

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

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Executive Summary

Gram Panchayat Tandi is located in the block Banjar of the district Kullu. The distance of the Gram Panchayat from block headquarter and district headquarter is 8 km and 68 km respectively. As per census 2011, the Panchayat has 295 households having a population of 1479. Out of total population, 775 are males and 704 are females. The community is mainly divided into two social group's i.e.; general and scheduled castes. The percentage of SC people in the total population is 23. The literacy rate in the panchayat is 90 percent. Male and female literacy is almost similar to 92 and 88 percent respectively. The native language/dialect of Tandi is Hindi and Pahadi, where Hindi is the predominant language used by most of the villagers. Gram panchayat Tandi is surrounded by eighteen villages (Soom, Narhan, Dalicha, Mihar, Dughli, Shaach, Khnala, Lushal, Kandi, Bhrthidhar, Dhaar, Bhlagran, Bhua, Chmnal, Tandi, Lotla, Seri and Fliya).

Tandi panchayat has taken various steps to overcome many problems faced by the villagers. Various developmental works have been undertaken through panchayat. Over the years panchayat has developed the infrastructure in the panchayat. They have built roads, bridges, runnels, water tanks and are working on many other projects. Besides the developing infrastructure, they have also done many social works which have been helpful to the villagers. In Tandi Panchayat few villages like Sairee and Lushwar/Dhar were suffering from a shortage of water. It was very difficult for the people of these villages to bring water from far-flung areas which were affecting the health of the people particularly women and children. They had to go as far as 2 -3 Kms to fetch water for their survival. To overcome this problem Panchayat Tandi built water tanks for the villagers near the source of the water through which the villagers are able to receive the regular supply of water. The regular water supply not only fulfilled the daily requirements of the water but the villagers save water to help themselves in the farming also.

Similarly, the road connectivity of the villages was very poor which was affecting not only the transportation of goods and services to the villages but also created health problems for the people. Transportation of patients to the nearest hospitals was very difficult as the roads were not well developed and sometimes it was leading to big casualty. It was also very difficult for the people to carry their agricultural produce to the markets and was affecting the earnings of the farmers. Cost of the transportation was also high which was affecting the pockets of the daily wage earners. To overcome this problem panchayat with the help of PWD and funds under PMGSY roads were

developed and macadamized. Transportation and connectivity have increased many folds and the cost of transportation has also decreased.

Along with roads; runnels and bridges were also constructed in the villages. Due to the frequent landslides and water clogging in the vicinities of the households during monsoons it was difficult for the villagers to roam around and go to their respective works. Many times landslides bring rocks with them and caused many casualties to the people. Panchayat with the help of PWD constructed retaining walls along the hills to stop the landslides and erosion of soil and constructed runnels along the retaining walls to carry the water to the streams. This provided much relief to villagers from the landslides and the casualties were reduced. Also, the bridges were constructed over the streams. People had to walk around the streams to reach to the nearest bus stations and was taking much time. To carry agricultural produce to the nearest station to transport to the market was cumbersome and costly. Panchayat built bridges over the streams and helped the villagers to save their time and reduced their distance to the stations. This provided much relief to the farmers who are now able to transport their agricultural produce easily to the markets.

Similarly, panchayat did various activities like campaign for clean environment to make sure that Panchayat remains clean and tidy. This helped to attract the tourist to the villages. Other programmes like distribution of books among children to aware them regarding the various competitive school exams were also initiated. Panchayat also provided economic help to the needy persons of the villages who are in dire need of economic help. Panchayat also took many initiatives in the beautification of the villages. Beautification works like parks, fencing of the tourist spots, disposal bins etc were completed. Tourist ghars or houses were constructed to increase the income of the panchayat. These works helped in bringing a good repute to the place and tourists are thronging to these places. With all these initiatives the panchayat has won the award for best Panchayat in the country by the Government of India. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has conferred them with the award of Deendayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puruskar. They have also been awarded by the Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Himachal Pradesh for the complete registration of cattle 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 Tandi Panchayat

The milieu of the district where Tandi Panchayat is situated

Nestled in the lap of the majestic Himalayas, Kullu is a veritable jewel in the crown of Himachal Pradesh. The breathtaking beauty of its marvelous landscapes, the hospitality of its people, their distinctive lifestyle and rich culture have enthralled travelers for centuries. Kullu is located on the banks of the river Beas in the Kullu valley. Kullu valley is formed by the river Beas between Manali and Largi. Kullu valley is situated between the Pir Panjal, Lower Himalayan and great Himalayan ranges. River Beas exhibits a concatenation of magnificent deodars, pine trees on the rocky ridges and apple orchids. The average elevation of the Kullu town is 1278m. Kullu lies in between $31^{\circ} 57'$ in the North and $77^{\circ} 6'$ to the East. The *Dev Sanskriti* of the valley blends faith, mythology and history to create and sustain a unique bond between the mundane and the divine. Blessed with salubrious weather throughout the year, the district is known for the internationally renowned towns of Kullu and Manali, the pristine beauty of the Parbati valley, the teeming biodiversity of the Great Himalayan National Park, the quaint temple architecture of the hills and several enjoyable trekking routes across its breadth and width.

The district of Kullu came into being on November 1, 1966. Various historical evidence including inscriptions on coins etc., accounts of travelers and other printed references point out to the antiquity of the track and the people which constitute the district Kullu of the present. The history of Kullu has been traced some 2000 years back in time. The word 'Kullu' is speculated to have been derived from the word '*Kuluta*' which was found inscribed on a coin from the first century A.D. The first king (Raja) mentioned in historical record is *Virayasa* whose name figures on that coin as '*Virayasa, King of Kuluta*'. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, is believed to have described the modern Kullu as *Kiu-lu-to* situated at 117 miles to the north-east of Jalandhar. The

track has also been referred to as '*Kulantapitha*', which translates to 'the territory which marks the end of Kula i.e. the socio-religious system of the mainland' or 'the end of the habitable world'.

The track is said to have been first ruled by the Pal kings, who were succeeded by the Singh kings, believed to be descendants of the Pal kings. According to known history, the kingdom of Kullu was founded in the first century A.D. by Behangamani Pal, who is speculated to have come from Prayag near Allahabad. It appears that the people of the higher valley of Kullu were suffering under the repressive regime of the Thakurs of Spiti then and a keen desire to overthrow the Thakurs was smoldering in their hearts. Behangamani Pal overthrew the Thakurs and established the first ruling dynasty of Kullu. The rule of the Pal kings continued till about A.D. 1450 and Raja Kelas Pal was the last in that line. After him, there was a long break of about 50 years and it appears that the Thakurs and the Ranas might have captured power during this period.

Until 1960, the tract of Lahaul & Spiti was part of the Kullu tehsil. Kullu was declared to be a district of Punjab in 1963 and on November 01, 1966 it became a district of Himachal Pradesh. In the British times, all the modern government buildings, hospital and government bungalows were built around the Dhalpur grounds (proximate to Sultanpur, the old capital). Dhalpur continues to be the nerve center of the district administration till date. An official Census 2011 detail of Kullu, a district of Himachal Pradesh has been released by Directorate of Census Operations in Himachal Pradesh. Enumeration of key persons was also done by census officials in Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh. In 2011, Kullu had a population of 437,903 of which male and female were 225,452 and 212,451 respectively. In 2001 census, Kullu had a population of 381,571 of which males were 198,016 and remaining 183,555 were females. Kullu District population constituted 6.38 percent of total Maharashtra population. In 2001 census, this figure for Kullu District was at 6.28 percent of Maharashtra population.

Demographic characteristics of district Kullu of Himachal Pradesh

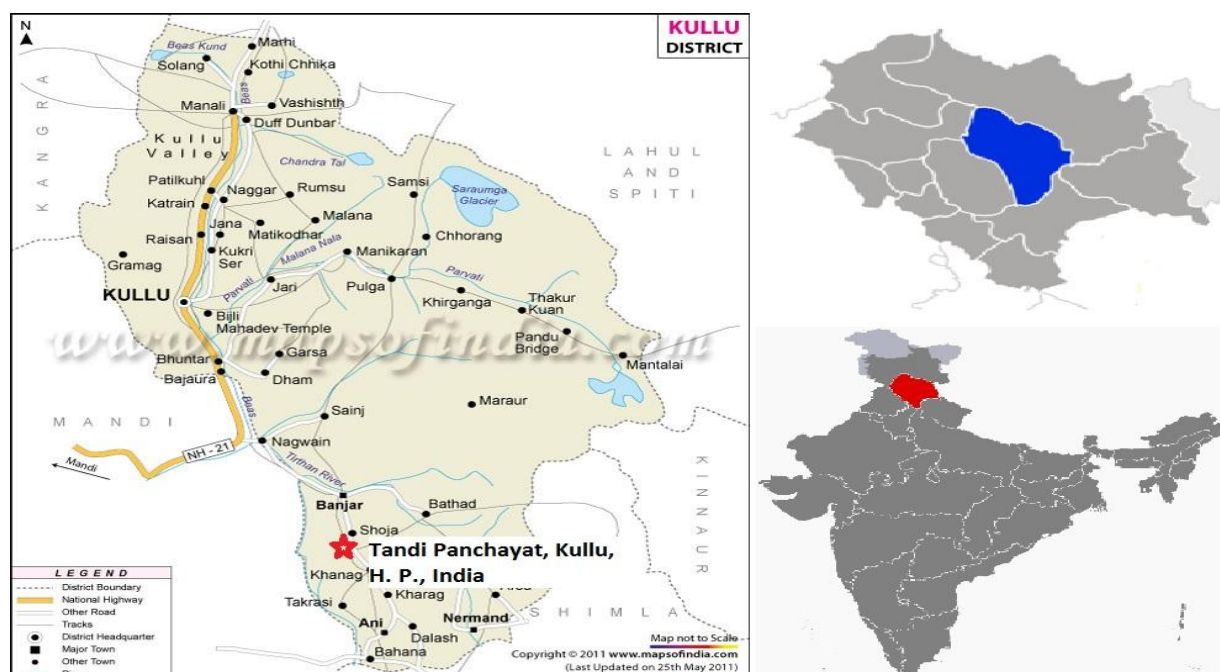
Description	2011
Actual Population	437,903
Male	225,452
Female	212,451
Population Growth	14.76%
Area Sq. Km	5,503
Density/km2	80
Proportion to Himachal Pradesh Population	6.38%
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	942
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	962
Average Literacy	79.40
Male Literacy	87.39
Female Literacy	70.91
Rural Population	93.04%
Urban Population	6.96%

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

Location and demographic characteristics of Tandi panchayat

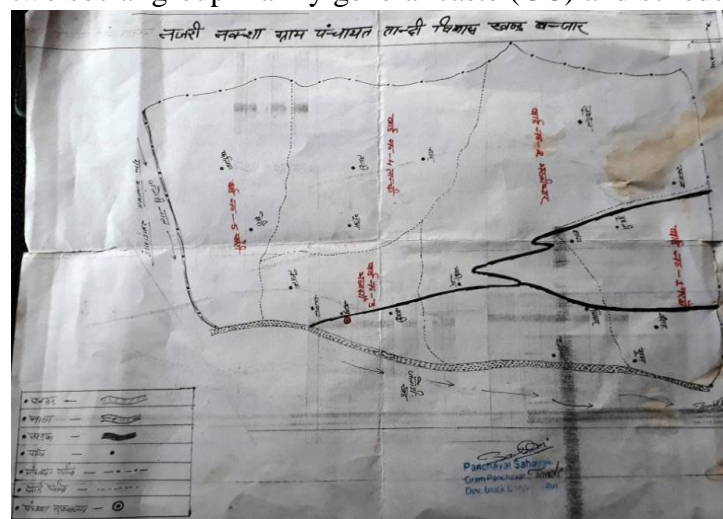
Gram Panchayat Tandi is located in Banjar block of district Kullu. The distance of the Gram Panchayat from block headquarters and district headquarter is 8 km and 68 km respectively. As per census 2011, the Panchayat has 295 households having a population of 1479.

Location of Tandi panchayat in district Kullu of Himachal Pradesh



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

Out of total population, 775 are males and 704 are females. The community is mainly divided into two social group mainly general caste (GC) and scheduled castes (SC). Percentage of SC people



Map of Tandi panchayat collected for panchayat office Tandi

in the total population is 23 percent. The literacy rate in the panchayat is 90 percent. Male and female literacy is 92 and 88 percent respectively. The native language of Tandi is Hindi and Pahadi, where Hindi is the predominant language used by most of the villagers.

Gram panchayat Tandi has eighteen villages. Soom, Narhan, Dalicha, Mihari, Dughli, Shaach, Khnala, Lushal, Kandi, Bhithidhar, Dhaar, Bhlagran, Bhua, Chmnal, Tandi, Lotla, Seri and Fliya). Panchayat office is situated in

Bhlagram, which is a small hamlet. Panchayat is headed by Pradhan Narendra Singh and comprises of five ward members. Other than panchayat office, there is the an anganwari center, primary schools, public distribution system (PDS) and veterinary clinic in the panchayat. Tandi is also the only revenue village in the gram panchayat. Six Samiti's have been established in the panchayat and meetings are held in each Samiti. The minutes of the meetings are mentioned (registered) in the Karyawahi register. In these meetings, all the executive works are discussed and planned along with roles and responsibilities of each Samiti.

Case presentation of Tandi panchayat

Information about all development and social works has been collected from panchayat officials, members and the residents of different villages of the panchayat. Members of the panchayat include Narendra Singh-current Pradhan, Jagdish Chand-Up-Pradhan, Babli Verma-Panchayat Secretary, Mamta Devi, Fulla Devi, Dhyan Singh, Khem Chand, Dolma Devi-ward members. Tandi panchayat has taken various steps to overcome many problems faced by the villagers. Various developmental works have been undertaken through panchayat. Over the years panchayat has developed the infrastructure in the panchayat. They have built roads, bridges, runnels, water tanks and are working on many other projects. Besides the developing infrastructure, they have also done many social works which have been helpful to the villagers. In this report, it is not possible to cover all the works and the initiatives which have been completed or taken by the panchayat to become the model panchayat. Only a few of the outstanding case studies will be presented. Few of the good works which panchayat has done are:

Water conservation and management

Village Sairee consists of 64 households with a population of 273 approximately. The village is approximately 5 km away from the panchayat office. The people of the village were suffering from

the shortage of water. They had to fetch water for drinking and other purposes from different ponds and streams which were far away from their homes. Usually, women and children had to go to fetch water. They had to carry water from 2-3 Kms to their homes which was affecting their health. They had to bring their cattle down to ponds and streams for drinking water. The village had water pipes laid down by the Irrigation and Public Health (IPH) but the water supply through these pipelines was erratic and inadequate to sustain for the day. They were facing many problems due to the shortage of water. Men sometimes had to accompany women to fetch the water and forego their daily work. Many hours of the day were wasted in collecting water from far-flung areas and this was affecting their economic activities. The villagers were concerned about the loss of their economic work and also the health of the women who had to carry water from very far areas. They along with the panchayat head planned to construct water tanks. The pipelines were laid down to connect these water tanks with a small pond. This small pond is a remnant of snow which is around 3 km away from the village. Water is stored with the continuous water supply from the pond in the water tanks and then through pipes, it is supplied to the villagers. Through this project, villagers get the regular water supply and many of their woes are solved.

During the construction, there were few objections by some households. They had the objections regarding the pipelines laid through their agricultural land. Their agricultural land was getting affected and there was no benefit to them. They demanded that if the pipes are laid through their lands then they should be either compensated or given the benefit of this project. The demands of these households were genuine and needed to be addressed carefully. Panchayat after deliberating with these households and the villagers; decided to provide them water connections. Now the villagers are able to get regular water supply which has solved their basic water requirements. Now they save the surplus water which is helping in their agricultural activities. Panchayat had to face

many hurdles in bringing water connection to the villagers. Firstly the terrain of the Panchayat and the Village Sairee, in particular, is very tough. It is situated in the mountains and it is very difficult to lay down the pipelines. Laying down of the pipelines was a herculean task which Panchayat has done successfully. Second, the problem of agitating households who were opposing the pipelines through their agricultural land. Panchayat very keenly addressed the issue and promised them with the water connections. Third, the allocation of funds to this project was not sufficient and panchayat couldn't bear alone. With the help of Irrigation and Public Health (IPH), they were able to lay the pipelines.

This project has provided relief to the villagers. They are now able to get a regular water supply and do not have to go to the far-flung areas to fetch water. Women are the main beneficiary of this project. The men are investing their time in the economic activities without worrying to lose their daily working hours. This project has helped the villagers to improve their health and economic activities. Panchayat has played a pivotal role in accomplishing this project with their continuous support and timely completion.

In another village, Lushwar/Dhar, the same problem of water shortage persists. Panchayat is planning to build the water tanks there also to conserve water. The water tanks will be connected to the source of water which is some 5 Kms away. This will provide relief to 57 households of the village who have to go around 2-3 Kms to fetch water for themselves and for cattle.

Construction of Roads, Runnels, and Bridges

Roads

Villages of panchayat were lacking better road connectivity. The roads were not metaled and a lot of dust was settled on roads. It was very difficult to commute through these roads daily. People who had to go to earn their livelihood were getting affected badly. Dust was creating a lot of health

problems for the commuters. They started suffering from various respiratory diseases which started affected their income. Their high expenditure on health was affecting other household related expenditures. Also during rain, the dust which was getting settled on the roads was becoming muddy and it was difficult for any vehicle to pass through these roads. Accidents were common during rains which were a cause for concern. The connectivity between villages of the panchayat was pathetic. Most of the times people were not able to transport their crops to the market. Due to bad road connectivity, transportation of patients to the hospital was distressing. Sometimes precious lives were lost because they couldn't receive treatment due to time lost in transportation. Village panchayat conducted meetings and deliberations regarding the improvement of the roads and the ways to get their roads improved and to make them metalled roads. Village panchayat took the help of the Public Works Department (PWD) and held deliberations with them. Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) funds were allocated to widen and improve the condition of the roads. Villagers were also employed as daily labor to construct these roads through MGNREGA. The works to improve the roads not only helped the villagers with good infrastructure development but also provided wage work to the people of the panchayat. Panchayat faced few hurdles in improving the condition of the roads. Problems were mainly due to the terrain as Tandri panchayat is a mountainous panchayat and many times while widening the roads wherever necessary, were getting sliding. Panchayat with the help of PWD solved these problems by employing heavy machinery.

Now, roads are very well connected to the villages and there is improvement visible in the panchayat. People can now move within the panchayat very easily without facing these problems. The problem of roads becoming muddy during rain is not visible and transportation during rains has also become easy.

Runnels

Villagers were also facing the problems of landslides and water clogging in their vicinities. The villagers in panchayat are living in the mountains. Whenever there is rain, the water runs down through the mountains and gets clogged in the yards of the households. Rains also bring soil down the mountains which cause landslides. Many times people got hit by the rocks and stones coming down due to landslides which sometimes caused the serious condition. During heavy rains, it was difficult for the households to come out of the houses as water was getting clogged in their yards. Also due to landslides, they were getting afraid to move out of their homes. This was not only affecting them economically but physically and psychologically also. To overcome this problem, villagers went to panchayat and held meetings with them many times. Panchayat took initiative with the help of PWD (Roads & Blocks) to construct the runnels to carry the running water down to streams. Retaining walls were constructed to contain soil erosion and prevent landslides. Runnels was constructed near to the retaining walls so that the water which runs down through hills will flush down to the streams. In this way, both the water clogging and landslides were checked. This helped the villagers to overcome the problem of water clogging and landslides. Now villagers are not facing this kind of problem. This has become a boon for the villagers and they are living in harmony with nature. The runnels have provided the relief by diverting the clogged water to the streams.

Bridges

Panchayat Tandi has water streams flowing through villages. People had to take long routes along the stream to reach their homes. This was taking the villagers extra time to reach their homes. Most of the times, the transportation is not available outside their homes and they have to get down to the nearest bus stand. For this purpose, they had to go around the stream to reach the place. To

bring their agricultural produce to the market, villagers had to carry their produce to bus stands first. This was cumbersome and also hectic because of these rivulets. Sometimes due to this long and tough distance to the bus stand, people were dumping their product in their backyards. Due to which the crops often gets rotten and was also economically disastrous to the households. Thus in panchayat meetings, this issue of constructing bridges on these rivulets was discussed. With a common consensus, panchayat decided to build small bridges over the streams. Panchayat with the help of PWD (R&B) started to build the bridges over the stream. Along with bridges panchayat also constructed paths to the villages connected till roads. Now because of these bridges, the transportation of goods has become easy. The time to transport goods has lessened and also the problem of rotten crops was reduced.

Construction of roads, runnels and bridges in panchayat is not easy. Panchayat had to face many problems mainly due to the terrain of the area. Due to the mountainous terrain, constructing roads to build infrastructure is always difficult. But panchayat with the help of many government agencies overcame all these problems and helped villagers with better road connectivity.

Swachh and clean environment

The surrounding in which we are living is very important because it tells the story of the way we live. It is important to take care of our surroundings and it is natural but there are many also who don't care about it. Like other areas of the country, the environment of this panchayat was also started getting spoiled because of the unawareness of the people and heavy flow of the tourists. Nowadays children prefer packed junk food rather than proper food. On the one side, it is spoiling their health and proper growth and on the other side, it is disturbing the fragile ecosystem of the panchayat. Because of demand, even small retailers of any nook and corner of the country has started selling these garbage in the packed forms and people are eating it without thinking about

its effects on health and environment. Without proper disposal facilities of the packing and lack of awareness are making the disposal of garbage problem worse. While eating snacks, packed or junk food people were just disposing of the wraps on the roads in this panchayat also. Tandi panchayat is beautifully picturesque which has beautiful mountains and the wide range of flora including beautiful pines and deodars. Without any dumping facility, people were dumping their leftovers of food and other wastes into the open and the wrappers of the packed snacks had the major share in it. Dumping of the garbage was producing a very foul smell which started creating various health-related problems in the panchayat. People were suffering from various infectious diseases. Unattended wastes lying around were attracting flies, rats, dogs and other creatures which spread diseases. Children were more vulnerable to these diseases. Garbage was not only polluting the air and producing foul smell but also was polluting the water. People were also throwing garbage into the near stream and polluting the water sources also. Cattles used to drink water from the stream hence, this was affecting their cattle also. Dumping of garbage into the open has also become a big problem to the villagers to attract tourists to their area. Being a tourist area many households are associated with small tourism activities to earn their livelihoods. Dumping of garbage into the open had become a big challenge to their small businesses. Taking the cognizance of the situation, the villagers and panchayat officials hold many meetings to overcome this problem. Panchayat also organized gram sabhas/meetings and held daily meetings with the villagers. The gram sabhas or the gatherings were organized weekly to educate villagers regarding the bad effects of the unclean surroundings. Panchayat also organized competitions among the school children regarding the cleanliness of the environment. School children were the front-runners to spread awareness of the clean environment. School children volunteered many times in the sanitation programme of the panchayat and played an active role.

To deal with this problem panchayat also constructed the solid and waste disposal pits for the waste disposal in the panchayat. Boards were erected in the villages and signboards with the clause of fine imposition in case of throwing any garbage on the roads and footpaths. Panchayat also installed the disposal bins in every village of the panchayat so that people should not litter around. Disposal bins were put so that wrappers, papers, polythene and other disposable things can be put into them instead of throwing on the roads and footpaths.



Solid and waste disposal pits constructed by Panchayat

Panchayat also helped households in constructing the disposable pits and putting disposal bins in the villages. This prevented the villagers to dispose-off their garbage into the open. This has made the surroundings of the panchayat clean and attractive. Now they host a good number of tourists and earn their livelihood in the village itself. This also has helped in controlling various infectious diseases people were suffering. People are happy with the work done by the panchayat towards cleanliness of the surroundings. By educating people and creating awareness among villagers for clean surroundings panchayat has helped them to get fresh air and healthy way of living.

Livestock tagging

Livestock is an important constituent in the rural villages. It plays an important role in the economic and socio-cultural well being of rural households. Livestock provides them food, the source of income, asset saving, generates employment and also plays an important role in agricultural activities. Tandi panchayat is not different from other rural villages of the country in this regard. In Tandi panchayat households also own livestock for their livelihood. Many households have their own cows, sheep, goats etc. But a tendency is getting developed in this so-called modern world and that is to leave the cattle especially whom people can't eat because of some religious faith and other reasons. If the society is predominantly Hindu then cows and bulls are the victims. People keep them till they provide them benefits. Once the livestock stops benefitting them, they either sell it in the market or set it free to roam without taking care. Cattles like buffalo, goats, and sheep are sold in the market when they stop providing benefits but the cows



Award given by Himachal Pradesh Government for cattle tagging

and bulls are not sold due to religious reasons. People were leaving them to roam around. Most of the times these cows roam on the roads creating various problems like jamming the road, hit the passersby and children are particularly vulnerable to get hit. These free cattle eat garbage many times and other harmful products which causes various

diseases which leads to their death. These cattle cause major problems during the night when it becomes difficult for the drivers to spot them due to darkness. This leads to accidents which cause various physical injuries and sometimes deaths also. Cattle when gets hit, they also become prone to various physical injuries which ultimately leads to death. When cattle die their carcass remains spread foul smells around which leads to many diseases. No one owns the dead cattle and due to which nobody takes care of the dead animal. The foul smell from the carcass spreads to the whole area and causes infectious diseases. Many times while playing, children often go to these places and get infected.



Stray cattle roaming on the road

To tackle the problem of stray cattle the government of Himachal Pradesh had introduced a scheme to tag the livestock. Gram Panchayats were given the responsibility to register the cattle of the villagers and empowered to levy the fine on the defaulters. Thus Tandi panchayat also started to register and tag the cattle of the villagers. This was the opportunity they were provided by the government to overcome the menace of stray cattle. Panchayat members along with staff from animal husbandry started tagging the cattle of the villagers. Around 637 cattle were tagged in the whole panchayat. The scheme proved to be blessing in disguise for the villagers. People now are responsible for their cattle and if anything happened due to stray cattle the owner is fined. This has completely resolved the problem of stray cattle on the roads and in streets in this panchayat. Now if the cattle die it is the responsibility of the owner to bury them and it stopped the spreading of various infectious diseases.

Panchayat faced few problems in the implementation of this scheme. People were very skeptical to this scheme and were not willing to let their cattle be tagged. Panchayat had to convince and educate them about the benefits of this scheme. Overall the scheme was successful and the panchayat was awarded for implementing this scheme successfully. The panchayat is now free from the stray cattle. People are not facing the problems of blocked roads and spoiling of crops by these cattle.

Distribution of books

There are total five schools in Tandri panchayat. Four among them are primary schools and one is middle schools. Children go to these schools to get their basic education. Every family wants their children to be well educated and live a better life. Families do their best to give the best education. But like other rural schools, the quality of education is the major concern in this panchayat also. People are aware of the importance of the education but they lack money to send their children to good schools



Book distribution among school children at panchayat office

in the towns and cities. The main issue in government in this region is the proper guidance to the children about different competitive exams and preparation strategies. Most of the time children are not aware of the competitive exams where they can go for better education. Families of these children are not aware of these competitive exams and the scholarships government provides them for education.

In order to tell school children about these competition and preparation strategies, Tandi panchayat organized few workshops for these children. Panchayat also provided books to these children. These workshops were organized to create awareness among these school children and their families regarding the various government schemes for them. The government provides many scholarship programs for the deserving students to get the best education. There are several other government schools where students enter only through competitive exams. The motive of these workshops organized by the panchayat was to create awareness regarding these scholarships and competitive exams. This initiative made school children and their families aware of the exams and schemes. This initiative was organized in the panchayat building only.

Social and economic help

Himachal Pradesh is one of the prosperous states of the country. It has achieved remarkable economic growth. But having a good economic growth doesn't mean that everyone enjoys the fruit of this development equally. There are many needy people which need special attention. Many people don't have enough money to meet their basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. In Tandi panchayat, one such example was Mohar Singh of Balagram village. Mohar Singh s/o Khaim Chand, aged 60 years has a wife, a son and a daughter. Mohar Singh did not have any house and was living in a makeshift tent along with his family. He was not holding any land either where he could do farming to feed his family. He was living a destitute life and his family was suffering from poverty. Mohar Singh had no one to help to overcome this extreme poverty. Mohar Singh's father before dying had transferred his land and house he owned to his nephew instead to his son. Mohar Singh is also not a literate person who could read what was written in the papers. They were cheated and were deceived by their relative. Mohar Singh fought for his right but was in vain. It became difficult for him to meet his and family's daily needs.

Given his poor condition and the destitute life, panchayat allocated 1.30 lacs under Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. But Mohar Singh didn't own any land which could have used for constructing a house. Under section 118 of the H.P. Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972 land can't be sold or transferred to a person who is not agriculturists. This led panchayat to mediate between Mohar Singh and his cousin. They mediated between them and convinced his cousin to gift some land to



House constructed for Mohar Singh

Mohar Singh. He was a bit reluctant to help him out but on the persistence of Panchayat, he agreed to gift some land to Mohar Singh. The allocated fund was released to Mohar Singh and he could construct a house for his family. Mohar Singh is now living with his family in this house and is able to live in better conditions.

Similarly, the other case consists of three brothers Tejas Singh, Mann Singh and

Permanand Singh. All three brothers are suffering from body tremors (a case of Parkinson's disease). Their bodies are always shaking which has made their lives miserable. Their muscles have stiffened and this has reduced their bodily movements. They have difficulty in standing, walking properly and voluntary movements.

Tejas Singh who is the eldest brother among three was the first one to get this Parkinson's disease. He was in his mid 50's when he had the signs of this disease. Taking this lightly, Tejas Singh didn't visit any doctor to inquire about the body movements. His other two brothers a bit to help him but the cost to cure was very high and was out of the capacity of both the brothers. After few

years another brother Mann Singh started suffering from the same disease. He saw the signs of the Parkinson's disease and went to the doctor. Although he was prescribed drugs and was asked to visit a specialist. Again due to the weak economic condition, he couldn't arrange for the doctor. A few years later youngest brother Permanandr also started showing the symptoms of this disease. Due to the poor economic condition, they couldn't arrange a better doctor. They were advised to visit Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Chandigarh and meet doctors there. Unfortunately, there was no one left in the family to take care of these brothers. Their relatives earlier decided to take care of them but later on, they gave up. They had to arrange food, take them to the toilet, and make them a bath etc. and their relatives found it difficult. Now a day's one of their nephews is taking their care and helping them with all their day to day activities. Panchayat showed a keen interest in helping these brothers to live their normal life. It arranged some doctors to get them investigated. It provided them monetary help whenever needed. Panchayat is helping them with all the means available. Panchayat helped them in getting a monthly pension of 650 rupees per person. It also arrangements to help them in getting a subsidized ration. In both the cases, Panchayat has done an appreciable work to uplift the condition of socio-economically backward people. They have provided help to the poor and the needy ones and set an example to promote humanity and human values.

Other works

Besides the above-mentioned works, Panchayat has done various works to uplift the panchayat. Beautification of panchayat works like parks, fencing of the tourist spots, disposal bins etc. Tourist guest houses were also constructed by the panchayat to increase the income of the panchayat. These works helped in bringing a good reputation to the place and tourists are thronging to these places. Current Pradhan of the panchayat resumed office in January 2016. Under his tenure, he has

planned to make a big library where people can come and read different knowledgeable books and magazines. He wants people particularly the school going children to get benefitted from the library. He wants to see children go to better schools and get a good education which is very encouraging and welcoming. This may provide a platform to work for the betterment of the society and particularly for their panchayat.

There are various construction related pending works which are to be completed and current panchayat team is planning to complete those works.

Discussion

Panchayats have been the backbone of the Indian villages since the beginning of recorded history. Gandhiji remarked that the Indian Independence must begin at the bottom and every village should be Republic. Gandhiji's dream became reality in 1992 when Panchayati Raj system was introduced with the 73rd amendment. Panchayats play a very important role in the development of the villages. The panchayats have the responsibility to implement the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs). Panchayats are entrusted with various responsibilities in planning, implementing and monitoring of different CSSs.

Panchayat Tandi has done various good works to promote the socio-economic development of its area. It has taken many initiatives to transform the entire region. Panchayat has improved the infrastructure of the villages with better roads, bridges, retaining walls and other development related works. The road connectivity to the villages has improved and are connected with villages. Road connectivity in all weathers was made possible with the help of various schemes like PMGSY and MGNREGA. The transportation of crops to the markets became easier for villagers. Good roads provided much relief to the patients to be taken to the nearby health centers. Along with roads, retaining walls, bridges and runnels were constructed. Bridges over streams reduced

the time to commute and made easy to transport produce to the nearest station, from where they can transport it to the markets. On the other hand, retaining walls and runnels helped in containing the landslides and water clogging. Water clogging and landslides during rains were the major problems for the villagers and panchayat has played a pivotal role to solve it. Safe and regular supply of water for drinking was made possible with the initiatives taken by the Panchayat. Water is stored because of tanks and surplus water is used by villagers for agricultural activities which increased the farm produces also. Panchayat has also improved the cleanliness of the surroundings by constructing garbage pits and putting dustbins in every village of the panchayat. Panchayat has also played a pivotal role in uplifting economically weaker people. Further initiatives like beautification of surroundings and construction of parks have attracted tourists and provided employment and livelihood opportunities to the villagers in the panchayat.

Recognition for her/ his activities

The panchayat got awarded as best panchayat for its overall development activities by the Government of India. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has awarded this panchayat with the award of Deendayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puruskar. This panchayat has also been awarded by the Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Himachal Pradesh for complete registration and tagging of cattle.

Acknowledgement

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Legends, Tables, figures, and photographs



Narendra Singh; Current Pradhan of the Panchayat



Panchayat Tandi Awarded for best Panchayat ward by the Government of India



Boards erected to promote cleanliness at tourist places



Tejas Singh (left) and Mann Singh (Right) suffering with Parkinson's disease



Animal husbandry staff along with panchayat officials tagging cattle

Video version of the case study

Given separately.

Permission

Not needed.