



MINI MILK REVOLUTION: A CASE OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR VILLAGE ECONOMY

R.M. Channaveer¹

Dr. Kurien the father of white revolution in India is not known in this village, but his mission is getting white here. Yelladgundi a remote village in Karnataka is getting white face-lift due to a transformative youth initiative. A handful of youths are striving for the last over two years to transform their village through self-help and milk diary activities. Village is flooded with milky animals, youths are no more wasting time as earlier, women's purse is filled with bounty of rupees, shy educated youths are grazing cattle and working in fields, and lakh of rupee revenue is drawn to the village. And so, the fields are filled with abode of happiness, as youth are working in the fields, once neglected considering it a low dignity work. Responsible youths are now affectionately pushing the elderly engaged in fields to homes for needed rest with a feeling of great sigh.

Context

Yeladagundi is a tiny and quite interior village in Basava Kalyan Tahsil of Bidar district in Karnataka. Two streams and mountains surround the village. There are 300 families with 2000 population. Roads, school building and housing are getting better due to active role of Gram Panchayat. Agriculture is the mainstay of the villagers since time immemorial. The village has ample of water resources for drinking. It is nature's grace during the last four years the village received sufficient rains and witnessed bumper yield of tur dhal, jawar, bajri, sunflower, green gram, black gram, ground nut and sugar cane; although drought persist in the nearby villages. The traditional occupations like carpentry, hair cutting, sheep grazing and farm labor form major means of livelihood for the backward communities. The village is composite of lingayat, dalit, backward communities and muslims. Although upper caste lingayat possess high per capita land, dalits with seer hard work are

¹ Dr. R.M Channaveerm Lecturer, Dept. of Social Work, Walchand College, Solapur-413006, Maharashtra

purchasing lands from the upper caste. The geo-ecological conditions are dry and the agriculture is dependent on rain. The youths and productive age group population therefore migrate seasonally to Mumbai, Pune and Hydrabad for their livelihood in tailoring and construction work. The hard earnings of labor, invest in the agriculture capital during rainy season. Lord Parameshwar, the village god is the symbol of unity and harmony for all castes and communities. Caste discrimination still persists, at times result in caste strife but get settled amicably. However, the accommodative attitude is gaining among upper caste people, which is a gradual process. Villagers staying in different parts of the state and neighbouring states gather in the month of December every year to celebrate fair of the village god. It is a mega event of culture and art as village youth perform dramas, and people from around tens of villages gather and watch dramas all through the nights for two days and appease their recreational desire. Wrestling the declining traditional sport is a great amusement here.

Hotels have come up very recently followed by some small provision shops. For the past five years villagers have maintained frequent contacts with nearby taluka and cities for marketing agricultural produces and availing health services. Since, the village is on the boarder of Karnataka and Maharashtra, contacts with border cities also increased these days for marketing and health services. Migration to Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad cities is phenomenal since the village and whole India was struck by the 1972 famine, which forced people to move out. The push – pull conditions of 1972 drought increased the mobility of people to cities. Many families have settled there in tailoring and construction occupations and assist the mother families in the villages. Recently, the migration trend of youth has become seasonal (mainly summer) so as to support the agricultural activities, and depending on the demand of the job in major cities. But the employment in organized sector is low. In the past five years girl child education is increasing and girls are going to nearby villages for high school education. Level of collegiate education is low, because youth taking interest in continuing collegiate education is countable, but slightly increasing these days. Early marriages are very rare, but dowry practice persists. Showing the characteristics of a healthy community, the village does not have any divorces or separations or marital conflicts or crimes for that matter. Caste Panchayat still prevails in the village to settle the family and property disputes.

Swami Vivekanand Self-help Group

Anand, a village youth, attended a lecture of NABARD Bank at

Gulbarga city, which is 60 km away from the village Yeladagundi. He was deeply inspired by the thoughts of the managers, who emphatically told the need of self-help groups for village development. Anand rushed to the village brooding over the self-help group concept. He shared the concept with his fellow friends. Mr. Khanderao was the first to respond positively to form a youth self-help group and other friends supported the idea, and all resolved to establish a youth self-help group. But hurdles started coming in the way one after another shattering their dream to form SHG. Taluka Panchayat office was never ready to register the SHG, and Banks were also not ready for opening bank account. The reason cited was that there was no norm to open male youth SHG, and only women SHGs can be registered and open their account. Youths were boiling and resolved not to leave the matter there itself, and fight till they get justice. They followed Gandhian means of Satyagraha. All the youths sat for dharana before the Taluka Panchayat. At the end, time came to their side. Taluka Panchayat agreed to their demand, and so the bank expressed readiness to allow opening of bank account. And thus the "Swami Vivekanand Self-help Group" became the first youth self-help group in Bidar district in the year 2004.

Good Practices of the SHG

The Swami Vivekanand SHG has framed its own rules and objectives to maintain discipline, responsibility and accountability. Some of the important good practices are -

- Membership is fixed at 20
- Monthly contribution of Rs.100/- for each member
- Money circulation among the members @ 2 per cent interest
- Penalty of Rs. 50/- for being absent to one SHG meeting
- Penalty of Rs.10/- each day per member for delay in monthly contribution
- Meeting at every fortnight
- Participation in social activities of the village
- Contribution of money for village developmental activities

Milk Dairy Initiative

The youth's zeal and vigor multiplied since the day of SHG's establishment. The youths started thinking seriously on only one question what should be done for the village? An idea struck them that milk dairy be the

most feasible one. All the youths approached the Milk Dairy Federation at Hudgi village in Humnabad Tahsil. Respecting the zeal and interest of the youths the dairy federation assured them to start a dairy unit. Special training was imparted to the members of the SHG in dairy unit. An initial need assessment for the potential milk providers was made through mobilizing 100 members required for running the dairy unit. People did not believe the initiative of the youths. They started doubting their ability and motive. Then the youths made it a campaign in mobilizing the youths of village to become members of the dairy unit. And it worked favorably. The major problem was that there was not sufficient number of milk animals. Most of the families had sold them for not able to maintain properly. Yet again the youths took a courageous stand to purchase cows out of the money accumulated in the SHG. All the members purchased cows so as to collect minimum of 50 liter milk.

This zealous and adventurous story really touched the heart of a Bank Manager of Krishna Grameen Bank. The manager came forward to extend a financial assistance of Rs. 4 lakh to the members of the SHG. This step of the manager came like a lightening in the village. Villagers turned to the side of the youths. Every family in the village purchased either cow or buffalo. Now youths have no difficulty in collecting 120 liter of milk every day.

Behavioral change among youths

1. Youths do not waste time as earlier they were without work
2. Disciplined life of youths
3. Time management consciousness
4. Financial support to family
5. Organizational and associational feeling through affinity to SHG
6. Gained business knowledge
7. Youths regained interested in agricultural activities
8. Youths developed social contacts (interpersonal relations)
9. No need to migrate to city, and youths are enjoying family life, which they were deprived of
10. Self-employment for unemployed youths
11. Subsidiary employment to agriculture
12. Friendship is professionalized
13. Social strength gained
14. Saving habit is multiplied
15. 'No' to chemical fertilizer
16. Livelihood security achieved

17. Planning mini dairy unit for vertical and incremental growth
18. Timely help of money
19. Financial support for agricultural activities
20. Leadership initiative for developmental activities
21. Bank knowledge gained
22. Contacts with govt. agencies (ZP, Taluka Panchayat, Bank etc) developed
23. No unnecessary expenditure (which was daily Rs. 100/- earlier)
24. Some youths stopped stone cutting job, and now engaged in cattle grazing
25. Economic security to 60 families in the village, who are sole milk producers now

Milk Dairy Initiative : Impact

Two years passed, the SHG has made its distinct mark in the district. The zeal and vigor of youth has multiplied ever since the milk dairy unit has been established in the village. It also assured them of dignity and status. Villagers especially the elderly have developed positive frame of mind towards the village youths and appreciate them for the miraculous work that they have done in transforming the whole village life.

Following are the long lasting impact –

- Youths' migration has nearly stopped
- Educated youths are holding work in fields with high dignity
- Grazing the cattle has become a habit of pride for the youths
- Youths are not wasting time as used to happen so earlier
- Solution to feminization of poverty, as women are earning out of selling the milk
- Monthly revenue to milk diary: Rs. 55000 to Rs. 1 lakh
- Loan assistance received:
 - General Loan: Rs. 50,000/-
 - Bank Loan to self-help group members: 4 lakh
- Assets of SHG: Insemination container, Training of insemination to a member and diary equipments
- Livestock increased in the village
- Dung manure is the byproduct of the milk diary initiative
- Purchase of chemical fertilizer has come down to 50 per cent as a result of accumulation of cow dung manure

- Some of the member of the SHG have stopped purchasing chemical fertilizer

Qualitative and quantitative changes of youths

Sl. No	Members of Self-help group	No. of Cows Added	No. of Buffaloes Added	Average Milk Sold (Liters) Min. Max.	Quantity of Cow Dung Manure (Tractor Qty.)	Yearly purchase of Chemical fertilizer (Bag of 50 kg)	Current year purchase of chemical fertilizer (Bag of 50 kg)
1	Shanappa Hanumanth Oderaj	1	2	5	4	2	No purchase
2	Haji Ali		2	4	2	1	No purchase
3	Mahadev Bhimrao Jangale	1	1	4 to 20	3	6	3
4	Shivanand Khanderao Jidde	3	-	14 to 22	4	10	5
5	Ramesh Parameshwar Inde	6	-	8 to 24	10	10	6
6	Deepak Reddy Pundlik Reddy	1	1	8 to 24	10	10	6
7	Revansiddappa Mahadevappa Niranjue	2	-	4	2	3	2
8	Baswaraj Gurlingappa Saje	5	-	20	8	7	No Purchase
9	Baswaraj Kalyanrao Bhange	3	1	20	7	15	7
10	Anand Gopalrao Patil	2	-	12	4	10	No purchase

11	Saibanna Bhimrao Jangale	2	-	8 to 15	5	6	3
12	Mallinath Chandrasha Kalashetty	2	-	8	3	5	3
13	Khanderao Madhura Bhange	1	1	7	3	6	3
14	Apparao Gireppa Inde	-	2	4	3	8	6
15	Dattatreya Basawantrao Ghale	2	-	8	2	15	12
16	Gopinath Gurunath Inde	2	-	9 to 14	4	6	3
17	Shivappa Madhura Tate	2	-	10	5	20	15
18	Omnath Gurunath Inde	2	-	10	2	2	No Purchase
19	Shivappa Gurlingappa Fulari	1	1	4 to 14	3	2	No Purchase
20	Ramesh Sidramappa Joti	2	-	8 to 10	3	No land	No Land

Conclusion

The youths are bubbling with new identity through constructivism in the village. Youths who were scolded for their laziness, carelessness and wasting of time unproductively are now respected, recognized and valued for performing an instrumental role in changing the scenario in the village. They wanted to establish milk diary that was the change they thought to bring in the village. But byproduct changes are phenomenal that happened unexpectedly. It is an exemplary work of rural youths who led an initiative to support the agriculture through allied activities like dairy. The initiative is a matter for advocacy that the rural youth can transform their village economy. This can be simulated in any parts of India. Such initiatives are replicated in many villages of India. The situation reminds us that the heritage of co-operative movement of our country could be transformed in a micro form at village level. Self-help, which is Indian concept, is a more evolved form of micro-finance concept of

Prof. Mohd. Younus of Bangladesh. The MYRADA NGO of Karnataka is the pioneer in coining, promoting and practicing the self-help for women.

On the other hand, the social capital of rural youths could be enhanced through enabling and empowering environment in the system both agency and community. Rural development through constructivism was the vision of Mahatma Gandhi. His lines for global change are revolutionary. He said, “Be the change that you seek in the world”. The youths have proved it through their transformative dairy activity. Further the context of globalization gives ample opportunities to gain access to the global markets. This demands constructive action at the individual and group level. *JGE*