

SMART VILLAGE

The Greening of India



An initiative to communicate
the Importance of Ecology
the Story of Resources and
the Lessons in Sustainability

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SMART VILLAGE
is what we need today.

The Question is:
How do we make a Village Smart?
We cannot bring industry or energy
to the rural hinterlands.
Agriculture has maxed out.
Animal Husbandry, including the Dairy
seems to be the only option
but a difficult one because Fodder is expensive.
Part of the reason why fodder is expensive
is that the village commons
variously called charnot, charagha, gochar, etc.
that were once traditional grasslands for village animals
are now either degraded or
illegally occupied by the influential rural rich.
People in the countryside are without
Fodder or Chara
The one who does not have "chara"
is in Hindi "Be-chara" or the Helpless.

BECHARA

We need to do this Project because
the rural poor are in deep distress.
Their well being is dependent upon the ecological health of their land.
But the ecology of Indian countryside is devastated.
There is an urgent need to rejuvenate our land
because Economy is the flip side of Ecology.
It makes sense to invest in
regenerating our natural resource base
on which depends our economic development.
So the project title is:

THE GREENING OF INDIA

Mission:

Set in motion a process to regenerate traditional grazing grounds
within three years by empowering the local people.

Vision:

To see regenerated village commons providing enough fodder for the village
to produce enough Milk offering food security, nutrition and generating income.

THE CENTRAL IDEA

Envisages the State to fund
a people managed organization in the village,
to maintain their milch and other animals
by organizing a
PASHUSHALA
where free fodder is provided by the State
for a period of three years.

This is the minimum time taken to regenerate a charnot.
The State pays for constructing a masonry wall
that is built by the people of the village.
The State also pays for the salaries of people
employed to manage the Regeneration of Charnot and
establishment of the Pashushala.
If the People act with vision
they make this project into a self-sustainable enterprise.

So what is that mechanism
that would organize the People?

It is
THE EDC

The Eco Development Committee.

It is a well defined concept
enshrined in the Forest Policy of India
under the Joint Forestry Management.
Almost all State Governments have adopted
the EDC Order of the Govt. of India.

The EDC

is a tripartite partnership between
The State, the People & the NGO.

The three parties come together to regenerate ecology.

The State provides funds directly to EDC.

The EDC managed by the People, spends the money
which is guided & supervised by the NGO
with the explicit objective of reviving the grassland
and in the process kick-start a whole new
movement towards empowering the rural poor.

By transferring the funds directly to the EDC
the State not only relinquishes
its control of the money but also the management & planning.
Only maintains supervision.

Minimum Government. Maximum Governance.

In other words, the Government delivers
on its promise of Development to the rural
by making the EDC accountable for its own progress.

If after 3 years of State funding
(amount needed to be calculated)
the EDC in collaboration with the NGO
is unable to make this a successful project
they have only themselves to blame.
By giving them the power to plan & disburse funds as they deem fit
the responsibility of development
also shifts from the State to the People.
With of course, supervisory responsibility of the NGO.

By funding Pashushala
the State is investing in
Regenerating the Natural Resource Base
which will in turn, generates jobs in the rural sector.
The migrant rural population living in depraved urban slums
would prefer to go back to the dignity of their countryside homes
provided they have an alternative to make an honorable living.
There, in their village, if they could be meaningfully engaged
in a people's based management model
that not only improves the food & financial security of the people
but also regenerates the ecological health of the area
then such an idea would become a
GAME CHANGER.
It would not only revolutionize India's rural hinterlands
but in the process decongest the cities.
NEW INDIA

If this concept has inherent merit
then a financial grant of Rs. 5 Lakhs
will be needed to re-write this idea
in all its working details.

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