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**A Case Study on the  
Intervention for Change: The  
GSHCL's initiative**

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# A CASE STUDY ON THE INTERVENTION FOR CHANGE: THE GSHCL'S INITIATIVE

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## Abstract

The case study presents an experience based on an action research conducted on a farming community with a purpose of bringing its participants together. It attempted at creating a unified sense making in the participants' mind with an aim to achieve transformation in their organizing and farming practices. It also narrates the results of an organization's initiative to innovate and manage its conflict functionally with the farmers. The case study illustrates the work conducted along with the GSHCL on farmers to improve horticulture cultivation in their village.

**(Keywords:** Farmers, Self-help group, community empowerment, Organizational innovation, Change management)

## The Context

The Goa State Horticulture Corporation Ltd (GSHCL) work towards marketing agricultural produce in the state of Goa. One of the prime goal of the corporation is to increase the states' self-reliance on its horticultural commodities. The farmers in Goa had been cultivating vegetables for their personal consumption and sell a meagre surplus in the local markets. This consequently led the state to depend on neighboring states like Maharashtra and Karnataka for its vegetable requirement. To encourage the farmers, the GSHCL promoted a few schemes to support the famers and draw their focus on horticulture; most importantly vegetable cultivation.

The GHSCL was well aware that its goals of self-reliance cannot be achieved without the support of the farmers. There were certain villages despite receipt of assistance showed little progress in the horticulture cultivation. The GSHCL had a major concern whether their schemes were reaching to the farmers. Therefore, corporation wanted to ensure whether schemes which were devised to encourage the farmers were utilized by the farmers efficiently. Consequently, it decided to conduct a study to find whether the farmers availed the schemes and effectively utilized it for the horticulture cultivation. To conduct the study, the corporation identified a village named Amona that showed a low production in the vegetable cultivation.

The research team studied two of the major horticulture assistance schemes namely, (a) solar power fencing support and (b) pump sets which were granted to farmers were audited. The solar power fencing assistance was provided to farmers to protect crops from the domestic and wild animals. A 90% subsidy was provided with a maximum sum of INR 200,000/- for every individual farmer who sought the assistance. Secondly, an assistance for creation of irrigation facility infrastructure was provided through (a) a 90% assistance for installation of new pump set for irrigation (b) 50% subsidy on standard cost for replacement of old pump set (c) a 50% subsidy on standard cost for above 5 HP pump set along with the accessories.

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The study's results confirmed that the farmers were aware of the schemes and have availed the pump sets and solar fences. The data corroborated with the physical evidences of pumps sets and fences available in the field. It was concluded that there were no discrepancies in the farmers' availing of scheme's benefit. However, with respect to its utilization, it was found to be ineffective and the farmers were not motivated enough to venture in to horticulture cultivation. Based on that study's result, it could be concluded that the schemes had successfully reached the beneficiaries; however, it was a challenge to state that the schemes have achieved its goals. Finally, in reaction to the study's result, a change management initiative was proposed at the Amona Village with an objective of encouraging the farmers to involve in Horticulture.

### **The Objectives**

Against the above context, an action research approach (Chia 2004, Liu 1992) was adopted with an intention of identifying the problems and discover solutions through the participation of stakeholders. The work was initiated after identifying two major stakeholders of the schemes a) the farmers who were the beneficiaries and b) the GSHCL, the stakeholder who wanted change to be initiated.

Three objectives were determined for the change management initiative, namely a) to identify the reasons that keep the farmers from not engaging in vegetable cultivation; b) to take action steps to support and involve farmers in vegetable cultivation; c) finally, to evaluate the steps taken to motivate the farmers in vegetable cultivation. To understand the issues, a diagnosis was done through interviews and observations in the field. The Konkani, the local language, was primarily used as medium of communication. The farmers were also able respond to the queries made in Hindi.

### **About the farmers**

The project was undertaken in Amona Village, in Bicholim taluka of North Goa District. The Farmers belong to the Konkani-speaking community with their own set of cultural and religious practices unique to their villages. They were mostly small<sup>2</sup> and marginal<sup>3</sup> in their land holding. Typically, every family in the village was into farming while the younger generation was well educated with jobs in government offices and private companies. They were either directly involved in farming or indirectly supported their family in farming.

The village have abundant water supply through river and soil was fertile. Water sourced from river Amona a tributary of Mandovi was used for cultivation. The wells were used to source ground water for irrigation.

### **About Amona village**

According to the census report (2011), the Amona was a large village with a total population of 2963 as per census 2011. It had total of 694 families residing in it. The literacy rate was higher compared to other villages of Goa. In 2011, literacy rate in that village was 91.38 % compared to 88.70 % of Goa. The Male literacy rate was 96.39 % while female literacy rate was 86.38 %.

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<sup>2</sup> Land holding more than 1 acre

<sup>3</sup> Land holding upto 1 hectares or 2.5 acres

## **The Diagnoses**

A diagnoses in the change management exercise makes the change process a visible reality (Workman and Boonstra,2001). Secondly, the diagnosis will help to reflect on priorities that were meaningful to stakeholders (Springett, 2003). To conduct the diagnosis, the Amona village was visited to interview farmers. The biggest challenge during the interactions was building trust among farmers and helping them to respond to interview questions.

Each meeting with farmers resulted in new issues and it appeared that the issues needed to be addressed at various levels from system level issues, interpersonal issues, communication and training issues.

During the interview, farmers shared data related to their challenges faced with vegetable cultivation. They mentioned that the payment made by the corporation for the vegetables collected from under market assurance scheme was often delayed. The farmers felt unhappy with the irregularity in the fund transfer period of payment from Horticulture corporation to the farmers. They mentioned about the delay in the payment which was causing them difficulty in repayment of debts and plan their monthly household expenses. They relied on horticulture corporation for the crop seeds and they trusted that the seeds supplied by the corporation met the quality standards. However, during the sowing season, the seeds at the distribution center were inadequate to cater the demand of the farmers. Finally, they shared about the difficulty in transporting their produces from the villages to the Horticulture department which was located 40 kilometers away. Therefore, they continue to visit the local markets sell their produces.

On observation and discussion with various farmers, severe interpersonal issues like mistrust and lack of cooperation were noticed among them. They followed traditional farming practices which were observed to be ineffective. There were technology and natural resources that could have been shared for their common benefit; however, the farmers prefer to act independently on certain decisions which could have been effective if they had worked as a community. It could also be observed that there was no unifying factor in the community that can connect them and leverage their strength.

The farmers also complained that they do not get adequate advice and communication from the agricultural officers regarding best agricultural practices. They do not have proper training in the farming practices.

## **Action steps taken by GSHCL**

The corporation was an important stakeholder and a wholesome solution cannot be achieved without its involvement. Therefore, it was necessary for the corporation to own the problem and be part of action planning to address the issues.

The diagnostic data was presented to the corporation for providing a clear picture of the reality existing with the Amona village farming community. The action planning was initiated with identification of issues which are within the purview of the corporation to support the farmers. Secondly, identifying the issues which can be addressed by the farmers themselves.

As a first step, training sessions were planned to impart training to the farmers. One of the major concern was practice of old farming methods. Those practices were ineffective in controlling the pests, producing adequate yield as well as quality of vegetables. When the data was presented to GSHCL, the horticulture officers visited the farms to examine the farming practices which led to scheduling of training sessions. Field demonstrations were conducted at the village; presentation were made on various farming practices and pesticides usages. As a result, farmers were familiarized with the use of pesticide and effective farming methods. During the subsequent field inspections, those practices were followed and received a feedback that farmers were benefitted following them. Secondly, a training session was conducted to impart knowledge on vegetables crops through a field presentation to the farmers which resulted in positive outcomes.

After the training session, the third step was to facilitate the opening of vegetable procurement center. The recommendation was made to the GSHCL. The GSHCL opened a vegetable procurement center at a nearest point where the farmers can sell their produce to GSHCL instead of travelling to a distance of 40 kilometers. It became a part of assured market scheme. The vegetables were collected by two staffs after duly weighing using an electronic weighing scale. The farmers were given a receipt for the procurement. The staffs were given hand-held internet device in which farmers' details were registered in the payment software. The quantity of vegetables deposited are logged in instantly and sent to the view of concerned payment approving authority. This had drastically reduced the payment delays which occurred primarily because of manual entry. Adding to this step, the GSHCL also improved the frequency of the transportation to procure vegetable from the village.

### **Action steps taken by farmers**

The issue of cohesiveness was addressed by forming a Self-help group (SHG). The objective was to develop leadership, self-reliance and cooperativeness among the farmers which would address issues of receiving the payments for the produce sold to GSHCL. A farmers' SHG was created to act as a single body to represent the famers' issues to GSHCL. An organization structure was created for the farmers' SHG. An election was conducted for various roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities were clearly communicated and defined. The farmers were explained about importance of conducting regular SHG meetings and maintenance of records. A bank account was opened for the SHG in a nationalized bank for the bank transfer of payment. This had provided transparency and stability within the system. This will develop stronger relationship between client and farmers.

### **Evaluation of the action steps**

An evaluation of action steps was conducted through the utilization of Sanquelim procurement center. A study was conducted in the year June, 2016 (Singhal & Padhmanabhan,2016) revealed that center was effectively utilized by the farmers. The presence of the center had motivated the farming communities in the nearby villages. It was observed that an average of 500 kg of vegetables been deposited by the farmers. The center's presence had motivated many households which had discontinued farming to start farming activity in their plots. During the interview with the farmers at the procurement center, it was also understood that the center had fostered cohesiveness and increased cooperative behavior

among the farming community. Farming cooperative societies have been developed by the farmers in their villages to coordinate the work of procurement and collective representation to the GSHCL. With respect to the payment, the farmers were satisfied that delay in the payment was streamlined and assured of the payment. The center had been operated digitally from collections of vegetables till payment through direct bank transfer. It appeared that the farmers have regained confidence in the system. It was also noted that the farmers' meeting frequency with zonal agricultural officers at the corporation. A considerable improvement in the communication was evident. They involved in co-creating their solutions through group discussions (Freir, 1970). It could be observed that they had begun to work together to address the issues

### Conclusion

It could be observed from the above change management approach that the stakeholders were able to develop social capital to confront the conflict functionally. It had resulted in fostering community empowerment through collective community action (Scoones and Thompson, 1999), (Mikolasek O. et al, 2008) and organizational innovation. Secondly, they were able to discover the solution within themselves to address their issues. This had resulted reliable sustainable solution for their issues. They were empowered them to be self-reliant instead of creating dependency on the third parties. For instance, in the above case, the farmers' issues were addressed by creating a SHG. The farmers had taken collective responsibility to co-own and manage the organization. The farmers had taken responsibility for its smooth functioning of the operation. It could also be noticed that farmers have learnt the importance of the organization which was created for their benefit. As a result, they had taken effort to maintain and sustain it. Most importantly, the changes that were noted as a consequence of coordinated effort between both the stakeholders. In this case, GSHCL had shown willingness and initiated proactive measure to address issues of farmers. Those steps have created community partnership which were voluntary and instilled confidence and social solidarity (Khandekar, 2004) among the farmers.

### Annexure - I

#### List of Horticulture Assistance schemes

| Sr. NO | Type of Assistance   | Criteria for assistance/<br>maximum limit | State/ Central Schemes<br>component  |
|--------|--|---|--|
| 1.     | Assistance for cultivation of Banana, Pineapple & Papaya   | 75% subsidy, Rs. 67500/- per ha           | Development of Horticulture Assistance for cultivation of fruit plants under State & NHM |
| 2      | Assistance for cultivation of Flowers i.e. Bulbous flowers | 75% subsidy, Rs. 75000/ha                 | Assistance for cultivation of Flowers under State & NHM                                  |
| 3      | Assistance for cultivation of Loose flowers                | 75% subsidy, Rs.                          | Assistance for cultivation of Flowers under State &                                      |

|    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
|    |  | 45000/ha.   | NHM  |
| 4  | Assistance for cultivation of fruits and spices, Mango, Chickoo, Nutmeg, Cashew, Kokum, Guava, etc | 75% subsidy, Rs. 30,000/ha.   | Assistance for cultivation fruit & spices  |
| 5  | Assistance for cultivation of cashew   | 75% subsidy, limited to Rs.30,000/- ha. in 3 yearly instalment  | Area expansion in cashew under State & NHM   |
| 6  | Assistance for replacing old deceased senile cashew trees with planting of new grafts              | 50% subsidy limited to Rs.20,000/-ha  | Rejuvenation/replace of senile plantations.  |
| 7  | Compensation to farmers whose crops are affected due to natural calamities and other damages.      | Compensation subsidy as per standard cost fixed for each crops limited to max. of Rs.15,000/- and min.of Rs.1000/-ha. for crops and max.Rs.1,00,000/- or 25% of estimated cost.         | Shetkari Adhar Nidhi   |
| 8  | Procurement of vegetable from farmers at pre-fixed rates.  | Procurement at pre-fixed rates through procurement centres.   | Procurement of vegetable   |
| 9  | Assistance for cultivation of coconut with local varieties.  | Rs.30,000/- per ha. @ 160 palms/ha. in two yearly instalment  | Coconut Development Board /State Scheme Assistance for cultivation of coconut      |
| 10 | Assistance for cultivation of coconut with hybrid varieties.                                       | Rs.40,000/- per ha. @ 160 palms/ha. in two yearly instalment.   | Coconut Development Board  |
| 11 | Assistance for cultivation of fruits & Vegetable in polyhouses/shadenet houses                     | a)Subsidy on structure upto 100% limited to standard cost max. 0.4 ha. per beneficiary and min. 100 sq.mts<br>b) Subsidy on structure on planting material 50% limited to standard cost | Assistance for protected cultivation for growing flowers & vegetables. State & NHM |

(Ref: A Farmer Friendly Handbook, For Governemnt of India/ Sate Schemes & Programmes in 2014-15)

## Annexure-II

### Year-wise vegetable Production in the State of Goa

| S. No | Year     | Quantity (tons) |
|-------|----------|-----------------|
| 1.    | 2011 -12 | 2.73            |
| 2.    | 2012-13  | 31.19           |
| 3.    | 2013 -14 | 132             |
| 4..   | 2014-15  | 320             |
| 5.    | 2015-16  | 526             |

*(Based on the interview data gathered from agriculture information.com)*

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