

## **Village Adoption – Action Research Project**

**Laloni , Sagonia Maaf Gram Panchayat, Jaithpur, Mahoba District, Uttar Pradesh**

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The team consisting of K.Suman Chandra and G. Rajanikanth identified Bundelkhand region comprising of 12 districts spread across Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh States for Village Adoption Action Research Project. A village namely “Laloni” which falls under Sagonia Maaf Gram Panchayat is selected for various activities. The block headquarters is Jaithpur of Mahoba district of Uttar Pradesh.

### **1. Background:**

Most of the villages in Bundelkhand region share common features such as perennial drought, low fertility soils, lack of irrigation, single crop, low literacy, massive malnutrition among both children as well as adults, lack of civic amenities and poor infrastructure. The present village selected for village adoption has all characteristics mentioned above. The village has roughly 40-50 houses (structures). It is common that in each house there will be atleast 3-4 families living together. On an average atleast 20 people are housed in each house with two or three hearths. About 70% of the households belong to scheduled castes community (Chamar & Pasi), 20% backwards, 5% business community and 5% brahmin community. It was learnt that each and every household owns a small piece of agricultural land (1 – 2 bigha), hence the main livelihood is agriculture. Literacy levels are abysmally low. Among dalit community no single person attained the educational qualification which is more than school final i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> standard. From the village there are two to three persons working as primary school teachers who belong to Brahmin community. Very few children are attending to school which is situated in the village. Couple of children are going to high school which is 5-6 kms away from the village.

### **2. Problem Areas:**

Villagers are depending on hand pumps for both drinking as well as for routine household chores. The water is not potable, which is causing for health problems. During summer even this hand pump water is not available.

Even though electric poles and electric lines are available there is no power supply almost for 12-15 hrs in a day. During night, it is very difficult for villagers for their movement as well as daily routine activities.

### **3. Land:**

It was learnt that majority of the Brahmin and business communities give away the agriculture land on lease to backward and dalit community small and marginal farmers. The land owner and tenant should bear the cost of seeds and fertilizers on 50:50 ratio. The remaining cost of cultivation including labour towards field preparation, diesel, weeding, cutting, threshing and winnowing are to be borne by the tenant himself. When the crop is harvested the land owner should get half of the produce. This system is very exploitative in nature from the outsiders point of view but it is very normal for the tenant farmers who used to cultivate lands on these terms and conditions. Land is being leased out to tenant farmers on orally. There is no written document for the lease contract. The tenant farmer is bound to sow the seeds of the land owner's choice. The freedom to grow crops suitable to tenant farmer is also curtailed in this system.

### **4. Social Angle:**

The social life of the village intertwined with the various dimensions of caste dynamics. The basic and fundamental base on which social interaction takes place based on purity and pollution which is being followed very meticulously. Dalits are not allowed to enter into the main house and kitchen of higher castes. Obviously one can't observe the practice of untouchability unless one stays in the village. Irrespective of caste in which they belong will go on normal activities in the village. When it comes to the acceptance of food, water etc., the practice of uneven caste hierarchy will come to show its ugly face.

### **5. Proposed Activities in the village**

Based on the basic understanding of the village community, the following activities have been proposed.

1. Supply of solar street lights in the village -- 15 nos.
2. Supply of individual solar lights -- 30 nos.
3. Organise Health Camps on regular basis
4. Identify youth for skill improvement programmes at RTP, NIRD
5. Identifying shelf of projects to be undertaken using MGREGA programme
6. Creating awareness about health and hygiene and issues of particular interest for women and adolescent girls.