Frontline Workers' (ASHA/Anganwadis) household visits during the pandemic.

Major target groups covered under the MSSSK are National Deworming Day (NDD) Program - Children and adolescents in the age group between 1-19 years, Vitamin-A supplementation (VAS) Program – Children in the age group between 9 months to 5 years, Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) Supplementation Program – Children and adolescent in the age group between 6 months to 19 years, and Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF) Program - Children in the age group between 2 months to 5 years.

The campaign was successfully carried out with the collaborative efforts of the Health and Family Welfare Department, Social Welfare and Social Education Department, and School Education Department. Evidence Action provided support to NHM for the NDD program. They helped develop standard operating procedures, operational plans, and program and joint directives for all four programs. In addition to that, they assisted with the development of the IEC package in English and Bangla, consisting of training presentations, social media, mass media, training reinforcement messages, and press releases. Remote phone-based program monitoring was conducted by them and an independent survey agency, to facilitate timely identification of gaps for corrective action. In addition to this, UNICEF, and Vitamin Angel also supported the campaign.

Through the campaign, FLWs delivered the deworming tablet (Albendazole 400 mg) and vitamin-A supplement capsules to the recipient at the household level in front of the parent or caregiver. The target group or their parents or caregiver received ORS, Zinc tablets, and IFA supplementation to ingest by the administration protocol. To handle cases of diarrhoea reported in the community, ORS and Zinc corners were also set up in PHCs/ sub-centers throughout the state's eight districts.

Efforts were made by Front Line Workers (FLW) to ensure coverage of all targeted beneficiaries of all four programs in their catchment areas. After visiting each house, it was mandatory to mark the door/wall of the house visited with chalk to keep track of the work done. Houses with active COVID-19 cases were excluded from the campaign, and officials and employees with COVID-19 illnesses or symptoms were not allowed to participate in the events. Only once the families were reported as being COVID-19-free were beneficiaries living in such homes covered.

Approximately 19,000 officials and FLWs

(ASHA, ANM/MPW, AWW, ICDS Supervisor, and teacher) across departments (Health, Education, and Social Welfare and Social Education) engaged in the program were oriented on the program implementation guidelines and the prescribed COVID-19 safety measures. During FLW training, integrated distribution of the MSSSKA kit, consisting of reporting formats and drugs and supplements for all four programs was done. Training reinforcement messages were sent to Frontline Workers through SMS and WhatsApp messages. The state government partnered with private telecom service providers (Jio and Airtel) to send program awareness messages to the community

Impact

Operationalization of MSSSKA in the State of Tripura furthered inter-departmental coordination and brought together four public health programs thereby ensuring resource optimization and limiting COVID-19 transmission risks. Resources pooled from all four programs were leveraged for wide program awareness, coverage, and focused monitoring activities.

Challenges

The joint implementation of the four programs can be challenging since they have different sets of treatment administration protocols and guidelines. However, due to the exigencies posed by COVID-19, health programs had to pivot towards a modified approach in the current scenario. To overcome this, specific directives and operational guidelines before the campaign was issued by the NHM to districts, and extensive training reinforcement to frontline workers was ensured before and during the campaign.

Conclusion

Community-based door-to-door MSSSKA was implemented as an alternative strategy, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure safe access, availability, and continuity of multiple children and adolescent health programs to the beneficiaries. There is potential for scale, especially in small states for multiple programs to be implemented through an integrated approach to cover overlapping target populations. However, school-based health programs continue to remain a cost-effective mode of program delivery. As we adjust to the evolving COVID-19 situation and with the reopening of schools/Anganwadis, key takeaways from programs implemented will remain instructive for program delivery in the future. As we return to school-based health programs, joint implementation of programs can help streamline processes, maximize program reach, reduce the burden on officials and functionaries, and ensure optimum resource utilization.

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Selfie with Daughter
(Haryana)

Background

On June 28, 2015, Sri. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India, highlighted the initiative 'Selfie with daughter' while sharing his views with the citizens of India through the program 'Mann ki Baat' recorded and broadcasted through All India Radio. After that, the PM commented on the unique concept during his address to the CEOs in Silicon Valley, USA on 26 September 2015. On the occasion of Children's Day, in his interactions with the Indian diaspora at Wembley City, England on 14 November 2015, the PM reiterated the significance of the Selfie with Daughter initiative and its unique potential to highlight the importance of a favorable sex ratio for women in the region. In line with the positive comments made by the PM on several occasions and venues, Sri. Manohar Khattar, Chief Minister (CM) of Haryana also appreciated the unique significance of the 'Selfie with Daughter' initiative.

About the Initiative

The concept of 'Selfie with Daughter' began in a small village of Haryana, the State is known for its adverse sex ratio in the country. The initiative started from 'Bibipur' Gram Panchayat, Jind District, Haryana on 9 June 2015 and picked up momentum with the help of Facebook/WhatsApp. When the initiative was launched, 794 selfies were received in 10 days of its campaigning. As part of the campaign, a cash reward of Rs. 3100/- with a trophy & appreciation certificate for first best selfie followed by Rs. 2100/- for second best selfie, and Rs. 1100/- for the third best selfie was announced.

The campaign aims to give girls special respect so they can develop into equally empowered adults in a culture that still tolerates widespread gender inequality. It is anticipated that it will give already established government initiatives and campaigns more momentum to achieve the goal of sensitizing society in general, but especially males, to the rights, equality, education, health, safety, participation, and empowerment of girls and women. A foundation called "Selfie with Daughter" is created because, in addition to the activities already in place, more structures in the form of NGOs are urgently needed.

Impact

As a by-product of this campaign, Bibipur Gram Panchayat recorded a child sex ratio of 1081/1000 as on 31 December 2015 which was much better than in 2014. The initiative made in the small village had a positive influence at the state level also within a year. It was for the first time in the year 2016, there was an increase in the child sex ratio in the State of Haryana. The problem of imbalance in the child-sex ratio could be found in many countries of the world. The 'Selfie with Daughter' campaign could be taken up in such countries, by making relevant contextual changes.

Conclusion

'Selfie With Daughter' is a concept in which parents take a selfie with their daughter and feel to be the proud parent of a girl child. This proud feeling is captured and disseminated to motivate the society which has been conventionally used to show the preference for male babies. The noble concept has been initiated to capture, celebrate, and manifest the importance, significance as well as the happiness of having girl children in a family as well as in society.

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42 Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukta Gaon Abhiyan (Maharashtra)

Background

Drawing inspiration from the late Hari Bhakta Parayan Pandit Gulab Rao Deshmukh Umarekar. the Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukta Gaon Abhiyan was initiated on August 15, 2007 by Sri. Vilas Rao Deshmukh, the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Sri. RR Patil, Deputy Chief Minister. They took the initiative to make the state conflict-free. The primary goal of the Mission is to address the problems faced by the villagers by categorizing their disagreements into criminal, civil, and revenue conflicts and swiftly resolving them. In this case study, an attempt is being made to examine this initiative from the State of Maharashtra, which stands apart from similar initiatives in the rest of the country.

About the Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukta Gaon Abhiyan

The Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan was conceived in the year 2007 to offer an alternate dispute redressal system to the state's rural areas. And, Tanta Mukti Samitis were established in every village of the state. Since its inception, the scheme has received tremendous support. In the Pune district alone, between 2009 and 2015, "790 out of 1,134 rural villages have become tanta mukta (dispute-free) and hence the villages in Pune district received Rs. 19,31,000,00 ($4.4 million), as the prize cash from the State Government. Since October 2009, 36,294 conflicts at the rural level were resolved and now, 28,084 cases were awaiting resolution" (Chothe, 2015).

The Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan is a system of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for rural areas. It aims to avoid conflicts from arising in the first place and to settle those that have already arisen there. The key elements of this mission are outlined in the study (Chothe, 2015):

- Formation of Tanta Mukti Samitis at each and every village in the state.
- Identification of existing disputes, classifying them into criminal, civil, and revenue.
- Noting them down in a register maintained by the Samiti.
- Preventive plans and gauges to ensure that disputes do not occur.

Resolution of existing and new disputes in a democratic, fair, and participative manner.

The performance of Tanta Mukti in the Villages, Talukas, and Districts in the State of Maharashtra are graded and marked on an annual basis. The rewards for the top-performing villages vary from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 10,00,000 (Chothe, 2015).

An important component of the Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan is public relations and awareness-raising. Press reporters can receive rewards for exposure that range from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 100,000 (Chothe, 2015). It is significant to note that the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan has advanced Maharashtra's transition to a period of widespread harmony, justice, and order.

Recent Reforms

Pune-based Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development (YASHADA) has been advocating for reforms in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Abhiyan for a long time. So far, 80 percent of the villages in the state have participated in this Abhiyan, and many have received prize money. It has been decided to provide grants to the villages rather than the distribution of prizes. As of now, out of 27,556-gram panchayats, 18,989-gram panchayats have received awards; and, Rs. 484 crores have been spent on this scheme; and since 2016–17, villages and journalists have not received awards (eSakal, 2021). Under this Abhiyan, villages with at least 140 marks out of 200 are eligible for the receipt of awards for resolving conflicts and preventing new conflicts.

On October 5, 2016, YASHADA began researching 49 awardee villages in seven districts to evaluate this Abhiyan. On October 5, 2017, YASHADA brought out the report which included several suggestions.

Since awards have been given out under this Abhiyan to 80% of the villages, it was advised that the Finance Department shall stop doing so (eSakal, 2021). Additional suggestions include changing the scheme's name, distributing grants in phases, involving the Rural Development Department in implementation, giving this scheme statutory approval, and offering a yearly allowance of Rs. 10,000 as a reward for holding Tanta Mukti Sabhas (eSakal 2021).

Conclusion

The Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan is a unique effort made to safeguard Fundamental Rights stipulated in the Indian Constitution, including the right to a speedy trial and the right to free legal aid. The Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Abhiyan would significantly contribute to reducing the strain of our judicial system, particularly the workload of subordinate Courts, as the Indian judicial system is overcrowded with more than 4.7 crore cases pending in courts across the nation (Sumeda, 2022). Given the Abhiyan's success in Maharashtra, it shall be replicated in other states as well. Such practices shall be examined with the existing institutions like Nyaya Panchayats in certain States and the initiatives for Gram Nyalayas Act.

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43 YounTab Scheme
(Ladakh)

Background

Given the impact of the pandemic on education, online education has become a necessity. During the pandemic period, the UT administration of Ladakh started working to expand Tele connectivity throughout the area. Subsequently, the administration sanctioned 12,300 tablets to all government school students from Class 6 to Class 12, under the Yountab scheme. It is hoped that this move would contribute to greater advancement of the education system in the Ladakh region.

The UT administration of Ladakh is in contact with the Telecommunication Department for the expansion of IT facilities to the far-flung areas. To provide complete coverage of Ladakh, an additional 115 towers and 1760 km of OFC cables have been sought. According to an assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by NITI Aayog, there is a need for significant improvement in the educational system in Ladakh UT. Every student shall be enrolled in school, and there shall be no dropouts. This would improve the quality of education. The Department of Education in the UT Administration received special appreciation from the Sri. RK Mathur, Lieutenant Governor, Ladakh for accomplishing its goal of 100% training for educators (Chhabra, 2022).

About the Initiative

On June 4, 2021, the UT Administration of Ladakh launched the 'YounTab Scheme' for children studying in government schools throughout the area. Lieutenant Governor, UT Administration declared the commencement of this initiative, in a virtual mode. The tablets are given to students in Class 6 to Class 12. All government schools have been equipped with adequate details such as textbooks, instructional videos, and online class applications.

This initiative is made to increase the use of technology in the current educational system. It is implemented by the Department of School Education with technical assistance from the Department of Information Technology (IT) (Goinfoadmin, 2021)

The primary objective of the YounTab scheme is to gradually enhance the usage of IT in the educational system. The students receive benefits from continual access to educational content online. The tablets provided to them were pre-loaded with online and offline content for the benefit of the students. It is expected to assist in raising the children's educational standards and general growth (Goinfoadmin, 2021).

The additional towers are installed to provide 100% coverage in Ladakh. It is known that Coaching price reimbursement of up to Rs. 1 lakh would be given for class 10th and 12th students when they study for competitive exams such as NEET, JEE, NDA, and UG CLAT. Students who pass the civil services prelims, IES, and IFS exams will be provided an allowance of Rs. 1.54 lakhs. Gram Panchayats would receive Rs. 25 lakhs in funding to run community classes for primary school pupils. Some of the challenges to this initiative are high cost of infrastructure, equipment, technology, and per-person cost.

Impact of the Yountab Scheme

The interventions by the Ladakh UT Administration, during the last three years of its existence, have resulted in raising the standards of the educational ecosystem at par with the best in the nation. It has resulted in significantly increasing enrolment and enhancing the retention indicators. To ensure that every child receives a high-quality education, deliberate efforts are being made to reform the educational system in Ladakh. All schools in the UT are now affiliated with the Central Board of School Education (CBSE), a significant development that might be seen as the beginning of a new era and will increase the participation and success rate of Ladakhi children in national-level exams.

To bridge the digital barrier between students from different places as well as to provide hybrid education to deal with COVID issues, all students in government schools from Class 6 to Class 12 were given educational tablets (YOUNTAB) with online/offline educational materials. All six colleges and the University of Ladakh have the facilities such as student

housing, athletic facilities, and sophisticated laboratories, to strengthen the infrastructure in the higher education sector.

Over the past three years, a greater number of courses have been offered at colleges and universities in the Ladakh region. The 25% rise in enrollment in Higher Education Institutes over 2019 demonstrates the success of all these measures. For internships and Sponsored M Tech programs for Ladakh students, UT Administration has partnered with the esteemed Indian Institute of Technology. (Indus Dispatch, 2022).

Conclusion

Efforts are being made in schools to improve educational quality to achieve 100% enrolment and eliminate dropouts. This strategy will add to the efforts and thus encourage children's overall growth.

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Background

Drug usage has reached alarmingly high levels in India, notably in the states of Punjab and Haryana. Drug availability and use have had a terrible impact on society, the economy, and health. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) graphic for the year 2017 shows that 17,996 people have been seeking treatment for drug usage.
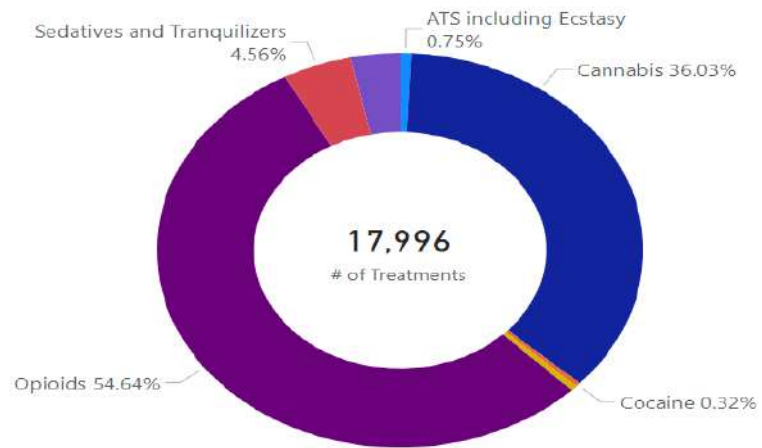
About the Initiative

In Punjab and Haryana, the drug usage epidemic has had negative socioeconomic effects. It has resulted in higher crime rates, health problems, disintegrated families, and decreased productivity. According to a report by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), over 3 million people in Punjab consume drugs. This amounts to 15.4% of the State's total population. (Hindustan Times, 2022). In Haryana, 5.9 lakh people consume opioids as per a report published by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi (Thakur, 2019). Nonetheless, the governments of both states have started extensive attempts to adequately address the issue after seeing the necessity for immediate action.

Both State governments have put into place specific initiatives to address this situation, including community involvement, enforcement actions, rehabilitation programs, and preventive measures. This case study examines the main programs, their results, and the difficulties encountered in Punjab and Haryana's ongoing fight against narcotics.

Initiatives by Punjab & Haryana Government

Awareness and Prevention Programs: The Punjab government has undertaken extensive awareness campaigns targeting schools, colleges, and communities to educate the youth about the dangers of drug abuse. They have organized workshops, seminars, and rallies to raise awareness and promote preventive measures. While the Haryana government has launched community engagement programs to involve local communities, NGOs, and volunteers in the

fight against drug abuse. These initiatives aim to sensitize the public, encourage reporting, and promote community-driven solutions.

Strengthening Law Enforcement: To combat drug trafficking and ensure strict law enforcement, the Punjab and Haryana government has enhanced the capabilities of the police force. They have established specialized units and equipped them with advanced technologies to track down drug peddlers and dismantle drug networks.

Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers: Punjab and Haryana have set up numerous drug de-addiction centers across the state to provide counseling, rehabilitation, and medical assistance to those struggling with drug addiction. These centers offer a holistic approach to recovery, focusing on detoxification, counseling, and vocational training.

International Cooperation: Recognizing the transnational nature of drug trafficking, the Punjab government has actively sought international cooperation. They have collaborated with neighboring countries and international organizations to strengthen intelligence sharing, training, and joint operations against drug cartels.

Inter-state Cooperation: In 2018, the Punjab-Haryana Board was formed as a result of the shared concern over the growing drug problem in the region. Recognizing the need for a joint approach, the governments of both states established this board to strengthen inter-state cooperation and maximize efforts in combating drug abuse and trafficking. This board is expected to focus on (1) Sharing Intelligence: Facilitating the exchange of intelligence and information regarding drug peddlers, networks, and supply routes between the law enforcement agencies of Punjab and Haryana, (2) Coordinated Operations: Planning and implementing joint operations to target drug trafficking networks operating across state borders,

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

and (3) Capacity Building: Enhancing the capabilities of law enforcement agencies through training programs, workshops, and the sharing of best practices.

The holistic approach adopted by the governments is a valuable lesson for any administration facing a drug problem. By addressing both the supply and demand sides of drug abuse, these initiatives aim to create a comprehensive and sustainable solution. They recognize the importance of prevention, rehabilitation, and enforcement in combating the drug menace.

Challenges

The widespread drug usage in Punjab and Haryana has resulted in several difficult problems. In their constant efforts to tackle the drug menace, the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana face several obstacles such as cross-border drug trafficking, the popularity of synthetic drugs, inadequately trained personnel, equipment, and infrastructure, low inter-state coordination of activities, and technological advancements and the dark web.

Conclusion

The initiatives taken by the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana in addressing the drug menace are commendable due to their holistic approach and comprehensive character. These initiatives not only focus on reducing the demand for drugs through community engagement but also actively seek ways to control the influx of drugs into the states through enhanced law enforcement and inter-state cooperation. However, it is unfortunate that the efficiency and effectiveness of these initiatives, including the Punjab-Haryana Board, have received limited coverage in the media. Despite the underreporting, the practicality of the initiatives cannot be ignored.

Moving forward, both State Governments need to continue evaluating and refining their strategies while ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting the outcomes of their initiatives. Incorporating Arts Based Therapy (ABT) techniques as well as involving the adolescents and youth sports and games could make significant value additions to the initiatives. While designing sports and games initiatives, due emphasis can be given to the promotion of traditional games as it will have benefits in multiple fronts. Introduction of positive detractors to the youth to keep them away from drugs could play an important role in the ongoing war. By sharing their successes and challenges, they can inspire other states facing similar issues and promote knowledge exchange and cooperation.

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Community-driven Sanitation (Mizoram)

Background

The Sanitation via Public Participation (SPP) initiative in Mizoram aims to increase community cleanliness and well-being by integrating the general public into sanitation and hygiene-related activities. The SPP programme has been taken up with the conviction that community involvement is necessary to implement sustainable sanitation and hygiene practices. It seeks to raise awareness, gather resources, and provide people and communities, the power to take control of their sanitation and hygiene. About the Initiative

Biate is a census-designated place, set on a mountain and situated about 175 km away from Aizawl, the state capital. On October 2, 2017, the State Government of Mizoram declared it as the 'cleanest place in the state'. Biate, one of Mizoram's oldest settlements, exemplifies the greatest practices for sanitation, waste management, and community in a state that is 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) and has one of the best cleaning initiatives in the nation (Wal, 2019).

According to government representatives and local leaders, waste management is a collective responsibility and not a 'dirty' job for hired labor from a disenfranchised society. As part of the Government of India's ranking process Swachh Sarvekshan, Biate was notified as the top city for 'Innovation and Best Practices' in the Northeast Zone by the Centre in May 2018. In the Kayakalp Awards notified by the Union health ministry, the Community Health Centre at Biate was given the top place in the year 2017 (Wal, 2019).

Lawmsangzuali, a local school teacher, lauded the community, and said, "Yes, we like winning awards, it keeps us motivated" (Wal, 2019). The children in the locality also responded with a similar tone. Some of them remarked that "Yes, we like cleaning", "No, we don't mind getting out of bed early", and "It's good for our health, it makes Biate better" (Wal, 2019).

According to Dr. C. Vanlanramsanga, Secretary, Department of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Govt. of Mizoram, there is a common practice in localities of Aizawl to contribute money for their upkeep.

As per him, Biate "had a head start," noted Vanlanramsanga, as their chiefs ordered residents to clean themselves, their homes, and their utensils as early as in the 1800s. If they didn't, they were penalized either a chicken or 25 paise. In the present times, each household in Biate makes a monthly contribution of Rs. 50 to the village council. The funds are used to compensate volunteers who manage waste, hire garbage tippers, and provide them with safety gear (Wal, 2019).

Conclusion

The community-driven sanitation programme in Mizoram helped to foster a sense of community ownership and responsibility for sanitation and hygiene, by involving every section of the society. Adoption of sustainable practices, a decline in open defecation, better waste management, and increased health and well-being are the visible results of the programme.

The unique approaches and strategies adopted in community-driven sanitation that include mobilization of all cross sections of the society, local organizations, and institutions as well as collectively addressing sanitation challenges and motivating every section of the society to work towards sustainable solutions, resulted in effective achievement

of desired goals and the establishment of a better place for a society to live in.

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Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

Chapter - V

Commendable Governance Initiatives in the Infrastructure Sector

This chapter showcases the commendable governance initiatives in the Infrastructure Sectors such as Energy, Water bodies, Sports, Tourism, etc. drawn from different parts of the country. In the documentation of each study, a brief background, features, impact, challenges and a brief conclusion, followed by references. Wherever possible, contact details like name, mobile and E-mail ID are also provided. This chapter captures about 30 case studies from across the country.

46 Local Initiatives in COVID-19 Management (Punjab)

Background

Chhina Gram Panchayat (GP) is in Dhariwal Block of Gurdaspur district, Punjab. It is located 10 km. away from the Block capital and 20 km. from the District capital. The village draws its name from Baba Bidhi Chand Chhina, a brave Sikh of 6th Sikh Guru Shri Hargobind Sahib Ji, and has given Bapu Banta Singh Ji, a proud son of the soil who participated in the freedom struggle.

Over some time, Chhina village became a favourable tourist destination. The village is known for its proximity to Kalanaur, the place of coronation of the third Mughal Emperor "Badshah" Akbar (Takhat-i-Akbari), and Mahakaleshwar temple, known for the only horizontal Shivalinga in India. Another reason for Chhina's popularity amongst tourists is its proximity to the India-Pakistan border which is at a distance of 35 km. only.

Chhina is on the way to becoming a model village and has won several national and sub-national awards for its achievements. All the activities are aligned towards achieving the 'holistic development' of its around 1600 residents. Several significant initiatives have been taken in the village

to ensure the successful implementation of several schemes of the Union as well as State Governments. This case study makes a brief description of the success story of Chhina village which took up novel initiatives to manage the COVID crisis, under the able leadership of Shri. Panthdeep Singh, a young and dynamic Sarpanch of Chhina.

When the spread of the COVID pandemic in China began to make headlines in India, Chhina Gram Panchayat took a pre-emptive step by passing a resolution on 20 March 2020, to impose a curfew in the village to limit person-to-person contact. Significantly, it was clear three days before the declaration of a nationwide lockdown imposed on 23 March 2020.

Necessary precautionary measures to check the entry and spread of the virus, fumigation (with sodium hypochlorite) of the entire village was carried out, which was repeated at regular intervals. Social distancing norms were strictly enforced in the entire village and the Sarpanch took the personal initiative to train at least one member of each family on social distancing. During the training session, red circles were painted at a distance of two meters each and the participants were

Functional committees were established in the village, and door-to-door campaigns were initiated to generate awareness about the virus infection and to enlighten the villagers regarding the precautionary measures to be adopted by every person in the village. To sustain the spirit of discipline, the whole village was voluntarily guarded by the Thikri Pehras (Elder residents) on a rotating basis. The Sarpanch of the GP made effective use of print and social media (including Facebook and Whatsapp) to issue public statements and assuage worries. The villagers were brought up to date on the Panchayat's activities, and measures weretaken to combat the dissemination of misinformation. In doing so, transparency was assured at each level, which by itself, brought a lot of comfort to the village community.

Chhina GP remained vigilant and passed several resolutions to lessen the social impact of the outbreak as the pandemic erupted in other parts of the State. A list of 55 families and vulnerable individuals was created, and doorstep delivery of grocery kits was ensured, twice a day. In addition, it was recommended that people, especially the elderly, consume fruits, vegetables, and vitamin C supplements to strengthen their immune systems. The Panchayat also collaborated with the Khalsa Helping Hands Foundation to provide cooked meals to poor families, twice a day in addition to other emergency relief supplies. To regulate the travel of the villagers, 32 curfew passes were distributed among 303 families, and travel was encouraged in the direst situations.

The Panchayat purchased 1500 masks from the Safalta Self-Help Group and distributed them to the village's 1311 inhabitants. In addition, 35 PPE kits, 200 alcohol sanitizers, 35 N95 masks, 25 pairs of gloves, and face shields were given out to the village police, the cleanliness staff of the civil hospital, and the front-line health professionals. The Panchayat decided to give the children's needs extra consideration. It was recognized that the COVID outbreak may negatively impact their educational opportunities. Provisions for the distribution of books and stationery items including notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, colors, sharpeners, drawing books, etc. were frequently made to reduce dropout rates during the lockdown.

After the catastrophic 2nd wave of the pandemic became clear, a COVID care center was established to address the immediate health emergency. The Panchayat launched Mission Tandrusti with assistance from the Khalsa Helping Hands Foundation and distributed oxygen concentrators, cylinders, utility kits, and grocery items throughout the Gurdaspur district. For patients who tested positive for COVID, separate isolation wards for males and females were created. Travellers and patients who couldn't be separated in their own homes were also quarantined at the facility. Also, arrangements were made to offer crematorium facilities with amenities for administering last rites for the departed.

In an unprecedented move, the Panchayat opted to cover all of the patients' costs for the services provided by the COVID care center and the crematorium.

The Panchayat honored the frontline health professionals, civil hospital's cleanliness staff, and police personnel for their outstan¬ding bravery and service to the village's residents during the COVID outbreak.

Conclusion

The novel health initiatives taken up in Chhina Village Panchayat of Gurdaspur, Punjab are deeply commendable. They were timely, visionary, and without a single point of failure. At a time when the Union and State governments were finding it difficult to respond to the COVID crisis, Panchayat Raj institutions like Chhina were able to respond to the outbreak without much difficulty. This case study highlights that since the local governments are the first to respond during calamities and disasters, they are in a better position to estimate the magnitude of the crisis. In other words, they can play a significant role in minimizing threats brought on by disasters to life and property. To broaden their vision, and strengthen their physical capacities, a case can be made to devolve powers to the local governments.

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Notes
For more information on Chhina village and the life and work of Shri Panthdeep Singh, watch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UwowxgxS7g&themeRefresh=1

Back to Village
(Jammu & Kashmir)

47

Background

Back to Village (B2V) is a unique initiative of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K), when the State was under President's role. It is an initiative made in June 2019, to usher development and empowerment of Halqa Panchayats in J & K. It has been conceived to ensure that developmental initiatives are built on the feedback and cooperation of the people (GoJK, 2019). The initiative reinforced the importance of ensuring people's participation in the development process, along with rejuvenating the decentralised governance system.

Major goals of B2V are "energising Panchayats; collecting feedback on the delivery of government schemes and programmes; capturing specific economic potential; and, undertaking an assessment of the needs of villages" (Chakraborty and Guha, 2020). As part of the initiative, collecting feedback on the delivery of programmes and schemes from the local community, local leadership and local bureaucracy was an important function. It also involved resource mapping as well as assessment of needs, concerns, issues, problems and priorities by deliberating with the key stakeholders of the locality.

B2V was initiated when J&K was governed by the Governor and the Legislative Assembly was in suspended animation. In spite of the presence of the Halqa Panchayats, they were not able to take up need-based and demand-driven initiatives as they were lacking in resources at their disposal. All these manifested towards 'deficit of representative democracy' prevalent in the State and local community were quite disillusioned with the political system. In this context, significance of the initiative needs to be analysed.

As part of the initiative, one senior official from the State Government was directed to stay in a designated Halqa Panchayat for two days and one night. Around 5,000 officers were engaged in the initiative of reaching out to the people in about 4,483 Halqa Panchayats in J&K (GoJK, 2019). During the period, S/he was expected to go around the locality, interact with the local community, local leadership and others. This was a planned approach and strategy to get impartial, unbiased and genuine feedback from the population. In

addition, it was designed in such a manner to motivate the local community to be more active in the activities of the Halqa Panchayat for local economic development. The first phase of the B2V initiative was made during 20-27 June 2019, which was followed by the Second phase during 25-30 November 2019. Third phase of the B2V initiative was held during 2-12 Oct 2020.

Unique Features of the Initiative

The unique features of the B2V initiative are:
- B2V is the first of its type in India where the executive takes an initiative to address the deficit of representative democracy
- Its emphasis on ensuring ownership of the local people in development initiatives
- Pro-active role to the Halqa Panchayat by co-ordinating with the programmes and activities of various Government departments and agencies as well as with other
- Inherent potential of the initiative to sensitise and re-orient the senior bureaucracy as it brought them closer to the field realities.
- Enhanced scope for providing a healing touch and soothing effect to the citizens.

The B2V programme was especially appreciated by the Prime Minister of India in his periodical address to the nation through All India Radio. He expressed hope that "its ripple benefits with thrust on community mobilisation and numerous possible opportunities that may come to the community" (Modi, 2019).

Phase I of the B2V programme resulted in documenting people's demands and grievances. Phase II of the B2V focused on the devolution of powers to the Halqa Panchayats and tried to understand how they are functioning and what are the grievances and demands. Phase III of the B2V programme was specially designed to address grievances on the inputs gathered from the previous two phases.

Outcomes

- Rise in enthusiasm among the local community.
- Revival of faith and trust of the community in the government system.
- Scope for expression of common needs, concerns, issues, problems and priorities.
- Quality and dedicated time spent by the senior bureaucracy at the Halqa Panchayat was a positive step in many ways.
- Enhanced understanding to the bureaucracy about field realities and the importance of prioritisation in addressing them in line with the expectations of the local population.
- Application of participatory methods and techniques by the officials to gather genuine and impartial feedback from the community.
- Enhanced scope for ensuring the convergence of different programmes/ schemes by the Central, State and Local Governments.
- Improved scope for establishing linkages and strengthening with past projects.

Conclusion

The Local Governments in the State need more resources and flexibility to plan and implement programmes and projects that are need-based, demand-driven and sustainable. It is reported that the "B2V programme with a central role to the empowered Local Governments and supported by bureaucracy can be a 'game changer' for participatory development and citizen-friendly governance in J&K" (Gireesan, 2022). It has the potential to transform the present modes, patterns and practices of governance to realise Citizen-centric governance. This initiative could be emulated in other parts of the country and outside by addressing the weaknesses and challenges of the initiative, as well as by introducing relevant contextual changes in the contents, process, approaches and practices. However, participation of responsible and committed official may be a big challenge while replicating such initiatives.

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48

Amphi Sports Complex below Flyover
(Maharashtra)

Background

"Sports teaches you character, it teaches you how to play by the rules, it teaches you to know what it feels like to win and lose, it teaches you about life", said Billie Jean King. However, India's sports infrastructure is far from ideal. The 2011 Census provides the most recent government information on migration. According to the Census, there were 45.6 crore migrants in India in 2011 (38% of the population). The rate of urban migration is 34.9% (Pavithra 2022). Due to rapid urbanization, vacant land and open places are being overused for construction projects. Playgrounds, where students can participate in team sports like football, basketball, and cricket are rather uncommon. This scenario might, however, change soon. In this case study, we shall highlight the innovative project launched in Navi Mumbai by the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation to facilitate field sports in the Sanpada locality

About the Initiative

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation's Engineering Department assisted the local corporators in conceptualizing and designing the Sanpada Amphi sports complex. In December 2022, the sports complex in Sector 15 under a local flyover was opened to the public (Narwade, 2023). Since it opened, the facility has been utilized by athletes, elderly persons, ladies, and sports enthusiasts.

Over 30,000 citizens live in the East Sanpada neighborhood of Palm Beach. It just has one playground and one garden. It goes without saying that the playground could not accommodate the rising demand for sports. Corporator Vaijayanti Dashrath Bhagat


brought the issue up with the Municipal Corporation as a consequence and provided the much-required trigger for action.

The municipality used a 2745.27 square meter plot under the overpass that connects Palm Beach to nodes to build a sports center on a vacant lot (Narwade, 2023). The height of the flyover in the area was taken into consideration when choosing the appropriate games. Various areas of the space were split based on the games. In the area where the height is higher, there are three badminton courts and a basketball court. Similarly, a box cricket zone with a 22-yard pitch was also created (Narwade, 2023).

A skating ring measuring 30.61 x 14.00 meters has also been provided. Additionally, a facility for yoga practice and a jogging track has been built close to these sports courts (Narwade, 2023). Additionally, benches have been erected underneath the flyover for elderly people, and others to sit.

Under the flyover in Sector 15, trash and debris were being deposited from the local construction site. As a result, the atmosphere became uncomfortable and unclean. The location was also being abused for anti-social purposes. As a result, locals were continuously requesting that the Municipal Corporation make beautification in this area. The authorities in the Corporation, therefore, decided to use this location for various reasons by beautifying it under the Swachh Survekshan in response to requests from the neighborhood residents.

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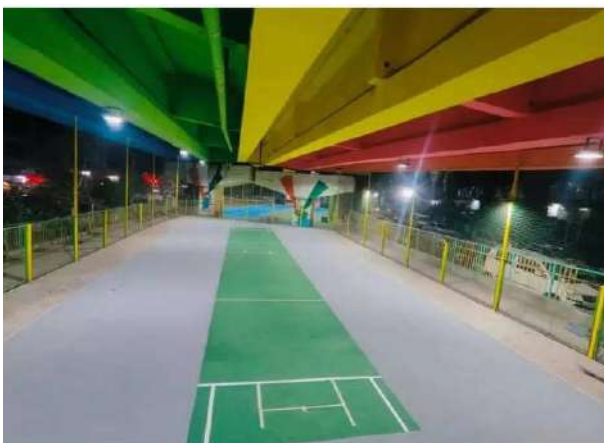
Conclusion

The Local Government institutions are under pressure to house the migrants. Open spaces including playgrounds are consequently made accessible for construction activities. Housing is a necessity that cannot be ignored, yet maintaining public places for recreation activities requires innovative thinking. This initiative made by the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation is innovative and practical as the Local Government is able to provide sports facility in a congested urban environment where the open land for construction of indoor/ outdoor activities are scarce and the land value is very high. It also shows how to optimally use the resources and channelise them for meeting the varying demands of different demographic segments of the society.

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Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project
(Telangana)

Background

Although Telengana region is drained by two significant rivers — the Krishna River which accounts for about 69% of the catchment area and the Godavari River which accounts for around 79% — the majority of the terrain is dry. Several smaller rivers, including the Bhima, the Maner, the Manjira, the Musi, and the Tungabhadra, also draining the state. The southwest monsoons are responsible for the 900 – 1500 mm of yearly rainfall in northern Telangana and the 700 – 900 mm in southern Telangana. However, the state of Telangana has a climate that is primarily hot and dry, with summertime highs of 46 o C.

Telangana is constantly at risk for drought because of these severe temperatures. In 2016, the state had its worst drought. People, particularly farmers, were compelled to sell their cattle at less than market value due to a severe lack of water and forage. The most severely impacted districts, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Medak, Nizamabad, and Adilabad, saw a migration of about 1.4 million people (Hindustan Times, 2016). Given this context, Telangana created the ambitious Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, which is meant to address the state's water problems. In this case study, we shall examine the specifics of the project and its anticipated advantages before noting the criticism the project has received.

About the Project 1

The Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project was envisaged to better utilize the waters of the Godavari River. It is constructed on the confluence of the Pranhita and Godavari Rivers. The Wardha, Painganga, and Wainganga rivers, among others, meet

at the confluence of the Pranhita River to form the seventh-largest drainage basin on the subcontinent, with an estimated annual discharge of more than 6,427,900 acre-feet (7,930 cubic hectometres). Since its main route passes through thick woods and other ecologically delicate areas like wildlife sanctuaries, the basin remained untapped until 2014.

The Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project spans a distance of 500 km (310 miles) through 13 districts. It uses a canal network of more than 1,800 km (1,100 miles). Given the wide territorial coverage, the project is broken up into 7 linkages and 28 packages. A total of 240 TMC water is expected to be discharged by the project (195 from the Medigadda Barrage, 20 from the Sripada Yellampalli project, and 25 from groundwater), of which 169 TMC have been set aside for irrigation, 30 TMC for Hyderabad municipal water, 16 TMC for various industrial uses, and 10 TMC for consumption in nearby villages. The remaining amount will be lost to evaporation. Along with stabilizing the current CCA, the project intends to increase the total culturable command area (the sustainable area that can be irrigated after accounting for both upstream and downstream considerations) by 1,825,000 acre-ft (2,251 hm3) throughout all 13 districts.

The project was inaugurated by the chief ministers of Telangana, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh on June 21, 2019, along with Telangana Governor Shri Narasimhan.

The project's outflow is controlled by four significant pumping facilities, the largest of which is at Ramadugu (the others are in Medaram, Annaram, and Sundilla). Ramadugu facility is likely the largest pumping facility in the world.

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Benefits

One of the largest irrigation projects in the world, Telangana's Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme is intended to solve the state's water problems, as many of its regions are dry. The ambitious goal of this project is to redirect 195 TMC of water to Telangana's underdeveloped regions. The project envisages the following benefits: 2

First, the diversion of 195 TMC of Godavari water to the Sripada Rao Yellampalli project will provide irrigation to a vast swath of land. Second, 40 TMC of drinking water will be made available to Hyderabad and Secunderabad in addition to 16 TMC for industrial use by creating additional ayacut of 18.25 lakh acres in Adilabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, and Ranga Reddy districts.

Third, flood flow canals are planned to stabilize excessive flow vis-à-vis shortfalls to ensure planned utilization under SRSP Stage-I & Stage-II.

Fourth, the project ensures restoring the groundwater level to its original state by taking irrigation needs into account and conjunctive use of groundwater for the same.

Criticism

Since its inauguration, the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project has come under sharp criticism from experts. Before we conclude our assessment of the project, we would like to take stock of the criticisms levelled against the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project.

First, experts have drawn attention to the massive cost escalation. Originally, the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project was estimated to cost Rs. 80,000 crores. However, the final cost reached Rs. 120,000 crores (Gujja, 2022). This was partly due to an increase in material cost, and partly due to additions made by the K Chandrashekar Rao government. Pumping expenses as well as other operational and maintenance expenses are expected to be close to or equal to Rs 70,000 per acre per season (Gujja, 2022).

Second, it was reported that the funding agencies have not independently reviewed the project viability. For instance, the Rural Electrification Corporation has rated the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project an 'A' grade. It is to be noted that the firm has invested Rs. 14,000 crores in the project (Gujja, 2022).

Displacement and rehabilitation issues became major hurdles in the completion of the project. "As per the detailed project report prepared by the state government, an area of 14,567 hectares, including private land of 12,340 hectares, will drown under the project, displacing at least 15,000 families" (Rupavath and Ganeshan, 2021). The affected families filed hundreds of pleas in the Telangana High Court. In July 2015, the government issued Government Order 123 which enabled 'voluntary acquisition' of land from 'willing landowners'. In January 2017, the High Court struck down this order following a petition (Rupavath and Ganeshan, 2021). On several occasions, the Courts have imposed fines on government officials and even sentenced the district collector of Siddipet to jail (Mutha, 2020).

In addition to these criticisms, the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project ran into early difficulties. Last year, reports of flooding in Bhadrachalam, Kaleshwaram, and Medigadda were attributed to the project's failure to contain inflows. For instance, the Medigadda barrage was designed to discharge 26 lakh cusecs. However, when it rained, the barrage received 27.88 lakh cusecs of water which had to be discharged by lifting 81 gates (The New Indian Express, 2022). The result was excessive flooding in the region.

Conclusion

The Kaleshwaram Lift irrigation project is a working illustration of rigorous design, spectacular engineering, and significant human effort. It is a highly productive and valuable resource in order to boost the agricultural and other development activities in the region. The case highlights the significance of mutual co-operation and support of all key stakeholders beyond the narrow interests of any State. It also points towards the need for optimally utilising the natural resources and sharing of the resources with the neighbouring states for the larger benefits for all.

Notes

This information was drawn from the Telangana government website. To read more, visit, https://bhoopalapally.telangana.gov.in/tourist-place/kaleshwaram-lift-irrigation-project/

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50 | M Sand - A Green Mining Initiative (West Bengal)

Background

Sustainable development is based on the principle that believes in meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. The protection of our planet's natural resources and the mitigation of the effects of climate change depend heavily on green initiatives. Green initiatives can assist us in achieving a more environment-friendly way of life by encouraging sustainability and lowering our dependency on non-renewable resources. Adopting green policies can also have a positive impact on the economy by lowering energy costs and opening new employment opportunities. These measures will further aid in building a more sustainable future.

Being the most populous country in the world, we must think about alternatives for meeting the needs of the fastest-growing major economy. One such effort is being made in West Bengal with an initiative to produce Manufactured Sand (M-sand) as an alternative to conventional river sand.

About the Initiative

Sand is one of the country's main geological resources, and M sand is a type of artificial sand that is produced by crushing big, hard stones into little particles. Finding an alternative to river sand became important because of the high demand, controlled supply, and complete prohibition on sand mining during the monsoon to safeguard the river environment. The Ministry of Mines' 2018 Sand Mining Framework includes alternate sources of sand, such as manufactured sand (M-Sand) made from crushed rock fines (crusher dust) and sand from coal mine overburden (PIB, 2023). Coal India Limited (CIL) in West Bengal started the first project of this kind to produce manufactured sand to encourage environmental sustainability and reduce excessive sand mining (Singh, 2023). The M-Sand facility was established with private participation, and it has been in service since September 2022. An estimated 3 lakh cubic meters of artificial sand is produced annually in the Kajora region of Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL), a subsidiary of CIL, using overburden from open-pit mines (Singh, 2023).

According to the report of the Bharat Times, in many parts of North and South West Bengal, sand from riverbeds and riverbanks is being illegally mined on a big scale. It functions through a connection between the sand mafia, regional politicians, and the government (Bharat Times, 2023). So, with such a backdrop, the initiatives like M-Sand hold significant importance. The M-Sand in West Bengal is a 'Green Mining Initiative'. It is designed to address environmental issues connected to sand mining in the state. During construction activities, the disposal of overburdened material is a big question. But the Director (Technical) of CIL, Shri B. Veera Reddy rightly pointed out that "Conversion of overburdened material into sand is a step to ensure environmental sustainability. Coal India Limited is committed to the cause of green mining" (Singh, 2023).

Moreover, M-Sand can endure any difficult environmental and climatic conditions thanks to its well-balanced physical and chemical properties. Its superior shape, perfect fines gradation, smooth surface texture, and consistency in manufacturing parameters result in higher durability and stronger strength in concrete. Since M-Sand, like river sand, has no pollutants and almost no wastage, it is eco-friendly as well as it may be used inexpensively. All these are some of the benefits of M-sand.

Through a tiny experimental plant at Nagpur-based Western Coalfields (WCL), CIL made its first entrance into the OB (overburden)-to-sand manufacturing industry a few years ago. The project's success was so overwhelming that a second facility was built in WCL in 2021. This factory is the biggest of its kind in India, with a production capacity of 6.10 lakh cubic meters annually (Singh, 2023).

'Caring for economy, environment, and society' is one of the core values of the West Bengal Mineral Development & Trading Corporation Ltd (WBMDTCL), and the M-Sand initiative is clearly aligned with it. On a similar ground, to guarantee that there will be no waste quarrying in the State, the Tamil Nadu government also announced the M-Sand policy 2023. By rationalizing and conserving the use of river sand, it also aims to reduce harm to river ecosystems (Business Line, 2023). Coal India Ltd (CIL) is also launching large-scale M-Sand projects.

Impact

The first benefit of this initiative is that it reduces the need for river sand, which protects the river environment and discourages harmful sand mining. Second, using M-Sand in construction lessens the environmental damage caused by construction activities and helps to prevent their negative effects. Third, because the facility needs both expert and unskilled workers to operate, the project creates job opportunities in the local area.

According to the report of the Hindu, M-Sand will satisfy around 25% of the sand needs of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. resulting in an immediate saving of around 6 crores annually. Apart from this, the initiative has huge potential to open new entrepreneurship opportunities in the entire nation.

Conclusion

Since the evolution of humankind, it has been known for its creativity and adaptability with surrounding. It is known for discovering a means to adjust to the changes led by the demands. Implementation of such alternatives will help in overcoming huge practical challenges in sand mining such as rat-hole mining, the terror of sand mafias, illegal mining, and the corruption involved in it, etc.

Overall, this initiative of West Bengal is a key step towards developing environment-friendly mining methods and minimizing the negative effects of construction activity. The initiative encourages the use of M-Sand in all types of construction sites and minimizes the detrimental effects of unlawful mining from riverbeds and riverbanks. The replication of similar initiatives could be explored in the mining areas of other States. Such initiatives have the potentials to generate lot of employment opportunities (direct and indirect) to the local population.

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Kooch Kavach
(Maharashtra)

Introduction

Road safety is still a crucial issue for growth, a problem for public health, and a leading cause of death and injury worldwide. "Every year the lives of approximately 1.3 million people are cut short globally as a result of a road traffic crash. India ranks at the top with the highest number of fatalities with about 11% share in the world" (GoI, 2022). India reported 412,432 accidents in 2021, resulting in 153,972 deaths and 384,448 fatalities (GoI, 2022). Furthermore, 1.5 lakh deaths and 3.8 lakh injuries have been reported due to road crashes in the same duration (GoI, 2022). The fact that we have not made much progress on this front despite the government's ongoing efforts in this area and its desire to halve deaths is, in fact, extremely concerning. This case study celebrates a special experiment that strives to reduce the dangers of running into roadside safety barriers. The 'Kooch Kavach' aims to lessen the post-impact hazards to life following an accident.

About the initiative

'Kooch Kavach' is the name of the initiative to create roadside crash barriers out of bamboo rather than steel. A 200-meter bamboo crash barrier was erected alongside the NH960 from Wani, Yavatmal District to Warora, Chandrapur District in Maharashtra as the first experiment of its kind ever conducted (Pinjarkar, 2023). The Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shri. Nitin Gadkari is credited with coming up with the idea.

Shri Ganesh Verma of Bemetara (Chhattisgarh) based Bhavya Srishti Udyog Private Limited produced the Kooch Kavach. Shri Sunil Joshi, a well-known bamboo expert and a former member of the Bamboo Society of India's Maharashtra Chapter contributed the knowledge for its design and construction. Expressing his views on the potential of the Kooch Kavach, Shri Sunil Joshi said, "It's really a historic achievement for the bamboo sector, and India, to celebrate as these crash barriers are a perfect alternative to steel and address issues related to the environment, apart from being a rural and agro-friendly industry in itself" (Pinjarkar, 2023).

The Kooch Kavach was put to the test scientifically before being used on highways. The National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRAX) at Pithampur in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, is where the crash endurance test was conducted. Similarly, the Central Building Research Institute in Roorkee, Uttarakhand, carried out the fire rating test. The Indian Roads Congress granted the final approval (Pinjarkar, 2023).

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

Expressing his views on its replicability, Shri Sunil Joshi said, "I am optimistic that not only India but the world will adopt it for the larger good of the planet. All PWDs will include this bamboo crash barrier in their fold at the earliest. The government must make its use mandatory wherever possible" (Pinjarkar, 2023)

The Kooch Kavach was built from bamboo of the "Bambusa Balcoa" kind. To keep it from deteriorating, creosote oil was applied. High-Density Polythene (HDPE) was then used to cover the Kavach, giving it its recognizable black glare. The crash barrier conforms to the common European Union standard "EN 1317-2 – containment level H2", and is a safer alternative to steel (BSU India, n.d.).

Conclusion

The case study on Kooch Kavach Scheme is really fascinating and worth immolating. It has environmental concerns, cost effectiveness and replicability and therefore worth pursuing.. When compared to steel (30–50%), the bamboo barrier has a high recycle value of 50–70%. Moreover, it also has high bending load-carrying strength vis-à-vis steel (BSU India, n.d.). Since bamboo is naturally non-corroding, it can survive rain without requiring any upkeep. Additionally, it has a huge potential to create 516.33 million man-days of labour annually (Pandey, 2018). The country has enormous potential as a top bamboo producer. However, initiatives like the Kooch Kavach can place India on the list of top exporters of "environmentally-friendly ideas worth replicating" for a safe, and sustainable future.

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From Rat hole Mining to a Football Field
(Meghalaya)

Background

The East Jaintia Hills District came into existence on July 31, 2012, after bifurcating the erstwhile Jaintia Hills District into the East and West Jaintia Hills Districts. Being one of the eleven Districts in Meghalaya, the East Jaintia Hills District is home to the tribes like Jaintias (or Pnars), and sub-tribes like Wars, and Biates. The District comprises the Saipung Community, the Khliehriat community, and the associated Rural Development Blocks. Located in the easternmost part of Meghalaya, the East Jaintia Hills District covers an area of 2040 sq. Kms. and commands control of rich mineral deposits of coal and limestone. It is estimated that the District has 37.25 Million Tonnes of coal deposits in addition to 1054 Million Tonnes of limestone deposits (East Jaintia Hills District, n.d.). Due to the vast reserves of rich mineral deposits, the District became a subject of illegal rat-hole mining.

Contemporary Developments

Rat-hole mining refers to a primitive method of digging deep tunnels to mine mineral resources. It is risky and life-threatening. Numerous attempts were made to outlaw the practice in the District. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) passed an order in 2014 to ban rat-hole mining. 5 years later, the Meghalaya government was fined 100 crores for failing to uphold the NGT order (Zahan, 2023). However, the socio-political nature of the problem makes it challenging for the government to take action because the villagers mainly rely on coal extraction for their subsistence. Speaking to a team of Outlook reporters, a villager in Tuber Kmaishnong says, "We have been living on coal for ages. We don't have agricultural land. Whoever had land, coal mining polluted them and made them unfit for agriculture. We want the government to do something to convince the Centre to lift the ban. So, yes, we want our representatives to take this issue up with the Centre at the earliest" (Zahan, 2023).

The Supreme Court decided to lift the ban on coal mining in 2019 after considering the repercussions on the grounds that mining should only be done using methods that have been scientifically verified. However, this order came at a time when 15 workers from Assam died in a mine that collapsed in December 2018 in the East Jaintia Hills District (Saha, 2018). This incident irked the local environmentalists and human rights activists as the bodies of the workers were never recovered from a depth of nearly 370 feet thus highlighting the human indignation associated with the problem (The Statesman, 2022). As pressure mounted on the authorities to follow the orders of the NGT and Supreme Court, rat-hole mining in the East Jaintia Hills District was outlawed by prohibitory orders issued by the District Administration in October 2022. The notification states that under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC, 1973), illegal transportation and dumping of coal is forbidden and that failure to comply with the order will result in penalties under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC, 1860) (The Statesman, 2022).

About the 'Football Field' in Khliehriat

As a practice, rat-hole mining is not exclusive to Meghalaya. Other States with a high prevalence of it include Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, and parts of West Bengal. However, Meghalaya is unique in its effort to put an end to this environmentally harmful, and dehumanizing practice.

For many years, the primary coal mining centers of Meghalaya were in the Khliehriat and Ladrymbai districts, where the ecosystem suffered practically irreparable harm. However, a recent endeavor has permanently altered the region's landscape. The District Administration of East Jaintia Hills has gifted a plush-green football field in Khliehriat to the sports enthusiast youth in the community.

The football field was inaugurated by Shri Kyrmen Shylla, Minister for Revenue, Disaster Management, Social Welfare, and Excise in the presence of Shri Abhilash Baranwal, Deputy Commissioner and President of the East Jaintia District Sports Association (EJDSA). Emotionally overwhelmed by the success of his efforts, the Minister for Revenue expressed that he "was overcome by emotion inaugurating the football stadium on the land my father, C. Sympli donated decades ago" (The Sentinel, 2023).

The football field is built at a total cost of 2.5 crores out of which Shri Kyrmen Shylla the Minister for Revenue donated 20 lakhs (Mazumdar 2023). The costs covered the artificial turf, boundary fencing, drainage facilities, stadium lights, and renovation activities. The usage of funding from the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) in the development of this brand-new stadium is arguably its most conspicuous feature. According to Mazumdar (2023), the East Jaintia Hills District reportedly receives 5–6 crores in mining royalties each year. "Companies undertaking mining in our district or any district pay the royalty to the state government. When they carry out the activities in our district, we get 30% of the royalty from the government", Shri Abhilash Baranwal informed The New Indian Express.

Conclusion

The newly constructed football field in Khliehriat is certain to offer wings to the ambitions of young football aficionados in the state. Shri Shylla noted that "this district has been able to produce many successful state and national football players. However, there is a setback, they don't have proper playgrounds, so this is like a gift to all those youths who love football" (Rashir, 2023). The aforementioned case study sheds light on the distinctive application of DMFT funds. Such initiatives are not only beneficial but also transferable to other Indian States with abundant mineral resources like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, etc. It is possible to adapt arid areas for public use with the proactive backing of local organizations and the passionate participation of elected representatives.

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Swayampurna Goa
(Goa)

Background

Swayampurna Goa, conceptualized by the Chief Minister (CM) of Goa, Dr. Pramod Sawant, is the flagship program of the Government of Goa which was launched on October 1, 2020. He said, "The Swayampurna Goa initiative has drawn inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Gram Swaraj." Under this scheme, the state government is making various efforts for developing important sectors for economic growth. In a nutshell, it is a Government-led community-level action plan to make every Goan village and city self-reliant.

The initiative was inspired by the clarion call of Atmanirbhar Bharat given by the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Hon. CM of Goa, Dr. Pramod Sawant launched the program of Swayampurna Goa to change the dependence of Goa on neighboring states and thus do import substitution through local production of food, and other products and strengthen different stakeholders. The idea is to encourage the people of Goa to become self-reliant by empowering them with the maximum benefits of the State and Central Government Schemes. The core Objective of the programme is to encourage the people in reviving the economy.

Features of the Initiative

A state government officer is appointed as 'Swayampurna Mitra' who visits a designated panchayat or municipality, interacts with people, coordinates with multiple government departments, and ensures that various government schemes and benefits are available to the eligible beneficiaries. (TOI, 2023)

As part of this initiative, the state government has appointed 191 Swayampurna Mitras in panchayats and 14 in municipalities. These Swayampurna Mitra reach out to each household, identify problems and deficiencies in their ward and make efforts to resolve the same. There is weekly online reporting every week done by Swayampurna Mitras through a special reporting portal. CM's office constantly monitors the portal. (TOI, 2023)

There are 10 focus areas under the Swayampurna Goa scheme such as Water for all, Electricity for all, Sanitation for all, Shelter for all, Health for all, Krishi card for all beneficiaries, Social security for all, Divyang card for all, Insurance for all, Financial security for all.

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

Enabling factors

The infrastructure being developed in Goa will also help in increasing the income of farmers, herdsmen, and fishermen. Many small farmers in Goa are either dependent on fruits and vegetables or engaged in fisheries. Securing easy bank loans for these small farmers, herdsmen and fishermen was a big challenge. Keeping this problem in mind, the Kisan Credit Card scheme has been expanded.

The food processing industry is going to be a major force in Swayampurna Goa. Goa can become India's strength, especially in fish processing. India has been exporting raw fish for a long time. Indian fish are processed in East Asian countries and then reach the world markets. (Narendra Modi, 2022)

Goa is an important center of India's tourism sector. The share of the tour, travel, and hospitality industry is continuously increasing in India's fast-growing economy. The state will also go big to promote electric vehicles. With a provision of Rs 25 crore made in the budget, Goa will relaunch its EV scheme for electric vehicles. Goa CM said that the renewable and green energy sector would generate 10,000 green jobs in the state (BW, 2023).

Challenges

The financing of such schemes can be challenging as there is a need to maintain fiscal deficit within the limits. There is a lack of backward and forward linkages reviving the domestic economy. In a lot of industries, India is dependent to an extent on countries like China for production and supply chains. The need of the hour is to be self-reliant in these areas.

Impact

Skill development is now the primary focus under Swayampurna Goa 2.0. According to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, the state government's Shiksha Sangam programme will enhance the scope of skilling, upskilling, and reskilling which will boost the employability of Goan youth in all sectors (PTI, 2023).

The State Government has undertaken an apprenticeship programme in collaboration with industry and educational institutions to provide on-field experience and skill development to youngsters. Through this scheme, the state has experienced a 40% increase in horticulture produce, a 10% increase in dairy produce, 6% increase in floriculture produce in the state. Under this scheme, Rs. 20 crore loan has been sanctioned to 15% of dairy farmers in the state till now thereby benefiting each farmer with Rs. 1.60 lakhs. The scheme has achieved 90% of its target as per official website statistics (GoG, 2022).

Conclusion

The case study on Swayampurna Goa Scheme is depicting about the Gandhi's idea of self-reliance. There is a need to compile important data on Goa about geographical resources, demography, water resources, forest resources, agriculture produce, horticulture produce, horticulture produce, animal husbandry, fisheries, tourism industry, and other economic indicators. The entire idea is close to decentralization wherein bottom approach is key but the scheme seem to have an approach of centralization in terms of monitoring and therefore the need and focus should shift to capacity building of the community and local leadership. Such initiatives need to be implemented in less economically developed states which will help poor states in reviving their economy.

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Rainwater Harvesting
(Kerala)

Background

Life thrives on Earth only because of water. Without water, life is unimaginable. Freshwater sources across the world are depleting with time. Nearly 6 billion people will experience clean water scarcity by 2050 according to the United Nations World Water Development Report's 2018 edition (Boretti and Rosa, 2019). However, sustainable practices like rainwater harvesting will help us to conserve water for a range of human activities. The process of rainwater harvesting entails collecting and preserving rainwater for use both now and in the future. In this case study, we will look at the story of the Kuttanad region of Kerala which has overcome all the odds and successfully adopted the modern rainwater harvesting system.

About the Initiative

The Kerala coastal low-lying region of Kuttanad is renowned for its scenic backwaters and farmland. Kuttanad forms one of the biggest and most complex backwater systems in the world intercepted by lagoons, rivers, and canals. Most of the territory is always submerged in water (Tang, 2009).

According to Christina Tang of the Center of Environmental Studies at Brown University, 80% of the 7,00,000 citizens of Kuttanad do not have access to clean water. Intensive untreated human sewage production and agricultural activity in Kuttanad have severely contaminated the area's surface waters. The groundwater has turned acidic because of the presence of soil and iron contaminants. Add to it, freshwater from public taps is scarce, and water supply from private vendors is exceedingly costly. At the same time, other sources of freshwater are unreliable for drinking (Tang, 2009).
Kuttanad was suffering from a severe water shortage despite its proximity to the sea. People in the area were having trouble getting access to clean water since the Kuttanad drinking water plan which started in 1973 is still unfinished (Paul, 2023).

In Kuttanad, drinking rainwater has no negative cultural connotations, it was the usual practice to collect rainwater using poles and cloths or plastic sheets. However, the limited storage potential and non-watertight holdings of this conventional rainwater collection put severe limitations on this technique. Water cannot be stored from the rainy season to the dry season due to the small storage capacity of containers like plastic jars and cans. The water is potentially contaminated by vectors like rats, mosquitoes, and bird droppings when it is held for an extended period because of the non-watertight construction (Tang, 2009).

However, people are increasingly turning to modern rainwater harvesting to meet their needs, particularly in the center of the region where it is difficult to distribute drinking water using pipe networks, tankers, and country boats. Organizations like the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) assist people in setting up contemporary rainwater collection systems (Paul, 2023).

The coordinator of MSSRF Kuttanad Centre, Jibin Thomas said, "There was a time when the people of Kuttanad used to drink water directly from ponds, wells, and canals. But due to high levels of contaminants caused by increased usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, people today are buying water for drinking and cooking. This is costing them a lot of money. Rainwater harvesting is a sustainable, low-cost solution to the water crisis in Kuttanad. The real beneficiaries are the ones living on bunds and islands (middle of paddy fields) who suffer a great deal to collect safe water" (Paul, 2023).

In collaboration with the MSSRF, Rainwater for Humanity took the initiative and funded the construction of rainwater harvesting structures, trained women to manage tank networks, and put into place a financially independent vending model to develop a sustainable response to water scarcity.

Impact

Since 2012, MSSRF has erected over 150 rainwater harvesting systems in Kuttanad, ranging in size from 10,000 to 50,000 liters, with the help of the Department of Science and Technology, Rainwater for Humanity in the United States, and CSR funding from businesses like HDFC Bank (Paul, 2023). The main advantages include an increase in household disposable income, time and energy saved from not having to collect water, a decrease in disease outbreaks, and lower medical costs (Tang, 2009).

Advantages of the Initiative

Rainwater harvesting supplies water close to the point of consumption and enables customers to own and operate the systems themselves. This is crucial in developing nations like India where a sizable section of the population lives in rural or inaccessible locations and local governments lack the resources or incentives to maintain public infrastructure for reliable water distribution. In comparison to other technologies, rainwater harvesting systems make use of existing structures and do less environmental harm. The system is energy-efficient and requires maintenance with little cost. Moreover, the quality of the rainwater is typically suitable for direct human consumption. Furthermore, local labour can easily install the systems, which can also build capacity within the communities and provide maintenance throughout the systems' lifetimes.

Conclusion

Water delivery to smaller and more rural communities is becoming more and more expensive due to the cost of building pipelines over great distances subject to diverse terrain conditions. In addition, viable economic options for isolated households are limited, such as modest manufacturing or subsistence farming. As a result, water shortage poses a risk to public health. The social burden on women and children is particularly concerning as they are expected to collect the water for family consumption. Therefore, adopting new measures and installing modern rainwater harvesting systems is a need of the hour for many regions in India and that is why initiatives like those undertaken in Kuttanad hold significant importance. There is little doubt that sustainable water solutions like rainwater harvesting can be replicated in areas where similar socioenvironmental conditions exist.

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55 Mission Solar Charkha
(Uttar Pradesh)

Background

Solar waves are a powerful and sustainable source of energy that can be used to power spinning wheels thereby increasing productivity and efficiency in the spinning process. By providing a reliable and cost-effective source of energy, solar-powered spinning wheels can have significant economic benefits, particularly in rural areas where traditional spinning methods are still used. The initial cost of purchasing and installing solar panels may be high, but the long-term savings on electricity bills can make it a worthwhile investment. In areas where electricity is not readily available, solar-powered spinning wheels can provide a reliable and sustainable source of energy that does not require expensive and difficult-to-maintain generators or other equipment.

Moreover, solar-powered spinning can provide economic opportunities for individuals and communities, particularly in rural areas where traditional spinning methods are still used. Solar-powered spinning wheels can also help to reduce the environmental impact of traditional spinning methods, which often rely on non-renewable energy sources and contribute to air and water pollution.

About the Initiative

The Government of Uttar Pradesh launched 'Mission Solar Charkha' in 2018. It aims to provide spinning wheels to create jobs for up to 100,000 people - from spinners to stitchers - in 50 areas or clusters across India. In this independent program, the solar charkhas are distributed via several grassroots non-profit organizations. One of them, Avadh Yuva Kalyan Gramodyog Sansthan also pays the women for the yarn they provide and gets it woven into khadi - a traditional handspun fabric - by other female workers in its network before the items are finished off and then sold (Basu, 2022)

The program aims to ensure inclusive growth by generating employment, especially for women and youth, and sustainable development through solar charkha clusters in rural areas. The projects also help to boost the rural economy and seek to arrest migration from rural to urban areas.

Benefits of using Solar powered spinning wheel

Solar-powered spinning wheels can spin fibers into yarn more quickly than traditional manual methods which helps in increasing productivity and output. Solar power is a renewable energy source that is free to use once the equipment is installed, which can significantly lower the cost of production. Solar-powered spinning reduces reliance on traditional fuel sources such as wood or fossil fuels, which can be expensive and have negative environmental impacts. Solar-powered spinning wheels can be used in remote areas where electricity is not available or is unreliable, providing greater flexibility and opportunities for economic development. Using a solar-powered spinning wheel reduces the physical strain on the operator, as they do not need to manually spin the fibers, leading to improved working conditions.

Challenges

While solar spinning wheels have the potential to provide significant benefits, there are also several challenges associated with their use. The initial cost of purchasing and setting up a solar spinning wheel can be relatively high, which may be a barrier for some people, particularly those in rural areas with limited financial resources. Solar spinning wheels rely on sunlight to function, which can be a problem during cloudy or rainy weather. This means that production can be disrupted during these times and may result in reduced income for the operator. Solar spinning wheels require regular maintenance, and their cost of maintenance is also high. The spinning capacity of a solar spinning wheel is typically lower than that of a conventional spinning wheel, which can limit the amount of yarn that can be produced.

Energy is a highly capital-intensive sector, And the cost of energy could have sudden ups and downs. Putting weavers in the frontline of volatile energy price could lead to rise in indebtedness of farmers. Uncertainty over subsidies, maintenance issues, seasonal problems could affect the viability of projects.

Impact

The government backed-start-up loans have boosted small business owners for using solar power. The Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) said it had installed about 700 mega watts (MW) of solar off-grid capacity. Its total solar capacity state-wide is 2,200 MW (GoUP, n.d.). Since 2018, solar charkhas worth 50,000 rupees have been distributed to about 1,000 women annually in Uttar Pradesh for free by the Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board (UPKVIB) (Oliver, 2022).

UPKVIB provides financial assistance to various organizations which ensures the sustainable production of textiles. There has been a reportedly four-fold increase in monthly earnings of women who started using solar-powered charkha instead of traditional wheels. Self-employment has led to the economic empowerment of women in rural areas. They can contribute to the household income, and this improves their social status in the family and the community. Self-employment through solar charkha has empowered women to take charge of their lives, make their own decisions and have greater control over their financial resources. Navneet Sehgal, additional chief secretary at UPKVIB, said persuading rural and 'patriarchal' households to allow women to attend solar charkha training had proved a challenge initially - but emphasized that the project was thriving after a slow start (Basu, 2022). Anita, 34, produces up to 1.5 kg of cotton yarn daily using her solar charkha, up from the 400 grams she spun with a traditional wheel. The result has been a more than fourfold increase in her monthly earnings which now stand at Rs. 10,000 on average. According to Anita as told to the Thomson Reuters Foundation, due to additional income, they can afford better nutrition, health, and tuition for their children (Basu, 2022).

According to Shyam Dhar Dubey, senior project officer at UPNEDA, "Off-grid solar applications can fit well into area-specific needs and penetrate any nook and corner of remote terrains". India targets to generate electricity and raise its renewables capacity to 500 giga watts (GW) by 2030, up from about 115 GW now (GoUP, n.d.).

Conclusion

Solar spinning wheels offer many potential benefits, but there are also several challenges that need to be addressed, including the high initial cost, dependence on sunlight, maintenance requirements, limited capacity, and limited availability. Self-employment through solar charkha helps to reduce gender disparities, as women are no longer solely dependent on men for financial support. It challenges the traditional gender roles and creates a more egalitarian society. These solar charkhas which are operated using solar power promote the use of environmentally friendly renewable energy sources. It will also generate sustainable employment for the artisans.

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Village Defence Committees in the Border Areas
(Jammu & Kashmir)

Background

The Village Defence Committees (VDC) were established in the mid-1990s in the former Doda district (now Kishtwar, Doda, and Ramban districts) as a force multiplier against militant assaults. Their goal was to arm and educate the residents of isolated, hilly regions so that they could protect themselves. The VDCs were formed to arm peasants for self-defense. Its members are trained by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Jammu & Kashmir Police in the use of Self-Loading Rifles (SLR) instead of 303 rifles which were in use earlier.

There have been calls to revive the VDCs after two terrorist assaults left seven villagers dead in Rajouri, Jammu, and Kashmir's Dhangri hamlet. In response to the calls, the authorities in the Jammu region gave SLRs to the locals and started educating the peasants on self-defence. The members of the VDCs are trained to use firearms and are expected to repel assailants until security personnel arrives. In March 2022, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs approved a new proposal to build Village Defence Guards (VDG) in J&K's vulnerable areas.

Origin of the VDC

The Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971 provided the impetus for the concept of VDCs with the government arming ex-servicemen and young, physically fit individuals in neighboring villages to prevent spy infiltration from Pakistan. Subsequently, the insurgency that had started in the Doda region in the early 1990s spread to other parts of Jammu and Kashmir also. When targeted massacres increased during the period, the Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave their homes in the valley towards Jammu and other parts of the country. Following the massacre of 13 people in Kishtwar in 1993, there was a call for civilians to be armed. Thus, the concept of VDC was eventually expanded to other regions of the Jammu division when terrorist activity increased in the districts of Udhampur, Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, Kathua, and Samba. The Home Ministry decided to build VDCs in 1995 to stem the migration after Kashmiri Pandits were compelled to flee from their homeland.

All-Women VDCs

All-women VDCs are playing an important role in combating terrorism in remote areas of Jammu where security troops are few. In Jammu and Kashmir, 450 VDCs are currently operational, with men and women trained for self-defense and counter-terrorist attacks. Security forces teach them basic battle craft, field craft, and weapon handling. It is worth noting that the first all-women VDC was established in the twin villages of Marrah and Kulali, which served as a model for others. Women in such locations have set excellent examples when it comes to saving not just their own family's life, but also the lives of the entire village. (The Statesman, 2020)

Training

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is training the VDCs to use fire arms to restore a sense of security in the conflict areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Through this, the trained villagers could safeguard themselves and their families as well as resist the terrorist threats until the para-military forces and Indian Army reaches the village in case of any infiltration/ attack. The decision to act became obvious following the terrorist strikes in the communities (Kumar, 2023)

In the Nowshera region of Rajouri District, a unique training program for Village Defense Guards was organized. The camp was jointly held by the CRPF and Jammu and Kashmir Police at the Lam ground. VDGs from Lam, Laroka, Mohra Kampala, Pukharni, Bhata, Raipur, and Qila Darhal attended the training session. The instructors illustrated how to maintain, clean, and handle firearms properly. The men and women from the villages of other districts were also invited to the special fire session. To develop their abilities and prepare them to effectively combat the danger, the district organized specialized training capsules (PTI, 2023).

Challenges

Apart from resistance to enemy infiltrations and other nefarious activities across the border villages, the VDCs also had to deal with allegations of extortion, murder, rape, human rights violations, and other crimes. In 2002, there were calls for the dissolution of the VDCs from different parts, after the return of peace and calmness in the valley. The number of VDC members was drastically reduced as a result of their involvement in criminal cases or the government taking away their firearms once they turned 60. In addition, several VDC members have given up their firearms since they haven't received the money.

Conclusion

In March 2022, the proposal to create VDGs in the vulnerable areas of J&K was approved by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. Operations for the VDGs would be overseen by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) or Superintendent of Police (SP) of the appropriate district. Recent terrorist attacks in J&K have targeted foreigners and minorities. Minority communities in the region experience a sense of threat as a result of certain targeted attacks, though the administration has been taking several measures to instill confidence among them.
In the past, full-time extremists would either leave their communities or advertise online. As a result, it was simple to locate them.

However, it can be difficult to locate those part-timers or sleeper cells. These hybrid terrorist neo-recruits avoid detection through irregular attacks, which helps their Pakistan-based leaders maintain their credible denial. Significantly, small arms like pistols were mostly used in the killing of civilians. It is known that the transportation of these weapons was done by drones in some areas. The neo-recruits received pistols from Pakistani handlers, who later gave them back after the conduct of the operation. Subsequently, they return to their houses and continue with their routine domestic functions.

It is in this context that the pro-active role of VDCs/VDGs becomes more crucial and significant. The members of VDCs shall keep a strict vigil on the activities of 'possible sympathizers' of the terrorists and sleeper cells, by keeping tabs on their gatherings, mobility, and other suspicious activities. At the same time, they shall not be prejudiced in their approaches and provision of inputs to the security agencies as well. Thus, VDCs play a very important role in contributing towards internal security in the border villages in the larger national interests.

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Rural Home Stay and Farm Tourism
(Maharashtra)

Background

Rural Tourism is a holistic approach to tourism that aims to showcase the art, culture, Indian heritage, and village life in rural areas. Under such initiatives, tourists experience various agricultural products and services related to nature and agriculture, such as farming, fishing, handicrafts, and different aspects of rural life. Rural tourism focuses on less populated and green spaces in addition to areas where land use is dominated by agriculture, forestry, traditional and social structure, village lifestyle, heritage, nature, etc. Around 70% population of India resides in rural areas.

Rural tourism has a huge potential to boost India's economic growth. It helps in bringing some social change to the village structure. Due to its complementarity with other activities like recreation and retention of jobs, creation of new business opportunities, revitalization of local art, promotion of handicrafts, etc. could be possible. And it is well aligned with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the mantra of 'Vocal for Local'.
Tourism is an important source of income in many countries. It generates a huge source of income in the form of essential goods, services, and hospitality as well as contributes towards boosting the local economy. It also creates job opportunities for local villagers in the tourism industry. Nature tourism creates awareness about nature and the environment. It promotes a sustainable way of living among people who are heavily dependent on luxuries and machines for their living.

About the Initiative

Maachli village is a source of inspiration for many young entrepreneurs in Maharashtra. It has been recognized as one of the best tourist destinations in the Konkan region that provides homestay facilities. Rural tourism provides several opportunities to the local women in particular, according to their skills. It is significant to note that most of the staff (about 90%) engaged in the village are women. This plays a significant role in their empowerment. They organize Tribal Art Exhibitions for tourists. Besides this, they also organize pottery classes in the village to encourage and revive this old art.

Maachli Village supports projects related to water conservation. They started by experimenting with a small temporary dam in the stream, which helps to increase the water-holding capacity of the soil. These actions resulted in raising the water level in nearby wells. Improvement in the area and carrying capacity of the water bodies contribute in multiple ways to the ecosystem. It resulted in a positive impact on the flora and fauna of the region.
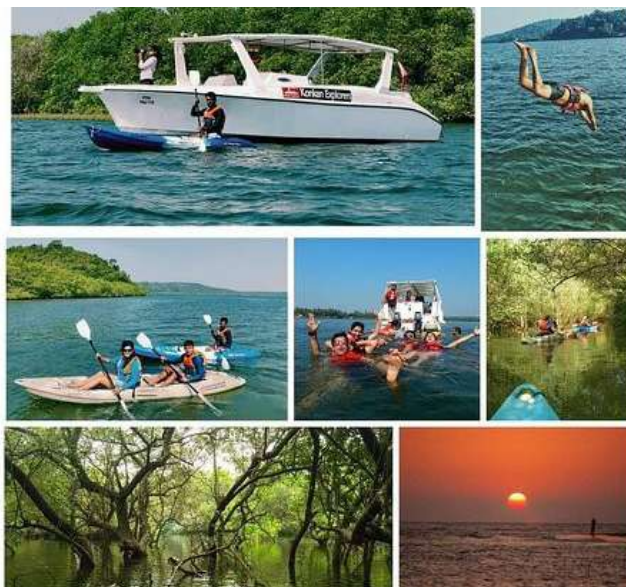
Maachli village has created a huge impact on Maachli's economy. There has been significant growth in the daily requirement of groceries, vegetables, fruits, and fish. This has resulted in healthy competition among the local suppliers to supply the best products. The pottery classes organized in Maachli village helps in reviving the local art and crafts. The potter has also started receiving sufficient earnings through the conduct of pottery classes. In addition, there was a huge demand for earthen pots and other artifacts made out of clay which took a backseat owing to modernization and the introduction of modern cookware.

Rural tourism encourages the primary aspect of 'living in harmony with nature'. It focuses on strategies to promote tourism development and employment creation. The program resulted in bringing synergy and convergence of tourism development and promotion programs in central and state programs in India (GoI, n.d.).

It also aims to facilitate the coordination of rural tourism development initiatives amongst relevant stakeholders. Such initiatives helped in developing a knowledge base of best practices around the country which will boost the development of tourism in rural areas. It aims to create an enabling environment for the development and promotion of rural tourism in India with the help of the Government, NGOs, and the community (GoI., n.d.).

Impact

It has created marketing support for rural communities through the promotion of homemade products, agricultural produce, and region-specific artifacts. The use of various digital and social media platforms has generated awareness about rural tourism. It has helped in building the capacity of the rural population for creating a sustainable source of income along with sustainable living. It has helped in developing clusters for rural tourism with the help of the local community.

Rural tourism has the potential to bring closer people from various cultures, lifestyles, and beliefs, which will help in broadening their outlook toward life itself. It will also help in developing social, cultural, and educational values. Rural tourism aims to benefit the local community with the help of entrepreneurial activities, employment opportunities, development of local handicrafts and arts (Verma and Jain, 2018).

Maachli village is one of the best destinations for tourism enthusiasts as many people visit to understand the theme and venture. The village has been visited by several architects and students for analyzing their work and sharing best practices.

Challenges

There are certain challenges associated with rural tourism. For instance, the economic benefits may be taken up by urban communities or big entrepreneurs. As many people in the hospitality sector come from big cities, there is a risk of dwindling profits. The local villagers may get exploited by entrepreneurs. The local artisans may not get benefited from rural tourism. Also, there are chances that tourist activities such as trekking, snorkeling, and camping may cause harm to the environment if not properly regulated. There may be an over-exploitation of resources for tourism activities. Unplanned infrastructure development may hamper the scenic beauty of nature. Natural ecology may get disturbed by environmental pollution.

Conclusion

The government is looking into areas of rural tourism for growth such as agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc. Local villagers should be imparted skills necessary for rural tourism such as communication skills, hospitality training, and business management. The village community should be involved in the planning and implementation of rural tourism. Government should also support rural tourism initiatives in other states with financial grants and material support. Needless to say, India has a huge potential of generating revenue from rural tourism.

The rural tourism and home stays are becoming very acceptable and likable avenues. However, in countryside, there is a need to develop the amenities which can attract the tourists to have a very different experience of life. It has enormous possibility for scalability.

Contact

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Nearest Airport: Sindhudurg - 3 km
Nearest Railway Station: Kudal - 20 km
Driving distance/duration from Mumbai: 550 km /12 hours

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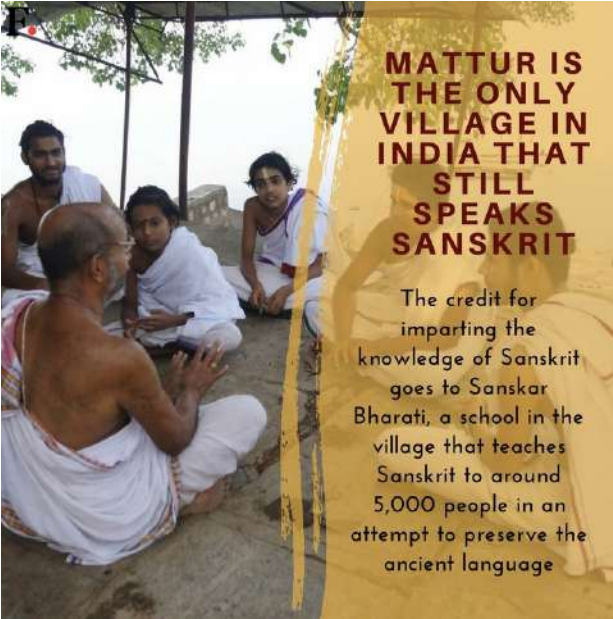
Background

Though Kannada is the official language of the state, Mathoor (or Mattur) is a village in the Shivamogga district of Karnataka that is renowned for using Sanskrit for daily communication (Koul & Devaki, 2000). Around 4 km from Shivamogga, near the Tunga River, is Mathoor which has a long history of serving as a location for Sanskrit and Vedic studies education. According to copper plate inscriptions kept by the archaeology department, the Vijayanagara emperor presented Mathoor and the nearby Hosahalli to the people in the year AD 1512 as gifts (Kushala, 2005).

About the village

The majority of the population (around 5,000) who live in this village speak Sanskrit as their primary language, and schools must provide the subject. When Vishvesha Theertha, the pontiff of Udupi's Pejawara Matha, visited Mathoor and dubbed it "the Sanskrit village", this uncommon quality received a considerable boost. In universities all around Karnataka, more than 30 Sanskrit academics have come from this village (Kushala, 2005)

.
Hosahalli, Mathoor's twin village, resembles Mathoor in practically every way. On the opposite side of the Tunga River is where Hosahalli is located. Nearly all references to these two communities are collective (Rao, 2008). Gamaka art is a distinctive style of singing and storytelling practiced in Karnataka, and Mathoor and Hosahalli are well recognized for their support of it (Nandi and Senthalir, 2010). Mathoor used to be home to a community of Sanketi Brahmins, but currently, it also contains Muslims, Lambanis, and people from lower socioeconomic strata living there. There are Rama, Shiva, Someshwara, and Lakshmikeshava temples there (Kushala, 2005).

MATTUR IS THE ONLY VILLAGE IN INDIA THAT STILL SPEAKS SANSKRIT

The credit for imparting the knowledge of Sanskrit goes to Sanskar Bharati, a school in the village that teaches Sanskrit to around 5,000 people in an attempt to preserve the ancient language

Conclusion

While Sanskrit is the tongue of a sophisticated civilization that was most likely swept away by the passage of time and forgotten, in Mathoor, young boys begin learning the Vedas in addition to English and ancient traditional art as early as age 10. Even though Mathoor is a Sanskrit-speaking community, it is not cut off from the modern world as evidenced by the fact that an IT professional lives in practically every home there and that many of them earn substantial wages working abroad. The hamlet now uses technology to spread Sanskrit knowledge worldwide. Here, several young business people instruct Sanskrit online from the village. It is important to communicate the Mathoor story as "a people-driven initiative" because it is special in the way that it represents generations of people taking the initiative to preserve the linguistic and cultural traditions of their community.

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Background

Bishnoi (also known as Vishnoi) is a community found in the Western Thar Desert and Rajasthan, the northern state of India. The word 'Bishnoi' comes from the Hindi words Tu (20) and Nau (9). The movement was started by Gambezi who lived in the early 16th century. Generally, Bishnoi people are non-violent and vegetarian (Halberg, 2021).

The Great Indian Bustard is one of the critically endangered species in India. Around 122 of these species are in Rajasthan in Jaisalmer district. Bishnoi focuses on the participation of the local community in the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard and its natural habitat. The Great Indian Bustard, which was common in the grassland of Rajasthan, had a peaceful co-existence with the local community.

The wildlife biologist couple named Sumit Dookia and Mamta Rawat initiated the community conservation project. Also, Bishnoi people help to map the location of the bird whenever they spot one. They also tip off the forest department about any attempts by poachers and spread awareness among other locals to ensure its habitat is safe (Rahman, 2021).

The Great Indian Bustard was hunted down by the official royal guests until the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 came into being. Even after the act came into force, it is known that the endangered species was hunted down for the consumption of meat. Generating awareness among locals along with strict penal actions against violators are essential to the protection and preservation of the Great Indian Bustard. Else they will become extinct from the country itself.

About Bishnoi Village

As one of the first known communities to believe in the sanctity of all life, the Bishnoi have religiously protected nature and the animals around them for more than 500 years, enabling them to survive in the wild and harsh Thar Desert. Shri. Dookia who belongs to western Rajasthan is educated about the socio-cultural practices of the local communities. Also, due to this awareness about the issues related to Great Indian Bustard, he decided to work together with the forest department for conservation efforts.

The people in the surrounding villages of Desert National Park were trained as nature guides by the forest department. This has improved their skills and provided economic benefits to the people. With increasing awareness about the environment and its conservation, it has instilled a sense of pride and ownership among people for wildlife. Bishnoi people follow strict rules that of not killing any wild animal even if it feeds on their crops. Bishnoi people are proactive in protecting wild animals against poachers. There are instances where Bishnoi men are beaten up by poachers when they chased them out of their region.

On a neighboring farm, a shepherd sings and makes sure that his cattle do not graze on the bright green fields. At the same time, he watches the approaching herd of black-haired antelopes (Antelope Cervicapra) so that they do not eat too much of the prey. Bishnoi's are also protected by trees as they provide shade and wood for house construction. The event with the embracement of the khejari trees at Jodhpur was a source of inspiration for a grassroots movement, Chipko Andolan (Halberg, 2016).

Impact

Bishnoi village was developed as the most attractive tourist place due to the migratory birds which flock from October to March. This has helped local people in generating additional skills for nature guides. This skill helps people in earning additional income as agriculture is not a major livelihood option due to water scarcity (Rahman, 2021).

They also help people in their capacity building. This initiative has helped in developing the yearly distribution of the Great Indian Bustard in the entire landscape and generating maps. Due to such initiatives, Great Indian Bustards who are stuck in some power lines are rescued by a team of nature guides. They also keep a watch on poachers and inform the forest department about the other birds and animals in the grassland area. Such proactive measures for the protection of these birds help them in the ex-situ conservation of species.

Challenges

The main threat faced by Great Indian Bustard is habitat loss, attacks by stray dogs, and obstacles on their flight path such as overhead power lines and windmills. Living in harmony with nature often requires relying on natural resources such as water, food, and energy. However, these resources can be scarce in some areas, making it difficult for people to meet their basic needs. Extreme weather conditions, natural disasters, and rising sea levels can all have a significant impact on people's lives and make it difficult to maintain a sustainable lifestyle. This can also lead to conflicts between humans and animals, especially when resources are scarce.

Conclusion

Every state or district should have a project which will involve the community in the conservation of endangered species/ animals. This will create awareness among people about the conservation of wildlife as well as prevent Man-Animal conflict. Also, those living nearby the National Park should live in harmony with nature.

The case study reveals the engagement of the couple for both the protection of one of the endangered species Great Indian Bustard and promotion of rural tourism. There is a need to have closure collaboration of all the stakeholders to pursue such imitatives. Thus, such initiatives should be replicated across India.

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Heritage Tourism
(Himachal Pradesh)

Background

Pragpur is a small village in the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh It is the nation's first Heritage Village. Pragpur was named in the late 16th century by the Kuthiala Soods in remembrance of Princess Prag Devi of the Jaswan Royal dynasty. Pragpur is a beautiful village with slate-roofed homes, cobble-stone lanes, an antique water tank, mud-plastered buildings, etc. The tiny lanes surrounded by fort-like homes, havelis, and villas are an indication of the area's aging charm and evoke a lot of fascination and curiosity, particularly among international visitors (Neeraj, 2017). About the Heritage Status

Pragpur was designated as a heritage village on December 9, 1997, due to its exceptional blend of architectural styles. Pragpur was later designated as a "Heritage Zone" by the state government and converted into a Rural Heritage site with the assistance of The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). This area is well known for its rural and eco-tourism. With its success, it has also been hailed as a fantastic example of community involvement in tourism. The government has declared the establishment of a Special Area Development Authority (SADA) to improve infrastructure in the area, particularly in terms of tourism.

Architecture

The 150-year-old hamlet of Pragpur is a superb illustration of pre-historic town design and construction. Upon their return from their travels, the merchants constructed palaces, schools, and hospitals using architectural designs that mirrored what they had seen. Most of the structures are currently either vacant, divided into numerous families, or rented out. Their exteriors continue to fascinate visitors even though maintenance is still minimal. If the greatest edifice in Pragpur is considered, it is The Judge's Court. The ancestral home of Shri. Vijai and Rani Lal, which is about 300 years old, has been converted into an elegant resort. It is one of the main attractions of Pragpur, and the same has been renovated a few years back. Period furniture and black and white family portraits on the walls adorn this two-story brick-red home and its six enormous rooms, generating a nostalgic sense of grandeur, similar to leafing through an old family book. It has been decorated with antique furniture that adds a touch of class to the rooms. Outside the mansion gates, a cobbled lane leads through Pragpur village to the ornamental water tank.

Tourism in Heritage Zone

Himachal Pradesh is one of the most well-known tourist destinations in terms of scenic and natural beauty, with each district offering something distinctive from one another. For example, the state capital Shimla is well-known for its historic structures constructed by the British.

There are four main tourist routes: the Sutlej Circuit, the Beas Circuit, the Dhauladhar Circuit, and the Tribal Circuit. The Pragpur Garli block, which is part of the Dhauladhar circuit, is most hospitable from March to October. The weather is warm and pleasant from March to October, with temperatures between 14 and 28 degrees Celsius. Winter is typically very cold, with highs of 4 to -12 degrees Celsius. Pragpur receives about 95% of its visitors from leisure travelers who come here looking for the natural beauty, vegetation, and fauna, as well as the historic rural setup. Pragpur used to be visited by an almost equal number of domestic and foreign tourists in a year. However, the block is visited by less than 1% of tourists who take the Dhauladhar circuit (Kant, 2021).

Preservation and Conservation of the Eco System

Shri. Vijai Lal, the grandson of Justice Jai Lal, has taken the initiative to preserve and restore the village's historic splendor. He currently manages a manor called 'The Judges Court', which has been attracting several visitors, especially from foreign countries. Shri. Lal has rebuilt his 300-year-old ancestral home and made it accessible for guests to stay in, in addition to the Judges Court, which was built in 1918. To maintain the ancient design and structure, efforts have been made to restore the house using the same wood and brickwork that was done originally.

Promoting tourism is crucial, but we also need to watch out that it doesn't lose its beauty and uniqueness, which is what makes it stand out. A heritage committee has been established to keep an eye on this and will enforce an extremely tight construction code. Within the heritage zone, no construction work will be permitted without the committee's approval, and the vicinity will be designated a planning area. All structures will adhere to a specified color scheme and blend in with the village's medieval aesthetic (Chauhan, 1998).

Initiatives by Various Institutions
Within the starting stage, the town took the help of the Chandigarh College of Architecture (CCA) for direction on its conservation. Presently, in any case, the Indian Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has agreed to direct the town and a special Notice of Understanding has been marked between INTACH, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Heritage Village Pragpur to develop Pragpur as an exemplary place for Village Tourism. Recognizing the notable viewpoint of this town in India, on the proposal of INTACH, the Government of Himachal Pradesh certified Pragpur as a Legacy Town (Kashyap, 2017).
Conclusion

The case study reveals the historical village with very old architectural structures. The administration has developed plans for several projects in the district that would enhance the tourism experience and give modern amenities. They have also recommended that an international-grade golf course be built at Heritage Village Pragpur. Indeed, the Pragpur heritage zone has highlighted the potential of rural tourism in Himachal Pradesh. It has lot of potentials for scalability.

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Innovation Hub
(Puducherry)

Background

Sri. M Venkaiah Naidu, former Vice-President of India rightly mentioned said, "There is no dearth of talent in the country. The only thing required is to create the right ecosystem for innovation to thrive" (Deccan Herald, 2019). Science education is important for the growth and development of a nation. It will also help in laying the foundation of innovative thinking. Scientific temperament brings forth a progressive society that is free from superstitions and irrational practices. It develops the nation in all spheres (political, economic, and social), and promotes tolerance among people for differing thoughts and ideas (Deccan Herald, 2019).

About the Initiative

The Innovation Hub was launched at the Dr. Abdul Kalam Science Centre and Planetarium in Lawspet, Pducherry. These innovation hubs along with various schemes are launched to promote scientific temper among students and youth. The government has announced to set up a 1.5 Crore facility to provide a platform for engaging students in innovation and creative facilities (The Hindu, 2023).
It not only provides opportunities for hands-on experimentation in science and technology but also provides students and young people with an open platform for innovative and creative activities.

The innovation hub was assigned to the Pondicherry Science and Technology Council (PCS&T) in 2018 by the National Science Museum Council (NSMC), a self-governing body of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The Innovation Center features facilities such as the Discovery Hall, Hall of Fame, Idea Lab, Phod-Jod Corner (Break & Remake), Kabad Se Jugad (Built from Scrap), Idea Box, and a Design Studio. It has a planetarium as well that includes a marine science gallery, a kid's activity corner, a 100-seat auditorium, a fun science gallery on the first floor, and a 50-seat planetarium with an 8-meter dome.

PCS&T, Puducherry UT Administration, and NSMC, Government of India, Kolkata shared 50% of the cost. In addition, the cost of operating and maintaining the hub for the first 3 years is approximately Rs 15 lakh (Rs 5 lakh per annum), which is also split between the state and the Union. According to the Science and Technology Council, it is also proposed to set up a space exhibition center, an innovation center, and a digital planetarium in Tirunalal, Karaikal. The total project estimate is 16.7 crore, split 50:50 between the Union Government and Puducherry UT (The Hindu, 2023).

The Council has also obtained approval in principle from the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India for the establishment of a Patent Information Center (PIC) in the Union Territory with a funding of Rs. 1.75 crore. Such initiatives encourage the growth of intellectual property rights for national economic development. According to Patent Information Center, the main purpose of this center is to raise awareness about intellectual property rights among scientists, researchers, students, and teachers.

Need for Innovation Hub

Science fosters creativity and innovation. By cultivating scientific thinking, students are better able to find creative solutions to problems. A scientific disposition helps students understand scientific concepts and terminology, which is increasingly important in today's technology-driven world. Fostering

the virtues of creativity, critical thinking, innovation, entrepreneurship, scientific spirit, etc. among students can have a significant impact on their personal and professional lives and on society as well. Children learn to challenge assumptions, evaluate evidence, and make informed decisions based on data. It also enables them to make informed decisions on important issues such as public health, environmental protection, and policymaking, thereby improving decision-making.

Challenges

Many schools, especially in rural areas, lack the necessary infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, and facilities to facilitate scientific learning. Schools and education systems may not have enough resources to provide students with the resources they need to effectively learn science. Students may perceive science as a difficult subject or have a negative attitude towards science due to their lack of awareness of science. Science curricula may not be designed to encourage a scientific disposition and may focus more on memorizing facts than developing critical thinking skills and scientific research.

Conclusion

Launching of initiatives like Innovation Hub in the Educational Institutions can be a game changer for a developing country like India which is still grappling with number of issues and problems. Efforts should be made to foster a culture of innovation by encouraging research and entrepreneurship, leading to scientific and technological progress. Initiatives like Innovation Hub can have a positive impact on personal growth and professional success to the individuals, socio-economic development in the society and could make multi-dimensional contributions to the nation building exercises.

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Tsunami-Ready Local Governments
(Odisha)

Background

Odisha, a coastal state in India is vulnerable to several natural calamities. The Supercyclone (1999), Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Titli (2018), Fani (2019), Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020), Yaas (2021), Gulab (2021), and Jawad (2021) are just a few of the destructive cyclones that have struck the state throughout 21st century. These cyclones have occasionally resulted in a tsunami-like situation, bringing a significant flood of ocean water up to 2 kilometers, severely damaging both people and property. If a tsunami is formed in the Indian Ocean close to Indonesia, it can reach the beaches of Odisha in three hours, according to a study by IIT Kharagpur called the Tsunami Travel Time Atlas for the Indian Ocean (Kumar, 2020). Some coastal towns and villages, however, have been planning for such events to avoid loss of life and property damage. In this case study we will investigate the tsunami readiness of the villages of Venkatraipur and Noliasahi in the state of Odisha.

About the 'Tsunami-ready' Recognition

Venkatraipur and Noliasahi in the Indian state of Odisha are the first villages in the Indian Ocean region to receive Tsunami Ready worldwide recognition — the benchmark for tsunami preparedness given by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Venkatraipur and Noliasahi villages received certification as 'Tsunami Ready' Panchayats on August 7, 2020, by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO, n.d.).

The success story of Noliasahi Village

Noliasahi is located in the Erasama Block of the Jagatsinghpur district, which was among the blocks most severely damaged by the 1999 Super Cyclone. In this one block alone,

the 1999 cyclone claimed the lives of about 7,000 people, while the state of Odisha as a whole experienced close to 10,000 fatalities, according to archival documents of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). Many of the coastal settlements in the block have rebuilt their homes and means of subsistence two decades after the terrible destruction.

Amar Mondal from Noliasahi says, "We faced a severe blow when the cyclone hit us in 1999 as several loved ones lost their lives then. But now the village has been trained, equipped, and well informed to fight tsunamis and cyclones" (Kumar, 2020). Sunil Mondal is another villager who farms prawns. "The UNESCO team came to our village in December 2019. A mock drill was organized in our village and the local community showed preparedness to fight against the tsunami. This was possible because we have been trained to counter tsunamis and ensure zero human causality", he says (Kumar, 2020).

Before receiving the 'Tsunami Ready' accreditation from UNESCO, the villages and the local community are evaluated based on 11 indicators. As per the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Centre (INCOIS), they are:

1. Community Tsunami Risk Reduction Plan
2. Designated and mapped tsunami hazard zones
3. Public display of tsunami information

4. Easily understood tsunami evacuation maps
5. Outreach and public education materials
6. At least three outreach or educational activities annually
7. Conduct an annual tsunami community exercise
8. Address tsunami hazards in the community's Emergency Operations Plan
9. Supporting the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) during a tsunami incident
10. Redundant and reliable means for a 24-hour warning point to receive official tsunami threats
11. Redundant and reliable means for a 24-hour warning point and/or EOC to disseminate official tsunami alerts to the public.

Shri. Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, the Collector, Jagatsinghpur District remarked that "The training has been given in such a way that the villagers can shift to cyclone shelters within five minutes. The cyclone shelter has been well equipped with safety gear used to fight a tsunami. Training has been given on what to do to an injured person needing medical emergency services." He also added, "They have also been trained to keep a bag with basic survival food items and essential medicines so that when a siren blows, they can quickly take the readymade bag and shift to the cyclone shelter within minutes. The local police, fire department, and others have also been trained accordingly" (Kumar, 2020).

The success story of Venkatraipur Village

Another coastal community in the Ganjam district to earn accreditation is Venkatraipur. A 600-meter distance separates the village from the sea. On its left lies a defence facility, while on its right is the well-known tourist destination, Gopalpur Beach. The people claimed that despite having experienced numerous cyclones in the past, they are now ready for disasters like tsunamis. In case of a tsunami-like event, the village has large display boards with evacuation routes and maps, as well as well-equipped Multi-purpose

Cyclone Shelters. Both the cyclone shelters in Noliasahi and Venkatraipur are equipped with sophisticated radars and siren systems to warn the people of a tsunami (Kumar, 2020).

Venkatraipur is home to about 400 families. The village has a Tsunami Risk Reduction Plan and a Village Level Committee, which serve as the de facto managers of the cyclone shelter and frontline disaster planners, according to Shri K Apparao, the sarpanch of Venkatraipur (Kumar, 2020). Shri Apparao described the minute-level preparations his village had made in the event of a tsunami. "We have a well-defined navigation plan on where to head when the siren becomes active. We have installed posters and informative material boards for public awareness too. We have been also briefed about tsunamis like their speed, the damages they can do, and how we can defeat them. We have a detailed map of the village mapping the hazardous zones and vulnerable households" (Kumar, 2020).

The Ganjam district administration claimed to have classified 44 coastal communities, including Venkatraipur, as 'tsunami prone' (Kumar 2020). Shri. Dibya Lochan Mohanta, the Deputy Collector for Revenue, Ganjam District, noted that while each of the 44 coastal villages in the district has its own village-level disaster management plan, including Venkatraipur, they also have a separate 'Tsunami Risk Reduction Plan' to help them specifically prepare for tsunamis. "The villagers in Venkatraipur had identified the most hazardous parts of the village,

their navigation maps, and display system. Then know how they can respond within the shortest span of time, how to fight power woes and other issues, how to send message to outside when such disaster strikes," Shri Mohanta said (Kumar, 2020).

The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) provided the training to the communities. According to OSDMA authorities, the communities received training in civil defence, first aid, rescue, search, and evacuation to better prepare them for a tsunami. According to the OSDMA, 328 tsunami-vulnerable settlements in the state are less than 1.5 km from the ocean. It claims to have also set up sirens and radars in 122 of these communities, as well as a good network of radars to warn the entire coastline of Odisha in case of emergency (Kumar, 2020).

Conclusion

Tsunami Risk Reduction Plans by the Venkatraipur and Noliasahi include information on resource planning, resource mapping, vulnerability mapping, and disaster mapping. It incorporates the details about each household in the locality that contain the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, widows, households headed by single women, and those that require extra care during disasters (Kumar, 2020). It reinforces the fact that if properly guided and supported, the Local Government Institutions could conceive and deliver very effectively with the active participation of the local community in various aspects. Effective operationalisation of Community Based Disaster and Risk Management could bring unimaginable and multiple benefits as well as reduce the burden of State Governments. Though Venkatraipur and Noliasahi are the first villages to attain Tsunami Ready recognition, we can only hope that this recognition will spur widespread awareness in other coastal villages and communities around India and the greater Indian Ocean region.

Notes

1. These indicators have been drawn from the INCOIS Press Release dated August 7, 2020. For more details,

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63 India's First Solar-Powered Village (Gujrat)

Background

"The Earth has enough resources to meet the needs of all but not enough to satisfy the greed of even one person," famously said M.K. Gandhi. The resources in our world are plentiful, but we are guilty of exploiting them irresponsibly. Most of the homes and businesses in the world in which we live are powered by fossil fuels. As time goes on, we use more of these limited energy sources to meet our essentially endless energy needs. The effects are difficult to overlook given how frequently air pollution and climate change are in the news. However, some organizations, institutions, local to international governments, and even individuals are beginning to understand the need of making sustainable decisions. Using energy from clean, renewable sources, such as solar energy, is a significant step in this direction. Modhera, a small village in Gujarat is setting an example by becoming the first village to operate solely on solar power.

About the Initiative

India is optimistic about creating a new green economy and expects to reach net-zero emissions by 2070 (GoI, 2022). According to Euro News, Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi declared Modhera to be the nation's first village to run entirely on solar energy. As a result, the government of Gujarat also said that the citizens can save anywhere between 60 and 100 percent on their electricity costs (Jaynes, 2022).

Modhera, a small village in Gujarat, has achieved the status of being the first solar-powered village in India. According to UN News, the solar project cost $9.7 million and both, union as well as the state government had shared this cost. Solar panels have been installed on about 30 acres of Modhera, and they currently provide more kilowatts of energy than the residents' daily needs. As a result, the residents of Modhera have an excess of sustainable energy (Jaynes, 2022).

Modhera is also known for the Sun Temple dedicated to the solar deity Surya. While referring to it, Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi said, "Modhera, which is associated with the Sun Temple, will also be known for its strides in solar energy. Big day for Modhera as it takes a giant leap towards harnessing solar power" (The Economic Times, 2022).

As cited in the World Economic Forum's report, according to the UN News, Shri. Rajendra Mistry, the chief project officer of Gujarat Power Corporation Limited explained that the project is made up of three main parts. One is a 6-megawatt project that is mounted to the ground, the second is a 15-megawatt battery storage system, and the third is 1,300 houses worth of 1-kilowatt rooftop solar panels (Jaynes, 2022). In this way, the solar project becomes a source of money for the villagers by enabling them to sell any extra electricity they create back to the power grid.

Impact

Gadvi Kailash Ben, a Modhera village resident said, "Earlier, when solar was not there, I had to pay a huge amount for the electricity bill — close to 2,000 rupees. However, with the

installation of the solar, my electricity bill is now zero. Everything from the refrigerator to the washing machine now runs on solar in my house. I am not paying even 1 rupee electricity bill now" (Jaynes, 2022).

Kesa Bhai Prajapati, a potter from the Modhera village has doubled the amount of earthenware he makes compared to a few months ago. Previously, he had to turn the wheel manually as he could not then afford the high electricity bill which was up to 1,500 Indian rupees per month. In another example, solar power has greatly assisted Reena Ben, a 36-year-old housewife, who works as a part-time tailor (Reuters, 2022). There are several such examples of potters, tailors, laborers, and small-scale farmers who have been benefited from the initiative and now supporting their families.

Conclusion

Solar energy is one form of renewable energy that has the potential to improve both the power industry and our quality of life. We are forced to breathe in dirty air because the air quality declining every day. Breathing in dirty air is contributing to an increase in serious health issues like asthma, lung cancer, heart attacks, and early death. In addition to this, India is susceptible to the effects of climate change. By the end of the century, it is predicted that there would be more frequent droughts, greater temperatures, and variations in monsoon rainfall (Krishnan et al., 2020). Therefore, implementing desperate measures to combat climate change is the need of the hour. Against this backdrop, Modhera, a small village is showing a way ahead where clean energy, livelihood, and health can go hand in hand.

India's future may lie in solar energy as it has the potential to lead the world in solar electricity with about 300 bright days per year. Being a tropical country, it has great potential to switch over to renewable and clean energy resources like solar energy by replicating the models like Modhera village.

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Restoration of a Lake
(Odisha)

Introduction

A few years ago, Ansupa Lake was a wasteland and of no value to the nearby fishing village. Over 20 different kinds of freshwater weeds were present in the Mahanadi's oxbow lake, which was bad for the environment. The Ansupa Integrated Self-Help Group (SHG) was established by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) which was responsible for overseeing lake activities. The lake is now free of weeds thanks to a mechanized weed harvester. Tourism revenue and the regulation of fishing both benefit the local economy. We shall first examine the SHG's efforts in this case study before making any comments about the viability of such projects.

The growth of weed in Ansupa Lake

Ansupa is an oxbow lake that was isolated after the lateral shift of Odisha's major river, Mahanadi, which currently runs roughly 2 km distant from the lake. It is located around 50 kilometers from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. "Spread over an area of over 700 acres and host to a variety of aquatic plants and fishes, the lake was the major source of livelihood for the surrounding villages," said Shri Debaraj Rout of Ratagarh village (Mahapatra, 2019b). However, during wet seasons, the lake receives large volumes of silt, about 100,000 metric tonnes annually, made up of clay and sand and strongly contaminated with nitrogen and phosphate as it flows in from rice fields. Due to its fertile nature, weeds were drawn to the lake and soon there were 21 different types of freshwater weeds in the submerged, emergent, and floating categories, leading to significant eutrophication and hypoxia.

After the growth of weeds, the portion of the lake that contained water shrank to about half its typical size. Shri Sumati Behura of Subarnapur claims that as the lake's weed population increased, there was significantly less room for clean water to exist. Neither fishing nor swimming was possible with it. It was too thick for even small boats to navigate. The dense weed growth prevented sunlight from reaching the water, which caused the water's low concentration of dissolved oxygen to deteriorate in quality. As a result, hypoxia started to develop, making it harder for aquatic life to survive and grow. "It hampered the growth of phytoplankton as well as fish," according to Shri Fani Bhushan

Nanda, Assistant Conservator of Forests at CDA (Mahapatra, 2019a).

Shri. Anama Chandra Dalai, a local fisherman, claimed that the fish catch fell to just 20 percent of the average. Both migratory and resident birds began leaving the wetland as a result of it being unable to provide them with enough food, such as phytoplankton and fish. At the same time, the livelihood of the local population was directly impacted by the declining growth of fish. "In its cyclic impact, the wetland ecosystem faced severe degradation and the survival of the lake was threatened," said Shri Nanda (Mahapatra, 2019a). The data released by the CDA for the year 2017 show that the weed-free water area decreased to roughly 20 acres and was dispersed over nearly 400 acres of total water area (Mahapatra, 2019a).

About the restoration effort

Even though the CDA took ownership of the water body in 2008–2009, manual de-weeding restoration work didn't start until 2016. This wetland environment contains weeds, and de-weeding is a regular, natural process during floods. This natural process was disturbed when floods became an uncommon occurrence as a result of the decrease in water in the Mahanadi River (Mahapatra, 2019b).

interests as well as temperature increases, the Mahanadi River is currently severely water stressed. The State of India's Rivers (2016) highlighted that excessive water use by people and industrial facilities in the Mahanadi Basin would be a severe issue shortly.

As natural de-weeding became less likely, the CDA started a manual de-weeding program in 2016. But since the lake's restoration wasn't very successful, in December 2018 the CDA hired a mechanical weed harvester to clear the Ansupa Lake with the help of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme.

Almost 295 acres of the 490-acre water-spread region have become weed-free, according to CDA statistics, which shows that the water body is now rebounding quickly. Due to considerable rehabilitation, the lake's water spread area increased from 400 acres in 2017 to 490 acres in 2019 (Mahapatra, 2019a).

Over 60 bird species, including 30 migratory species, visited the lake last winter. Resident birds that had left the marsh are now coming back to Ansupa, according to naturalist Shri Tuhinansu Kar.

Additionally, fishing is steadily becoming a dependable source of income for the fishing community. Currently, a fisherman's daily catch is about 5 kg. Before the de-weeding activities began, it was nearly difficult to catch even one kilogram of fish, according to fisherman Shri Bikram Jena (Mahapatra, 2019a).

Community participation

The Ansupa Integrated Self-Help Group was established by the CDA with the participation of four local SHGs to involve the local community, which is the ecosystem's main beneficiary, in protection and conservation efforts. All lake activities and wetland-related tourism-related services are now managed by the integrated SHG. Smt Shobha Dalei, a member of the integrated SHG, stated, "We regulate fishing activities in the lake by giving it on lease to the Ansupa Matsyajivee Society, an organization of fishermen in the locality. We also manage the tourism activities at the eco-garden complex developed by the CDA and maintain the complex" (Mahapatra, 2019b).

About one-third of the revenue is distributed to the community's active participants, while a portion is given to the CDA, which oversees restoration and conservation efforts. According to Shri Debaraj Rout, a supervisor at the eco-garden, the remaining money is held as a corpus fund (Mahapatra, 2019a). Conclusion

After the lake has been cleared of weeds, the CDA's main task was to turn it into a habitat that will support the living systems in it and provide the surrounding communities with a secure source of subsistence. In addition to its contributions towards the eco system, such initiatives could bring multiple benefits to the local community by way of enhanced livelihood opportunities and increased scope for responsible tourism.

According to Shri Susanta Nanda, Chief Executive-CDA, "Our primary task was to conserve rainwater flushed by nearby Sarandagada and Bishnupur hills at the surface as well as in the subsurface soil and recharge groundwater sources" because the flow of water from the Mahanadi is projected to diminish further as a result of rising temperatures and climate change, as well as the developmental needs of the riparian states (Mahapatra, 2019a).

According to the Chief Executive-CDA, "While the traditional water channels for inflow and outflow of water are being restored, staggered trenches are also being dug around to filter out the eroded soil from the water. These trenches hold water for a longer time and facilitate percolation of water onto the surface of the soil, supporting the lake's ecosystem throughout the year and helping agriculture in the 3000-hectare catchments during the dry seasons," Shri Nanda further added (Mahapatra, 2019b).

People are concerned about the state of wetland ecosystems all across the world. According to the Global Wetland Outlook published by the Ramsar Convention, wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests, and between 1970 and 2015, wetlands on earth lost close to 35% of their total area (Mahapatra, 2019a). In light of this scenario, Ansupa Lake is coming back to life and the ecosystem's improved health represents a lot to the world community, which is gravely concerned about the future of wetlands.

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Water Harvesting in Drought-prone Regions (Maharashtra)

Background

Maharashtra has been plagued by drought for decades, which has caused thirst, starvation, debt, forced migration, and withered crops in hundreds of the country's villages. It is a result of improper water and resource management, which is made worse by unpredictable drought and climate change. Methods for conserving water, managing water resources, and restoring the ecosystem are scientific ways to find solutions to this situation. These are well-known methods that have been promoted by specialists for many years. Deep-seated societal divisions, however, function as the main obstacle to their widespread implementation. Caste, religion, political, and gender barriers have stopped communities from taking ownership of this problem and establishing a common goal for resolving it.

To address the issue, Aamir Khan, Kiran Rao, and the main cast of the television series 'Satyamev Jayate' started the Paani Foundation in 2016. Their activity aimed to mobilize the public in support of farmers to bring prosperity and realize drought-free villages. Villages and farmers are mobilized, trained, and inspired to take the initiative in this mission.

About the Initiative

The transformative potential of collaborative action is at the heart of the Paani Foundation's success in ensuring water management. Only a broad-based people's movement that unites the entire community can confront this challenge. The foundation's objective is to develop societal unity and provide scalability to proven ideas and technologies to establish a drought-free and prosperous Maharashtra. From 2016 to 2019, the foundation organized the Satyamev Jayate Water Cup, a competition for soil and water conservation excellence. The competition provided a platform for rural communities to collaborate positively and happily to solve the challenge of drought. The tournament was supported by two main pillars: Training and Shramadaan.

According to the competition's rules, villages must perform a significant amount of Shramadaan. Doing so forces all the organizations and factions in the village to cooperate. Social boundaries and walls inside

the village were slowly broken down during the process of sweating for water. For the last few years, the work done by the villages by taking part in the Satyamev Jayate Water Cup has resulted in the potential to store nearly 550 billion litres of water!

Training Programme

An immersive training program was organized to empower and motivate the community from the drought-affected villages in Maharashtra. The four-day residential program encourages villagers to break down social barriers and learn technical and social skills to lead the fight against drought. Each village was informed to send five people to the program, including at least two women. In 2020, around 1,000 villages in 40 talukas of Maharashtra were able to participate in the competition arranged by the Foundation as part of the initiative. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was done digitally in four phases. The online course focuses on how villages might take a community-led approach to water management and crop planning.

Satyamev Jayate Samruddha Gaon Spardha

A tournament called the Satyamev Jayate Samruddha Gaon Spardha aims to advance the work done in the Water Cup with a thrust

on boosting Maharashtra's rural environment and economy with sustainable water usage, agriculture, and environmental restoration at the center.

The competition began in January 2020 and ended in January 2023. In this competition, about 1,000 villages from 40 different talukas in Maharashtra took part. The Farmer Cup is also a component of the competition (Paani Foundation, 2020).

Collaboration with Government

Paani Foundation's work included developing its ties with the government so that officials at all levels are involved as significant partners in the effort of the villagers to become water secure and 'Samruddha'. For those officers and officials who are dedicated to using their official positions for the public benefit, the competition offers the perfect platform. In addition to political leaders, several District Collectors, Tehsildars, Block Development Officers, and Agricultural Officers participated in Shramadaan. The activities were made available to the populace and went above and beyond to educate the populace on technical subjects and administrative processes. As a result, the public's opinion of and relationship with the government has changed (Fernandes, 2021).

Through collaborations, Paani Foundation has successfully launched numerous initiatives. Some of these initiatives include the setting up of a socially Distant Farmer's Market in the Akola district, the setting up of a Direct-to-Customer based Farm-to-Home Model in the Akola and Sangli, the setting up of a Farmer's Market in Girgaon, Mumbai, and running a farmer's market in nine villages in Khultabad and Phulambri Taluka, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar.

Challenges

This effort has resulted in establishing a cadre of village-level trainers and volunteers in the State of Maharashtra. The initiative was a significant accomplishment across the State, especially in the rural areas. About 2800 persons were trained for the 2016 Water Cup, while 6000 were trained for the 2017 Water Cup. The number of trained community members rose to 20,000 by the year 2018. Teams made up of hundreds of trainers participated in the training. Although there is no shortage of books and audio-visual content (such as short films, documentaries, and videos) on the topic of soil and water harvesting in the state, Paani Foundation has created films and books in a straightforward, appealing, and effective manner that deserves to be praised. This project's methodological contribution is undoubtedly the gathering of many stakeholders and their active participation as a group.

The Paani Foundation was successful in persuading major corporations and movie stars to support this project, in addition to obtaining the necessary backing from the government and administration for the competition. The project not only mobilized the village residents, but also connected city inhabitants, civil society organizations, and people from many professions. Despite all these accomplishments, this initiative's general strategy for ending droughts is not supported by a reasonable and scientific understanding of how to handle droughts once they occur. The increased amount of water captured throughout the competition using scientific techniques to conserve soil and water seems to support the assertion that the drought has been tackled reasonably well (Kale, 2018).

Conclusion

The work of the Paani Foundation has been exceptional. It has created programs with a strong commitment to community-based development. People are motivated by information and behaviour that are correct. Simple explanations of this knowledge are comprehended and shared from village to village. Compared to the subsidies and standard approach toward development,

the foundation's strategy for educating and inspiring stakeholders has been focused more on outcomes rather than outputs. It is probably going to produce much-needed rural non-political leadership. Such opportunities don't exist in many of its predecessors with thrust on subsidy.

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'Dhara Vikas' - Rejuvenation of Springs in Himalayan Regions (Sikkim)

Background

A young woman Ms. Ratna Mangar from Gupti village in the Sumbuk block of South Sikkim district climbs up the hillsides near her home and digs trenches. The trench is around six feet wide and over two feet deep. Multiple series of trenches along the hilly slopes help hold the rainwater and recharge aquifers. Locally they call the natural spring 'Dhara' and stream 'Khola'. In many areas of Sikkim like Sumbuk, villagers are working with the administration to rejuvenate their springs. Water from the stream is channeled into the village, stored in tanks, and distributed to each household from there.

Springs have been a major source of water for communities living in the Himalayan landscape of Sikkim. However, due to the ever-increasing effect of climate change on rainfall patterns, there have been increasing instances of springs drying or becoming seasonal. The South and West parts of Sikkim have been in the rain shadow area and as such the villagers suffer from water scarcity during the dry season (Jamwal, 2018).

The geo-hydrology technique was carried out for the entire project which included the mapping of spring sheds, and monitoring of spring discharge and quality. The spring revival technique was implemented on the sloping lands which comprised mostly of staggered rows of contour trenches (India Water Portal, 2017).

About the 'Dhara Vikas' Initiative

The Government of Sikkim launched the Dhara Vikas program in the year 2008. It aims at involving villagers in revitalizing springs and streams as most rural households are dependent on streams for drinking water in the state. It aims at creating water security through spring-shed development in Sikkim. The program aims to empower and protect the livelihood of the local beneficiaries dependent on springs and streams for domestic and agricultural purposes.

The Dhara Vikas aims to improve water availability in drought-prone areas of Sikkim and is implemented through MGNREGA in collaboration with multiple sectors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Presently, it is being implemented in 25 drought-prone Gram Panchayats of Sikkim.

The People's Science Institute, Dehradun helped in training officers from the Rural Development Department to launch the spring shed development project in Sikkim (Jamwal, 2018).

Impact

The Dhara Vikas Program has successfully revived 55 springs in Kaluk, Rhenock, Ravangla, Sumbuk, Jorethang, and Namthang and has added 1,035 million liters of groundwater per year for the past 4 years (India Water Portal, 2017). The program has resulted in increased forest cover as well. It has reduced the water disputes between the local people due to an adequate supply of water. Further on the disaster management side, this has reduced the occurrence of landslides and flood control. Also, it has prevented downstream field damage due to controlled run-off (India Water Portal, 2017).

The Indian Institute of Science in a study conducted in 2013 reported that increased irrigation has encouraged farmers to grow new crops such as beans, radishes, cauliflower, cabbage, tomato, and rice as well as pepper. Also, there has been an increase in crop yields as well as an increase in cultivation of vegetables.

Challenges

As per the report of the Govt. of Sikkim (2012), the catchment areas have been largely impacted by rising population, erosion of topsoil, erratic rainfall, deforestation, forest fires, and road building. There is a lack of accurate data on springs which affects implementation of the program. Also, the success of the spring shed development scheme depends upon the active participation of various stakeholders such as people, government, and NGOs.

Regular maintenance of the water-harvesting structures built on springs is also a challenge. Climate change and unpredictable rainfall patterns can pose challenges to the effectiveness of the Spring Shed Development Scheme. Identifying suitable land for constructing water-harvesting structures can be a challenge. Also, adequate financial assistance is needed for the construction of water-harvesting structures. However, it is important to seek scientific opinion before the creation of water harvesting structures in the sloppy terrain as the State of Sikkim is very much prone to land slides and other natural disasters.

Conclusion

Thus, the spring shed development shall focus on the proper mobilization of communities. It is important to undertake a scientific investigation to help improve decision-making and action. Also, addressing the challenges of spring shed development

requires comprehensive planning, coordination among stakeholders, adequate financial resources, technical expertise, and a long-term vision for sustainable water management. Thus, by recognizing and actively working to overcome these challenges, the Spring Shed development program can maximize its potential benefits and contribute to the conservation and efficient use of water resources.

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Background

The society we live in needs rewards and punishment mechanisms for its functioning. Generally, rewards are given for good work whereas punishments are given for work which is considered as socially harmful in nature. The law is a representation of social standards and what is just, equal, and fair in our society. Law is essential to society to control how individuals behave in conformity with social norms and to consider the harm caused by the victim concerning the individual and society at large. Every society has its laws, yet these laws change as social standards change.

A society can maintain its rules and laws, as well as peace by using punishment as a kind of social control. Therefore, a punishment mechanism is necessary to keep the crime under surveillance and to address wrong behavior or crimes that could be categorized as violations of the law. Otherwise, it will cause problems in the community and people's daily lives. But at the same time, punishment should be used to change behavior rather than only to punish. Punishment should aim to transform the offender's character. In this context, the open prison idea used in Rajasthan has encouraged a reformative kind of punishment and has been successful in changing the lives of inmates.

About the Initiative

Rajasthan is a pioneer in the idea of open-air prisons or camps. The state government's innovative approach to assisting the offenders' process of social reintegration involves the establishment of open-air prison camps. According to the Rajasthan Prisoners'

eligible to go to the open prisons after serving one-third of their sentences. Those inmates from the central and district jails who have a history of good behavior are frequently chosen for transfer to open prisons, where they are permitted to live with family and pursue their livelihoods (Iqbal, 2023).

Living with one's family is a significant form of moderation in open prisons. As a result of these halfway homes, prison discipline has altered since inmates are now more compliant with the law because the biggest temptation for an inmate is to live with their families. The presence of family prevents a person from engaging in numerous undesirable distractions. Each morning and evening at a specific hour, the convicts must report for roll call (GoR, n.d.).

Moreover, all inmates in these wall-less prisons are given suitable jobs so they can properly manage their family duties. Due to their predominately rural backgrounds, most inmates are given jobs in the agricultural sector, and the rest of them are provided with work in industry or manufacturing, in the construction process, etc. The prisoner is permitted to keep his/her family's wages, and the state does not in any manner support or subsidize his way of life. Therefore, the wall-less prison inmates are not a financial burden

been spent on inmates in a walled prison is conserved (GoR, n.d.).

According to the Jail Department of the State, the "Prisoners Panchayat," the "Works and Discipline Committee," and the "Prisoners Cooperative Societies" are all involved in the internal control of the camp. Prisoners' Panchayat has the authority to handle insignificant deeds committed or omitted by inmates. The discipline and work committee creates work schedules and makes sure the code of conduct is followed. For the everyday requirements of the camp, cooperative societies are established in each camp (GoR, n.d.,).

As reported in the Wire, for studying this model, an independent researcher Smita Chakraburtty interviewed 428 prisoners covering 15 open prisons spread across the state in 2017. She expressed, "The idea of open prisons is an experiment on minimal restraint. Open prisons are prisons without bars. It is a trust-based system built on the principle of self-governance and self-discipline, which is rehabilitative in nature." This study was conducted by the Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority (RSLSA) and Rajasthan High Court Judge K. S. Jhaveri, who also recommends that the practice be expanded to accommodate undertrial prisoners in addition to convicted ones due to its many benefits (Bhatnagar, 2017).

Justice MB Lokur, who had issued a historic

decision in 2018 ordering the establishment of an open prison in every district, and the Centre was encouraged to take the lead in formulating regulations (Venkatesan, 2023).

Impact

The open prison idea used in Rajasthan has encouraged a reformative kind of punishment and has been successful in changing the lives of inmates since convicts live on community land without being subject to intense surveillance or high walls. As a once ground-breaking concept, Rajasthan has now validated it with 40 of these open camps (Iqbal, 2023). Open prisons will help develop prosocial behaviour and participatory management among the inmates, in addition to earning some income which could be put to productive use when released from the prison. Instead of abolition of retributive justice, it is a means to reduce the burden of retributive justice and also think about the possibility of restorative justice in some forms.

Conclusion

M.K. Gandhi's famous saying "An eye for an eye blinds the whole world," should be the philosophy of punishment in modern societies. The goal of punishment should be to change the offender through an individualization strategy. The Open Prison Model in Rajasthan is founded on the humanistic idea that an offender does not instantly stop being a living human being just because he/she commits crimes. It entails the change of offenders and a belief in re-educating and reforming them. In this context, Rajasthan's 'Open Prison Model' is highly essential and can be seen as helpful "missing links" of the criminal justice system and, in fact, work as "halfway houses" or "transit homes" between the institutionalized, closed treatment and the free society. Potentially it can alter not only the prison system but also crime and ultimately contribute to the abolition of

retributive forms of punishment. Therefore, it needs to be replicated all over the country.

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Pilgrimage Tourism
(Jammu & Kashmir)

Background

A poetic account of the history of Kashmir called Rajatarangini written by Kalahan states that Pandrethan was one of the historical capitals of Kashmir. The city was founded by King Pravarsena in the 6th century. Hence, it is named Pranadishthana or 'Old City'. The small stone Shiva temple picture is from the mid-10th century and is said to have been built by a Minister named Meru. It was placed in a spring-fed tank, the bottom of which is now submerged. Inside it has one of the finest surviving temple ceilings in Kashmir, consisting of its three intersecting squares formed by placed lintels, with the soffit decorated with lotus flowers (British Library, 1868).

About the village

Pandrethan is a small village situated 5 km from Srinagar on the Anantnag-Cart Road. The newly built military barracks are the only attraction. There is a well-maintained medieval temple behind the gate on Cullen Road. The temple was built in Mandapa style and is around 17 feet 6 inches tall. It is open from all sides.

The roof is of the usual pyramidal shape, but its monotony is divided horizontally into two levels by decorative toothed bands. The top of the pyramid has four trefoil-shaped vents, which are often reminiscent of similar niches in Gandhara architecture. Nine stones are arranged in three overlapping squares, each cutting off a corner of the square below to reduce the extent of the space it covers.

The intricate ornamentation of the temple includes 12 triangular motifs used for decorative purposes. Within each triangle of the lower square, captivating imagery portrays a pair of airborne yaksha facing one another. These enchanting figures are depicted holding garlands that gracefully cascade around their bodies and between their knees. Moving to the second set of triangles, four exquisite beings are showcased, each grasping a disc in their right hand while delicately holding a lotus stem in their left. Adjacent to the right arm of one of these figures, a flowing curtain extends, creating a dynamic sense of movement (Travel Himalayas).

Even though the temple's base remains submerged for a significant portion of the year, it is indeed remarkably well preserved. A notable feature is the line of elephants that run around the temple and upon which the walls of the sanctum rest. The springs formed around the structure do not appear to have existed when the temple was first built. But according to Cunningham's theory that "the Kashmir temple was placed in the middle of a water tank", is now believed. It is said that this temple was built on a vast swampy area that had just been drained recently.

Pandrethan Temple

The Temple at Pandrethan village near Srinagar houses the deity, Meruvarddhanaswami. The Pandrethan Temple is a heritage site in Badami Bagh, Srinagar. Minister Meru of King Parta, who was the ruler of Kashmir built the Pandrethan temple in the 8th Century. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located near the Jhelum River.

A devastating fire is said to have ravaged the city of Pandrethan in the year 960 AD. Amidst the ruins, the Pandrethan Temple stands as the sole remaining edifice in the once-thriving metropolis. It hosts several excavated sculptures dating back to the 2nd century. They include two large monolithic rock Shiva lingams; Seven Gandhara-style sculptures; huge rock carving of the feet of a monolithic statue (Korgaonkar, 2019).

Meruvardhana, the Minister of Partha, built the Vishnu-Meruvarddhanaswami temple around the tenth century A.D. Its reference can also be found in Rajatarangini. Another passage in the Rajatarangini mentions the construction of the Shiva Rilhanesvara temple around 1135 AD by Jayasimha's minister Rilhana (Travel the Himalayas).

Shaivism in Kashmir

Trika (Trinity) Shaivism or Shaivism in Kashmir arose after 850 AD. It is a non-dualist tradition of Shaiva Shakti Tantra. It is a school of Shaivism, which is a major branch of Hinduism focused on the worship of Lord Shiva. Since this tradition originated in Kashmir, it is often referred to as 'Kashmiri Shaivism'. This later developed into a pan-Indian movement, called by the great biblical scholar sage Abhinav Gupta as the 'Trika'. It flourished especially in the states of Odisha, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

Shaivism in Kashmir emphasizes the non-dual nature of reality, asserting that the ultimate reality, called Shiva, is not separate from the individual self (Atman). It places significant emphasis on the concept of Shakti, the divine feminine energy or power. Shakti is seen as the dynamic force that creates, sustains, and transforms the universe. It incorporates various practices such as meditation, mantra recitation, contemplation, and devotion.

The Kashmir Shaiva Institute was inaugurated in February 2022. The Kashmir Shaiva Institute (KSI) became the first research and publication center on Kashmir Shaivism. During the inaugural session, Sri. Vijay Kumar Kaul, Secretary of KSI, remarked, "Kashmir Shaiva Institute has been launched as the first research, studies, teaching, and publication center of excellence across the globe on Kashmir Shaivism".

Operation Rakshak Memorial

Adjacent to the Pandrethan Temple lies the Martyrs' Memorial, officially recognized as the "Operation Rakshak Memorial," situated in the Badami Bagh Cantonment. This poignant monument serves as a tribute to the brave soldiers of the Indian Army who tragically lost their lives in the relentless battle against militancy in the picturesque Kashmir Valley (Korgaonkar, 2019).

Old British Residency

Originally built in 1885, this beautiful British official residence was extensively renovated in 1998 after it burned down during a power outage. The photo is in the hallway of the original building, which has since been overgrown with ivy. It now houses a handicraft store.
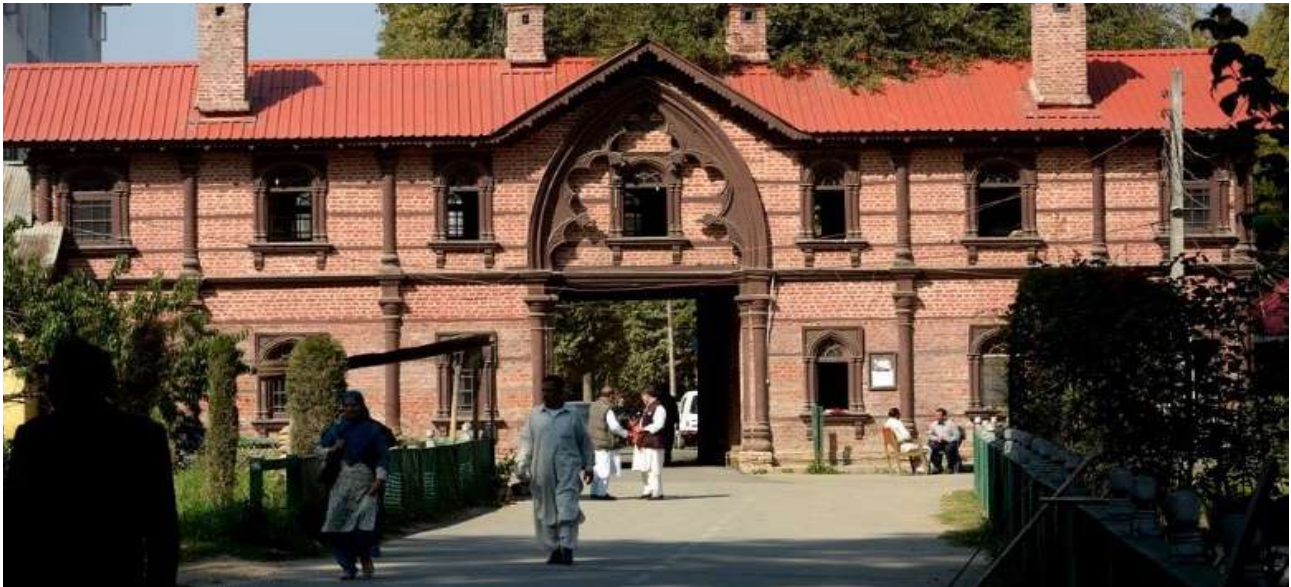
Conclusion

Shaivism in Kashmir has had a significant influence on the spiritual and philosophical traditions of India. It is known for its complex metaphysics and its emphasis on direct experience and realization of one's true nature as divine. Scholars and practitioners of Kashmir Shaivism have composed numerous texts and commentaries to expound its teachings, making it a rich and profound tradition within Hinduism.

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Plantation Tourism
(Tamil Nadu)

Background

Kolukkumalai is a small village in the Theni district of Tamil Nadu, India. It is known for having the highest tea plantation in the world, situated at an elevation of around 7,900 feet (2,400 meters) above sea level. The tea produced in Kolukkumalai is famous for its distinct flavor and high quality.

Visitors to Kolukkumalai can experience the scenic beauty of the region, including breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The tea estate offers guided tours where visitors can learn about the tea production process and even participate in tea plucking. The sprawling plantation is spread across more than 1000 acres of land and produces around 12 tons of tea per month on average (Times of India, 2019).

About the Kolukkumalai Tea Estate

At 7,900 feet above sea level, Kolukkumalai is 'the highest tea plantation in the world'. Kolukkumalai is undoubtedly one of the world's most beautiful travel destinations. Established in the early 20th century, this farm produces tea using traditional methods in a long-established tea estate. The factory still follows the colonial-era legacy of manufacturing the finest quality tea available in South India (Times of India, 2019).

Traditional tasting and orthodox tea-making is a 7-step process – withering, rolling, sieving, fermenting, drying, fiber extraction, and grading. The higher the altitude, the better-tasting tea. Also, at higher altitudes tea can be manufactured using a low-productive but high-quality tea manufacturing process.

The British built the Kolukkumalai Tea plantation between 1920 and 1927 with the assistance of the Chettiar brothers in Theni District, Tamil Nadu. Tea cultivation took place from 1927 to 1932 and in 1936 the tea industry was completed. The factories and buildings were all constructed using horse tracks and overhead loads. The facility employs over 150 employees and is headquartered in Bodinayakkanur, Theni District, Tamil Nadu. The Chettiar brothers ran the plantation from 1935 to 1971 under the Wright Worley scheme. The Chettiar brothers then transferred the rights to the A. J. Group on May 1, 1971. Since 1971, the facility is managed by A. J. Group located in Sivakasi, Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu, India (Kolukkumalai).

Nature and Wildlife

The region is characterized by lush greenery, with a variety of flora found in the surrounding hills and valleys. The tea plantations themselves contribute to the scenic beauty of the area. The region is home to a diverse range of wildlife.

Also, many animals can be encountered such as elephants, gaurs (Indian bison), sambar deer, wild boars, languors, and various species of birds, including endemic and migratory species. Birdwatchers can spot many birds such as Common Blackbird, Grey Wagtail, Malabar Whistling Thrush, and Hill Maina in Kolukkumalai tree plantations. As a result,

several initiatives have been taken toward the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of this region's biodiversity.

Impact of the Tea Plantation

Tea plantations have a great impact by bringing about significant changes in people's lives. Also, tea plantations provide employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, improving the livelihoods of many individuals and their families. Income from tea cultivation helps to alleviate poverty and contributes towards economic stability. Tea plantations have contributed to the general socio-economic development of a region. They provide opportunities for economic growth, infrastructure development, and raising living standards.For example, supporting local infrastructure, such as schools, healthcare facilities, and basic amenities.

Along with buying some good tea and enjoying the scenic beauty, plantation tourism should also teach one aspect of our colonial history and the exploitation of cheap labour practised by the Europeans in such plantations.

Challenges

Tea plantations face several challenges that can affect their productivity, sustainability, and profitability. Changing weather conditions, including erratic rainfall, variations in temperatures, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events, can adversely affect tea plantations. Tea plants are susceptible to various pests and diseases such as tea bugs, red spider mites, and fungal infections.

Tea plantations have contributed to the state's revenue through taxes, export earnings, and foreign currency inflows. Tea plantations eventually become a part of the local cultural identity. They shape the lifestyles, traditions, and practices of the communities that reside in and around the estates. Finally, tea plantations can have a positive impact on the environment when managed sustainably. Sustainable agricultural practices such as agroforestry and organic farming can help conserve biodiversity, prevent soil erosion, and conserve water resources.

Labour shortages, high labour costs, and social unrest can pose significant challenges for tea plantations, affecting productivity and profitability. Fluctuations in global tea prices and market demand can affect the profitability of tea plantations. Tea plantations require the right infrastructure for processing, packaging, and transportation. Lack of modern machinery, outdated processing facilities, and inadequate transport networks can affect efficiency and quality.

Conclusion

Tea plantations can enhance their productivity by maintaining product quality and contributing towards the sustainability of the tea industry. In addition, with growing consumer demand for sustainably produced tea, tea regions can make themselves stand out in the market and secure a prosperous future for the tea industry. Balancing the economic benefits of tea plantations with social and environmental considerations is essential.

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70 Integrated Water Management
(Andhra Pradesh)

Background

Human's relationship with water has always been a fluid and existential dilemma. Water resources and their wise management will overtake food security as the most important global issue in the future years. According to the Central Groundwater Board of India, 17% of groundwater blocks are over-exploited, indicating that the rate at which water is removed is higher than the rate at which the aquifer can recharge. Of the remaining groundwater blocks, 5% and 14% are at critical and semi-critical phases respectively. Three significant areas in India - the northern, western, and southern peninsular - are particularly in danger (Shiferaw, 2021).

To address this issue scientifically and systematically, Andhra Pradesh started a novel program, Integrated Water Management. This case study aims to combine key data into a unified framework for the scientific management of the state's water resources and aquatic ecosystems.

About the Initiative

Integrated Water Management in the State of Andhra Pradesh incorporates all information about water resources, including "rainfall, river flows, groundwater, reservoirs, canals, minor irrigation tanks, soil moisture and evapotranspiration into one system" (GoI, n.d.). In 86 reservoirs and 25 canals, real-time water level sensors collect data for the integrated water management system. In addition, it receives real-time data on soil moisture from 959 soil moisture sensors spread across the nation, as well as data on rainfall, humidity, temperature, and wind speed from 1876 automatic weather stations (GoI, n.d.).

Additionally, the system uses a mobile app feed to receive periodic data from small irrigation tanks as well as near-live data from satellites on soil moisture and information on calamities like cyclones. Scientific research and statistical interpolations are used to provide various solutions. Visibility solutions are generated for different water assets such as reservoirs (including large, medium, and small), groundwater, and soil moisture to demonstrate how much water is available over the entire State. This information provides the water balance that is always available for use in the State (GoI, n.d.).

The amount of water intake and discharge from other States and different sources is shown in the Water Audit Solution from the start of a monsoon year to the present day. The device can suggest protective irrigation methods based on information about soil moisture and crop stress. It forecasts stress alarms seven days in advance for the best yield by using weather station metrics to estimate the real rainfall, temperature, wind, and humidity at the village level (GoI, n.d.).

A disaster management solution has also been developed in partnership with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) using precise weather forecast data and nearly real-time data from sensors and apps. Because it can forecast cyclones, it also provides a seven-day forecast for rainfall and wind speed every six hours (GoI, n.d.).

Commendable governance initiatives for CMs, MLAs & MLCs

With the help of an integrated water management system, all water resources could be managed holistically. Automated SMS notifications are used to distribute data to multiple stakeholders. The technology created has been used to conduct a water audit across the State. In the Anantapur District, interventions to salvage groundnut crops were made using a 'crop stress system' that provided information on the particular mandals and villages that were under stress. The system assisted in the preparation for Cyclone Vardah in 2016 by forecasting wind speed, precipitation, and the path of the storm. The system also provides advice on which mandals to concentrate on when evacuating people.

Conclusion

The creation of a real-time Water Balance Sheet in India is pioneered by the experiences of the state of Andhra Pradesh. According to the 2019 Composite Water Management Index formulated by the NITI Aayog, such measures have assisted Andhra Pradesh in maintaining its 'High performer' rank in water management (NITI Aayog, 2019). The Integrated Water Management experience of Andhra Pradesh is a pointer to the entire country as to how to manage water resources wisely and scientifically.

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71 The Village with Asia's Oldest Fossil Park (Himachal Pradesh)

Background

In the Markanda Valley of the Sirmour District of Himachal Pradesh, close to breathtaking vistas of the Shivalik highlands, is the Shivalik Fossil Park, Suketi. The Park was established by the Geological Survey of India in collaboration with the government of Himachal Pradesh as a significant step towards the preservation of ancient animal sites, restoration of those environments, and utilization of those sites for scientific, educational, and recreational purposes. Life-size reproductions of extinct animals that lived in the area between 1.2 and 2.5 million years ago are on display in the park, which was founded in 1974 and whose fossilized bones have been found in Suketi and other locations.

Many outstanding fossil specimens from this collection about vertebrate groups have been shown at the Park's tiny museum. The Shivalik rocks are well-known across the world for the embedded remains of diverse vertebrate creatures and plants that flourished over a 25-million-year period and evolved along diverging lines, giving rise to the modern forms of land animals and plants. The Shivalik Fossil Park near Suketi is one of nature's great gifts in the Shivalik hills, including the remnants of extinct prehistoric species preserved as fossils, and is a rich geological heritage (GoHP, 2023).

About the Village

Suketi village is situated in Bali Chowki tehsil of the Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh, India. he village has a total dimension of 65.39 hectares. There are a total of 412 people staying in Suketi village out of which 201 are men and 211 are women. The literacy rate of the village is 68.20%. Just more than half of the residents (50.97 %) of the village are Schedule Caste (SC). And no Schedule Tribe (ST) community members are living in the village. While 31.50% of workers were engaged in marginal activity that provided a means of subsistence for less than six months, 68.50% of employees described their work as Main Work (employment or earning longer than six months). Among the 346 people working on Main Work, 237 were cultivators, either as owners or co-owners (Census, 2011).

Suketi Village is part of the Seraj assembly constituency and Mandi parliamentary constituency. The closest town to the village for all significant economic activities is Mandi. (Indian Village Directory, 2023).

The uniqueness of the Fossil Park

The concept of designing a museum was proposed to protect the fossil site and the fossils from indiscriminate extraction and vandalism. It was also meant to provide scientific facts from the prehistoric period for scholarly inquiry (Bhandari, 2018).

A vast variety of fossils are on show throughout the park. The most fascinating fossils are those of mammals and extinct vertebrate species from millions of years ago. These excavations have been incredibly valuable in helping us understand how species changed during the prehistoric period. Six life-size fiber models of extinct animals have been installed to commemorate these discoveries (Jana, 2022).

Way Forward

Through ADB funding, the tourism agency is expected to develop the Suketi Fossil Park. The government of Himachal Pradesh has been committed to providing all necessary assistance to develop this site as a destination for domestic and international tourists, historians, archaeologists, etc. However, to develop this fossil park as an important destination for tourists, transportation to the site and other facilities need to be made on priority. That includes making provision for all-weather roads, regular water supply in line with the needs of tourists, provision of emergency medical facilities, and other basic amenities in the area. Plans are getting ready for the creation of water supply sources by channelizing from the Markandey River, opening the ESI hospital at Kala Amb, etc. on priority. All these efforts could be accelerated with the active guidance and support of State and Union Governments as well as by actively engaging the local government and the local community.

Conclusion

Suketi Fossil Park is a perfect example of developing a small village into a point of destination for tourism where a lot of visitors from domestic and international are expected. After recognizing the uniqueness, identifying & developing such tourist destinations could contribute positively towards enhancing the livelihood opportunities and horizons of development in rural areas. However, it is very important to remember that while creating the infrastructure and other essential facilities in the area, social features, cultural beliefs, ecological vulnerability, etc. shall be considered and the philosophy of 'Responsible Tourism' shall be always maintained.

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Climate Action Plan
(Maharashtra)

Background

According to studies, temperature is gradually rising in urban areas around the world, and more people are being exposed to dangerous heat levels. The frequency of extreme weather events has also increased. The sustainability of the world's rapidly expanding urban settlements is threatened by increased exposure to intense heat caused by climate change. Urban development and health are endangered by exposure to extremely high temperatures, which results in decreased economic output and labor productivity as well as increases in sickness and mortality. Extreme heat exposure is very unequal within urban settlements and has a particularly negative impact on the urban poor (Tuholske et al., 2021).

India, like many developing and under-developed nations, is quite vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change on human health. Cities in India are very much susceptible to extreme weather conditions, including heavy precipitation, floods, droughts, and heat waves brought on by rising temperatures because of climate change. Aside from that, one of the main aspects to consider is India's high population density along with the country's ongoing urbanization and industrialization. India is projected to have 53% of the urban population with an addition of 416 million urban dwellers by the year 2050 (Desa, 2018). Therefore, crucial mitigation and adaptation methods are needed for the current and future impacts of climate to prevent a wide range of adverse effects on human health in Indian cities.
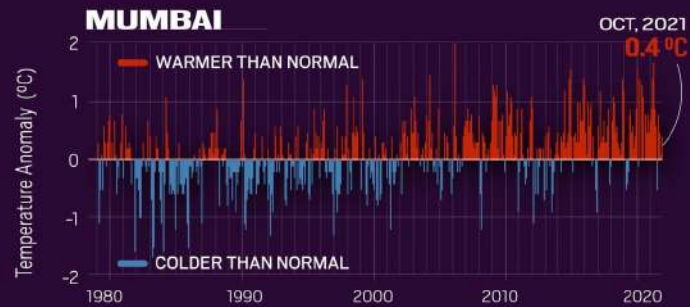
About the Net-Zero Emission Initiative

More than 70% of the world's carbon emissions come from cities. To keep global warming to 1.5°C, metropolitan areas will need to undergo quick and significant changes. It is encouraging to learn that Mumbai just declared its intention to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, making it the first Asian metropolis to do so (Jena and Thakur, 2022).

The mean annual temperature in Mumbai increased by 0.4°C between 2016 and 2020, according to data from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) compiled by Meteoblue. This information suggests that Mumbai is seeing an unprecedented increase in temperature. So, it is likewise experiencing erratic temperature and precipitation changes. According to the study (Rai, 2021), the city's May was drier than usual for the first time in 15 years. The August temperature was approximately 0.5 °C higher than the 30-year norm (1980-2010).

Through the adoption of comprehensive and effective mitigation and adaptation methods, the city of Mumbai has come up with the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP), giving a 30-year roadmap to address the problems posed by climate change. With a net-zero emission objective for 2050, this action plan has established short, medium, and long-term climate goals (Bhalerao, 2022).

Mumbai's plan outlines reforms in six different categories which are as follows- Sustainable Waste Management, Urban Greening and Biodiversity, Urban Flooding & Water Resource Management, Energy & Buildings, Air Quality, and Sustainable Mobility.

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) designed MCAP with technical assistance from World Resource Institute India (WRI India), which was brought on as a knowledge partner. MCAP is included in comprehensive roadmaps for reducing emissions and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Its main initiatives include highlighting Mumbai's demographic information and describing its socioeconomic and ecological characteristics, creation of a city's 'climate profile', in-depth analysis of six main sectors, establishing concrete objectives for Mumbai's emission reduction, and

creating plans of action and implementation, etc.

As reported by Nikhil Anand, an Anthropology Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, in the South China Morning Posts (2023) 'Mumbai's proposal could aid India in re-evaluating its existing development paradigms, which prioritize economic expansion over environmental protection' (SCMP, 2023).

Involving Key Stakeholders in the Initiative

Large firms, banks, and financial institutions are based in Mumbai. Additionally, it serves as the financial capital of the country. The future of India has a lot of potential to be shaped by this ecosystem. The leaders of these organizations have a say in how India responds to climate change. Key stakeholders can effectively affect the economy by taking collective action. The coordination of various stakeholders can facilitate communication, foster shared understanding, extend expertise, consolidate current activities, and record and disseminate best practices. Thus, engagement with corporations is the best course of action to decarbonize the economy as divestment from carbon-emitting companies continues. They can communicate with their borrowers collectively to ease the transition to net zero. To encourage borrowers to make commercial decisions to reach net zero, they might establish and adhere to universal net-zero lending and investing rules. They have the power to collectively modify corporate business practices by submitting climate change-related proxy votes and suggestions.

To create the best policies and regulatory framework to gradually reduce carbon intensity, the leadership group can collaborate with decision-makers and regulators situated in Mumbai (Jena and Thakur, 2022).

With its MCAP 2022, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is best equipped to lead such a change. It might offer a cooperative forum for promoting communication focused on taking concrete action amongst businesses, financial actors, and financial authorities. BMC can facilitate collaboration between NGOs, research institutes, and civil society organizations. Through this collaborative platform, a Climate Action Council (CAC) can be established, carrying the coalition's climate activities forward. By actively contributing to the CAC's resource pool, BMC can guarantee the success of its special mission. It can offer strategic incentives to Mumbai-based corporations including partial property tax exemptions, rebates, and reductions for businesses that commit to and meet their objectives for achieving net zero (Jena & Thakur, 2022).

Challenges

Apart from financial challenges, it is difficult to include different stakeholders in this project because they all have distinct interests.

Conclusion

While talking to India Today, Abinash Mohanty, Programme Lead, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) said, "As the COP 26 negotiations enter their final stage, it is critical to call for strict measures for enhanced adaptation finance to climate-proof our cities and tackle these climate extremes. Because more than 80 percent of the Indian population resides in extremely climate-vulnerable districts. India's average temperature has risen by around 0.7°C from 1901 to 2018" (Rai, 2021). Therefore, it becomes very important to find some sustainable ways to cope with such huge challenges, and Mumbai, the financial capital of India is taking

some initiatives in this regard. As indicated by Jena and Thakur (2022), Mumbai has the unique opportunity to begin on a wider, more audacious goal to guide the entire country towards an inclusive, resilient, and net-zero future, which is especially important given the relevance of such climate initiatives in huge metros. Mumbai can provide India's climate initiatives with a new spark of creativity. It has the power to transform confrontational encounters into cooperative ones. Mumbai's actions may demonstrate that regional and local efforts can significantly impact the fight against climate change. Such initiative could contribute significantly to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and needs to be replicated by making relevant changes as per the locality.

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Responsible Tourism
(Kerala)

Background

Kerala, which is located in Peninsular India's southern region, is well renowned for its pleasant climate, backwaters, Ayurveda, magnificent beaches, and rich cultural legacy. The State's thriving tourism economy is built on its bountiful natural and cultural resources as well as its well-educated and welcoming populace. An action programme for practicing responsible tourism was developed in 2007 with the help of elected representatives, NGOs, policymakers, industry practitioners, community leaders, social activists, environmentalists, media professionals, academicians, and other tourism stakeholders. This was done in recognition of the enormous potential of tourism, the development paradigms, and the need to promote it sustainably. With the cooperation and assistance of all parties involved in the tourism industry, it was determined to put RT into action while giving social, economic, and environmental considerations the weight they deserve. Before analyzing the necessity for other regions of India to embrace such a practice, we will first take a look at Kerala's objective to promote responsible tourism.

About Responsible Tourism Mission

The Responsible Tourism idea was put into practice as a pilot programme in 2008 at four different locations throughout the State, including Kovalam (beach), Kumarakom (backwaters), Thekkady (wildlife), and Wayanad (hill station). The Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria were taken into consideration when creating the action plan for implementing Responsible Tourism, which was done so through a consultation method (UNWTO, n.d.).

A scientific evaluation of the daily needs of hotels, resorts, lodging businesses, and other service providers in the tourism industry was part of the first phase's preparatory stage. To pinpoint places where the local community can effectively participate in the tourism industry, a mapping of the area's tourism resources was carried out concurrently. The local community and industry were then made aware of the benefits of RT to society, visitors, and the tourism industry. This was done through a programme of education. Responsible Tourism was able to improve the places where people live and visit by launching a participatory tourism initiative (UNWTO, n.d.).

The Government of Kerala established the Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission as its nodal agency to promote and put into practice the concepts and programmes of responsible tourism throughout the State. The Chief Minister, Government of Kerala officially unveiled it on October 20, 2017 (GoK. n.d.). Additionally, Responsible Tourism Mission serves as the State Nodal Agency for the Rural Tourism Development Project being carried out by the Ministry

of Tourism, Government of India. "The Mission is envisaged with a 'triple-bottom-line' mission, which comprises economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. Making tourism a tool for the development of village and local communities, eradicating poverty, and giving emphasis on women's empowerment are the main aims of the Responsible Tourism Mission. The mission aspires to provide an additional income and a better livelihood to farmers, traditional artisans, and marginalized people along with creating a social and environmental equilibrium" (GoK. n.d.).

In 2011, as part of the second phase, responsible tourism practices were expanded to three other locations (Bekal in Kasaragod, Kumbalanghi in Ernakulum, and Ambalavayal in Wayanad) after an evaluation of the activities at Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady, and Wayanad.

Two distinct streams of activity - field-level activities and ancillary academic and research activities—were developed during the third phase of Responsible Tourism. The two tasks will be carried out by Responsible Tourism Mission, which will report to the director of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism and the Government

of Kerala's initiatives and programmes for responsible tourism will be directed and carried out through the Responsible Tourism Mission (GoK. n.d.). As part of its initiatives for responsible tourism, the Responsible Tourism Mission held an extensive number of workshops, special gram sabhas, and other initiatives like the Clean Vembanadu initiative. These efforts have contributed to more responsible tourism (GoK. n.d.).

Conclusion

The demand for ethical and genuine vacation experiences is what gave rise to the movement toward responsible tourism. Marketing materials for the cause encourage consumers to think critically and reflexively, which in turn puts pressure on the travel and tourism sector to adopt more responsible tourism practices (Kokkranikal and Chettiparamb, n.d.). Other states can examine and implement Kerala's RT objective. The ecosystem will endure less stress as a result of the growth of responsible tourism, which will also provide visitors with an authentic vacation experience and sustainable livelihood prospects for the local people.

Contact

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Muppandal Wind Farm
(Tamil Nadu)

Background

Muppandal in Tamil Nadu has been India's largest operating onshore wind farm in terms of installed capacity. The wind farm was developed by the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA) and it has been in operation since 1986. In addition to supplementing the energy requirements, the Muppandal wind farm resulted in creating a tangible social impact on the people of Tirunelveli, Toothukudi, and Kanyakumari districts in the State over the past many decades. The strategic geographical position of these farms enables them to harness the uniquely powerful winds originating from the Arabian Sea. As Tamil Nadu does not have many hydroelectric projects, the presence of wind farms in the regions and other parts of the State played a crucial role in the comprehensive development by supplementing the energy gaps with non-conventional energy options. Without the adequate backing of non-conventional energy options, the industrialization in the State would have suffered keeping in mind in view that Tamil Nadu has been one of the leaders in industrial development in the country.

This case study is an attempt to provide a comprehensive approach towards the functioning of Wind farms, as an important non-conventional energy initiative, that has been successfully functioning as well as delivering multiple benefits.

About the Initiative

The Muppandal wind farm has a total installed capacity of 1500 MW. Additionally, there are several other wind farms situated in different villages across the Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, and Toothukudi districts of Tamil Nadu. These wind farms have brought about significant changes to the local communities and economies. The large wind farm in Muppandal features many wind turbines ranging from 200 kilowatts (KW) to 1,650 KW (Shankar, 2022).

The population living in nearby villages of Muppandal farms in Tamil Nadu comprises the population engaged in agriculture and allied sectors, the industry as well as tertiary sectors. The beneficiaries of these wind farms include farmers (paddy, milk, vegetable, etc.), pastoralists, small entrepreneurs, industrialists, persons engaged in the service industry, etc. These residents have witnessed the transformation of the region over the past few decades and have experienced the social impact brought about by the presence of wind farms. The presence of an uninterrupted supply of energy resulted in the initiation of several industries working in multiple sectors along with the creation of a lot of 'Green jobs' in the region, owing to the contributions of the wind farm projects.

In the year 2020, the electricity produced by wind farms in Tamil Nadu contributed to approximately 13% of the state's overall power demand. However, it is worth noting that Tamil Nadu possesses the capacity to generate around 31% of its total electricity requirements through wind power. The output is purchased by the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited or Tangedco – the government-run entity responsible for power generation, transmission, and distribution (Sridharan, 2021).

Impact

The gradual decline in the field of agriculture productivity, especially in the Toothukudi, Padmanabhapuram, and many other districts of Tamil Nadu, has been due to multiple reasons. The absence of adequate water resources has been one of the significant reasons affecting the farmers in the region. It is known that many individuals who express concerns about the decline of agriculture in the region often have family members employed in wind or solar energy farms. The people living in the region perceive wind power as an important source of livelihood citing benefits such as the presence of uninterrupted power supply resulting in increased employment opportunities in small and medium industries as well as other sectors, increased property values, etc.

There is a huge role played by wind energy produced in the region in generating

employment opportunities for the villagers. Supplementing the conventional energy options in a big way has resulted in the generation of a lot of opportunities for green jobs in the region. The villagers have started raising more and more demand to the authorities to expand wind farms which in turn created more job opportunities and especially green jobs for youth. Many farmers in nearby villages made good profit by selling their land, which was lying barren for want of adequate water resources for pursuing agricultur

Before the installation of wind farms, many villagers were in a desperate situation of meeting their needs as the agricultural productivity has come down owing to less rain and poor irrigation facilities. Continuous supply of electricity has increased the scope of education, especially in higher education with a lot of scope in non-conventional energy and allied areas. Many youths could find suitable jobs in the expanding small and medium industries owing to the boost in energy sources. In addition, there was a minor surge in the scope of education as well as employment in the non-conventional energy sectors.

Similar Initiatives

There is a rising trend in the initiatives and investments in the non-conventional energy sector in different parts of India. Union governments and State Governments provide huge subsidies to those who are keen on the installation of non-conventional energy options for domestic as well as industrial purposes.

India has set the target of generating 140 GW of renewable energy from wind farms

Table 1: An Overview of Wind Farms in Selected Parts of India

Wind power plant	State	Energy Produced (in Megawatt)
Muppandal wind farm	Tamil Nadu	1,500
Jaisalmer Wind Park	Rajasthan	1,064
Brahmanvel Wind Farm	Maharashtra	528
Dhalgaon wind farm	Maharashtra	278
Vankusawade Wind Park	Maharashtra	259
Vaspet	Maharashtra	144
Tuljapur	Maharashtra	126

alone within a reasonable time. There is a demand as well as the need for more focus on the expansion of non-conventional energy sectors, in which wind farms could be an important option. With a long coastal line, the country has a lot of scope for exploring the full potential of wind energy for supplementing conventional energy options in a big way. States such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan have already taken steps in the same direction. Other parts of the country, especially the States with long coastal sides shall invest more in wind farms for accelerated and sustainable growth in multiple sectors. It is significant to mention that the thrust on non-conventional energy options like wind farms is quite eco-friendly and could provide 'green energy' options as well as generate several 'green jobs'. In addition, barren lands and unused lands could be gainfully utilized for setting up wind farms and other non-conventional energy options.

Challenges

Expanding wind farms to additional areas poses a potential threat to the agriculture sector, as it may result in the diversion of resources toward the development of wind energy. And it provides limited employment opportunities for people involved in agriculture and plays a vital role in ensuring food security. There is a need for enhancing the skills of the rural community in multiple aspects. And there is a need for balancing investments and support in multiple sectors as well without one acting detrimental to the interests of the other.

There were some instances where the operators met with accidents during the transportation and installation of materials for wind farms. The utmost care and concern shall be adopted during the processes.

Thangaraj, who works on a wind farm, commented "I do acknowledge that women can't feel as safe in crane operation or security jobs at wind farms. But there are many women in factories producing electrical components

that are used in wind turbines. That counts as a green job too." (Sridharan, 2021)

Many years ago, energy-intensive industries such as textiles and cement factories used government incentives to build wind turbines to meet their needs. About 40% of the country's wind farms belong to the textile industry. There is huge potential to expand the use of non-conventional energy in manufacturing industries and other productive sectors.

Conclusion

The State of Tamil Nadu, which has a long coastal line, is very suitable for the expansion of wind farms and other non-conventional energy options. Its landscape is very much suitable for wind energy generation. With the liberal support of the Governments and incentives offered while opting for non-conventional energy options, individuals, industrialists, and many others are shifting towards these alternative energy options for domestic as well as non-domestic purposes. Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in the wind energy sector in the country. Being a large consumer of fossil fuels and conventional energy sources, exploring and expanding the non-conventional energy installations could help the country's dependence on fossil fuels, which results in multiple types of pollution. Such initiatives could contribute towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goals.

Contact

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Localizing SDGs in the Border Villages
(Arunachal Pradesh)

Background

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the global, integrated, and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Achieving these SDGs is a priority for all Governments. The NITI Aayog has been given the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the SDGs in India. As the Union Government is committed to several SDGs, actions must be taken by the State and Local Governments. To be more specific, Local Governments shall be better aware of the needs, issues, problems, and priorities specific to the local area and could serve the people from proximity.

Localizing the SDGs makes decision-making processes more inclusive and participative. It will also ensure that the choices, voices, and views of the local population are considered seriously and get priority. The SDGs can be locally adapted to ensure effective monitoring and accountability systems from close quarters. In such cases, the governments and other stakeholders could contribute more towards the accomplishment of the objectives and measure their impact locally by establishing local targets, indicators, and progress-tracking systems. This localized monitoring encourages openness, responsibility, and data-driven decision-making, along with ensuring sustainable methods for measuring and evaluating progress. In this case study, an attempt has been made to analyze the initiative made by the State government of Arunachal Pradesh to localize the SDGs.

About the Initiative

During the opening ceremony of a three-day training program on the occasion of the National Panchayati Raj Day, Shri. Pema Khandu, Chief Minister, State Government of Arunachal Pradesh announced that all the villages in Arunachal Pradesh situated at the border with China, Myanmar, and Bhutan will be fully built with all essential amenities. There are a significant number of villages along Arunachal's 1,817 km of international borders with China (1,080 km), Myanmar (520 km), and Bhutan (217 km) (IANS, 2023).

The Chief Minister said that the state administration is dedicated to developing each village in the state with the backing and direction of the Union Government. By combining the State and Union Government projects and schemes, he added, "We will also develop all the other villages" (IANS, 2023).

The Chief Minister promoted nine criteria to meet the Localized Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) established for the development of villages in Arunachal Pradesh based on the SDGs adopted by the United Nations.
According to him, 'the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) have a flawless road map for planning and carrying out development projects for their particular segment, thanks to the nine parameters set forth by the Department of Panchayati Raj'. The nine criteria are a clean and green village; a village with enough water; a child-friendly village; a healthy village; a poverty-free village; a village with self-sufficient infrastructure; a village that is socially secure and just; village with strong governance; and a village with gender equality (Singh, 2023).
The Chief Minister said that "In accordance with the 17 SDGs adopted by the United Nations, of which 15 are relevant for Arunachal Pradesh, the state government has been preparing the annual budget to achieve these goals. Likewise, the PRIs can now plan to achieve these nine parameters prescribed in the LSDGs for the wholesome development of the villages" (Singh, 2023.)
According to him, the fund for Panchayati Raj has been enhanced from Rs. 123 crores to Rs. 143 crores in this year's budget (2023 - 24). In addition to the grants from the financial commission, he also mentioned that PRIs receive 10% of the state's funds (Singh, 2023).
During the recent visit of Shri. Amit Shah, Union Home Minister to Kaho, the 'first village on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC)' situated in the Anjaw district, the ambitious 'Vibrant Village Programme' (VVP) for the Centre's goal of comprehensive development of border

villages was unveiled. On that occasion, the Chief Minister mentioned that "All villages along the border, which are significant in number with Arunachal's long international border, will be fully developed with all basic facilities. Similarly, we will develop all other villages by the convergence of state and central government schemes and programs" (Singh, 2023).

Challenges

According to the Chief Minister, the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh is not experiencing any fund shortage, but the planning system in the State is still not ideal, so things aren't moving very well. Therefore, he suggested better coordination among different Departments as well as improved convergence of programs, projects, and other initiatives to strengthen their planning and operationalization at the local level. Considering the institutional, material, technological and human resources available in the villages in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, District/ Block may be considered as the operational unit for localising the SDGs.

Conclusion

"Think globally, act locally" is a principle that encourages individuals to think about the health of the entire globe while acting locally in their communities, villages, and towns. Localizing the SDGs gives the Local Governments greater scope to improve their governance systems and encourage democratic participation. Planning, execution, and oversight of sustainable development programs are imperative to involve individuals, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. Localizing SDGs is expected to contribute towards Increased accountability and transparency, as well as more inclusive and effective governance.

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Chapter - VI
Way Forward

One of the expected outcomes of the NLC Bharat, 2023 is to project 'India i.e, Bharat' as not only the largest democracy of the world but also to work on its transformation as the most vibrant democracy. To make that a reality, ensuring ownership of all State and UT legislatures; improved planning, co-ordination, execution and feedback system; and, institutional support are very much needed.

Drawing inputs from the Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives, a number of pan-Indian Working Groups (WG) / Special Interest Groups (SIG) could be constituted in the post-NLC Bharat, 2023. The WGs/ SIGs could be initiated in diverse domains such as Agriculture and allied areas, Art and Culture, Career and Employment, Civil Society engagement, Conflict Transformation, Decentralised Governance, Disaster and Risk Management, Eco-friendly Infrastructure, Educational Reforms, Environment Protection, Gender and Development, Green Politics, Health and Hygiene, Hunger-free India, Inclusion of the Excluded, Low Cost Housing, Non-Conventional Energy, Responsible Tourism, Science and Technology Adaptation, Sports and Games, Water and Sanitation, Waste Management, etc. The list and areas of operations could be finalised after detailed deliberations with the legislators as part of the Conference.

The ideas, views and commendable practices arising out of the WGs/ SIGs shall be disseminated to all legislators for wider deliberations and emulation in different parts of the country with necessary regional and state-specific variations. The WGs/ SIGs could be constituted at the pan-Indian level and State-wise Working Groups (SWG) could be formed at the State level.

As part of capacity building of the legislators, 'Exchange Programmes' and 'Learning Journeys' between the States/ UTs also could be initiated. Such practices of 'Peer Learning Sessions' or 'Horizontal Learning Programmes' have proved very effective in the domain of capacity building of political leadership. It is expected that such practices will have better acceptability and receptivity among the legislators.

Similar to 'Exchange Programmes' and 'Learning Journeys' of legislators between one State/ UT to another, similar exercises by a group of legislators to some of the best performing democratic nations across the world also could be organised. If carefully curated, such 'International Exchange Programmes' or 'International Learning Journeys' will enable to appreciate and adapt some of the commendable practices from vibrant democracies across the world as well as to show case our commendable democratic and governance practices with the legislators of the host nation(s).

All such academic, research and professional exchanges could be richly benefited from this Compendium. Acknowledging inputs from this Compendium of Commendable Governance Initiatives, wherever used, is a humble expectation.

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Athenian Oath

" We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of dishonesty or cowardice. We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this City not only, not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us".

Note: The Athenian Oath was recited by the citizens of Athens, Greece more than 2000 years ago. It was quoted by Lycurgus during the training of young men in Athens. In the modern times, it is referred by the empowered political leaders, as a timeless code of civic responsibility.

|| विधानं राष्ट्र-धर्मः ||

राष्ट्रीय विधायक सम्मेलन | ৰাষ্ট্রীয় বিধায়ক সন্মিলন | জাতীয় আইনসভার সম্মেলন |

রাষ্ট্রীয় ধারাসভ্যো পরিষদ | ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಶಾಸಕರ ಸಮಾವೇಶ |

ദേശീയ നിയമസഭാംഗങ്ങളുടെ സമ്മേളനം |

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