

Hiware Bazar – a story of developmental transformation

- **Hiware Bazar village in Maharashtra – a quintessential public success story of Watershed development and Water Management.**
- **Combined efforts of the Gram Sabha, local government and NGOs turned a drought-ridden village into a healthy and wealthy community.**
- **Brought about suitable changes in the cropping patterns.**
- **One of the few cases where reverse migration was observed; a model worth emulating.**

Overcoming the ails of drought and poverty that affected the village for years, Hiware Bazar in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra is the quintessential example of sustainable development achieved through well-orchestrated integrated water management approach and unceasing public participation. The watershed development programme in Hiware Bazar executed through Yeshwant Watershed Development Trust and became successful because of coming together of all stakeholders including the people, NGOs, Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat and the State government. It is a remarkable case in point vis-à-vis Water Conservation and Water Management.

The results which were achieved through the programme speak for themselves as the water table in the village rose to 70-80 feet from 20 to 25 feet, **suitable change in cropping pattern was brought about (from jawar & bajra to onion, potato, horticulture etc.) and standard of living improved considerably due to economic stability.** The programme proved specifically beneficial for farmers who were able to build additional water storage structures. The resulting availability of good quality grass led to improved dairy farming and subsequent increase in milk yield. Hiware Bazar story is one of the few in India where reverse migration was observed and people who had left affected by impoverishment returned.

The works which were undertaken in the programme are as follows:

- Construction of deep Continuous Contour Trenches (CCT),
- Construction of percolation tanks
- Widening and deepening of drain beds

- Construction of cement storage tanks
- Plantation for soil and water conservation,
- Adoption of Chloride Mass Balance method.

All these works were implemented through Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS). It was the labourers from the village itself who built the structures thereby improving livelihood.

But what makes the Hiware Bazar story stand apart is the voluntary and unceasing participation of the local community and subsequent efforts to change people's mindset. This watershed development programme also ensured that people who would not gain directly would also benefit. The role of Shri Popatrao Pawar, the farmer leader of Hiware Bazar village, around whom the entire community rallied to bring about the transformation, is inseparable from the achievement.

The once impoverished Hiware Bazar village, indeed, has made humungous strides in several fields including agriculture, village infrastructure development, environment conservation, dairy development, livelihoods, sanitation, and of course, water management.

With water crises deepening in the country, India needs to replicate initiatives like Hiware Bazar to ensure holistic sustainable development.

