



MODEL VILLAGES IN TELANGANA: A CASE STUDY OF ANKAPUR

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Abstract

India is a country of villages and rural residents rely mostly on agriculture for their living. Therefore, rural development and agricultural expansion are closely related. Model villages have gained popularity among policymakers in the context of numerous rural development initiatives. The standard for all other villages in the nation is set by these model villages. The idea of model villages, which are now only used in a small number of villages around the nation, especially in Telangana, was advocated to be replicated in our study. Agriculture will continue to be the primary industry in Indian communities, including Telangana's Ankapur hamlet. A model village acknowledged by the International Rice Research Institute, ICAR, and ICRISAT, Ankapur is a small, independent, and agriculturally prosperous community that has emerged as a shining example for rural India. The area is well-known as the "Seed Bowl of Telangana," and nearly all of the farmers have embraced drip irrigation. Ankapur, a model village in Telangana, a case study presented in this article.

Keywords: *India, Model villages, Telangana, Ankapur, Seed bowl.*

Introduction

The Census of India (2011) defines villages or rural areas as those with less than 5000 residents and a population density of less than 400 per square kilometer. At least 75% of the working-age male population in these locations works in agricultural fields. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the importance of village development for the advancement of India by stating that "India resides in its village." In this context, the idea of a model village originated from Mahatma Gandhi's vision. The Government of India currently runs the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana program, which was introduced on October 2, 2014, with the goal of adopting these villages and using them as role models for the other villages in our nation. Under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), the Holistic Village Development Program (HVDP) allows each Member of Parliament to adopt a village from their area and turn it into a model village. Water, agriculture, gender, health, and other multifaceted issues form the basis of the ideal village concept. Up until 2019, 2379 villages were covered by the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).

Agriculture prime component for village development

Since the beginning of early civilizations, agriculture has been an integral element of human existence. Over two thirds of India's population depends on agriculture, either directly or indirectly. It is a significant source of income for over half of the population and accounts for 17% of GDP. Furthermore, the idea of rural development and agricultural expansion are closely related. Strong, direct connections exist between agriculture and agricultural processing as well as backward connections to businesses that produce inputs.

Therefore, for a village to be referred to as developed, smart, or model, it must have a robust agricultural foundation and a contented farming population. According to the National Skill Development Policy, 2015, the employment base in agriculture was 240.40 million in 2013 and is expected to reach 215.60 million in 2022. This indicates that the breakdown of incremental requirements across sectors is greatest in agriculture.



This suggests that India's future lies in green jobs, such as those in agriculture, horticulture, renewable energy, recycling, ecotourism, etc. In the meantime, it is found that 80% of farmers have tiny and marginal landholdings. The sale of their output, the availability of inputs, credit and subsidy support, the absence of extension activities and facilities offered by various organizations, new research discoveries and technology, etc. are all issues that these farmers deal with. Climate change, water shortages, food waste, price volatility, and many other issues currently plague agriculture across the country, necessitating the implementation of sustainable agricultural technologies with community involvement. Therefore, the foundation of smart communities and model villages is agricultural transformation.

In addition to farming, model villages prioritize resource evaluation and establish objectives based on local needs. One such need is to the conservation of water and soil or the management of natural resources, such as the revitalization of soil and water resources through micro-watershed management, the planting of native tree species and medicinal plants, and other watershed development initiatives. Therefore, model villages provide encouraging indications of enhancing local employment opportunities, agricultural patterns, livestock management, and water availability at the grassroots level in a sustainable way (Mukherjee and Maiy, 2017).

Ankapur a Model Village

Ankapur is a village in Armoor Mandal, Nizamabad district of the Indian state of Telangana. Recognised as a model village by the ICAR, ICRISAT and the International Rice Research Institute, this small, self-sufficient and agriculturally rich community has become a beacon for rural India. Almost every farmer here has adopted micro irrigation using drip systems, and the village is famously known as the "Seed Bowl of Telangana".

Acute drought prevailing across the district appears to have little impact on Ankapur. While neighbouring villages report crop failure and migration of agricultural labour, Ankapur stands apart. The pipeline from the Gutpa lift scheme on the right bank of the Godavari takes care of drinking water needs. Moreover, farmers here have long understood the value of water: they raise only irrigated dry crops such as turmeric, jowar, maize, bajra and vegetables, using minimum water for maximum yield. The population of Ankapur is more than 6,000. We haven't raised more cattle than is necessary for a number of decades. As a result, we have less milch animals," says Tota Gangaram, a former government employee and active Village Development Committee member. "Any fodder we obtain is sufficient for our animals because we only cultivate irrigated dry crops." Worker migration and the transfer of cattle to slaughterhouses, which are usual during droughts elsewhere, are completely unproblematic.

Ankapur, a self-sufficient hamlet in , Telangana, is known for its sophisticated farming methods and urban-like facilities, making it a model for rural development. According to the 2011 census, there are 5,689 people living in 1,451 houses in the village, which is roughly 20 km from Nizamabad's district headquarters and 6 km from Armur town along National Highway 63. The hamlet's total area is about 2,200 acres (890 hectares). Known as the "mini USA" for its contemporary amenities, Ankapur has no thatched homes and has received praise for its creative farming methods from agricultural organizations such as the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

The village's income is mostly based on agriculture. Since the late 1960s, farmers have been growing commercial cash crops including vegetables, maize, and turmeric. This has allowed them to harvest up to four crops a year, which has shocked agricultural specialists. With the help of 22 seed processing



facilities that sell red jowar seeds abroad, more than 75% of farmers have paid back their loans without the need for government exemptions. Infrastructure and development have been strengthened by significant contributions from non-resident Indians (NRIs), including more than 500 educated youth employed overseas. As a result, the NRI community has created a dedicated web portal to promote the village.

The majority of Indian farmers still only plant a maximum of two crops annually, which is extremely poor crop variety. Nonetheless, Ankapur farmers are able to produce five crops annually in the following order: fodder, vegetables, groundnuts, coriander, and maize. In addition to their intensive agricultural practices, farmers in this area are able to see higher returns per acre since they employ mechanization. Government subsidies are used at a very high rate, and collectively purchasing or renting machines is a common practice.

Ankapur's accomplishment in giving local farmers access to processing facilities serves to further solidify its reputation as a model town. Since private businesses, not the government, own and run these processing facilities, farmers and private entrepreneurs have formed a successful alliance. In general, everyone benefits from the outcome. After processing their crops, farmers can get better prices, and private businesses can enter the expanding market for processed goods.

Additionally, private enterprises are eager to give Ankapur farmers money, seedlings, and newer technologies to boost their outputs since they want to see that local farmers can match the demand created by their processing plants. In order to maximize their combined profits, farmers in Ankapur have discovered that this increased demand also puts them in a stronger position to strategically negotiate and decide the price of the commodities they would trade with these private businesses.

Ankapur is a model village for many reasons, but its success is frequently ascribed to the way it uses its several committees made up of citizens to handle community tasks in a way that is particularly effective. This strong sense of community involvement has been a part of the town's identity for more than 40 years. Nonetheless, a number of additional variables have contributed to its success.

The majority of the hundreds of former residents of the village who now reside in the US send substantial amounts of money back to the community. With three bank branches in the main village area, the community enjoys access to mainstream finance on a scale that is nearly unheard of in the great majority of the country. Future research should focus on why mainstream finance has become so prevalent in Ankapur, considering that it is not present in the majority of other rural communities.

Additionally, Ankapur's use of agricultural subsidies was unlike anything we had observed during any of our earlier field trips. Given its prominence, government authorities are inclined to give it a plethora of advantages that aren't extended to other regions of the state (free water, free power, etc.), suggesting that its success has led to further success.

Agricultural Practices

The main dryland crops that Ankapur's agricultural economy depends on are bajra (pearl millet), sorghum (especially red jowar for export and seed production), maize, turmeric, and vegetables. These crops are well suited to the semi-arid climate of the area. These crops are grown on roughly 2,000 acres of cultivable land, with vegetables on irrigated areas and turmeric on about 40% of irrigated plots. This allows for effective land utilization even with limited water supplies. Red jowar seeds are grown locally and exported to northern India, making the village a significant hub due to its emphasis on commercial seed production.



Mechanization increases productivity; local farmers own more than 300 tractors, which allow for timely planting and harvesting on tiny holdings with an average of less than 10 acres per household. With over 75% of farmers repaying loans without government waivers, this infrastructure, together with the village's status as the "Seed Bowl of Telangana," has led to great harvests and financial stability. These methods not only increase productivity but also provide a model for sustainable farming in areas with limited water resources.

Ankapur farmers have taken the lead in using innovative agricultural techniques and technologies. The Village Development Committee is in charge of this initiative, which shares the risk of betting on new technologies among community members and partially reimburses the corporations who supply the technology. Before proposing whether to implement new growing methods and technology on a bigger scale, the Village Development Committee arranges trials with one to two volunteer farmers. Additionally, farmers in this area have more access to mainstream financing than farmers in other parts of the state and make extensive use of the various subsidies offered by the federal and state governments

Micro Irrigation and Ponds: A water revolution

In addition to building enormous concrete farm ponds to store water raised by pumps, nearly all farmers have adopted drip irrigation. Cattle's thirst is satisfied and crops are watered with the same water. Small and marginal farmers, who also work during the hard summer months, have benefited greatly from the National Rural Employment Guarantee program.

Farmers use cutting-edge methods like extensive drip micro irrigation, which is used by almost every family and allows for the harvesting of four harvests a year—a pace that normally takes two years elsewhere. Building big concrete farm ponds that store pumped water to serve both crop needs and minimum livestock requirements improves water conservation. The village's significance in India's seed industry is further demonstrated by the 22 seed processing facilities that worked in collaboration with businesses like Pioneer, Pro-Agro, Ganga Kaveri, and Nuziveedu to process and export seeds to national markets. There is still little reliance on livestock because there is enough food from agricultural residues to avoid the need to kill animals or relocate farmers during dry spells.

Commercial and Export-focused seed processing facilities dominate Ankapur's commercial sector, greatly boosting the village's economy and making it one of Telangana's wealthiest villages. Major corporations including Pioneer, Pro-Agro, Ganga Kaveri, Kaveri, Tulasi, and Nuziveedu operate facilities in these 22 units that specialize in processing sorghum (red jowar) and pearl millet seeds. These businesses generate significant cash that supports high farmer incomes by exporting premium seeds to northern India and other regions of the nation. The village's economic resilience is increased by this trade, which not only gives young people in the area jobs but also integrates with larger agricultural exports. Service Sectors.

Four Crops a Year- the farming Miracle

Ankapur village farmers typically surprise their peers by harvesting four harvests a year. This achievement is largely due to the farming community's togetherness and dedication to labor. The village has three commercial bank branches, 300 tractors, and an equal number of vehicles. It is located 20 kilometers from the district headquarters on the Nizamabad Armour road. It also has the advantage of being a village with no huts at all; as you drive down the main road, it nearly feels like you're entering a large town.



In contrast to traditional paddy, farmers in this district known as Telangana's "rice bowl" are renowned for implementing contemporary agricultural techniques in commercial crops like turmeric, maize, and vegetables on a huge scale. Even in the worst of circumstances, they never seek assistance from governments. Over 75% of farmers who obtained loans for crops and other agricultural purposes have already paid back the banks without requesting a waiver.

Global Recognition and the NRI connect

National and international agricultural research organizations including the International Rice Research Institute, ICRISAT, and ICAR have recognized the settlement. It's likely the only hamlet in Telangana with an independent website made by its NRIs. "More than 500 of our educated youth are either employed or pursuing further education in the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and other nations." In addition to agricultural revenue, the community has strong financial standing thanks to their contributions, according to community Development Committee head Challa Ananta Reddy. Despite the fact that no household owns more than 10 acres of land, women here put in a lot of effort and produce at their highest level. Farmers used their crop revenue to buy a large number of new cars during a bountiful harvest. The hamlet has twenty-two seed processing facilities. This region produces red jowar seed, which is exported to northern India. With processing facilities in the village, seed firms like Pioneer, Pro Agro, Ganga Kaveri, Kaveri, Tulasi, and Nuziveedu significantly reduce unemployment.

A Village without Hut

The absence of thatched homes and cottages in the village is a fact. According to Village Revenue Officer, Ankapur, which has 1,520 homes, 5,689 residents (as of the 2011 Census), and more than 2,000 acres of arable land, may be among the few villages with a remarkably low number of white ration cards. According to M.C. Ganga Reddy, head of the Rythu Sangh, the Village Development Committee (VDC) is essential to the village's development and discipline.

Conclusion

Examining the Indian setting, where our national identity is shaped by villages. Rescuing small towns from the issue of migration is crucial, but it's also critical to develop them in a way that will allow them to contribute to the overall development of our country. In our study, we suggested replicating the model village concept, which is currently limited to a small number of settlements around our nation. Ankapur is a small, independent, and agriculturally prosperous community that has emerged as a shining example for rural India. The area is well-known as the "Seed Bowl of Telangana," and nearly all of the farmers have embraced drip irrigation. Although each village has unique resources, opportunities, strengths, and challenges, the idea of model villages would vary for each village. However, the community's involvement without which sustainability cannot be attained technological intervention, particularly in resource assessment, and the meticulous execution of all governmental initiatives would be the common thread uniting all of these villages. Numerous essential institutions and organizations, such as panchayats (local self-government), Raithu sangham and VDC groups, etc., must also play a significant role in this entire process.

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