

Transforming the lives of Women through Women Empowerment Programmes: A Case Study of Jayapur Village (PM Narendra Modi's Adopted Village)

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Abstract: In 2014, the destiny of a small village, Jayapur, changed forever. A village that was not known by many people came into the limelight after Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted it. As part of the SAGY scheme, the village was adopted by PM Modi who urged all his MPs to adopt villages of India and transform them into Adharsh Gaon. While earlier the village lacked basic amenities like electricity, safe drinking water, toilets, hygiene management, banking services and employment opportunities for women, after 2014 many things changed. Women have also been given skill development and weavers training programs in order to help them become self-employed and to develop the possibilities for them to find work in rural India. The paper focuses on the equal participation of corporate, public-sector banks, government, and the local community in the growth story of an ordinary village that was completely transformed in 6 months and gained its own identity, proving to be a model village for other villages in India. The paper looks at the changes happened in the Jayapur village post 2014 from the perspective of women empowerment.

Keywords: Governance, Jayapur, Varanasi, Adarsh Gaon, SAGY, Women Empowerment, Government Schemes, Government of India

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office as the 14th Prime Minister of India on 26th May, he brought with him a lot of new ideas, schemes, and spread the slogan 'Ache Din Aane Wale Hain'. Within a few months of his taking command of the office, he launched several new schemes which portrayed him as the flagbearer of development.(PM India, n.d.)

One such scheme, which highlighted his development-oriented approach, is Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY). The rural development programme, which was launched on 11 October 2014 focused on the upliftment of the untouched rural areas by 2019 which would eventually come forward as the 'model villages', The scheme mandates to develop three Adarsh Grams by 2019 by providing basic amenities, better livelihood opportunities, access to rights and entitlements especially for women and

weaker sections and employment opportunities to every person residing in these villages. (Ministry of Rural Development, 2014)

As per the 2011 census data, approximately 69% of the Indian population lives in rural areas. Despite various efforts and initiatives, the gap between rural and urban areas has not declined as expected. (Kundu & Pandey, 2020) Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana is another step in the direction of bridging this gap. SAGY has been laid as per the idea of Mahatma Gandhi who visioned an ideal village to be as one which has every basic facility such as proper sanitation, houses with proper light and ventilation, schools for children, and so on. Taking his vision of an ideal village in account, PM Modi laid the foundation of this scheme in which one can adopt a village and transforms them into the 'Model Village.' The idea of transforming a village not only circles around its physical development, but also integrates multiple areas such as agriculture, health, education, sanitation, environment, livelihood, etc. It also aims at improving the standard of living and well-being of every person residing in the rural areas. (Ministry of Rural Development, 2014)

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF SAGY

On the birth anniversary of Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi launched the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY). He envisioned to create three Adarsh Grams by March 2019. (Sharma & Singh, 2020) The scheme further planned to select five such Adarsh Grams (one per year) and develop them by 2024. (Ministry of Rural Development, 2014) SAGY is not a new idea, it is a dream that was seen by Mahatma Gandhi long back. The scheme lays down its goals and objectives on the principles and values of Gandhiji which emphasises on national pride, patriotism, community spirit, self-confidence, and infrastructure development. (Sharma & Singh, 2020) SAGY will maintain rural India's soul while giving its people with decent access to basic facilities and chances to choose their own destiny. Taking his concept ahead, Prime Minister Narendra Modi enthused and motivated all MPs and other leaders by adopting a small village in his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi. On November 7, 2014, he adopted Jayapur village through the SAGY.

JAYAPUR VILLAGE, VARANASI

Jayapur was never under the light until it became the 'adopted' village of Varanasi in November 2014. After winning the 2014 elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to adopt the Jayapur village in Varanasi as part of his scheme launched in October during his first visit to the constituency. He chose this village to emphasise the value of cleanliness and a stress-free environment among the people. He made the decision to proceed with the development of the village's physical and institutional infrastructure. Until 2014, the village lacked basic facilities such as toilets, well-constructed roads, transportation, and so on. Once hidden under the cover, it suddenly became everyone's center of attraction. Many non-government organizations, social activists, and other private organizations started investing in Jayapur and came forward for its development.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research paper are to:

- Assess the condition of women in Jayapur
- Explore the skill-development and employment programmes running for women in Jayapur.
- Analyse the impact of solar power in bringing a change in the lives of women.

STUDY AREA

With 401 families, Jayapur is a small village in the Varanasi Tehsil of the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. One of the villages in the Varanasi district is Jayapur, which is around 25 kilometers from Varanasi and is located between the Varanasi and Mirzapur districts. According to the 2011 census, it has a total area of 26,268 hectares and a population of 3,205. The Jayapur village has a population of 2974 people, with 1541 males and 1433 women, according to the 2011 Population Census. In Jayapur village, there are 385 kids under the age of six, or 12.95% of the entire population. The average sex ratio in Jayapur village is 930, which is higher than the state average of 912. The census reports that Jayapur's child sex ratio is 825, which is lower than the average for Uttar Pradesh of 902. In comparison to the rest of Uttar Pradesh, Jayapur village has a greater rate of literacy. In 2011, Jayapur village had a literacy rate of 76.21% compared to Uttar Pradesh's figure of 67.68%. In Jayapur, the literacy rate for men is 89.85%, compared to 61.80% for women. The Sarpanch (Head of Village) is a chosen official of the village as defined by the Indian Constitution and the Panchayati Raj Act. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population in Jayapur village is 10.89%, and the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population is 1.58%. While 12.71 percent of workers identify their work as marginal (employment or earnings for less than six months), 87.29% identify it as their main work (employment or earnings for more than six months). The total area of arable land in the community is 268 hectares, yet there is just one government-run primary school.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher has adopted a qualitative approach to look at the condition of women in Jayapur. As the scheme focuses on making women self-reliant, it is important to look at women's perspective and their lifestyle. The researcher has conducted in-depth interviews with the women of Jayapur working in the thread-making agency run by the government and the stitching center run by a private company in the village. The researcher has also conducted in-depth interviews of women allotted houses in the 'Atal Gaon' about the changes they have gone through after they were given the well-constructed houses with proper bathrooms and toilets.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To study the impact of modern technologies and development on the life of women of Jayapur village, the researcher has used the modernisation theory given by Walt Rostow. There are three phases of development of modernisation theory beginning from the 1950s. Earlier, the modernisation theory was given with the approach that mass media can be a game changer in the growth and development of any society. However, as the societies changed and the evolution of technology came into being, there started a constant debate about the impact of modernisation in the 1970s. In the third and last phase, which emerged in the 1990s, modernisation started to be seen as a Western concept. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009) However, modernisation can't be seen only from the perspective of society but needs an economic perception as well. The modernisation theory given by Walt Rostow talks about five stages of making the society modern in terms of economic growth. These five stages include (i) The traditional society, (ii) preconditions for take-off, (iii) take off, (iv) drive to maturity, and (v) the age of high mass consumption. (Rostow, 1990)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jayapur was one of the first villages of Varanasi that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apparently heard of after getting a ticket from there for the Lok Sabha elections of 2014. Earlier, nobody was familiar

with this village as it suffered from an identity crisis but soon after its adoption, it came into the limelight and got its own identity. After 2014, many major changes have happened in the village, especially in terms of women's empowerment. The researcher has compiled the in-depth interviews into a few themes to look closely at the development of the village and transformation in the lives of women after the development.

DISCUSSION: CONDITION BEFORE 2014

Before 2014, Jayapur was a backward village which lacked provisions of electricity, safe drinking water, sanitation, and even pucca houses. Jayapur, like any other village in India, was dealing with unresolved challenges such as health, education, a shortage of power, open defecation, impure drinking water, and muddy roads. The village has two public toilets, one at the primary school and one at the Panchayat Bhavan, yet barely 5% of the children in the community attend school. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted it, the village began to undergo transformation. (Dwivedi, Bagga, Naruka, Agarwal, & Khambra, 2021)

Rajkumar Yadav, Gram Panchayat Pradhan, said, "Before 2014, there was no provision of electricity in the village. The electricity used to come for a few hours only. Also, there were no banks in the village and people had to go to Jhakni village, which is almost 1.5 km from Jayapur to access basic bank facilities. While many things have changed post 2014, there are still a lot of things need to be transformed further."

POST 2014 – CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENT

After the adoption of the village, many Indian and foreign companies started taking interest in its development. Many teams visited the village after 2014. The two banks, Canara Bank and Union Bank have been opened in the village and Jan Dhan Accounts were opened of the villagers. While earlier, the village only had 2 toilets, now, the condition has changed. The government has provided fund of Rs. 10,000 to each villager to build toilets in their houses. Many villagers have availed the benefit of the scheme and have constructed toilets in their houses. One common toilet has also been constructed in the village for common use of public. Not just this, the provisions of safe drinking water have also been made post 2014 in village. The pipelines have been installed in the village which are attached to the common tank of the village. The pipeline transports water from the common tank to the taps installed at houses or at common areas in the village. Solar Panels were also fitted in the village through which 120 street lights light up every evening in the village. A private company as part of their CSR installed, he solar lights in the village to provide light in the lives of people of Jayapur. Post 2014, a 'Katai-Bunai Kendra' was also established by the government to provide employment opportunity to the women of Jayapur. Not only this, a private company also set-up a 'Silai Center' for young girls to teach them stitching free of cost.

ATAL GAON YOJNA IN THE VILLAGE

14 houses having 1 bedroom, 1 kitchen, 1 bathroom and 1 toilet were constructed from scratch in the Atal Gaon for 14 families. These pucca houses, with the permission of the villagers, were constructed after demolishing the kaccha houses. However, there is no water connection inside the houses due to which the residents have to access water through common tubewell or common tap. The toilets inside the houses are a boon for the female members of the family who can access hygienic conditions during

menstruation. They also get privacy and toilets serve as a tool of self-esteem. Many problems related to hygiene have been solved due to the construction of private toilets in the pucca houses.

KATAI-BUNAI KENDRA AT THE VILLAGE

The center is run by government of India and is made to make women self-reliant. As told by the supervisor of the center, “The center was established around 2016. In the starting we only had 25 women working for the center and earning but now, the number has increased to 75.” The center has two types of machines that are used to make raw threads which are further exported to other places for weaving and cloth making. The supervisor further said, “When the center started, there were manual machines which worked through hand but as solar panels started installing in the village, the government provided automatic machines which run through solar energy. As the labour in hand-made machines and automatic machines are different, the costing is also different for the women. The ones who work on the solar energy run machines get Rs. 250 per kg of thread, whereas the ones working on the manual machines get Rs. 400 per kg of thread.” While the women put on extra efforts in the manual machines and takes more time in making one kg of thread, the work has become easier with the emergence of solar panels. The solar energy has proven to be boon for the women who can make more thread and eventually, earn more every month. The women are paid as per their monthly kilograms of thread and receive money directly in their bank accounts making the process transparent and easy. Due to the accessibility of banks in village, the withdrawal of money has also made easier.

SILAI CENTRE FOR GIRLS AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE VILLAGE

For every person, skill development is necessary so that they can use that skill to earn a livelihood. A private company has set up a small stitching center for the girls of Jayapur, where they learn stitching free of cost. Anyone can enroll in the course and learn basic skills of stitching. Many teenage girls of the village have learned stitching from the center and have set-up their own Tailor shops at their houses. This is making them confident and empowered.

CONCLUSION

People of Jayapur never thought their village would become well-known one day. They were living their simple lives without any complaint in anonymity. But one day, their lives changed when Jayapur was noticed by none other than the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. PM adopted the village and did a lot of work in making it an Adrash Gram. Earlier, where there was no electricity, solar energy was provided to the village to remove the darkness. The provisions of safe drinking water, sanitation was made and women were empowered through employment and skill development. The village is an example for many more villages in India. However, the road to development is yet very long as the village is again going back to where it was a decade ago. The attention is getting diverted, and the government is not doing enough to keep the village a model village.

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