CHAPTER VIII

Different Hurdles Faced while Implementing The Schemes
Rural development of late has become a matter of global concern though issues associated with the problems by and large still appear to suffer from ambiguity and lack of direction. The perception of the problem as well as the nature and intensity of the programmes are likely to vary across societies, cultures and ecologies, has added to the confusion on the matter. The reasons are apparently historical though not totally free from the influence of concerned societies.

India has passed through three decades of experiments on rural development. It is also true that the signs of change are quite conspicuous. The poor have become poorer and the rich have become richer. Development failed because it adopted wrong "priorities", the "methods" were wrong, the programme was "wrong". Development had made the rich richer simply because the planners did not turn to the poor in selecting the beneficiaries. Unplanned development has resulted in dwarfing the socio-cultural development apart from economic development.

At Ralegan Shindi, Anna Hazare triggered off the process of development. The strategy however was multi faceted, multi sectoral and multi processed in character.

In the previous chapter factors that brought about rapid implementation of the schemes were examined. However, change does not come about over night. A number of problems crop up along the way.
In this chapter different hurdles faced while implementing the schemes have been examined.

Government machinery

Since Anna Hazare’s schemes embraced all governmental activity, he had to visit the collectorate and other government institutions many times. Initially the officers there did not care for him. They troubled him by seeing that he made innumerable trips to get any project sanctioned. Unnecessary technical problems were raised making it difficult for him to get any work sanctioned. Local MP and MLA did not help him either. They were not even interested in coming to the village to survey the schemes to be undertaken. They were not even interested in the development of the village. His innumerable attempts to meet them resulted in frustration.

The struggle to set up a high school in the village was unique. After the villagers built the school building themselves through sramadaan, the local MLA - angry that the villagers had not voted for him manoeuvred to deny recognition to the school. But Hazare was undeterred. He hired ten teachers offering free food and housing in lieu of salaries and got the school going. Then he systematically began lobbying officials both at district headquarters in Ahmednagar and at the state secretariat at Bombay, 350 kilometers away. To keep expenses down during his Bombay trips, Hazare slept on news papers spread on bus station floors and bathed in the sea. But for one year despite 20
visits to Bombay and an innumerable more to Ahmednagar, nothing happened. Finally, Hazare says "I decided I had enough". He descended on Ahmednagar's Zillha Parishad office one morning with 250 villagers and announced that they were all going on hunger strike. Within hours officials in Bombay sent a positive reply and within days the recognition and the funds for the salaries of the teachers were made available.

Illicit distillaries

At that time Ralegan Shindi's most distinctive features were its 40 illicit distillaries which made the village a popular haunt for drunkards and gamblers. Liquor had blighted the lives of Ralegan Shindi's residents. In the absence of any work, liquor distilling provided the villagers with some income. Gambling and smoking of ganja was also rampant. Thefts and brawls were also common. There was no meaning in their lives, as they could not think of anything better.

One night a few Tarun Mandal members rushed to the temple with the news that some drunkards from a neighbouring village had beaten up a Ralegan Shindi's farmer, just because he did not salute them. Hazare seized this opportunity to call a meeting and lashed out against illicit distilling and gambling in the meeting. He told them that liquor was the main reason which had blighted their lives and convinced them that addiction to vice was a product of ignorance about life and its purpose and asked them to abstain from it. He also warned all distillary den runners to close down their dens.
Some fearing Anna closed down their shops, others had their shops smashed up by Hazare and his boys. But Anna Hazare was not content with shutting down the distillaries, he also wanted the people to give up liquor. He warned the villagers not to drink.

He soon proved as good as his word. A few days later when three men returned to Ralegan Shindi drunk, Hazare tied them to the village temple pillars and personally flogged them with the army belt.

Even today Anna is unfazed by criticism of such harsh behaviour "Rural India is a harsh society", he says and if you want change you have to be tough. Indeed no one at Ralegan Shindi holds Hazare’s harshness against him.

Today no one drinks in Ralegan Shindi. The people have found new meaning to their lives. They are no longer indebted, their health has improved. The family sufferings have also been reduced.

Poverty

When Hazare took premature retirement from the army the village was in a sorry state. Almost a quarter of the people were on the brink of starvation. They were surviving on bhakris made out of hulga (horse gram). Many of them used to get food only four to five days a week and go hungry the rest of the time. Over 60 percent of the villagers had to buy food grains from other villages to last throughout the year. Roti,
Kapda and Makaan were mere slogans, that did not have any meaning to them. The village was struggling under the yoke of backwardness and poverty. The cause of poverty lay in its weak economic base which was not in a position to sustain even 2000 people that resided in the village. It fact since many of the villagers had worked for bootleggers, shutting down the distillaries had made several families penniless. As he was wondering what could be done, he chanced upon a newspaper article about a state government scheme that provided manual labour jobs on public works project. He and the Tarun Mandal boys quickly rounded off about 250 villagers who badly needed work and got jobs for all of them.

Anna thus had developed a community sense and a feeling of solidarity in the village. This was a part of a wide programme for bringing about a rapid increase in the standard of living.

Untouchability

Today untouchability is one of the most important evils of our society and is deep rooted in our social structure. Not only the constitutional provision for its eradication has been provided but the government has been trying its level best since our independence for the removal of this social evil.

At Ralegan Shindi also, untouchability was deeply rooted. The Harijans lived on the outskirts of the village. They had become the victims of exploitation by other castes.
They could not draw water from the village well. They had a separate cremation ground. Also the village temple was not for them. The benefits of economic schemes did not reach them and they continued to wallow in poverty. Caste rules were prevalent, caste barriers separated the caste Hindus from the Harijans.

Anna Hazare was touched by the injustices to the Harijans. He did not want the Harijans to be separate from other castes in the village. He accepted them as equals in his personal life and he wanted the villagers also to follow.

With Anna Hazare’s initiative in eradicating untouchability, it is beginning to loose its force in Ralegan Shindi. There are no caste rules now. About 10 houses were built for the Harijans in the village through shramadaan by other caste people. The Harijans also share the community water with caste Hindus and eat along with them in group marriages. The Satyanarayan Pujas of the Harijans which are performed in the village temple are attended by all people.

Due to this change some Harijans who had left the village due to atrocities and separatist attitude of the villagers have since returned to the village. Their children have also started going to school.

There were sixteen Harijan families in village who had incurred a debt of Rs. 60000 which they could not repay. A meeting was called and the people collectively decided to repay their debt by collectively farming their fields. Within two years the Harijans were cleared of their debts.
Thus Hazare had invoked in them a desire to improve their attitude and instilled in them a spirit of cooperation. Now they even have a common cremation ground.

Thus at Ralegan Shindi there is cooperation in work and in all activities of life. In fact the Harijans share the prosperity generated by the villagers.

Customs and Traditions

The people of the village were tradition ridden, they were maintaining their own traditions and adhered to their own social values. However, from amongst the customs were being followed religiously were inhuman customs and traditions. Anna Hazare felt that laws or reforms could do more harm than good. Ignorance and the dead weight of customs and taboos coupled with poverty provided the initial obstacle in bringing about change.

The annual festival of Chaitra Saptami in the month of April May is the time when the village fair is held. This is the time when once a year all the villagers gather and pay their respects to the Goddess.

Drum beats rent the air, trumpets sound and mass sacrifice of several goats was the usual practice after which the flesh was distributed as "prasaad" to the villagers.
This cruel gory practice was physically revolting and superstition had it that if goats were not sacrificed then disease, famine and death would ravage the village.

But Anna Hazare was firm and he stopped this bloody method to appease God. He told the villagers that if they thought they could appease God by sacrificing goats, then they could sacrifice human beings as well, as human beings are far superior than animals. To begin with he offered himself to the villagers to be sacrificed to the Goddess. Most of the villagers were convinced and the sacrifice of goats was stopped.

To add, a possessed person who was sought after by the villagers when he was supposed to be possessed by the "divine", declared that since the goat sacrifice had been stopped famine, death and disease would ravage the village, as the Goddess was angry. Anna was unperturbed. He with the permission of some of his confidants tied him to a pole and gave him good beatings in front of the villagers.

From that time till today "the divine" does not possess him any more.

Thus Anna had stopped inhuman customs and rituals and the people of the village had been awakened. Ignorance of the people had been removed. He thus proved that disease and famine had to be fought by the villagers themselves.
Traditional Social Customs

Virtually all the marriages in the village were celebrated with pomp and gaiety. Weddings were an expensive affair with exchange of costly gifts and feast for all. However the burden of the marriage expenses fell on the girl’s father who had to many a time sell some of his land or cattle or borrow money from the village Mahajan who charged exhorbitant rate of interest. Thus a girl’s marriage in the family made the villagers destitute and indebted to the village Mahajan. Apart from this the marriage functions usually witnessed misunderstandings and fights over trivial matters like marriage arrangements for the grooms party, food, gifts etc. Thus at Ralegan Shindi matrimony was a matter of money. Money based marriages were also the prime cause of impoverishment at Ralegan Shindi.

Anna’s object was to jerk the villager out of his groove and teach him that unhealthy and uneconomic customs had to be stopped for a better way of living. To prove this Anna with the help of Tarun Mandal started organising group marriages. The marriage takes place in the village temple.

All the marriages whether they are of the rich, poor or Harijans are conducted in groups. Now nobody has to spend more than Rs. 1000/- and poor families do not have to pay anything at all.

The advantage has been that needless expenditure is avoided and so, nobody has to beg or borrow money for marriage.
Vested-interests

Local politics, graft, corruption, diversion of funds were the diseases that had plagued Ralegan Shindi. It had become very difficult for any villager to rise above this. Even the youth of the village were wayward. The village had become more favourable to corruption and opression.

The socio-economic background of Ralegan Shindi was not conducive to the functioning of an institution based on democratic and egalitarian principles. There was also to be found a cleavage of interests in the village itself. The village leadership operated partly for the advantage of the more powerful economic interests and partly in alignment with the social institutions of the caste. The leadership made itself felt in the village by exerting great influence on the village life and thwarting progress of any kind.

Leadership lay in the hands of persons who were not genuinely interested in the progress of the village. The village had turned out to be a handy tool of self advancement in the hands of petty politicians and district officials. Their aim however was to convert it into an anti-thesis of cooperation and make it one of the most organised channels of national waste.

These vested interests were the real internal enemies of Ralegan Shindi’s development and progress and were more dangerous and parasitic than the enemies from outside.
homogeneous influencing centres like caste, kinship and individual families.

Unanimity in elections were encouraged, thereby encouraging the selection of right person for the job. As many as thirteen societies which operate in Ralegan Shindi adopt unanimous method of electing their leaders/members.

Illiteracy

The greatest hindrance to any progress is illiteracy. Ralegan Shindi was utterly lacking in educational facilities. There was wide spread illiteracy which did not allow them to take advantage of economic opportunities. Although elementary education was available nonenrolment and dropouts were high. A sizable portion of children belonged to weaker sections, socially disadvantaged, economically deprived and girls formed the bulk of non enrolled, non-retained and drop out population. However, drop outs and nonenrolment were also due to socio-economic factors.

The key issue was however illiteracy. Literacy had to be a starting point to enable them to demand development. Being literate would help them to stand on their own feet and not depend on any one. But literacy was a very complicated issue in a society of this type, where vested interests were entrenched, since literacy for a large group of people was bound to change the equation in the society. It was therefore not in the interest of these vested, self centred interests to promote literacy. So it is one thing to verbalise concern
for literacy and another thing to deliver literacy. For that Anna had to focus on the delivery of literacy which was their fundamental right and privilege. The rule of thumb practice had to yield place to precise and rational use of education to ensure fuller development.

Adverse traditional values according to which education to girls is not considered necessary or desirable, ignorance of parents and school teachers who did not motivate the children to attend school were among the reasons of being illiterate.

Anna however knew that education had an important bearing on the development of human knowledge, skills and attitude. He therefore had to encourage both formal and non formal education. As for formal education he won the battle by starting a high school at Ralegan Shindi. As for the non formal education, adult education and functional literacy were introduced.

Thus education and literacy went a long way in helping the people to take advantage of the developmental activities. The villagers also developed a positive attitude towards cooperation. The disadvantaged were re-socialised through education so that they could be participants in the real sense of the developmental efforts for well being. Literacy had helped them in absorbing economic opportunities and enjoy the benefits rising out of it. Also every child in Ralegan Shindi goes to school and Hazare is determined that every boy and girl gets equal opportunity of completing schooling.
The village money lender

The village money lender was still the important source for borrowing.

Since the villagers suffered from ignorance and poverty and were indebted to the village Mahajans, their need for ready money to pay off land revenues and family burdens like marriage, sickness and lack of bank facilities compelled them to dispose of their produce at a loss. Over and above that they had the village money lender who charged exorbitant rate of interest.

Dozens of villagers were under knee deep debt and were in the clutches of moneylenders.

With untiring efforts Anna Hazare was successful in bringing Bank of Maharashtra to the village. After the bank opened its branch at Ralegan Shindi, the people no longer had to turn to the local money lender in times of need. The risk of production operations like drought, accidental break down of farm machinery, unsuspected defects in seeds and manures, infectious plant disease were all shared by the bank. Loans for buying cows, buffaloes, agricultural implements, in fact all that agriculture requires were offered by the bank. Thus the bank played a very crucial role in the economic development of the village.
Credit Society

Agricultural marketing is a general problem of the farmers. The farmers since they are not organised are exploited by the purchasers. Also the fluctuations in the prices of agricultural product are the greatest hurdles in the way of agricultural development, for they bring ruin to many. When the farmer has enough grains after a good harvest the prices are low.

At Ralegan Shindi because of poverty, indebtedness, hand to mouth living and lack of credit society, the farmer sold his produce at the prevailing prices since he was hard pressed for money. Thus he sold his produce at unfavourable times and at unfavourable terms to the middlemen who reduced the share of the consumers price received by the farmer in the absense of credit society.

To overcome this Anna Hazare encouraged the formation of a credit society. This society buys the produce from the farmers when they want to sell it. It pays them cash for the purchase of grains. The grains are stored in the godown of the society.

When the prices are stable the members take back the grains and sell it in the market when the best price is prevailing. Then they return the amount taken earlier. The society charges a marginal sum as interest. This society has come as a blessing to the farmers of Ralegan Shindi by overcoming the exploitation of their helplessness during the time when finance was needed most.

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Scarcity of Water

Ralegan Shindi lies in the drought prone zone of Ahmednagar district which is perennially a drought prone zone of Maharashtra state.

Rainfall figures suggest that the village suffered from drought since time immemorial. Though the rainfall was below normal, many a times it was erratic. There was no river or any irrigation project nearby. The only source of water for the village wells were the rains.

There was acute drinking water shortage in summer and decrease in ground water had reduced the vegetal cover not to speak of agriculture. As the availability of water was very limited agriculture was precarious and the farmers, since they had no work engaged in bootlegging and distilling illicit liquor.

Anna Hazare therefore rightly gave the highest priority to the work of conservation of water through systematic watershed management on all lands–private, common as well as government land through a series of check dams, bunds, contours, waste weirs, with the intention of preserving every drop of rain water. A percolation tank was also constructed. The result was dramatic, the underground water level has gone up thus facilitating sinking of more wells. The problem of food, fodder and water was solved.
Lack of vegetation

The extent of damage caused to the environment was alarming. Increasing frequency of drought, unabated deforestation, no perennial water system foreshadowed a very dismal future for the village. The poor villagers who were the ones depending directly upon immediate environment for survival were the ones who were suffering the most of the brunt of this problem. Barren hills and parched land indicated that the crisis was severe. Their basic needs which were met by plants and animals in the form of food, shelter, fodder, fuel, fertilizers (which means manure for their fields), wood for bullock carts, thatch for the roof of their homes etc. were deprived to them because of lack of vegetal cover.

The destruction of the environment had an enormous impact on their lives. The amount of time the women had to spend on collecting fuel and fodder was very high. Even pregnant women had to undertake this hazardous task, not to speak of fetching water for which they had to walk long distances.

Anna Hazare had to regenerate the environment back. For that the villagers had to cultivate fast growing fuel trees which could grow at least at the rate of two feet a month.

The ecological balance in the area which was shattered was regenerated through soil conservation, water conservation and afforestation. Today the story of Ralegan Shindi is a
documentary evidence of such a programme, an experiment in the regeneration of environment. Ralegan Shindi proved that it could do better than governmental programmes and by forest officials alone. With 250000 trees and the peoples involvement in afforestation programme Ralegan Shindi was "greened". He had raised the consciousness of the people towards environment.

Lack of technology

Technology does not mean only computers. It means anything other than tradition. First technology for water we have to modernise our outdated water management systems to provide ample of water to our villages. The womenfolk don’t have to trek kilometers for water, wood for fuel and fodder — there will be a social transformation in the villages. We also need technology for literacy from radio sets to TV sets to solar cookers, to solar lamps. We also need to immunise children, so that infant mortality goes down and female literacy goes up, automatically literacy will also help in family planning. There still could be hope because of information technology and biotechnology. Biotechnology is going to create better fertilizers, better agricultural products, better pharmaceuticals etc. The food problem will not be a major one as people would be able to manage droughts and floods. The environment will have to be improved because of new techniques in tissue culture and new policies in forestry. There also has to be focus on management communications, information, people’s participation motivation etc.
To go into details, the villagers of Ralegan Shindi had to be given water, leave alone potable drinking water, children needed good health service and education. All types of fruits, vegetables, fertilizers could be made available with bio-technology. Housing facility together with communication had also to be improved. There also had to be mass communication at the village level - some form of entertainment and education.

There was however a very serious problem in the system when it came to modernising Ralegan Shindi. Anna Hazare's real motive in modernising Ralegan Shindi was to bring technology close to people since the only available option for speedy development was the effective use of technology. Anna Hazare very well knew that technology was to be used not because of fancy but because it was the only tool available to solve the existing problem of Ralegan Shindi's backwardness. Technology was the only factor that could increase efficiency, reduce costs, distribute equitably, boost innovation and at the same time change the basic attitude to work, foster a work ethic and improve the quality of work. Anna realised that without technology there was not going to be any change in the things as it stood revealing under-development. However Hazare felt that technology was not the solution to all problems, however it was an entry point to development. People had to change their work culture at Ralegan Shindi. Anna Hazare quiteley ushered in technology through gobar-gas, bio-gas, smokeless chullha, lift irrigation, T.V., solar street light and water heater, flour mill, water pump, wind-mill etc. to name a few, which played
a very important role in speeding up development and nothing else was important as that. Also new farm techniques, irrigation facilities, improved fertilizer and improved variety of seeds emerged helping agriculture to flourish.

Agricultural practices

The agricultural practices adopted were primitive. The standard of agricultural activity were also low. The farmers were unaware of modern methods of agriculture. Also machinery for agriculture extension was lacking. Various inputs like water, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, modern tools and equipment were all not available. Thus agriculture at Ralegan Shindi had the most dubious distinction of input output relation among all the sectors of economy. The problem of unstable productivity in agriculture was of no less importance than the problem of growth in agriculture.

Anna Hazare introduced agricultural extention, modern tools and equipments were made available, credit to farmers was also made available. Good seeds coupled with manures and pesticides helped agriculture grow.

EGS schemes a curse

In 1970 and 1971 there was very less rainfall. Most of the interior of Maharashtra was under the grip of severe drought. It was followed by the 1972 famine which proved disastrous. There was very little rainfall in 1972. The conditions became very severe. Farmers became helpless. This
time it was so severe that the parched land started developing huge cracks. Ralegan Shindi which was an arid part of Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district wasn't very different from hundreds of other villages which were severely drought prone. The condition here was very pitiable. Streams, nullhas, wells had all gone dry. There was little or no drinking water for the villagers.

There were demands for the famine commission. After 1972, EGS schemes were introduced. It was launched as a response to the crippling drought, faced almost perennially in the state.

The villagers of Ralegan Shindi under took work under EGS. The labourers employed under the Employment Guarantee Schemes (EGS) were not being paid regularly were the complaints of many workers on the sites. A few others said that the ration coupons for them had not been supplied. Attendance registers and muster rolls were not found in order, were also the complaints.

To retain more water, thirty five projects of nullha bunding were undertaken. A site was selected for percolation tank and the work was started. But the work done was of very poor quality. Villagers did not pay much attention to the quality of work. Corruption at every level in the government departments, careless attitude of the villagers, their helplessness, neglect of local organisations were all responsible for the poor quality of work.
One of the most disturbing features was, that it had passed into the hands of vested interests who lacked proper accounting practices, indulged in irregularities of loans and maintenance of false records. While constructing the percolation tank most of the technical aspects were overlooked giving rise to inferior quality of work.

The percolation tank for which Rs. 9 lacs were sanctioned could not hold water. There was loss of water due to seepage and after two years it developed huge cracks and the rainwater could not be checked, it just flowed away.

At that time Mr. Anil Kumar Lakhani was the district collector of Ahmednagar. Anna Hazare with the villagers made a representation to him with photocopies of the tank. On Anna Hazare’s persistance he made on the spot survey and sanctioned Rs. 2 lacs. Anna Hazare decided that this time the contractor will not be given work and the villagers themselves undertook the repair work. 9 lacs of rupees which had gone down the drain were saved by just spending rupees two lacs.

Thus Anna Hazare says there was a lot to learn from this experience. After this experience, the construction of boys hostel, afforestation programme which were sanctioned under the EGS were undertaken by the villagers themselves.
Lack of Planning

Due to lack of planning all the efforts for development suffered numerous drawbacks. Exclusive and one sided concentration on one aspect of rural life, predominantly emotional bias, lack of coordination at work, insufficient ability to assess the results and above all an absence of sociological perspective were responsible for ineffective success.

Development required the facilities to raise the general level of people which was very low. People had no access to factors making for change. The basic facilities for development were all absent. Electrification, transport communication which were all necessary infrastructure for development were not adequate.

Development schemes were sporadic and overlooked their basic needs and immediate benefits, due to lack of planning. The social, economic, cultural and political aspirations of the people were overlooked.

Anna Hazare very well knew that the solution to the problem of rural upliftment lay in proper planning because without such planning no development could take place.

Anna Hazare thus planned and organised an assault on all facets of the rural life systematically through a single multipurpose aim of upliftment of the village Ralegan Shindi.
Lack of Participation

Attempts to revitalise the rural life met with enormous obstacles. There was an overall blindwall and any attempt for economic development met with sceptism. It was a colossal task to develop the village in all its aspects due to inadequate support by the people. For generations they had lived with little or no knowledge of the outside world in complete or partial isolation and looked with strong misgivings at innovations or suggestions.

With Anna's efforts opportunities for peoples participation in various aspects of development project not only created a feeling of ownership but also a positive attitude towards the development process. Anna Hazare encouraged the participation of the people regardless of their social or economic status, to realise the only objective and that was the development of the village.

Lack of Effective Leadership

Earlier, life in the village was of abject poverty. Their outlook towards life was apathetic and the hope of spontaneous leadership was almost nil. There was absence of zealous and properly oriented village level workers. The villagers had to be inspired for better living. Water was not the only commodity that was short, there was shortage of social and moral responsibilities as well. There was nobody to lead the village towards initiating a process of transformation in the socio economic life of the villagers.
However there was a slow process of change brought about by Anna Hazare with his effective leadership. With honesty, dedication and selflessness, Hazare has spear headed a movement that has led the village to all round prosperity. The impact of his towering personality had galvanised the villagers into a corporate entity.

Lack of Economic activities

With water available only during monsoon the farmers could barely grow one crop a year and 70% of the villagers comprising of 315 families lived in abject poverty.

The main hurdle was however to provide the villagers with an economic base so that they could depend upon themselves for meeting the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter, apart from educating children and other commitments that were oriented to their future development schemes, which were to be relevent and meaningfully linked to traditionally oriented occupations that had to be identified and fostered among the people.

There could not be any denial of the fact that economic development had to be given priority and it was a must and had to be taken up.

Anna therefore encouraged farm activities like goat rearing, rearing good quality of cows and buffaloes, poultry farming etc. He also encouraged trades like cycle repairing, smithy, bullock cart making, carpentry, etc.
Neglecting the human factor

The assumption that given the economic opportunities, the people would not only respond to them as expected but derive benefit from the opportunities does not always hold good. However there is something like the human factor which intervenes between the stimulations provided from external sources for economic development and the consequent conditions. It was also believed that improving the quality of human factor is as essential as investment in physical capital. Therefore Anna Hazare felt that unless an attempt was made to develop the human being in all its aspects like perceptions, motivation, attitude in keeping with the type of opportunities provided in different situations, abilities and skills, it would be difficult to expect the economic development envisaged. If development was to be conceived as development of the people, it would amount to improving the human material, from one of difference to responsiveness. In this attempt, the human being who is to operate and utilise the economic opportunities should be effectively motivated.

At Ralegan Shindi since development efforts ultimately had to bring about the improvement of people, it was necessary to pay more attention on human potential in order to build their capacity to absorb changes that were to come. In the context of development, parallel efforts had to be made at the economic as well as human level, instead of emphasising one against the other, so that the consequences that would be envisaged would bring about self-reliance among the people. Therefore unless an attempt was made to develop
the human being in all the aspects, it would be difficult to be able to provide for the satisfaction of the basic necessities.

Anna Hazare's task was directed towards man making. For Anna the most important thing was not the immediate material improvements like ample food grain, enough water, health and sanitation but the change in the outlook of the people, instilling in them an ambition for a richer and fuller life by developing the capacities of the individual so that he could master matters for himself.

Poor awareness of people

As for the Ralegan Shindi's residents their behavioural pattern in terms of awareness was negative one. With regards to awareness it was found that whatever be the kind of economy and welfare measures they did not have the requisite awareness among them in terms of nature and content of the programmes which could generate an urge in them to take advantage of the measures for their benefit.

To create awareness it is not expected of the government to solve the problems. It is not just possible also for the government to solve all the problems. The village did not have enough of wells, the school was not adequately staffed neither were the class-rooms sufficient, there were no electric motors to lift water from the wells. From the above problems it was clear that the government alone could not solve the problems. Also there were so many
youngsters in the village who just whiled away their time because they did not have any work to do. Thus a question arose to Anna’s mind as to when there were so many of them available, couldn’t anybody teach in the school, couldn’t anybody build classes, couldn’t anybody fix the water pump, couldn’t anybody repair a broken down bio-gas plant. Thus Anna had to make the villagers aware that they themselves could do it.

The local initiatives had to be used. There was enough capacity available locally so why wait for someone. The villagers were so unaware of their own capabilities that they looked for someone else to do work for them or help them in finding solutions. The solutions to local problems had to be found out at the grass roots level in the village itself.

More specifically in the context of innumerable schemes which were being implemented like education, various concessions available for children, health, agriculture, etc. their awareness was found to be nil. It was thus needless to say that awareness of the facilities would not only generate an interest in them but also could make them avail them to a large extent. Thus there seemed to be a gap between the services or facilities available for the people and their awareness about these which limited to a great extent their utility for the villagers for whom it was meant.

Anna Hazare’s programme which was directed to the task of village upliftment embraced all the aspects of governmental activity. With Anna’s help the villagers studied each and every scheme and started taking advantage of them.
Poor development of media

In the absence of media like newspapers, T.V., films it was found that accessibility of the villagers to mass media was very limited and the official machinery was not in a position to meet the information demands to the extent desired in order to generate the required feeling among the villagers that there were a variety of measures being implemented to their advantage. Again the mass media by themselves also could not generate the desired awareness among the villagers unless they were supported by some functionary at the village level to serve as a communicator.

With Anna's efforts T.V. has come to the village. People are also encouraged to read newspapers. Educative films are shown in the village. This has been able to serve effectively the cause of transformation. It has been effective in creating the necessary awareness among the masses about the efforts the government and other institutions were undertaking to better their lot. It also served to lay foundation for motivation that occurred among the people of Ralegan Shindi so that they could make use of government programmes for their socio-economic development.

Thus the village studied, suffered from physical isolation from urban centres, misery, paucity of resources, drought, untouchability, alcoholism, gambling and crime, poverty, primitive customs and traditions, social problems illiteracy, poor agricultural practice to name a few. It however had a solution in a dedicated voluntary agency that
could be looked upto for enlightenment in seemingly impossible conditions. It overcame all these difficulties by dint of its imaginative constructive and unified leadership of Anna Sahab Hazare.