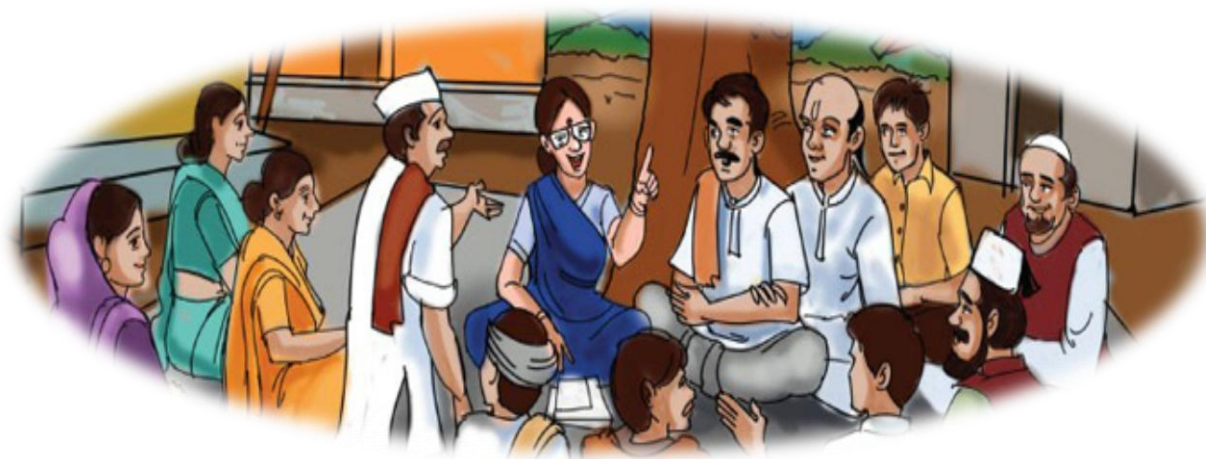


A Report
on
Community Development through Panchayati Raj
Institutions (PRIs) in Himachal Pradesh: A Study of
Kasba Paprola Panchayat

Submitted to
National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR)
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India



Submitted by
Dr. Ramna Thakur
Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi,
Himachal Pradesh, India
February 2018

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii-iv
Introduction	
An overview of Panchayati Raj in Himachal Pradesh	1
Methodology	
Need for the study	3
Objectives of the study	3
Nature of data used	4
Research approach	4-5
Findings and Analysis	
Case Study of Kasba Paprola Panchayat	6-29

Executive Summary

Panchayat Kasba Paprola is situated in development block and tehsil Baijnath of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. This panchayat has 13 wards, out of which 5 are on the right side and eight are on the left side of the national highway no. 154. Among these wards 3 are urban and 10 are rural. Panchayat has its population 5,444 persons but almost 2500 persons from other areas are also residing there because of banks, schools, post office, railway station and a state Ayurvedic Medical College in this panchayat. Majority of the population in the panchayat belongs to general category followed by other backward classes (OBCs), scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) respectively. In case of Kasba Paprola panchayat information was collected from panchayat members and panchayat residents. Mukesh Kumar (Pradhan) is serving in this panchayat for last more than 15 years. After identifying the issues panchayat strategically solved many problems which panchayat was facing. In addition to these problems, panchayat also constructed roads, footpaths, school rooms, canals, land development, flood control, water conservation, rainwater harvesting cleanliness and sanitation, crematorium, old age and physically challenged pensions and development of different minority etc like other panchayats in the region. Panchayat is situated at national highway 154 and because of that traffic congestion was a common problem in the panchayat. Accidents were very common because of vehicles parking on the roadside. Panchayat took the initiative to construct a parking and solve this issue. It was all because of the efforts of panchayat that it has now a parking for more than 70 vehicles which has solved the traffic congestion problem completely and panchayat has also got a permanent source of income which is getting utilized in panchayat's other developmental activities. In addition to this, it provided employment to some people who got deployed to collect rent, maintain and regulate the parking. More than 1400 households of different communities are residing in Kasba Paprola but there was no community hall which could be used for different purposes like marriages, meetings and other ceremonies. People were facing big problems to celebrate any ceremonies, especially in rainy and summer seasons. To deal with this, different community halls such as Parsuram Bhawan, Ravidas Bhawan, and Jang Star Bhawan have been constructed by the panchayat to different communities in the panchayat. Since Kasba Paprola is situated in a rural area where villagers grow vegetables, wheat, maize, rice, pulses and other eatables and sell in the local market to earn their livelihood. Since they are not permanent retailers who have shops for storing and selling their commodities. They come in the morning to the local market for selling their produce and go back to their villages

in the evening. These small farmers were facing a problem of a common place where they could sell their product and if there is rain or hot sun they could have shed to keep their product. Since villagers were coming to the local market from far off villages and were not feasible for them to take their product back if there is sudden rain or bad weather. Panchayat took it seriously and came up with a plan with the consensus that there should be a place where small farmers belong to IRDP households can sell their produce. Ultimately ‘village *hatt*’ of multiple rooms was constructed near the market by the panchayat where villagers sell their product without any worry of rain or hot sun.

Earlier small artisans belonging to poor households who are self-employed in small activities like rope making, clay utensils making, toys making, bamboo basket making, agricultural tools making, and shoemaking of Kasba Paprola were facing a problem. They were making all these products but did not have a place in the panchayat market to store and sell their product. As most of them were selling the product which were needing sheds in rainy seasons. Panchayat planned to construct some shops under ‘Sawaran Jayanti Swarojgar Yojana’ where these artisans can sell their product. Ultimately With the help of DRDA, panchayat built seven shops on the roadside and allotted these shops to seven different groups of artisans belonging to poor households. As per the Panchayat members, Kasba Paprola is the first panchayat in Himachal Pradesh who has constructed Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan under MGNREGA. Since Kasba Paprola was comparatively a big panchayat but there was no place to conduct any meeting, seminar or any other training camps. For this purpose, people had to go to the nearby town and because of that villagers were not taking much interest as the town is far from Paprola. Many times panchayat tried to organize awareness camps and to give training to farmers about new technology in agriculture, new seeds, eye checkup camps, general health camps, yoga camps and lectures on different issues but was not very successful because of this problem. Hence panchayat constructed ‘Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan’ with multiple halls which later has also become a big source of income to the panchayat.

Ayurvedic Medical College of Himachal Pradesh is situated in ward no. 8 of Kasba Paprola panchayat. Patients, doctors, staffs, and students of the college were finding it difficult to walk in the evening after getting dark because of no street lights on the roads and streets. Many times people got attacked by stray animals because of darkness. Panchayat decided to install solar street lights and now they have 250 solar lights on the roads from the medical college to the main market

of Kasba Paprola. The complete solar panel is installed in Panchayat Bhawan and panchayat is taking care of this system completely. Many development works have been done under MGNREGA along with assets creation, footpaths, renovation of water bodies and rain harvesting tanks. In addition to these works there are many works which panchayat has done and are appreciable such as: maintenance of national assets directory, land development, cleanliness drives, construction of canals, construction of panchayat building, mahila mandal building, houses grant to 89 poor (IRDP) families, pension to 344 old aged, widows and physically challenged people, formation of 25 self-help groups, 9 mahila mandals, many cow sheds, crematorium, construction of toilets in schools and hospitals and proper waste disposals etc.

Kaswa Paprola was a gram panchayat till 2016 but now it has been included in Nagar Panchayat Baijnath Paprola. Mukesh Sharma who was the pradhan of Kasba Paprola panchayat between 2011 and 2015 is now an active ward member of Nagar panchayat Baijnath Paprola. Kasba Paprola panchayat got appreciated by the state government from time to time for its efforts in various activities of development in the panchayat and by the central government with national award in April 2015 for overall development in the panchayat.

Introduction

An overview of Panchayati Raj in Himachal Pradesh

In Himachal Pradesh, Panchayat Raj system was established in a statutory form under the provisions of the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1952 in the year 1954. Before the enactment of the Himachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1952 only 280 Gram Panchayats existed. However, in the year 1954, 466 Gram Panchayats were established, and the number of Gram Panchayats increased to 638 during the year 1962. On 1st November 1966, the hilly areas of Punjab were merged in the State, and consequently, the number of Gram Panchayats rose to 1695. In the merged area, a three-tier Panchayati Raj system was in existence under the provisions of Punjab Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act, whereas two-tier system was prevalent in this State. To bring uniformity in the Panchayati Raj system of the old and the newly merged areas, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1968 was enacted on 15th November 1970 in this State, and the two-tier Panchayati Raj system was established throughout the State. After the enactment of the said Act in the year 1970, the existing Gram Sabhas were reorganized or bifurcated from time to time and new Gram Sabhas/Gram Panchayats were established. At present, some Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) working in the state of Himachal Pradesh in several domains are quite noticeable which include fields like regularity of panchayat meetings including those of gram sabha and standing committees, attendance in these meetings particularly the representation of SC and STs in the Gram Sabhas, discussions held and issues discussed, resolutions undertaken on various development works, identification of multiple beneficiaries, implementation of the State and Central Government schemes, efforts for achieving total sanitation, development of effective plans for raising own resources, systems for efficient tax collection, strengthening of local institutions, capacity building of the elected representatives and staff, having mechanism for

transparency and accountability, development in the infrastructure in the panchayat, cleanliness, women empowerment, save girl child, education, health, employment, awareness and so on. These gram panchayats in the state have set many examples in rural development, infrastructure development and implementation of all programmes launched by the Centre and state government. These panchayats have been selected among many gram panchayats from all over the country and state for the national and state level awards in different time periods and got an appraisal for their best performance in the country. Some of these panchayats took the lead in getting declared open defecation free (ODF) in the state and became eligible for different cash awards. Some of them have successfully launched Swachh Bharat Mission by keeping its panchayat neat and clean besides constructing separate toilets of boys and girls in all government schools in the panchayat and fulfilled all yardsticks laid down by the Centre under the Swachh Bharat programme. Some of them have installed solar streetlights in different wards of the panchayats. The panchayats have also built crematoriums under government's Vikas Mein Jan Sahyog scheme. Most of these panchayats have built their panchayat bhawans (buildings) with a well-furnished conference hall, veterinary dispensary, community hall, and a fair price shop are sometimes running under the same roof. Some of them have brought about a remarkable change in the magnitude of participation of women in PRIs. In fact, Himachal excels in working for women empowerment and has been awarded the 'Diamond State' award. Himachal Pradesh has become the first state in the nation in which 50 % reservation is given to women in Panchayati Raj institutions and other urban jobs. In this project, we have documented the successful practices of such 5 panchayats from three districts named Kangra, Kullu, and Hamirpur of Himachal Pradesh. These panchayats are national award-winning panchayats in excelling in the overall development of the panchayat. This work is

beneficial to motivate other panchayats especially those who have the similar type of problems, topography and climatic condition.

Methodology

Need for the study

Himachal Pradesh is different from rest of the country in many aspects. These include the topography of the region, climate, culture, dialects, agricultural cycles, and practices. In addition, there is a relative absence of industrial factories in the state that are the mainstay of urban employment in many other states of India. Himachal Pradesh is the most rural state in the country where 90% the population live in rural areas. Although 3316 panchayats (Zila Parishad 12, Panchayat Samitis 78 and Gram Panchayats 3226) are working in the state but some of them are doing very well and are ahead of many other panchayats in their work efficiency and management. These panchayats are considered good in meeting some of the core objectives of the Panchayati Raj including rural asset creation, micro-watershed development, reducing urban migration, empowering women, uplifting scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, economically and socially backward sections. For their outstanding contribution, they were awarded national awards many times. In this project, we have documented that in spite of hard topography and other barriers, how these panchayats have performed better than others. There was a great need of the documentation of successful practices of these panchayats and the mitigation strategies

Objectives

While many panchayats in Himachal Pradesh have been successful in achieving the desired objectives of the Panchayati raj but there is a lack of studies done on the factors behind the successful working of these panchayats. Our study has delineated the practices and processes responsible for the successful working of these panchayats. Given Himachal's mountainous

terrain the study has also uncovered the practices which can become inspirations to other panchayats of the country especially to other hilly and difficult terrains.

Nature of data used

In order to analyze the objectives of this study, both primary, as well as secondary data, has been used. The secondary information has been collected from the District Rural Development Agencies, Block Development Offices, books, journals, and reports. The primary information has been collected from different stakeholders at the panchayat level.

Research approach

Our study aims to delineate the practices and processes responsible for the successful working of five panchayats namely; 1) Tandi Gram Panchayat, block Banjar, district Kullu; 2) Balagad Gram panchayat, block Banjar, district Kullu; 3) Kuther Gram panchayat, Nagrota Surian block, district Kangra; 4) Kasba Paprola Gram panchayat, district Kangra; 5) Pahlu Gram panchayat, district Hamirpur, in the diverse areas of Himachal Pradesh, India. These panchayats got different national and state awards for their exemplary works in the respective panchayats. This study has been conducted in three phases. The first two phases involved preparation of preliminary and preparatory tools to undertake the main survey in Himachal Pradesh. In the first phase, a review of the literature, internal group discussion and interviews with key stakeholders has been conducted, which provided the background information necessary to ensure a complete understanding of the successful Panchayati Raj institutions' working. With this background information, the study has proceeded to the next level wherein appropriate research tools have been identified, as also the indicators to measure the different dimensions of the study. This exercise has enabled the research team to secure greater control over and a better understanding of the issues under review. The research methodology and tools have been then taken to the field

for pre-testing. The pre-testing has helped in establishing confidence in the methodology and to facilitate the firming up of indicators. From this phase, the study moved into the final level, which has included field survey and monitoring, preparation of data entry programme, data entry, preparation of analysis plan, analysis of data, and final report writing.

Case Study of Kasba Paprola Panchayat

The milieu of the district in which Kasba Paprola panchayat is situated

Kasba Paprola panchayat is situated in Baijnath tehsil of district Kangra. District Kangra lies between 31- 40 to 32-25 east longitudes and 70-35 to 77-5 north latitude. It is situated on the southern escarpment of the Himalayas. The district has a geographical area of 5,739 km. which constitutes 10.31 % of the total geographical area of the State. The district is bounded by Chamba to the north, Lahaul, and Spiti to the northeast, Kullu to the east, Mandi to the southeast, and Hamirpur and Una to the south. The district shares a border with the states of Punjab on the southwest, and Jammu and Kashmir on the northwest. The elevation varies from 500m to 5500m from the sea level¹. The present Kangra district came into existence on the 1st September 1972 consequent upon the re-organization of districts by the Government of Himachal Pradesh.²

Due to the hilly terrain, not that much of the land is cultivated. The district is full of uniform patches of barren land, as well as small forests. This district is having a topography with some of the parts at 400 m. altitudes, while the area of Bara Bhangal is at the altitude of 5500 m. Winter lasts from mid-December to mid-February, during which the temperature ranges from 0 to 20 °C. Western disturbances cause winter rains in the district. Summers are hot (temperature 25 to 38 °C) and dry and last from April until June. They are generally followed by a wet monsoon which ends in autumn³. District Kangra is named after Kangra town which was called Nagarkot in the ancient times. It was a part of ancient Trigarta which was named for territory drained by three rivers i.e. Satluj, Beas, and Ravi. Region Trigarta had two provinces out of which one was in the hills with headquarters at Nagarkot (Kangra).⁴

¹ Balokhra, Jag Mohan. "Kangra." *The Wonderland Himachal Pradesh: a Survey of the Geography, People, History, Administrative History, Art & Architecture, Culture, and Economy of the State*; 2015th ed., H.G. Publ., 2002, pp. 495

² http://himachal.nic.in/index1.php?lang=1&dpt_id=219&level=0&lid=11351&linkid=3787

³ http://himachal.nic.in/index1.php?lang=1&dpt_id=219&level=0&lid=10666&linkid=3573

⁴ Balokhra, Jag Mohan. "Kangra." *The Wonderland Himachal Pradesh: a Survey of the Geography, People, History, Administrative History, Art & Architecture, Culture, and Economy of the State*; 2015th ed., H.G. Publ., 2002, pp. 497

Demographic characteristics of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh

Description	2011
Actual Population	1,510,075
Male	750,591
Female	759,484
Population Growth	12.77%
Area Sq. Km	5,739
Density/km2	263
Proportion to Himachal Pradesh Population	22.00%
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	1012
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	876
Average Literacy	85.67
Male Literacy	91.49
Female Literacy	80.02
Rural Population	94.29%
Urban Population	5.71%

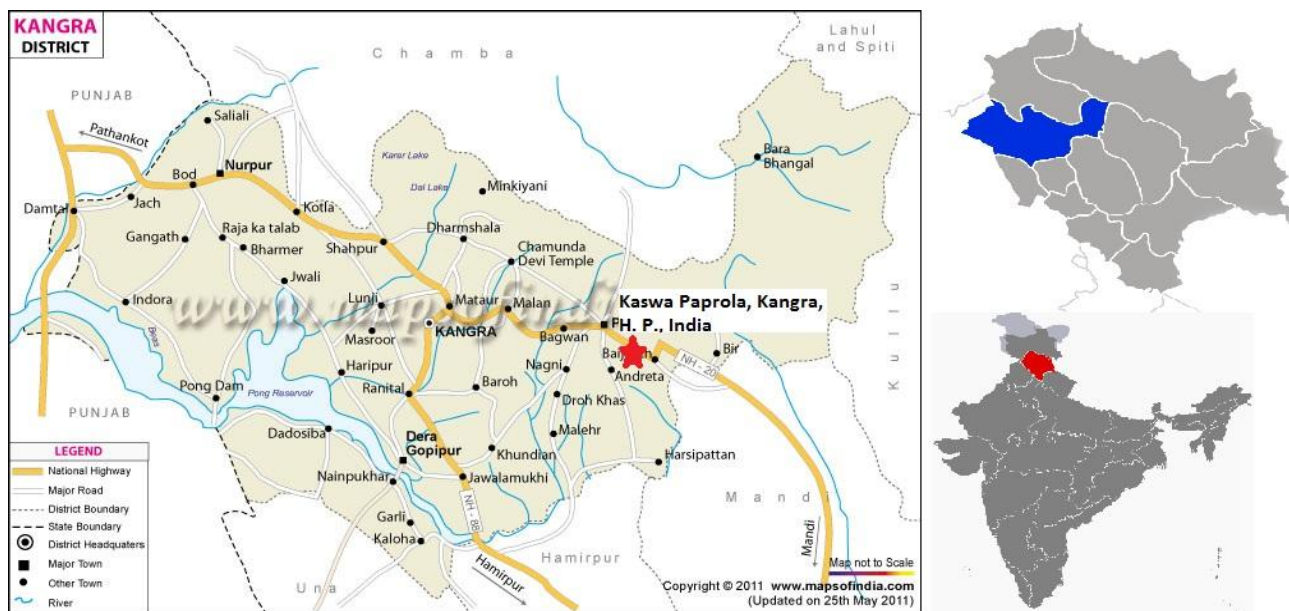
Source: <http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/233-kangra.html>

According to the census 2011, the total population of the district is 15, 10,075 with a population growth of 12.77 %. Male population comprises 7, 50,591 while female population is 7, 59,484. It is one of the districts in Himachal Pradesh where the sex ratio is above 1000 with 1012 females per 1000 males. It constitutes 22% of the total population of the state and population wise it is the biggest district in the state. The average literacy rate is 85.67% in which male literacy is 91.49% and female literacy is 80.02%. Out of total population, 94.29% is living in rural areas and rest 5.71 in urban areas.

Location and demographic characteristics of Kasba Paprola panchayat

Panchayat Kasba Paprola is situated in development block and tehsil Baijnath of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. This panchayat has 13 wards, out of which 5 are on the right side and eight are on the left side of the national highway no. 154. Among these wards 3 are urban and 10 are rural wards. Panchayat has its population 5,444 persons but almost 2500 persons from other areas are also residing there because of banks, schools, post office, railway station and a state Ayurvedic Medical College in this panchayat.

Location of Kasba Paprola panchayat in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/himachalpradesh/districts/kangra.htm>

Majority of the population in the panchayat belongs to general category followed by other backward classes (OBCs), scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) respectively.

Demographic Characteristics of Kasba Paprola panchayat in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh

No. of HH	General category			Scheduled Castes			Scheduled tribes			Other backward categories			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1404	1274	1247	2521	558	503	1061	125	124	249	830	781	1611	2787	2657	5444
In %	46%	47%	46%	20%	19%	20%	5%	5%	5%	30%	29%	30%	51%	49%	100%

Source: Data is obtained for the gram panchayat office of Kasba Paprola

Case presentation of Kasba Paprola panchayat

In case of Kasba Paprola panchayat ground level information was collected from panchayat members (Mukesh Sharma – Pradhan, Suresh Kumar – panchayat secretary, Piar Chand – GRS, Baldev Kumar – technical assistant, Rakesh Kumar – panchayat chowkidar, Suman Devi, Anju

Bala, Ghanshyam, Rahul Sood, Surjeet Kumar, Renu Devi, Nirmala and Sunita Devi – ward members) and panchayat residents. Mukesh Kumar (Pradhan) is serving in this panchayat for last more than 15 years. He belongs to a business family migrated to Kasba Paprola long ago. He is 49 years old with a political career of more than 20 years. During the course of data collection, panchayat residents told us that he is a person who is serving panchayat not just he has to serve because he is Pradhan of the panchayat but because of his passion to serve the society. They told that it is the only because of his dedication, vision and hard work that Kasba Paprola is among best panchayats not only in the state but also in the country as a whole. In addition to this, he has a deep knowledge about herbal medicines and also works as a spiritual healer. People trust him like a saint and come to him not only from the same panchayat but from the surrounding areas for herbal and spiritual treatment of different diseases. He has a very good reputation among all communities in the panchayat. Late Mr. Tilak Raj (former Up-Pradhan) had also contributed a lot to the development of the panchayat along with Pradhan and other panchayat members. His accidental death in 2015 was a big loss to the panchayat.

After taking the responsibility at panchayat office in 2011, Mukesh Sharma and his team members started meeting to chalk out the major problems with local residents were struggling in the panchayat. After few meetings, they got ready for a long list of issues needed attention. Mukesh Sharma and his team members belong to the same area, hence, it was not difficult for them to pinpoint the issues in the panchayat. After identifying the issues panchayat strategically solved them which were diverse in nature like the construction of roads, footpaths, school rooms, canals, land development, flood control, water conservation, rainwater harvesting cleanliness and sanitation, crematorium, old age and physically challenged pensions and development of different minority areas etc.



The project officer is interviewing Pradhan and local residents in Kasba Paprola, Kangra, H.P.

We have a constraint of not explaining all of them in details in this project and have selected some of the exemplary works which have changed the face of the panchayat. These are parking on the national highway no. 154, construction of village *hatt*, Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra, multipurpose & production training center, installation of solar lighting system, village *hatt*, seven window marketing center and skill training etc.

Parking on the National Highway

Mukesh Sharma took the responsibilities as panchayat Pradhan on January 1st, 2011, at that time panchayat was struggling with the parking problem. As is mentioned earlier that this panchayat is situated at national highway 154 and because of that traffic congestion and jam was a common problem in this problem. Accidents were very common because of vehicles parking on the roadside. After becoming Pradhan of the panchayat constructing parking for the panchayat was Mukesh Sharma's first priority. But the journey of completing parking was not easy as Mukesh Sharma explained in his interview. Panchayat neither had money nor land for parking. This matter

was discussed in the *Gram Sabha* (panchayat meeting) where panchayat members and residents discussed all the issues related to this work. To get land at the name of panchayat on the roadside was the first and foremost task. There was a suitable piece of land on the roadside but it belonged to PWD department. Panchayat started requesting PWD to transfer this land to the department of Panchayati Raj and in this regard, Mukesh Sharma and his colleagues had to visit Chandigarh multiple times. Finally, panchayat got the land but problems did not end here. The piece of land

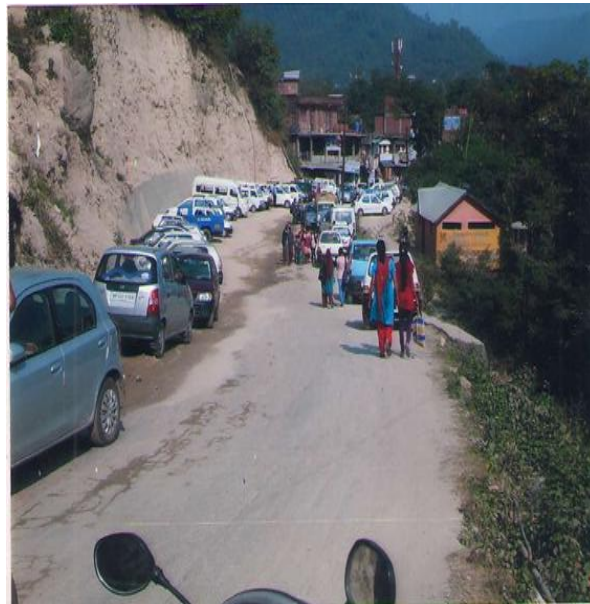


Land slide in the parking area

that panchayat got was a steeply sloped hill, not a plain ground. Next issue was of money to make a plot out of this steep hill and give a retaining wall to prevent the landslides. In this regard, Mukesh Sharma and Tilak Raj met PWD department informally to discuss the technicalities and to get an idea of the approximate cost of the work. PWD gave

an estimate of INR 97, 00000 (ninety-seven lakhs) of this work which was out of the capacity of the panchayat. After this, as the panchayat was desperate to construct the parking, it started looking for other options and in this regard, panchayat members visited District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) which is situated at Dharamshala. At DRDA office, they discussed the issues with project officer and got to know that they can do it under a government scheme called 'panchayat innovation scheme' which is a 10:90 scheme in which 10% of the cost has to give by the residents of the panchayat and 90% will be given by the government to accomplish the

developmental task. In this regard, panchayat had a meeting with residents and told about the scheme



Constructed parking in Kasba Paprola

After discussion, some of the residents got ready to contribute in the 10% of the panchayat share in the scheme but at the end, only Mukesh Sharma gave all the amount from his pocket. After depositing their 10% to the competent office, panchayat got 90% from overnmentAs Mukesh Sharma owned some of the cutting and construction machinery,



Retaining wall construction in the parking area

he deployed all of them in this work for free of cost and accomplished the work. Ultimately the parking got ready only with 25, 00000 (twenty-five lakhs). Now panchayat has a parking for more than 70 vehicles which has solved the traffic jam problem completely and panchayat has also got a permanent source of income which is getting utilized in panchayat's other developmental

activities. In addition to this, it provided employment to some people who collect rent, maintain and regulate the parking.

Community Halls

More than 1400 households of different communities are residing in Kasba Paprola but there was no community hall which could be used for different purposes like marriages, meetings and other ceremonies. People were facing big problems to celebrate any ceremony, especially in rainy and summer seasons. Either they had to celebrate in temporary tents sometimes which get washed away in heavy rain or they had to go to the town which was a very costly affair. This was another serious issue in the panchayat. To deal with this, different community halls such as Parsuram Bhawan, Ravidas Bhawan, and Jang Star Bhawan have been constructed by the panchayat. To construct Parsuram Bhawan panchayat contributed 30% and government contributed 70%.



Ravidas Bhawan in Kasba Paprola panchayat in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh



Parsuram Bhawan in Kasba Paprola panchayat in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh

While Ravidas Bhawan was constructed under 10:90 scheme where 10% was contributed by the panchayat and 90% was given by the government. In rural India caste system is still very dominant, people of scheduled castes categories were still finding it difficult to have a place to have any formal ceremony like the marriage of their children, any spiritual and other birth or death ceremony. In this regard, a hall called ‘Jang Star Bhawan’ was built by the panchayat where they celebrate functions even in heavy rain or hot sun.

Construction of Village hatt

Since Kasba Paprola is situated in a rural area where villagers grow vegetables, wheat, maize, rice,



Village Hatt details in Kasba Paprola panchayat

pulses and other eatables and sell in the local market to earn their livelihood. Since they are not permanent retailers who have shops for storing and selling their commodities. They come in the morning to the local market for selling their produce and go back to their villages in the evening. These small

farmers were facing a problem of a common place where they could sell their product and if there is rain or hot sun they could have shed to keep their product. Since villagers were coming to the local market from far off villages and were not feasible for them to take their product back if there is sudden rain or bad weather. Panchayat was very much concerned about this problem of small growers. Panchayat took it seriously and came up with a plan with the consensus that there should be a place where small farmers belong to IRDP households can sell their produce. Ultimately ‘village *hatt*’ of multiple rooms was constructed near the market by the panchayat where villagers sell their product without any worry of rain or hot sun.

Farmers interviewed confirmed that they are very happy because of village hatt. Now they can sell their product without any fear. People are also enjoying locally grown vegetables, fruits and food grain without any break. This has increased the income of these small farmers which they confirmed it in the study interview.

They mentioned that regular financial stability is the most immediate, tangible benefit they have



Village hatt constructed in Kasba Paprola panchayat

because of this hatt. One farmer remarked, “Things were quite difficult before actually...we had no place where we could keep our product. We were struggling to have a place to use to sell our product. Things have become much easier for us now that we have this *hatt*.....place is no longer a

concern”.

In the interview farmers shared that the income generated from here has significantly improved their standard of living, allowing them to access better food and higher quality clothing. Some farmers also mentioned better health and wellbeing of their children as a benefit of their income. When asked how their income from the selling of the produce was being utilized at the household level, the two most common answers provided in the interviews were on children's education and covering household expenses.

Seven Window Marketing

Earlier small artisans belonging to poor households who are self-employed in small activities like rope making, clay utensils making, toys making, bamboo basket making, agricultural tools making, and shoemaking of Kasba Paprola were facing a problem. They were making all these products but did not have a place in the panchayat market to store and sell their product. As most of them were selling the product which needs sheds in rainy seasons otherwise will get spoiled. Panchayat was concerned about this problem also and trying to do something for these poor artisans. Panchayat planned to construct some shops under 'Sawaran Jayanti Swarojgar Yojana' where their artisans can sell their product. Ultimately With the help of DRDA panchayat built seven shops on the roadside and allotted these shops to seven different groups of artisans belonging to poor households.

When some of the artisans were asked to comment on whether they considered this arrangement has any impact on their business or not. They overwhelmingly answered positively, saying that this arrangement has a significant positive impact on their business, now they are in a position to sell more as they have a permanent shed and are not worried about rain or bad weather.



Seven windows shopping complex in Kasba Paprola panchayat

As the market of Kasba Paprola is situated on 154 national highway on the way from Dharamshala to Kullu Manali (between two big tourist destinations) which has a positive impact on their business. After getting these shops on the roadside artisans are in a better position to sell their product to the tourists as well. Artisans noticed that these seven window marketing arrangement has helped them to sell their product to the tourists also which is not only increasing their income but also advertising their product in different parts of the world.

Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan and Multipurpose (Production and Training center) Hall

As per the Panchayat members, Kasba Paprola is the first panchayat in Himachal Pradesh who has constructed Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan under MGNREGA. Since Kasba Paprola was comparatively a big panchayat but there was no place to conduct any meeting, seminar or any other training camps. For this purpose, people had to go to the nearby town and because of that villagers were not taking much interest as the town is far from Paprola. Many times panchayat tried to organize camps to inform and to give training to farmers about new technology in agriculture, new seeds, eye checkup camp, general health checkup camp, yoga camp and lectures on different issues but

were not very successful because of this problem. Hence panchayat constructed 'Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan' with multiple halls which later has also become a big source of income to the panchayat.



Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan and Multipurpose (Production and Training center) Hall in Kasba Paprola panchayat

In addition to this, a production and training center has also been constructed by the panchayat which is a great source of income to the panchayat. This center is being used by the experts and scientists of Agriculture University Palampur, Kangra to give training to farmers about different techniques of production, use of fertilizer, use of new technology etc. In addition to this these halls are also used to give training to unemployed youths on mobile repair, mason, electrician etc. Further, these halls are used by Block Development Office to give training and information about different schemes and loans of the government to the youths of IRDP households to start their own business.



Use of Rajiv Gandhi Seva Sadan and Multipurpose (Production and Training center) Hall for different purposes

Further, these halls are also being used by panchayat and mahila mandals of the panchayat to give training to local women to make the pickle, fruit jams & jelly, handicrafts, clay utensils, stitching, and embroidery etc. As state Ayurvedic Medical College is located at a short distance from this place hence these halls are also being used by the college from time to time to conduct yoga and meditation camps.

Solar Lighting

Ayurvedic Medical College of Himachal Pradesh is situated in ward no. 8 of Kasba Paprola panchayat. It is the only medical college in the state to get ayurvedic treatment in case of illness. Doctors, nurses, staff, students in this college belong to different parts of the country. Being the only Ayurvedic College in the region patients come not only from different parts of the district only but from different parts of the state and country. Patients, doctors, staffs, and students were finding it difficult to walk in the evening after getting dark because there was no street light. Many times people got attacked by stray animals because of darkness. Panchayat decided to install street

lights in the ward and they arranged money to do so. After installation, they felt that it is becoming difficult to pay the heavy bills of these lights and it was becoming burdensome to the panchayat. Again panchayat had a meeting in this regard and it decided to install solar lights at the place of old street lights.



Solar panels at different places in Kasba Paprola panchayat

In this regards panchayat members met local MLA and succeeded in getting some money to install solar lights. Now they have 250 solar lights on the roads from the medical college to the main market of Kasba Paprola. The complete solar panel is installed in Panchayat Bhawan and panchayat is taking care of this system completely.

Other Work

In an interview when we asked pradhan Mukesh Sharma about the exceptional transformation of the panchayat, he simply replied – mutual cooperation and trust. He explained that when after becoming pradhan in 2011, he started implementing the schemes of the government with planning and dedication. He informed local residents about various schemes of the government from time to time and asked them to take as much as benefit as they can. He got assistance and help from all departments of the governments e.g. PWD, Forest, IPH, District Administration, DRDA and BDO

office. Slowly, the transformation of the panchayat started. MGNREGA has also played a very important role in the face lifting of the panchayat. Many development works have been done under MGNREGA in addition to assets creation, footpaths, renovation of water bodies and rain harvesting tanks. In addition to these works there are many works which panchayat has done and are worth mentioning here, these are; maintenance of national assets directory, land development, cleanliness drives, construction of canals, construction of panchayat building, mahila mandal building, houses grant to 89 poor (IRDP) families, pension to 344 old aged, widows and physically challenged people, formation of 25 self-help groups, 9 mahila mandals, cow sheds, cremation centers, construction of toilets in schools and hospitals and proper waste disposals etc.



Road constructed by Kasba Paprola panchayat



Toilets constructed in Ayurvedic Medical College Paprola by Kasba Paprola Panchayat



Toilets constructed near Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra by Kasba Paprola panchayat

In the interview, Mukesh Sharma thanked the government officials of all the above-mentioned department for their cooperation and support in the successful completion of all works. But most importantly he says that it all became possible with the mutual cooperation and trust of the locals. The way in which people of the panchayat supported panchayat officials is commendable and is an inspiration to other panchayats. While talking to the resident of panchayat we came to know that sometimes whenever financial constraints came in the way of any work pradhan never stopped the work he himself paid out of his pocket whenever it was needed. He is a big inspiration to the people to work overtime and sometimes without wages. Shortage of raw materials and machinery due to non-availability of funds never became an issue as pradhan used his personal machinery without any payment so that the development work could not stop. This trust and cooperation is the key to the transformation of the panchayat. When asked, villagers told that they fully trust their Pradhan, he never worked for money and they are very happy with the works done.

Discussion

Kasba Paprola is a panchayat where development can be seen and can be validated by the stakeholders. Whatever development work panchayat does is properly discussed in the panchayat meetings. All sources of finance and expenditure are also discussed in details in the panchayat. In every three months, social audit is done in case of income and expenditure of all works. Kasba Paprola panchayat also supports poor people who come to Kasba Paprola and stay there for a little longer time. Panchayat gives them ration cards and issues food grain and other minimum necessities on those ration cards so that they should not get malnourished or die because of starvation in the panchayat. Till now panchayat has issued 5 ration cards to such people so that they can get food grain and other necessities from the panchayat. Panchayat also has a 'Rogi Kalyan Samiti' which is very active in the panchayat. All retired doctors and ex-servicemen are

its active members who take care of the medical health of poor, handicapped and other needy people in the panchayat. They serve these residents without any charge/fees. This Samiti has also donated an ambulance to the panchayat so that patient can be taken to the service unit without any delay in an emergency.

Kaswa Paprola was a gram panchayat till 2016 but now it has been included in Nagar Panchayat Baijnath Paprola. Mukesh Sharma who was a pradhan of Kasba Paprola panchayat between 2011 and 2015 is now an active ward member of Nagar panchayat Baijnath Paprola. Although residents of Kasba Paprola are not happy with the inclusion of their panchayat in Nagar panchayat but they have accepted it. They said that this panchayat should not have been included in Nagar panchayat because out of total 13 wards 10 were rural wards hence it should have been a rural panchayat. Now future plans will not be decided by this team but at the higher level in Nagar panchayat.

Recognition for panchayat activities

Kasba Paprola panchayat got appreciated from time to time for its efforts in various activities of development in the panchayat and national award in April 2015 for overall development in the panchayat is one of them.



Mukesh Sharma attending motivation speech immediately before the national award in 2015



Mukesh Sharma (Pradhan Kasba Paprola) receiving national award on Panchayati Raj Day in 2015

Acknowledgement

We are really thankful to panchayat residents, panchayat members especially pradhan, DRDA office Kangra and BDO office for their cooperation and help in the complete process of data/

information collection. It would not have been possible without their support and information. We are also thankful to NIRD&PR Hyderabad for providing funding and IIT Mandi for providing infrastructure and other support for this project.

Legends, tables, figures, and photographs



Mukesh Sharma receiving memento in a function conducted to appreciate the panchayat for its development works



Panchayat members getting awarded for their work in maintaining National Assets Directory



Office of Gram panchayat Kasba Paprola



Mukesh Sharma (Pradhan) is distributing certificates to the participants at self-employment training camp



Mukesh Sharma is receiving award in a training camp conducted by the department of agriculture, Government of Himachal Pradesh

Video version of the case study

Given separately.

Permission

Not needed.

References: