



Story of Change

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

August 15, 2008 to January 26, 2009

**Process Documentation Report
Population First**

Foreword

“Go to the people, Live with them, Learn from them, Start with what they know, build with what they love.

With the best leaders, when the work is done, the tasks are accomplished; the people will say “we have done this ourselves”

- Lao Tse, Founder of Taoism

The AMCHI (Action for Mobilization of Community Health Initiatives) project is guided by the above words. AMCHI in Marathi means “Ours”. The focus is on building community resourcefulness, leadership and accountability to initiate and sustain social development programmes at the village level. We had the good fortune of villagers coming and telling us “You had done only the initial training programmes, but we had done everything to bring about change.” The pride in their voice is only matched by ours. The happiness of knowing that we have succeeded in what we have set out to do is immense.

This is the “Story of Change” brought about by the women, youth groups, and the communities to better the health and education of their children, make the government agencies and service providers accountable and participate actively in the local self government issues.

The Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan (Our Village, Our Pride) Contest among the villages was a means to motivate community involvement in social development issues. The response in the first year was heartening, with many women and youth coming forward to take up the responsibility to bring in change, putting aside their differences and personal agendas.

The following are the stories of those exceptional women and young people who dared to challenge the apathy and self centeredness and worked for common good.

Hope you find the stories inspiring.

Sharada.A.L.
Programme Director
Population First

A Story of Change

Gegaon's women certainly know how to make an impact. For sometime now, three women's groups from this tiny village in Shahapur Taluka, of Thane district, have been working with the local school to improve the quality of education. Funds from the Self Help Group (SHG) have been used to provide books to students at the beginning of the academic year. School premises are regularly cleaned and beautified. Framed images of Dr. Ambedkar and Jijabai adorn school walls - a gift from the women's groups. Teacher's Day has been recently celebrated with great pomp. And all school teachers are keenly aware that these women are actually interested in making them accountable for their work.

And so in January 2009, it turned out that Gegaon's women received the first ever '*Stree Shakti Puraskar*' initiated by Population First (PF). They were there, at PF's award ceremony, winning accolades for their development work, during the six-month long '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' ('Our Village, Our Pride') campaign. Among the audience sat young men who had fought against alcoholism, panchayat members who had made their villages 'open-defecation' free, and women's groups working on malnutrition.

The ceremony was unique in two ways. Firstly, a majority of the people present were women who had actively participated throughout the campaign. Secondly, many who did not get the awards were present to encourage the award winners and to learn from them. Village health workers from the aanganwadi tai to ASHA and PHC staff too were part of the audience. They were making a difference in health status of women and children, thus earning appreciation from their peers as well as the villagers.

This document is their story.

A story of the processes these groups underwent, their struggles, their strategies, their successes and setbacks.

A story of change.

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan : Genesis

In 2006, Population First (PF) was involved in organized training programmes using theatre techniques for health workers of Dolkhamb and Kinhavali PHCs in Shahapur taluka, to motivate them to look at their role as change agents.

Apart from changing the mindsets of the service providers, it was important to create a consistent demand for quality health services from the community to change the health scenario in the region. It was necessary to mobilize and motivate communities to realize their right to quality health services. Support came from UNICEF in the form of the concept of micro-planning. Micro-planning is a highly hands-on, participatory exercise that employs a range of tools and methodologies to assess, and analyze issues with the villagers themselves. A plan of action is evolved at the end of a five-day micro-planning process. Responsibilities are delegated to the village members and the wheels of change are set in motion.

Beginning March 2007, PF began working in 46 villages of Shahapur Taluka. An intensive five-day micro-planning process was conducted by teams who lived and worked in the village for the duration. PF then followed it up with two years of consistent work in each of these 46 villages. PF held series of meetings, training programmes and health *melavas* to aid village groups achieve the goals set in their action plans, evolved during micro-planning.

The pace of change, however, was varied in each village. Active youth groups such as those in Aadivali and Vitthalgaon took charge almost immediately. Women's groups in villages like Bhavsa and Gegaon did likewise. But many other villages made headway at their own pace, negotiating time, resources, and even the occasional internal village politics.

Two years of work later, PF wanted to gauge the level of initiative the villages would take on their own, for the development of their villages. To this end, a six-month village development campaign was designed as a strategy. Titled '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' (Our Village, Our Pride), the campaign was an opportunity for villages to choose a development issue of their choice and work on it, entirely on their own.

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan : The Campaign

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan campaign was a strategy to motivate village communities to choose an issue and work on it for six months to make a difference. Their work would then be assessed by an independent jury, and prizes given to the best in each category.

Each village in Shahapur taluka had its own list of issues. From defunct schools, to malnourished children, and water scarcity, problems were aplenty. Some villages were semi urban in nature with better literacy and employment rates. Others were situated in far-flung areas, with predominantly adivasi communities. Hence their response to issues of water, sanitation, education and health were remarkably different too.

But on the positive side, most villages had at least one women's Self Help Group (SHG). Young people from most villages were keen to work for change. And gram panchayats were aware and already involved in implementing government policies. The key issue however, was gaining the participation of the entire village. The micro-planning process was the first step in bringing the village together. The *Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan* campaign could now be the catalyst that brought villagers to *work together* for change. The aim of the campaign was to provide a boost to overall village development through people's participation.

The objectives of the campaign were to:

- Mobilize community participation in health and social development programmes
- Involve more and more people in various programmes of village development
- Motivate various groups like SHGs , health committees, and anganwadis to perform better
- Recognize the efforts put in as well as strategies adopted by the villages in various areas of development

Across Shahapur, PF held a series of gram sabhas wherein groups discussed and short listed priority issues for the campaign. Issues like village cleanliness, zero open-defecation, child health, water and sanitation pertained to the whole village. It was expected that the entire village would participate in the change process if they had chosen one of these 'issue-based' topics. Other topics involved the activities and initiatives of community-based organizations like SHGs or youth groups. Their performance as change agents

would be evaluated on the basis of their groups' work. Finally there was competition among the service providers as well e. g. Anganwadi workers, school teachers, sub-centre ANMs etc.

The finalized categories were as follows*:

- “Swachha Gaon, Sundar Gaon” Clean and Beautiful Village
- “Dr. Mhapuskar Puraskar Hagandari Mukta Gaon” Open-Defecation Free village
- “Swastha Balak/ Balika Puraskar” Award for Healthy Children
- “Janani Suraksha Puraskar” Mother Protection Award
- “Sukhi Kutumb Puraskar” Happy Family Award
- “Swajal Dhara Puraskar” Safe Drinking Water Award
- “Anutai Wagh Puraskar” Best Anganwadi Award
- “Vikasdoot Puraskar” Youth Group Award
- “Stree Shakti Puraskar” Best Women's Group/ Self-Help Group
- “Adarsh Shala Puraskar” Ideal School Award
- “Adarsh Samiti Puraskar” Ideal Committee Award
- “Mother Teresa Puraskar” Strengthening of Sub-Centre Award

Some rules were also formulated for the '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' village development campaign.

- Participating villages should provide a letter of participation to the organization.
- Each village had to select a minimum of two subjects from the listed categories.
- The subjects on which substantial work has already been done could not be selected.
- Only those issues that need attention were to be selected.
- The contest would begin on August 15, 2008.
- An independent jury would be established to evaluate the work. The evaluation would be done from Jan. 12 to Jan 16, 2009.
- Winning villages would be given their prizes at a prize distribution ceremony on Jan. 26, 2009.

Villagers were exhorted to take the whole process as a campaign for village development rather than a contest.

*Refer Annexure A for translated version of the pamphlet distributed among villagers during the campaign.

Campaign Begins : Opportunities and Challenges

The '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' campaign was launched on 15 August 2008, with 21 villages sending in their participation letters to PF, each specifying the subjects of their choice.

Many village groups saw the six-month campaign as the right incentive to boost their existing development activities. In Vitthalgaon, an informal group of ex-students belonging to three neighboring villages, called the Maji Vidyarthi Sangh, had participated in the micro-planning process with PF. The group saw the campaign as a great opportunity to plan and implement their chosen program. They decided to focus on village cleanliness, and over the next six months, Maji Vidyarthi Sangh virtually spearheaded the "*Swacha Gaon, Sundar Gaon*" campaign in Vitthalgaon.

On the other hand, certain villages could not participate despite interest. Political dynamics, work schedules and timings of villagers conflicted, and people were unable to work together. In village Ashta, for example, the campaign was adopted in the Gram Sabha, and groups had begun work as well. However, a fight erupted in the village and people got divided into camps. Nobody took responsibility for the campaign, and the process fell apart. As the PF team learnt, choosing a topic to work was just the first step. Stumbling blocks were a tad too many.

Political influences were quite high in certain villages, with people aligned to one or the other political party. These differences would erupt whenever a project was undertaken. If women or the youth groups decided to take the lead irrespective of these differences, there would always be someone opposing their actions. It was in these areas that PF's team had to intervene. The team provided groups with inputs on negotiating with dissenters, involving passive members, delegating work, and making the process transparent and accountable.

Lack of technical information related to the themes was another difficulty. Village Mohili had chosen '*Swajaldhara*' as their topic. But the women's group had little information on the usage of water purifying agents, sourcing Mediclone or maintaining water resources. The PF team then took a series of sessions with the women's group on the technical aspects, for their understanding. Groups also wanted additional training from expert resource persons along with books and pamphlets. In these cases, PF gave technical

information, provided leads, and directed the villagers to technical experts who would be able to guide them better. Throughout, the PF team ensured that the entire responsibility for implementation of these technical guidelines remained with the villagers.

The "Bachan Gaur" campaign was launched on 15 August 1988, with 21 villages sending in their participation letters to PF, each specifying the subjects of their choice.

Many village groups saw the six-month campaign as the right incentive to boost their existing development activities. In Vithalgaon, an informal group of ex-students belonging to three neighboring villages, called the "Maji Vibhanti Sangh", had participated in the micro-planning process with PF. The group saw the campaign as a great opportunity to plan and implement their chosen program. They decided to focus on village cleanliness and over the next six months, Maji Vibhanti Sangh virtually spearheaded the "Bachan Gaur, Zindan Gaur" campaign in Vithalgaon.

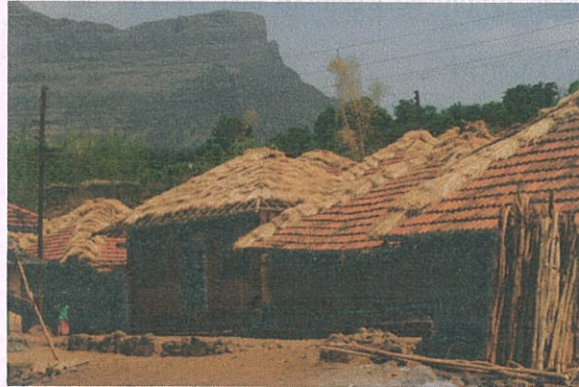
On the other hand, certain villages could not participate despite interest. Political dynamics, work schedules and timings of villagers conflicted, and people were unable to work together. In village Ashra, for example, the campaign was adopted in the Gram Sabha, and groups had begun work as well. However, a rift erupted in the village and people got divided into camps. Nobody took responsibility for the campaign, and the process fell apart. As the PF team learnt, choosing a topic to work was just the first step. Stumbling blocks were a lot more.

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Evaluating Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan

A jury comprising NGO professionals, development sector consultants, and Corporate Social Responsibility managers visited the villages accompanied by the Population First team from January 12-15, 2009, to evaluate the outcomes of the campaign.



The adivasi village of Chinchwadi (top) stands in stark contrast with the more prosperous village of Vitthalgaon (bottom), each with different development goals.

The jury was provided with brief background material about each of the participating villages. Details included the current socio-economic condition of the population, development issues facing the village and activities currently being undertaken. Evaluation criteria for each of the categories were also prepared for the jury members. They helped the jury to evaluate the knowledge, planning, and participation of the village on the chosen issue. Specific indicators were also created to evaluate the village on technical aspects.** The evaluation criteria had been shared with the participating villages early on in the campaign so that they

could plan their processes accordingly.

For the evaluation, the jury panel was divided into four teams. Each team also included at least one PF representative as a facilitator. Each team visited one or two villages per day and at the end of each visit would discuss their observations and finalize marks under each indicator. Participating

villages were not informed in advance about the exact date of visit of the evaluating team. This helped the jury members to observe the village processes as they were being done, without any fanfare. Post-evaluation, the jury members came together once again to share their observations, and select the winners under each category.

The jury included:

- Ms. Suvrata Gharage- Manager, Employee Relations and Development, Mahindra Tractors
- Ms. Alka Gharat, Consultant- UNICEF
- Father Miranda Trevor, Director- Reach Education Action Programme (REAP)
- Ms. Aparna Tamhankar, Social worker and Partner, AT & Associates
- Ms. Gayatri Oak-Sathe, Director-Training, Centre for Study of Social Change
- Ms. Madhuri Patil Consultant
- Ms. Sajana Jayaraj- Consultant
- Ms. Bhavana Golambde- Navnirmitti



Jury members meet before the evaluation process.

** Refer Annexure 2 for evaluation criteria and indicators developed for the jury for each category.

The Campaign Winners...

'Swacha Gaon Sundar Gaon Puraskar'

Clean and Beautiful Village Award

Winner: Vitthalgaon

Special Mention: Nandgaon

Twelve villages participated in the 'Swacha Gaon Sundar Gaon' category. But the levels of participation, awareness, and knowledge of the theme varied from village to village. Indicators for qualifying for the Clean and Beautiful Village Award included

- Cleanliness of the houses and its surrounding areas, including animal sheds
- Cleanliness of public spaces
- Garbage Management
- Waste-Water Management
- Solid-waste Management
- Incidence of diseases.

Village Nandgaon, received a 'special mention' for their campaign efforts. With 67 toilets in the village, and up to 40 kitchen gardens, waste water drainage was well taken care of. The jury was particularly impressed with the commitment of the villagers in sustaining the process in their villages, as well as their initiative in guiding neighbouring villages on the issue.

The winner in the 'Swacha Gaon Sundar Gaon Puraskar' category was Vitthalgaon, which consistently scored high on all the indicators. Maji Vidyarthi Sangh was the key driving force behind the campaign in Vitthalgaon. The youth group conducted a week-long 'swachata sapthah' (cleanliness week). *Prabhat Pheri's* (morning marches) were taken out in the villages to build awareness on the issue of cleanliness. A two-hour cleaning session took place daily, where members of the youth group swept the streets, cleared up litter, and tackled drainage problems. They spoke to women and families on the need for cleanliness, and the need to maintain their houses and surroundings clean. Maji Vidyarthi Sangh also organised a series of workshops for people in all the 4 villages they worked in. Taluka sanitation expert, Mahesh Dhanke was invited to conduct sessions on how to build toilets, septic tanks, control drainage and creating *parasbaugs* (kitchen gardens).

A workshop was also organised for members of all the village women's groups. Experts from the taluka panchayat office discussed how the youth and women's group could collaborate to create a clean village. Each of these meetings were organised and facilitated by members of the youth group. Women also joined in the campaign in full force, taking charge of cleanliness in and around their homes. The campaign saw a marked increase in the number of soak pits, kitchen gardens and toilets built and maintained in the village. Public spaces, including the school and aanganwadi were also clean and well maintained. For its sustained efforts, Vitthalgaon was adjudged as the winner in the *Swacha Gaon, Sundar Gaon* category.

'Swajaldhara Puraskar'

Safe Drinking Water Award

Winner: Tansa

Water is one of the key issues in Shahapur taluka. Despite the presence of two major lakes - the Bhatsa, and Tansa in the region, water scarcity is a recurring problem every summer. Secondly, management of existing water resources varies from village to village. Safe drinking practices are not universally followed, and this puts children at risk of water-borne diseases.

The jury had to evaluate the participating villages based on the following indicators for the '*Swajaldhara Puraskar*':

- Sources of safe drinking water
- Maintenance of the areas around the sources of drinking water
- Use of T.C.L
- Storage of water at home
- Water purification processes at home.

Newra's Mahila Mandal, comprising four women's groups had been working on the issue of water in their village for quite some time now. Summer months meant a constant lack of water. This had prompted the women to demand a water tank in their village. With the support of the gram panchayat, a water-tank was built and filled regularly by tankers, once every two days in summer. The responsibility of maintaining the water tank, paying off bills and cleaning up the tank surroundings belonged to the mandal women.

While this work had begun much before the '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' campaign, the group decided to step up their efforts in water management

during the campaign duration. They divided themselves into smaller groups, and made regular rounds of homes to check methods of water storage and usage of Mediclone. Follow-up visits were conducted regularly, with the group even taking signatures of women from the houses they had checked. The Mahila Mandal was commended by the Jury members for their commitment to sustain this process for such a long time.

Village Tansa, was the eventual winner of the '*Swajaldhara Puraskar*'. The village lies close to the expansive Tansa Lake, one of the key sources of water for the city of Mumbai. Tansa's problems began when the Gram Panchayat botched up the regular payments of water bills. Over months, when bills remained unpaid, the Corporation (BMC) was forced to cut the village's water supply. The youth group immediately swung into action. Tansa's 24-member youth group, formed after PF's micro-planning process, was instrumental in reviving the water connection. As the first step, they recovered all the unpaid money from the Gram Panchayat.

Next, they motivated the villagers to contribute and clear the mounting debts. The youth group would make weekly rounds through the village to collect funds, and diligently kept all accounts. When Rs. 22,000 was collected, the group paid up their bills to the BMC, and importantly, negotiated a staggered system of payment with the Corporation for the remaining dues. Their efforts paid off, and water supply was restored to the village. It also won the village the '*Swajaldhara Puraskar*'.

'Stree Shakti Puraskar'

Best Women's Self Help Group Award

Winners: Ekta Bachat Gat - Gegaon & Vanita Mahila Mandal - Newra

During the prize-distribution ceremony, the audience was stunned when a 15-member women's group walked up on the stage, all dressed in green nine yard sarees, and flower-bedecked hair. They were members of the award-winning Ekta Bachat Gat from Gegaon - a strong, unified and confident group of women, who had made substantial changes in their village education system. Ekta Bachat Gat had been working in close coordination with their village school to improve the standard of education. While helping students with books and writing material, and celebrating Teacher's Day, they also knew just how to keep the teachers on their toes! For their active interest in education, and supporting the village school system, Ekta Bachat

Gat from Gegaon was the recipient of the *Stree Shakti Puraskar*.

The prize was shared by the Vanita Mahila Mandal from Newra. The mandal consists of four women's group from Newra, who, apart from regular group meetings, meet once a month as a mandal to discuss and work out village issues. Women from Newra had initiated their first savings group almost 11 years ago. Today, each of the four groups are largely independent, with women taking loans, dealing with banks, managing accounts and setting up business enterprises as well. During evaluation, the aanganwadi was packed with women sharing their experiences. There were women who had taken loans to set up a bangle store, grocery shop and papad-pickle business. Yet others had taken loans for cattle and their farms. All loans had been repaid in full and in time - a feat that impressed the jury and helped Newra's Mahila Mandal to bag the *Stree Shakti Puraskar*.

'Anutai Wagh Aadarsh Anganwadi Puraskar'

Ideal Aanganwadi Award

Winner: Bhavsa

Special Mention: Mohili and Pachghar

When Jury members reached the aanganwadi at village Mohili, they were in time to see the local SHG members arriving with the mid-day meal for the children. The aanganwadi Tai efficiently juggled her tasks of handling the children, monitoring food distribution, and speaking to the visiting team as well. The children were well turned out and were enthusiastically following the Tai's instructions. The jury found the space clean and uncluttered. Paintings, and framed pictures added charm to the classroom. Most of the drawings had been done by members of the village SHG themselves. All records were being meticulously maintained as well. Their creditable work had earned for Shahapur Taluka the Government instituted '*Savitribai Phule Swacha Aanganwadi Puraskar*' earlier in the year, and this time around won them a special mention by the PF jury.

The aanganwadi at Pachghar also impressed the jury by its meticulous record maintenance and aanganwadi tai's interest in nutrition and education of children of the village. She had taken many initiatives like making the SHG cook nutritious meals, buying tonics for weaker children, and bringing malnourished children to normal grade. Although the support she gets from panchayat members and other villagers including the parents is little, she has continued her work with great determination, thus receiving a Special

Mention under the *Adarsh Aanganwadi Puraskar*.

The campaign award however went to the aanganwadi at village Bhavsa. Interacting with the jury, parents gave a very positive feedback about the aanganwadi and the Tai. They spoke of the efficient functioning of the aanganwadi, and their confidence in their Tai, and her work. 47 children attended the aanganwadi, with no children in grade III or IV on the nutritional scale. The children were all immunized, weighed once every month and sufficient quality of nutritional food was provided by the village SHG members daily. The aanganwadi had utilized the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) fund optimally. They had sourced Rs. 3000/- for the Gram Swachata Abhiyaan, and utilized Rs. 2700/- to provide medical attention to a tribal woman and her new born child. For these efforts, Bhavsa's aanganwadi was adjudged the best in this category.

'Dr. Mhapuskar Hagandari Mukta Gaon Puraskar'

Open-defecation Free Village

Winner: Mohili

Most villages in the area had identified open-defecation as a key issue during the micro-planning processes conducted by PF. The gram sabha members of Nandgaon had taken the lead in making their village open-defecation free. Its members had attended three training programmes on the theme of 'open-defecation free village' and had brought back the learnings to be implemented in their village. Villagers were motivated, and people collectively brought materials and put in hard labour to build toilets and septic tanks in individual homes. The jury were also impressed that the village school had separate toilets for boys and girls, and both were clean and well-maintained.

But the winning village in this category, Mohili, made a positive impression on the jury members from the moment they entered the village. The village appeared clean and well maintained, with neatly swept courtyards, decorated with little *rangolis*, and with little or no sign of drainage water flowing on to the streets. Women took pride in inviting the jury members into their homes to view their neat kitchens and clean toilets. Most households had access to clean toilets, with water, and the mandatory soap hanging outside. The aanganwadi too had a toilet, with water, and a wash-basin with soap for the children.

Mohili's true achievement however, was in moving ahead on the concept of sanitation. It was not just about having toilets in every home. The village had improved their drainage system. Waste water was routed through the kitchen gardens, and areas near public water pipes had small drains to prevent water being collected. These methods had greatly reduced the risk of water-borne diseases especially among young children, and won Mohili, the award in the "Dr. Mhapuskar Hagandari Mukta Gaon Puraskar" category.

'Vikasdoot Puraskar'

Best Youth Group Award

Winner: Sangharsh Yuva Mitra Mandal, Aadiwali and Maji Vidyarthi Sangh, Alyani

The *Vikasdoot Puraskar* was instituted to inspire and encourage existing youth groups in the village to take up development activities in and around their village. The micro-planning process conducted by PF, was completely supported by youth in many villages. It had resulted in the formation of youth groups, who were keen to work on development issues. After the micro-planning process, PF conducted regular training programmes for these youth groups to strengthen their understanding of the development process, and their role in it.

'*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' campaign served as a catalyst for them to actually implement their ideas. Maji Vidyarthi Sangh, a youth group comprising ex-students from Vithalgaon and three neighbouring villages showed exemplary initiative in integrating with the women's group to work on cleanliness. The group undertook a sustained campaign over six months, complete with *prabhat pheris (morning march)*, and training sessions on cleanliness. Sanitation experts from the Taluka office were invited to give talks on building toilets, improving drainage, and garbage disposal in the village. The group was able to successfully involve various stakeholders of the village school children, women's self help groups, gram panchayat members, to work on cleanliness. The efforts and the result were evident for the jury, and Maji Vidyarthi Sangh was declared the joint winner in the category of "*Vikasdoot Puraskar*".

The other winner in this category was Sangharsh Yuva Mitra Mandal, Aadiwali. During evaluation the jury was shown around a newly restored temple built at their initiative. The Sangharsh Yuva Mitra Mandal had sourced the funds, arranged for materials and supervised the construction of this space



Mohili's Aanganwadi Tai conducts playful lesson with children (top) while Pachghar's aaganwadi Tai looks at a baby she nursed back to health after severe malnourishment. Both Tais received a Special Metion by PF jury.

that they hoped would translate into a social and cultural meeting point for the village. Another credible achievement by the group was the initiation and enforcement of a complete alcohol-ban in their village.

After the members of the Sangharsh Yuva Mitra Mandal identified alcoholism as a key issue in their village, they called for a gram sabha. Here, they outlined the impact of alcoholism on women, children and families. Women came forward and strongly supported the demand to enforce prohibition. Despite protests from men, the gram sabha was able to pass the proposal to ban alcohol in the village. The police were informed about the gram sabha's decision.

Brewers in the village and *padas* were asked to stop their business. The youth group grew vigilant about outsiders coming into the village to sell alcohol. Brewers in the nearby villagers were also warned off. Their struggle paid off, and the youth group managed to implement the ban for over 8 months. It also made the youth group deserving winners of the *Vikasdoot Puraskar*.

'Adarsh Shala Puraskar'
Ideal School Award

Winner: Chinchwadi

Special Mention: Chinchechi Wadi, Tansa

A well-run school is usually a good indicator of a village's commitment to social development. But as in other cases, village schools in the region ranged from 'excellent' to 'passable' to 'poorly maintained'. The primary school at village Mohili was a three-roomed school, spacious and well lit, with poems, drawings, and pictures on the walls. The common toilet for girls and boys, however, was badly maintained. Interactions with parents revealed that though they were largely satisfied with the school, lack of good quality teachers was worrying them.

Similarly, in village Bhavsa, two teachers handled the primary section classes up to standard IV. Jury members found that though there was a seven-member Village Education Committee (VEC), five of the male members worked *outside* the village, and the woman member was residing at her parents' home in a far-off village. The VEC had conducted no meetings in the last six months and clearly was not contributing anything to improve the school system. Parents were extremely dissatisfied with the teacher and were planning to apply to the education department to get him/her transferred!

But the village of Chinchwadi was distinctly different. In this predominantly tribal village at the foothills of Aja mountain range, families struggled to get one square meal daily. In the face of poverty, education had always been on the backburner.

The school had a dismal 30% attendance, with children either spending time working in the fields, or taking



Jury Member Dr. A.L. Sharada inspects a toilet in open-defaecation free village of Mohili

care of siblings, while parents went to work. The dropout rate was considerably high. But two school teachers, Mr. Ghule and Mr. Paigire, have managed to change the picture.

The teachers went around the village talking to each parent, trying to convince them to send their children to school. The local SHG members were roped in to provide mid-day meals for the children. The teachers made efforts to make the school child-friendly and adopted interactive teaching methods to keep the interests of the students. Responsibility of maintaining the cleanliness of the school and its premises was shared by teachers and students alike. The children even started a small *parasbaug* (kitchen garden) in front of the school. Seeing the efforts put in by the teachers, parents began to cooperate. They took care to see that their wards attended school regularly, and on time. The result: A phenomenal 90% attendance in school. No wonder then, that Chinchwadi won the Ideal School Award!

The school at the adivasi wadi, Chinchechi Wadi, of Tansa village earned a Special Mention of the jury under this category for a number of reasons - high attendance of adivasi children, cleanliness of the premises, co-curricular activities initiated by the teachers among many others. What impressed the jury most was the excellent relationship between the school teachers and the villagers, who together made efforts to improve the school functioning. It was the villagers who contributed and constructed a kitchen shed in the school and as a token of appreciation have not let the teachers get transferred from the school for the last ten years.

'Special Award for Fighting Malnutrition'
Winner: Chinchwadi

The fantastically improved school of Chinchwadi had impressed the jury members. But they were equally taken in by the work put in by the village women, and its aanganwadi Tai to reduce malnutrition among children in the 0-6 age group.

An earlier survey by the Population First team revealed around 30 children in grade III on the nutrition scale. One child was in grade IV, and so weak that he had difficulty walking. Village women were mobilized to focus on changing the nutrition status of their children. Population First's team provided inputs on timely immunization and medical help for children. The SHG pooled in with nutritious food for the children, and made sure that all children ate food at the aanganwadi itself.

Each growth indicator was duly recorded for each child, and over months, about 90% of the children in grade III had moved into the normal grade on the nutritional scale. The child in grade IV also began to show marked improvement.

Tackling malnutrition was not a category under the '*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*' campaign. But the jury strongly felt that the efforts of the women's group and aanganwadi Tai should be recognised on a larger platform. Their effort was doubly commendable, brought out as it were, under circumstances of extreme poverty and illiteracy.

The prize money is currently being utilized to provide two whole eggs to each child every week. By putting back the prize money to fight malnutrition, the women of Chinchwadi demonstrated their commitment for a healthier tomorrow, and are the deserving winners of the special award.

Campaign Learnings

The six-month long *Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan* campaign was a huge learning experience for the entire PF team. The campaign exposed the levels of initiative groups took for their village development. Of the 46 villages where Population First worked, 21 villages participated in the campaign.

Among these 21 villages, the levels of participation and impact of their work were different. Some villages were semi-urban in nature, while others were quite rural / tribal. Yet others were in remote corners of the taluka, with little or no mainstream access.

Villages in remote areas were comparatively poorer than their rural counterparts. The real concern here was ensuring two square meals for the family everyday. Their need was survival. If not in the farms, entire families would be seen working as daily-wage labourers. Village development issues like building toilets or cleaning the village were not high on their priority list. Caste-alignments and political influences had their own impact on the campaign. They hampered work in villages where differences could not be sorted.

All together eight awards were given. Awards for five categories could not be given as the jury did not find any of the villages deserving of the award which are as follows -

- “Swastha Balak/Balika Puraskar” Award for Healthy Children
- “Janani Suraksha Puraskar” Safe Motherhood Award
- “Mother Teresa - Upkendra Balkatikan Puraskar” Mother Teresa Strengthening of Sub-Centre Award
- “Adarsh Samiti Puraskar” Ideal Committee Award
- “Sukhi Kutumb Puraskar” Happy Family Award

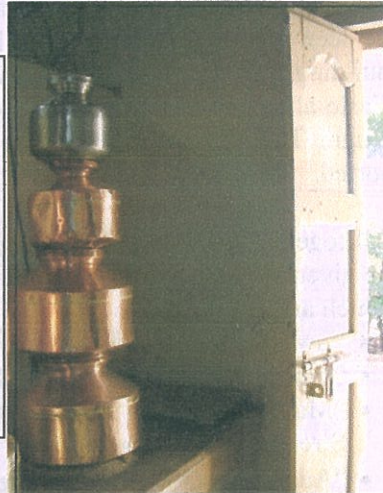
The most positive aspect of the campaign was the leadership displayed by youth groups and women's groups. They took risks, made their own decisions, and acted upon them with full responsibility. They were proud of their work, and winning the prize was a great morale booster for the groups involved. As women in Gegaon put it, *“It's not the money. The prestige it has brought us is invaluable!”*

Glimpses of People's Participation in the Campaign and Award Ceremony



Students preparing for exams at the school in Mohili.

Water is stored in clean vessels and stacked high in this home in Tansa.



Stree Shakti Puraskar's winners, Gegaon's Ekta Bachat Gat, display their unity and creativity by presenting a song composed by them, during the award ceremony.

PF team member Sangita (right) speaks to Gegaon's women about the campaign.



The President of Maji Vidyarthi Sangh acknowledges PF's support in the development of his village at the award function.

Dr. A.L.Sharada, Programme Director, PF presents the Stree Shakti Puraskar to the winning women's group of Newra.



Celebrating Change!

The prize distribution ceremony for all the *Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan* campaign winners was held on January 26, 2009 at the Panchayat Samiti Hall in Shahapur. The response by the villagers was encouraging. The ceremony was unique in two ways. Firstly, majority of the people present were women who had actively participated throughout the campaign; and secondly, many who did not get the awards were present to encourage the ones who got the award and to learn from them.

The winning teams acknowledged the support and guidance of PF in the development of their villages. The President of Maji Vidyarthi Sangh, Suresh Walimbe added that this process had motivated them to work on more subjects and win more awards next year!

Dr.A.L.Sharada, Programme Director, Population First in her key note address explained the concept, process and outcome of the Village Development Campaign "*Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan*". She appreciated the efforts put in by youth and women's groups in bringing substantial change in their villages. Awards were not given under five categories namely Healthy Children, Mother Protection, Strengthening of Sub-Centre and Happy Family as the jury found none of the villages to have taken appropriate action in these areas. Dr. Sharada expressed her belief that village groups would recognize these health issues as important and work on them as well.

A similar campaign has been launched in 2009 with more concerted efforts and better focus. Preparations are already underway to modify the concept to suit ground realities and increase people's participation in the campaign.



Dr. A.L. Sharada, Programme Director, PF presents the award to the winning women's group of Newar.

Annexure 1: Translated version of the pamphlet distributed among villagers during the campaign

**“AMCHA GOAN, AMCHI SHAAN –
VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN”**

Duration : August 15, 2008 to January 26, 2009

Population First and the Panchayat Samiti, Shahapur Block have jointly launched a campaign “Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan” literally translating “our village - our pride” on August 15, 2008. The development of village is possible only by the village people themselves.

This campaign was started with a view to achieve overall development of villages. It is in the form of a contest and the villages winning the contest would be given cash prizes and mementoes.

The rules of the contest are as follows:

1. Villages wanting to participate in the contest should give a letter of participation to Population First.
2. The contest begins on August 15, 2008 at the Gram Sabha.
3. Each village selects minimum two subjects from subjects listed below.
4. The subjects on which substantial work has already been done cannot be selected. Only those issues that need attention are selected by the villagers.
5. The evaluation of the work done by the villages is scheduled during Jan. 12 and Jan 16, 2009.
6. The Prize Distribution ceremony will take place on Jan. 26, 2009. Venue and time will be informed later.
7. Apart from subjects pertaining to the entire village, there are also prizes for groups like SHG, Youth Groups, School, Village Committees etc. Criteria for evaluation are stated under each subject.
8. Villagers should take the whole process as a campaign for village development rather than a contest.

Annexure 2: Evaluation Criteria and indicators developed for the jury for each category

“Swachha Gaon, Sundar Gaon Puraskar” – Clean and Beautiful Village Award

- Management of sewage water
- Management of garbage
- Personal hygiene
- Household and surrounding area
- Cleanliness of public places
- Decrease in water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, malaria, typhoid etc. caused by poor management of sewage water and garbage

“Dr. Mhapuskar Puraskar – Hagandari Mukta Gaon” – Open-defecation Free Village Award

- Solid waste management
- Individual Toilets/ Cleanliness
- Public Toilets / Cleanliness
- Public Urinals
- Toilets and urinals in schools and anganwadi
- Usage of toilet/ Cleanliness

“Swastha Balak/ Balika Puraskar” – Award for Healthy Children

- Immunisation of children, colostrum, BCG, Polio, DPT, measles, Vitamin –A
- Breast-feeding till six months/ regular health check-ups, appropriate supplementary nutritional food
- Weight of the child
- Cleanliness of the child
- Nutritional Grade

“Janani Suraksha Puraskar” – Safe Motherhood Award

- Immunisation of the pregnant women, TT Dosage, iron supplement, information
- Registration within 3 months of conception
- 3 times check-ups
- Organization of ANC Clinic
- Institutionalised birth
- Information regarding nutrition during pregnancy
- Visit of ANM within 48 hours of child birth
- Participation of men in maternal and child care

“Sukhi Kutumb Puraskar” – Happy Family Award

- Use of condoms
- Use of Copper-T
- Use of contraceptive pills
- Spacing between two children
- Tubectomy
- Vasectomy
- Participation of women in decision-making regarding use of contraceptives

“Swajal Dhara Puraskar” – Safe Drinking Water Award

- Public water supply source and surrounding area
- TCL usage
- Keeping drinking water at a height
- Use of hand mug
- Purification of drinking water (Use of Mediclone, boiling, filtering etc.)

“Anutai Wagh Adarsh Aanganwadi Puraskar” – Ideal Aanganwadi Award

- Attendance of children at the Anganwadi
- Learning levels of children / informal education
- Nutritional Grade
- Monthly weighing
- Record keeping
- Immunization
- Coordination with villagers
- Provision of ANC/PNC services
- Referral Services
- Cleanliness in the surrounding area of the Anganwadi

“Vikasdoot Puraskar” – Best Youth Group Award

- Membership Strength
- Meetings
- Agenda of the meetings
- Registration of the group
- Innovative activities undertaken
- Participation in village development

“Stree Shakti Puraskar” – Best Women’s Group/ Self-Help Group Award

- Membership Strength/ Membership criteria
- Attendance in meetings

- Subjects/ agenda of the meetings
- Innovative projects/ programmes undertaken
- Participation in village development
- Usage of the capital

“Adarsh Shala Puraskar” – Ideal School Award

- Attendance of children
- Attendance of teachers
- Cleanliness of surrounding area of the school/ toilets, drinking water facilities
- School drop out rate
- Level of information of children/ learning capacity
- School participation in village development
- Innovative activities undertaken by the school
- Work done by school committee
- Quality and distribution of food

“Adarsh Samiti Puraskar” – Ideal Committee Award

- Membership
- Attendance in meetings
- Work done
- Responsibilities taken up and fulfilled
- Participation in village development
- Use of funds received

**“Mother Teresa Puraskar - Upkendra Balkatikaran Puraskar” –
Mother Teresa Strengthening of Sub-Centre Award**

- Availability of medicines at the sub-centre
- Daily OPD
- ANC/ PNC check-ups conducted in last 3 months
- Immunization sessions conducted
- Number of deliveries conducted at the sub-centre
- Facilities at the sub-centre
- Coordination with villagers
- Cleanliness of the sub-centre

Annexure 3: List of winning villages under each category

Issue-based Awards

Swacha Gaon, Sundar Gaon Puraskar (Clean and Beautiful Village Award) - Vithalgaon
Special Mention - Nandgaon

Dr. Mhapuskar Puraskar – Hagandari Mukta Gaon (Open defecation-free Village Award)- Mohili

Swajal Dhara Puraskar Safe Drinking Water Award - Tansa

Special Award to Eradicate Malnutrition - Chinchwadi

Performance-based Awards

Vikashdoot Puraskar (Best Youth Group Award) - Sangharsh Yuva Mitra Mandal, Aadivali & Maji Vidyarthi Sangh, Vithalgaon

Stree Shakti Puraskar (Best Women's/Self Help Group Award) - Ekta Bachat Gat, Ghegaon & Vanita Mahila Mandal, Newra

Adarsh Shala Puraskar (Ideal School Award) - Chinchwadi
Special Mention - Chinchechi wadi, Tansa

Anutai Wagh Adarsh Aanganwadi Puraskar (Ideal Aangawadi Award) - Bhavsa
Special Mention - Mohili & Pachghar

Population First

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Improved communication skills of grassroots service providers, awareness about available services and increased access impacts the quality of health services for women, children and adolescents. Initiating activities that improve the sanitation and hygiene practice also add to a healthier population.

Population First has been working in the area of preventive and promotive health care in families and communities in Shahapur block of Thane district for the past five years through its project, "Action for Mobilizing Community Health Initiatives (AMCHI).

AMCHI is a field based primary health care project aimed at:

- Mobilizing communities to encourage preventive and promotive health care in families and communities,
- Create demand for quality services at the community level, and
- Strengthen the communication skills of the service providers and reinforce their role as change agents.

Project AMCHI is financially supported by HDFC and Mahindra & Mahindra.

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Story of Change

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan

Village Development Campaign

January 26, 2009 – February 2, 2010



**Process Documentation Report
Population First**

Story of Change

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan

Village Development Campaign

January 26, 2009 – February 2, 2010



**Process Documentation Report
Population First**

Story of change

Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

August 15, 2008 to January 26, 2009



Process Documentaton Report
Population First



Foreword

This was the second round of the “Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan (AGAS) – Village Development Campaign”. The fact that the AGAS campaign is enthusing the communities is amply clear from the response we received – both in terms of the number of villages participating in the contest as well as the participation of people in the awards ceremony. Awards in 12 categories were given in 2010 as against 8 in 2009 and close to 400 people attended the awards function as against 150 last year.

It is also heartening to note that we were able to present awards in all categories including 'Strengthening of the Sub-centre', 'Safe Motherhood', 'Healthy Children', 'Ideal Committee' and 'Ideal Village' which were not awarded last year. We also found that there was more planning and greater community participation in working on the selected issues, which is encouraging.

This year we have also actively involved the Government officials from the medical and health department in the jury process as well as in the awards ceremony and we are elated by their cooperation and encouragement.

We have reason to believe that the change will sustain as we notice a change in the perceptions and attitudes of people. They no longer see development as somebody else's business but as their own responsibility. They have also understood the power of collective action to make the system work. The fact that they were able to make a difference, we are confident, would keep them motivated to be more proactive in their efforts.

On our part, all the members of the AMCHI team are determined to empower the people with information, skills and understanding of development and gender issues and bring in true “Swarajya” (rule by the people) in our villages. Amcha Goan, Amchi Shaan has been a very fulfilling experience for all of us.

A. L. Sharada
Programme Director
Population First



“Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan” 2008-09

January 26, 2009 – AMCHI team of PF is busy in last minute preparation of the Prize Distribution ceremony of “Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan” - Village Development Campaign.

Dr. A.L. Sharada, Programme Director, PF takes a look at the preparation and asks Sangita Tribhuvan, Coordinator, AMCHI how many people are expected to attend the programme. Sangita, a little apprehensive, says, “About 60. May be more. The villages are far away and the transportation is not so easy.” All apprehensions and doubts dissolve as more and more people arrive at the Panchayat Samiti Hall at Shahapur. It turns out that the team is struggling to get more chairs, more tea and more samosas as over 150 people attend the programme. What is more gratifying is people’s enthusiasm and happiness at the recognition they are getting. Dr. Sharada declares open the campaign for the second year in her keynote address.



Dr. Sharada, Sangita and Fazal giving final touches to the stage for the award ceremony on Jan 26, 2009.



Mr. Sista and Dr. Sharada waiting for the guests and people to arrive for the award ceremony.



Quality health services in villages through innovative activities

Population First's project AMCHI is a rural community health project with empowerment approach that seeks to work on both supply and demand aspects of quality health services at village level. It uses innovative and people-centric processes to mobilize people around health and related issues. We believe that if equipped with right information and skills, people would stand up for their own rights. AMCHI team acts as a facilitator while people own the change process as well as the results they wish to bring to their village. Not restricting itself to only some sections of the villages, AMCHI team tries to involve all the stakeholders in the participatory "assessment, analysis, action, and association" cycle of solving problems. Women and youth form the most important change agents in the development process in the 46 villages of Shahapur block of Thane district where AMCHI project is being implemented.

The best practice at PF is that we never shy from experimenting. Taking risks, even if calculated, is a norm with the organization. We have failed to get desired results at times but have benefited immensely each time with important insights. AMCHI team too has tried new ideas that would appeal to people and attract their attention towards developmental issues of their village. "Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan" – Village Development Campaign (AGAS Campaign) is one such idea that met its objectives and was appreciated by people.

The campaign was first launched on August 15, 2008 and successfully ended on January 26, 2009. PF decided to conduct the campaign for the second time because people of the villages had liked the concept and could see the benefits. The campaign succeeded in involving all the stakeholders in the development process of the village. Since the campaign dealt with the basic developmental issues like education, water, health, sanitation etc. the overall impact on each village was very positive. The campaign could give a direction to people's collective energy, which was earlier directed towards religious activities or was wasted. Another satisfying outcome of the campaign was that the attention of stakeholders was being drawn to issues they normally do not think about. For instance, a 25 year old youth of a village is unlikely to think about quality of food being cooked by a women's Self Help Group for children of anganwadi unless the issue is presented in an interesting way. It is through the AGAS campaign that he gets an opportunity to think and act on the issue.



Campaign Process

The campaign duration is approximately one year starting from January 26, 2009. The work, however, gained momentum after a lull of few months. The task before the team was to explain the concept of the campaign to the villages that did not participate last year. The team had to concentrate on ensuring greater participation of people from each village to achieve specific goals set by the community itself. In the villages, the word “campaign” is synonymous with “cleanliness drive” that starts and ends with one or two cleaning sessions by the women. The team needed to make the people understand that AGAS campaign is different from mere cleanliness drive and that it is about all the villagers coming together and solving the basic issues in a sustainable manner.

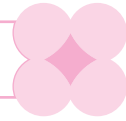
There were series of meetings in each village. At least one of them was facilitated by Sangita Tribhuvan, Coordinator or Fazal Pathan, Field Officer wherein most of the villagers were present. The meetings were scheduled according to the convenience of the villagers, as has been the working principle of the AMCHI team. Some meetings were held with either only women’s groups or youth groups if the other stakeholders were not active initially. Some smaller meetings were conducted by our village coordinators in their villages.

Initially the meetings were conducted to select the issue on which to work under the campaign. They had to choose the subject based on the need but it was also important that it should be challenging enough to take up. A goal too easy to attain would not inspire people to put in extra effort.

Evaluation

Surekha Pednekar, a jury member, said, “It was a good experience and I am glad to see that project AMCHI is giving real benefits to the people in that area. What I liked best is that the campaign is being directed by the people themselves and that this initiative is encouraging them to develop their villages.”

We follow a very systematic jury process to ensure that good work is rewarded. We invite people for evaluation from government and non-government sectors who have experience and knowledge in rural development for the jury process. They take an objective look at the work done by people based on what they are saying about their initiatives and what is shown to them as the result of their work. One of AMCHI team members assists the jury



members in organizing meeting in the villages and providing any additional information needed by them. A lot of information about the project, the campaign and the villages is given to jury members in writing and at an orientation meetings prior to the visits to the villages.

Unlike last year, we decided to conduct the evaluation in two phases this year. The first phase consisted of visiting each village for screening by team members of Population First working on projects other than AMCHI to short list villages. The second phase consisted of evaluation of the short listed villages by an external jury. List of jury members is enclosed in Annexure 3. The first phase of evaluation was completed between Jan. 6 and 8 while the second phase was carried out on 20th and 21st Jan. 2010.

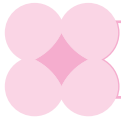
The jury looked for the initiative shown by the villagers to solve the problems and results achieved during the campaign period. The emphasis was on the process of change rather than simple comparison of final outcomes.

In both phases of the evaluation, people of the villages were very eager to show their initiatives to the jury. Women were at the forefront in planning and executing action plans. The women's groups in most villages came together and took the lead to work on issues. The youth groups were the second most active group. Despite working outside the village, they found time to contribute to the campaign. Whether women or youth, in the winning villages they were able to get the support of each other as well as other stakeholders like Gram Panchayat members, service providers etc.

Mrs. Suvrata Gharge (Manager Employee Relations & Development, Mahindra Tractors), who has been a jury member last year also, said,

"The competition in the "Ideal School Award" was very tough. All the three schools of the villages, Dehna, Kanva and Pashtepada, have worked very well. The quality of the work done by the villages has improved noticeably compared to last year. The involvement of the villagers was obvious and it reflected through their eagerness to showcase their efforts as a contestant."

Apart from getting verdict on winners in various categories, the jury interacted with AMCHI team and gave feedback on the project interventions as well. Vibha, an external jury member who is a partner in a consultancy firm and runs an NGO for adolescents, said



Story of Change

"This field visit was a very interesting experience for me. It was so good to see confident women and their genuine work. ...I wish success for this program (award ceremony) and congratulate the villages for taking ownership."

The winner villages could overcome problems like disagreements within the group, emergencies arising due to erratic monsoon, core group not getting sufficient support etc. to bring in desired changes. Villages which had participated in the campaign last year had experience of facing the jury. PF team had taken care not to let the winners in last year's campaign compete in the same categories.

Winning Stories

“Swachha Gaon, Sundar Gaon Puraskar” – Clean & Beautiful Village Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Management of sewage water
- Management of garbage
- Personal hygiene
- Cleanliness of households and surrounding areas
- Cleanliness of public places
- Decrease in water-borne diseases like diarrhea, malaria, typhoid etc. caused by poor management of sewage water and garbage



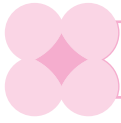
Jury Member Bhairav Desai in Tembhurli village during evaluation.



Women of Tembhurli village gathered for a meeting.

Winner Village : Tembhurli

When PF began its work in Tembhurli in October 2008, the women were neither united nor optimistic about any positive change in the village. The village is geographically divided into three parts and so were the women in them. As a result of PF's efforts, women started looking at issues collectively. The campaign came at the right time to test if they can make some decisions together and follow an action plan.



Story of Change

After a lot of discussion over a number of meetings, the women decided to select two subjects – *Swachha Gaon*, *Sunder Gaon* and *Stree Shakti*. Presence of men in the meetings was minimal and women were the ones who had the enthusiasm and determination to make the change. The competition was tough in the two subjects selected by Tembhurli. There were villages like Taharpur and Gegaon which had participated in the campaign last year and were better organized. Women of Tembhurli were not deterred, however. Their action plan was quite simple - digging soak pits or planting kitchen gardens in one's own house and cleaning the public places together once a week.

Then came the trouble. Five SHGs suddenly announced that they would not take part in the campaign. No amount of counseling by PF team or arguments from the other SHGs could persuade them to take part in the campaign. Apparently, they were instigated by another organization. The three participating SHGs then went ahead with implementing the action plan. They took care of the part of the village which they inhabited and all the public places of the village. That took care of 80% of the entire village. The village looks clean – there is no waste water near the well because no one is allowed to wash utensils/clothes after designated hours, the main road and internal roads are swept regularly, cleanliness of school and Gram Panchayat premises are maintained by the people.

The women are happy with their work and want to continue cleanliness drives even after the campaign. It has given them the confidence to improve affairs in their village. Men are more appreciative of their efforts and eager to join hands. While receiving award for "*Swachha Gaon, Sundar Gaon*" Mrs. Jayashree Gulab Chaudhary of Tembhurli village said, "All of us (women) came together for working on cleanliness of the village for the first time. We had not done anything together for the village in the past. Next year we will do even better."

"Hagandari Mukta Gaon" – Open-defecation Free village

Evaluation Criteria :

- Solid waste management
- Cleanliness of individual toilets
- Cleanliness of public toilets / urinals
- Cleanliness of toilets and urinals in school and anganwadi
- Usage of toilet



A hand pump and area nearby in Taharpur before and after the work was done by women

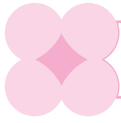


A monitoring chart prepared by the women of Taharpur of work under the campaign.

Winner Village : Taharpur

Women of Taharpur, from all the 7 SHGs, along with the ANM, MPW, Anganwadi Tai are a spirited lot. They are determined to make their village a better place. Many issues needed their attention. After a long discussion, they could settle for less than four subjects – maximum that any village took up in the campaign. They have chosen Swachha Gaon, Sunder Gaon, Adarsh Anganwadi, Stree Shakti and Swajaldhara subjects.

The women of Taharpur started preparation early in the campaign. They prepared charts showing the initial status of each of the subjects in the village. The areas to work on under each subject were clearly defined and so were the targets they wanted to achieve. These charts were displayed at prominent places in the village like anganwadi, Panchayat office,



Story of Change

school etc. These charts proved very helpful in monitoring the progress of work by the women themselves as well as PF team and evaluation teams.

The energy of women's group was divided on the four selected subjects. They could progress in all the four subjects but it was "Hagandari Mukht Gaon" that the jury thought was the best. The women were successful as they could convince more and more people to use the existing toilets. In the village, around 70% households had constructed toilets but were not using them. They involved the wadi (cluster of houses) close to the village in the campaign and increased the usage of toilets. The argument women used was that if they do not become "Hagandari Mukht Gaon" they would not get the benefits of many a government scheme for welfare of people. The public toilets were dirty and ill-maintained. The women together started cleaning and maintain them. Anganwadi Worker Mrs. Shashikala Nipurte made use of the anganwadi to organize meetings of SHGs for implementing the action plan.

The village wanted to be "Open-defecation free" for a long time but was not succeeding. However, the women did well in using the opportunity and motivation that the campaign provided.

"Swajaldhara Puraskar" – Safe Drinking Water Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Cleanliness of water sources and surrounding area
- TCL (a water purifying agent) usage
- Purification of drinking water at home
- Water hygiene in households



The three subjects selected by Vitthalgaon displayed at prominent places in the village.



People of Vitthalgaon answering queries of jury members in the first round of evaluation.

Winner Village : Vitthalgaon

When people of Vitthalgaon realized that there is direct correlation between higher incidence of diseases and unsafe drinking water, they decided to take up the issue of Swajaldhara. The subject concerns with cleanliness of both – water sources and purification of water at home. The group spearheading the action on the issue under the campaign were youth and women.

The strategy used by them was to meet at regular intervals, decide on action points, execution and monitoring mechanism. All of this was done by themselves with little help from PF. First action point was to clean up the surrounding area of the village-well and cementing it to prevent waste water collection and breeding of mosquitoes. The Pada Worker had to mix the TCL (water purification agent) in right quantity and at regular intervals as people monitored her work. People made sure that the Pada Worker had sufficient quantities of TCL available by coordinating with the Gram Panchayat, which is responsible for the supply of TCL, for ensuring its availability.

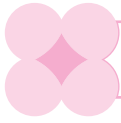
They contributed money and bought special ladles with long handle for each household and asked everyone to use them for drawing water out of pots to avoid touching water while transferring. Each household was also given mediclore for purifying the water at home from the contribution.

The villagers are confident that they would be able to protect themselves from water-borne disease this year.

“Janani Suraksha Puraskar” – Safe Motherhood Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Immunisation of the pregnant women, TT Dosage, iron supplement
- Registration of pregnant women within 3 months of conception
- 3 ANC check-ups
- Organization of Ante natal and Post natal Clinics
- Institutional deliveries
- Information regarding nutrition during pregnancy
- Visit of ANM within 48 hours of child birth
- Participation of men in maternal and child care



Story of Change



Women of Gegaon discussing the work plan for the AGAS campaign.



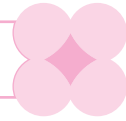
Members of Prerana Gaon Vikas Samiti with Dr. Sharada during evaluation

Winner Village : Gegaon

The results achieved in the campaign by Gegaon women were spectacular! Each pregnant woman is aware of what care she should take during pregnancies and later, for her own and baby's health. Each pregnant woman is registered with government health care system and is determined to go for an institutional delivery. These women are getting full support from their husbands and in-laws and refuse to go to their parent's place for delivery or plan to postpone it until the delivery.

This was made possible due to the concerted efforts of women of Prerana Gaon Vikas Samiti, a mandal of five SHGs of Gegaon. Most of these women have achieved the desired size of their families. They made groups, contacted each of the houses with pregnant woman, and discussed about the importance of safe motherhood with family members. The mother-in-law, for instance was convinced to ensure that her pregnant daughter-in-law takes adequate rest and works less.

Women have gone beyond creating awareness about safe motherhood. They have brought the debate of smaller family size versus necessity of a son in the family before people. They felicitated a couple who decided to limit their family size after having only one daughter.



“Swastha Mule Puraskar” – Award for Healthy Children

Evaluation Criteria :

- Immunisation of children,
- Feeding of colostrums and breast-feeding till six months
- Appropriate supplementary nutritional food
- Monitoring weight of the children
- Hygiene of the child
- Monitoring of and improvement in nutritional grade of children

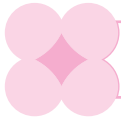


Fazal Pathan facilitating a meeting in Alyani to select subject under the campaign.

Winner Village : Alyani

The anganwadi worker had been reporting the need for nutritional supplement and care of the children at home for quite some time. But parents, especially fathers, had never seriously thought about the issue. The responsibility was largely left to the anganwadi worker and the mothers. When all the subjects of the campaign were placed before people in a meeting, the choice for “Swastha Mule” (Healthy Children) category seemed just right to everyone present. Especially, when they were told that no one had selected this category in last year's campaign.

Once the category was selected, the usual practice of passing the responsibility from one group to another started. Quite a lot of time passed without much progress on the issue. It was in a meeting in September 2009 in the village that people suddenly realized how little time remained to do anything. They were jolted out of their stupor when they came to know about the efforts taken by other surrounding villages.



Story of Change

The women, men and youth sat in the anganwadi with the SHG responsible for cooking food and prepared a roadmap. They decided to improve the situation even if they did not get the award. The roadmap included steps like identifying the factors responsible for higher attendance of children in anganwadi, better nutritional grades of children, deciding upon right meals and supplementary food for children, being present at the time of weighing children, making sure ANM is following immunization schedule for children etc. People monitored anganwadi worker and ANM's work and utilized funds from Gram panchayat as well as NRHM for provision of supplementary nutrition at anganwadi.

The results were encouraging – improved nutritional grades of the children, higher awareness in people about health and improved performance of ANM and anganwadi worker.

Laxman Walimbe of Alyani village said, "We (the youth/men) had never thought about children's health as an issue to think and work on till we selected the issue under the campaign. We improved attendance of children in the anganwadi, monitored the quality of food given to children, ensured that the growth of children is appropriate for their age.

"Adarsh Anganwadi Puraskar" – Ideal Anganwadi Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Attendance of children at the anganwadi
- Nutritional grade of children
- Immunization of children and pregnant women
- Session on mother-child care practices
- Surrounding area of the Anganwadi
- Learning abilities of children
- Record keeping
- Coordination with villagers
- Referral Services



Anganwadi Tai of Vachkole village showing facilities at the anganwadi to the jury members, Ms. Rekha Talmaki and Ms. Pradnya Shinde.

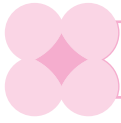


Anganwadi at Nevra improves its look after renovation

Winner Village (Joint) : Vachkole

Mrs. Kanta Rajaram Bhare, the Anganwadi Worker of Vachkole village, will retire soon. She will say good bye to the anganwadi she has worked in for over 20 years with satisfaction. The satisfaction that she finally succeeded in involving people of the village – young boys and girls, parents, SHGs and Gram Panchyat - to work on the anganwadi to achieve better environment in the anganwadi and higher attendance of children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Mrs. Kanta Bhare has worked well for so many years – maintained all the records, engaged children in many learning and fun activities, rarely letting the grades of the children go below the second etc. However, she was doing all this without much of people's involvement. It was by way of the campaign that she succeeded in getting attention of people towards the anganwadi. People too responded to her appeal well by pitching in their contribution. People's contribution came in the form of painting the anganwadi, maintaining the cleanliness of the surroundings of the anganwadi premises, presence of parents at the time of weighing, women monitoring the quality of food cooked for the children by the SHG, young girls conducting games and group activities for the children etc.



Winner Village (Joint) : Nevra

Mrs. Sheela Shelavale, the Anganwadi Tai, has been appointed just two years back. She is enthusiastic and has support of the women's group. When she proposed that her anganwadi would like to participate in the campaign, people present in the meeting agreed and promised their support. Even though she had the support of people of the village, the major task was to renovate the dilapidated building of the anganwadi. She was disturbed at the condition of the anganwadi ever since she joined work. Shortage of money for renovation has been a problem since then.

This time however, she decided to rope in the Gram Panchayat body as well as the Gramin Arogya Poshan Ahaar Ani Pani Puravatha Samiti (Village Health Nutrition and Water Supply Committee) formed under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in the planning meeting for the campaign. People supported her and she got funds from both NRHM and Gram Panchayat. People also offered to provide free labour to renovate the roof and walls, painting the walls etc. Sheela said, "The attendance in anagnwadi has improved and the building is renovated. PF team made people aware of their responsibilities."

"Upkendra Balkatikan Puraskar" – Strengthening of Sub-Centre Award

Evaluation Criteria :

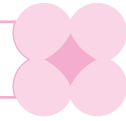
- Availability of medicines at the sub-centre
- ANC/PNC check-ups conducted in last 3 months
- Number of deliveries conducted at the sub-centre
- Coordination with villagers
- Daily OPD
- Immunization sessions conducted
- Facilities at the sub-centre
- Cleanliness of the sub-centre



Sangita Tribhuvan facilitates a meeting at Piwali for improving the functioning of the Mobile Health Unit.



People of Piwali opening the lock of the Mobile Health Unit in the presence of Dr. Nagare, Taluka Medical Officer.



Winner Village : Piwali

Public Health Department has earmarked Piwali village for developing a sub-centre but even the land has not been identified. The village has a building for the Mobile Health Unit (MHU) but the unit is not functional. People of the village were apathetic towards the services supposed to be provided by these health centers.

When the objectives of the campaign were explained to them, the women and a few men present did not take long to choose the subject concerning strengthening of sub-centre. They were so enthusiastic that they involved the women of Khor, Savroli, Koshimbde and Wandre villages which are attached to the MHU in their work on improving the functioning of MHU. The meetings for making action plans and assigning responsibility were well attended; some facilitated by PF team while some were conducted by themselves.

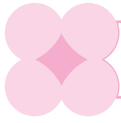
They followed the issue of the MHU not being open day and night with the Medical Officer (MO) and then with Taluka Health Officer (THO). Their demand was that the health unit be manned day and night. The women went to the extent of locking the health unit when no one responded to their requests. It was on the promise of the THO that the centre would remain open day and night to provide emergency services that the unit opened and was allowed to function.

The centre functions much better now. At least one staff member is present during nights to provide emergency services. There is still scope for improvement and women and men of Piwali are still working on the issue.

“Adarsh Shala Puraskar” – Ideal School Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Attendance of children
- Attendance of teachers
- Cleanliness of surrounding area of the school
- Availability of toilets and drinking water facilities
- Learning levels
- Innovative activities undertaken by the school
- Functioning of school committee
- Quality of mid-day meals



Story of Change



The school at Dehna village



Jury members Mrs. Gharge and Dr. Nichat interacting with the students during evaluation.



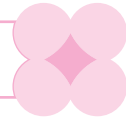
Students of Kanva school welcome the jury members during evaluation.



A patch of vegetables grown by the students of Kanva school.

Winner Village (Joint) : Dehna

When the evaluation team of Mrs. Suvrata Gharge and Dr. Nichat reached Dehna village they did not imagine they would be seeing an ideal school. The area is populated by adivasis with low economic and social status and is so remote that it rarely gets visitors. However, the students and the teachers seemed used to receiving guests. The school premises was clean and was decorated with rangolis. The toilets were clean and well maintained and there was provision for clean drinking water. The motivated team of



teachers under the leadership of Principal Mr. Abdul Shaikh, was bringing together resources from villagers to construct a compound wall as there was no government funding, available for it.

The students knew well about hygiene and were enthusiastic to show their acting talent. Any one would have been impressed with near 100% attendance and no dropouts.

Winner Village (Joint) : Kanva

Mr. Dashrath Vitthal Vishe, the Principal of school in Kanva, is an enthusiastic person who has a positive influence over most of the villagers. He lives in a nearby village but remains in Kanva much beyond school timings. His rapport with the people has made the school a venue for many programmes like training programmes, women's meeting, and a computer centre.

The school of course fares well in attendance, cleanliness, quality of education, co-curricular activities etc. The students sing and dance well and involve in gardening. They have painted the compound walls and some of the building walls with pictures. The science laboratory has many a things on display.

The school took up the cleanliness drive as well as painting activity under the campaign. They took the help of village youth and women in doing so.

"Stree Shakti Puraskar" – Best Women's Group/ Self-Help Group

Evaluation Criteria :

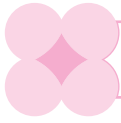
- Attendance in meetings
- Innovative projects/ programmes undertaken
- Usage of the capital
- Subjects/ agenda of the meetings
- Participation in village development



Women of Bhavsav village at the anganwadi.



Women of Vanita Mahila Mandal, Nevra explain their work to the jury members.



Winner Village (Joint) : Nevra

Women of Nevra are united when it comes to participating in a campaign that is appealing to them. AGAS was such a campaign in which many subjects were interesting to them. To their credit, they did not take up the same issues as before but the ones that needed their attention urgently.

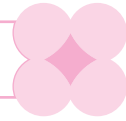
All the four SHGs and their federation “Vanita Mahila Mandal” took up cleanliness of village to work with. They also decided to support the anganwadi worker in renovation of the anganwadi building. They discussed the matter with the Gram Panchayat body and Gram Sevak. Together they decided to take steps like rules for using well water, using Gram Panchayat funds for big garbage bins at several places in the village, rules for each household to dump garbage in the bins, system for emptying the bins by women's groups by turn etc. Women decided these rules and started observing them religiously. Moreover they decided not to stop after completion of the campaign. Their endeavour is to continue with these practices in future.

Winner Village (Joint) : Bhavsa

Women of Bhavsa, not so united generally, were in agreement to work on the issue of school. Being mothers, they wanted to give good education to their children. They could not see them wandering in the village and whiling away their time when they were supposed to study. They knew it wasn't the children's fault. Nor was it their own fault. The school teacher was the one who did not come to school, played cards with the men of the village, did not pay heed to women's request to teach children properly.

Women started working on the issue by discussing the matter directly with the school teacher. When no improvement was seen, they wrote an application to the Education Department and got it ratified by the Gram Sabha. Eight women from the group then went to Shahapur and submitted the letter. In the letter, they specified the problems faced by the school-going children and demanded that the teacher be transferred, and a new teacher be immediately appointed in his place. Despite promises, no official from the Education Department turned up for inspection.

Women locked the school one day when the teacher did not turn up on time. They then reached the Shahapur Panchayat Samiti to complain. The women explained the matter to the concerned official and demanded transfer of the teacher as well as immediate replacement. The officer-in-charge was forced to give in to their demand and posted a teacher from a nearby village for the time being.



“Vikasdoot Puraskar” – Best Youth Group Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Membership Strength
- Agenda of the meetings
- Innovative activities undertaken
- Frequency of meetings
- Registration of the group
- Participation in village development



Maji Vidyarthi Sangh organised a programme to felicitate the successful students of 10th and 12th std.



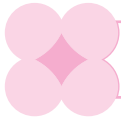
The Village Knowledge Centre supported by Maji Vidyarthi Sangh.

Winner Group : Maji Vidyarthi Sangh

Youth of the villages can be a driving force for village development. The difference that they can bring to villages is clearly seen in the villages Alyani, Vitthalgaon and Devlichapada. These are the villages from where the youth have formed an association called “*Maji Vidyarthi Sangh*” (MVS). Formed in 2008, the group has become a focal point of activities related to health, sanitation, education, and women empowerment in these villages.

Maji Vidyarthi Sangh was the joint winner in last year's AGAS campaign. The group was eagerly waiting to participate in the campaign this year and was determined to get the award under Vikasdoot Puraskar category. They had already identified issues they wanted to work on.

Quality of education in the villages was the area of work chosen by them. They started organizing Parent-Teachers Meetings in order to increase the involvement of the parents in



Story of Change

education of their children. By discussing performance of Gaon Shikshan Samiti and Gram Panchayat in Parent-Teachers Meetings, they compelled these two institutions to perform better.

They felicitated the successful students of 10th and 12th standards in a ceremony and invited resource persons several times to guide the students appearing in scholarship exams. Donating notebooks and study material was also one of their activities. All this resulted in attracting overall attention of people towards the quality of education and inspired students to study better.

The group helped Gaon Shikshan Samiti and the school teachers to prepare a new proposal for construction of two rooms in the school building under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Earlier the proposal was sanctioned but work did not start within stipulated time and funds had to be surrendered. This time MVS made sure that the village politics did not kill the project. The proposal is sanctioned and work is almost complete. The group has also motivated SHGs of the villages to contribute towards the village issues. They have helped women form new groups and get them basic training in maintaining it.

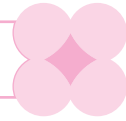
"Adarsh Samiti Puraskar" – Ideal Committee Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Membership
- Attendance in meetings
- Work done
- Responsibilities taken up and fulfilled
- Participation in village development
- Use of funds received



PF team discussed the issues under campaign with the people of Khor.



Winner Village : Khor

Situated about 45 km from Shahapur, Khor is a purely tribal village. It is connected to the nearest village Piwali, about 5 km from Khor, by a pucca road but lacks any means of transport to reach Piwali. Piwali is where people of Khor can access medical facilities at a Mobile Health Unit under government health system. People of Khor work as labourers for contractors working for government departments. Some villagers have their own land which they cultivate. Water is scarce, both for irrigation as well as for drinking and daily use.

Mr. Kaluram Shende, the Upsarpanch, however, is a natural leader. He commands respect of his villagers as well as any external agency that comes in contact with the village. He takes all villagers together to do their best that can be done in the situation. He along with the others has achieved a lot – many government schemes, support from corporates and NGOs and participation of people in village work.

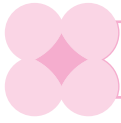
Jury had no difficulty selecting the village for the award in the Ideal Committee category when they came to know about Kaluram Shende and his work. He has formed a committee called “Gaon Vikas Samiti” in 2007. The objectives were to come together and discuss common issues and find solutions. When AGAS campaign was explained to people of Khor, they intuitively chose the subject of Ideal Committee. The Samiti’s work intensified during campaign. They took up cleanliness drives in the village and used the money contributed by members for treatment of a villager in Mumbai. They purchased utility items like chairs, big utensils etc. for people to be used in weddings or other functions. The samiti meets regularly and discusses issues before them. Women are an essential part of the committee.

Kaluram Shende expressed his views as – “We collect money from each villager every month and use it for the village. Last month one of the villager had to be taken to hospital in Mumbai. The Samiti used the money for his treatment. Khor is not easily accessible village. PF has taken the trouble to visit our village and work with us.”

“Adarsh Gaon Puraskar” – Ideal village Award

Evaluation Criteria :

- Best efforts put in by all the stakeholders in all the selected subjects
- Visible results that bring marked improvement in one or more areas



Story of Change



Jury members take a look at the games and exercises for the children of anganwadi.



Ms. Vibha, a jury member interacts with the women of Mohili.

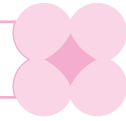
Winner Village : Mohili

Mohili village is well connected to Aghai Primary Health Centre as well as the sub-centre at Taharpur. People of different castes live together harmoniously and have agriculture, fishing and odd jobs in Thane and Mumbai as their occupation. It had opted to participate in two categories – Adarsh Anganwadi and Hagandari Mukh Gaon. Last year they had missed the award for Adarsh Anganwadi narrowly. This year they were determined to put in their best. They were rewarded by the jury beyond their expectations. They got the campaign's highest award – Adarsh Gaon Puraskar.

Early in the campaign they selected the issues carefully, the ones that will make their village a better place. Since the women are active, enthusiastic and determined, they did not have much difficulty convincing people to build toilets, the few who had not. They gathered all the women in regularly cleaning the public places like roads, open spaces, area around wells as well as anganwadi, school and Panchayat office. They could convince the Gram Sevak and Upsarpanch to support them in all their activities. The ANM, Pada Worker and other Gram Panchayat members were included in the campaign.

Mrs. Mohini Ware, the Anganwadi Worker took up renovation and painting work along with the clearing up of area in front of the anganwadi. The toilet and wash basin for the children were renovated. The anganwadi Tai created new games for children and taught them how to make toys from newspaper. The sight of children engrossed playing with paper and taking pride in their creations left a memorable impression on one and all. The fact that despite her ill-health, Mohini Ware could garner support from all the stakeholders points to her commitment and dedication.

The jury members in both rounds unanimously adjudged Mohili village as the best in Hagandari Mukh Gaon and Adarsh Anganwadi categories. It was decided by the jury that the village be given the Ideal Village Award instead of two separate awards.



The Award Ceremony

February 2, 2010 – AMCHI team along with Mr. S. V. Sista, Executive Trustee waits for the Chief Guest of the award ceremony , Dr. R. V. Kadam, District Health Officer, Thane to arrive at the Panchayat Samiti Hall at Shahapur. Sangita has been warning for some days now that the capacity of the hall is insufficient for the villagers who would want to be part of the programme. All knew this but went ahead with the decision of holding the programme at the same venue as it is easily the most important place for the Shahapur taluka – most of the government offices are located in the same campus and every villager recognizes it as a symbol of action/decisions.



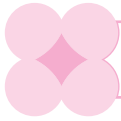
Executive Trustee of Population First Mr. S.V.Sista waiting for the District Health Officer to arrive at the award ceremony.



People at the award ceremony

Sangita's apprehensions proved right. Close to 400 people arrive in jeeps from different directions despite it being a working day. There is a commotion to move all the chairs out of the hall to accommodate more people. The seating arrangement is miraculously changed within minutes with the cooperation of villagers and help from special guests. The function starts and celebration is in the air.

The District Health Officer, Thane, Dr. R.V. Kadam, presided over the function whereas Mrs. Madhuri Kasture, Block Development Officer, Shahapur, Dr. M.D. Nagare, Taluka Health Officer, Dr. Nichat, Medical Officer, Dr. Madhav Waghmare, Medical Officer, Kasara PHC, Mr. M. M. Indikar, Extension Officer, District Health Office, Thane Mr. Sarode, Extension Officer, Panchayat Samiti Shahapur were present as Special Guests at the



Story of Change

function. More than 350 women and men were present at the ceremony who were as enthusiastic as the PF team. Their excitement at winning the award was visible on their faces and so was their determination to work better in the next campaign. Some of the responses of people present at the programme –

Dr. G.P. Nichat, Medical Officer, PHU, Dhakne who was present as a Special Guest at the function said,

“I congratulate the team of Population First and Mr. Sista who have involved women, youth, men in the village development who will eventually become part of the mainstream development.”

Dr. M. D. Nagare, Taluka Medical Officer, Shahapur who was present as a Special Guest at the award ceremony said,

“... Population First's work has been able to create an atmosphere of positive change related to health issues in Shahapur.... Health department will support the organization in all its endeavours in future.”

Dehne village was the joint winner in Adarsh Shala Puraskar. Mr. Abdul Shaikh, Principal said,

“We took lot of steps to improve our school after participating in the campaign. School-teachers and villagers together have won the award. In the next campaign, we will make Dehne village “Open-defecation Free” village.”

The gathering included people who have won awards as well as those who have not. Those who won shared their joy with others. Those who did not win wanted to know how the winner villages had worked in the campaign. Some groups declared the subjects they would be selecting in the next campaign openly while some informed us quietly of their resolve to win the award in a particular category. Some told us that they would work harder the next year. Amcha Gaon, Amchi Shaan campaign is a given for the people!

The function had its share of problems - some people did not get food. Even the extra order got finished and some had to contend with standing outside the hall because there was no space left to sit inside. No one complained. Members of AMCHI team heard from many that they wanted to get more people from their village.

People valued the programme so much that they kept aside their work for the day, invested money and time in participating. They thought the investment was worth the experience. For the PF team, the excitement on people's faces and their eagerness to join the campaign once again was proof enough that the campaign was a success.

Dr. R. V. Kadam, District Health Officer, Thane, who was the Chief Guest of the ceremony, said,

"...after watching the spontaneous response of the women present at the programme, I could understand how well the campaign was conducted at field level. ... Women could express their views well while receiving awards. Encouraging villages to work better using the idea of awards by Population First is commendable."



Dr. R. V. Kadam addressing the audience at the award ceremony



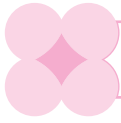
People at the award ceremony



Alyani village receives award for Swastha Mule.



Dehna School gets the award of Ideal School from Mr. Indikar, Extension Officer, District Health Department.



Story of Change



Mr. Dashrath Vishe, Principal of Kanva school getting award of Ideal School.



Mrs. Surekha Tai Dongre expressing her joy getting Janani Suraksha Puraskar for Gegaon.



People of Khor display their award of Ideal Committee. Seen with Mr. Sista and Fazal



Anganwadi Tai of Mohili Mohini Ware expressing her views at the award ceremony



Ravindra Walimbe of Maji Vidyarthi Sangh (winner of Vikasdoot Puraskar) at the award ceremony.



People of Mohili pose with their award of Ideal Village.



Women of Piwali village show their citation for Strengthening of Sub-centre.



Women of Vanita Mahila Mandal with their trophies for Stree Shakti Puraskar and Best Anganwadi.



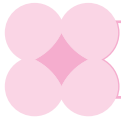
Women of Taharpur win the award for Hagadari Mukh Gaon.



Dr.R.V.Kadam giving away the award for Swachha Gaon, Sundar Gaon to Tembhurli village



Anganwadi Tai of Vachkole, Mrs. Kanta Bhare, receiving award for Best Anganwadi from Block Development Officer, Mrs. Madhuri Kasture.



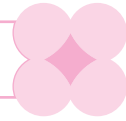
Way Ahead

Barku Bhoir of Belavali village, which had participated but had not won any prize, said, "We could not win because we did not put in enough efforts. Next time we will work on the issues of cleanliness and open-defecation free village. We will start work from now itself."

Koshimbde village did not take part in the campaign. A woman, who was present at the prize distribution ceremony from Koshimbde, said, "We lacked unity among women and men. Next year we will come together and work in the campaign."

AMCHI team is in two minds whether the campaign should be conducted for a third time. On one hand the project is in its end phase and lacks the funds for more activities. On the other hand, people expect the campaign to be conducted again. Villages that did not participate want to work under it and win awards.

The objective of the campaign was to bring together people around the developmental issues of the village and motivate them to work on those systematically. Many villages have reached the stage that they will continue working on these issues irrespective of the campaign. However, there are still some villages which need a push in the form of the campaign.



Annexure 1

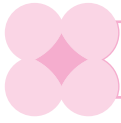
AMCHI Core Team

- Ms. Meenal Gandhe – Programme Manager
- Ms. Sangita Tribhuvan – Coordinator
- Mr. Fazal Pathan – Field Officer

AMCHI Support Team

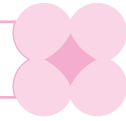
- Mr. Dilip More – Centre Coordinator, Village Knowledge Centre, Vitthalgaon and Village Coordinator Nandgaon Sub-centre
- Mr. Vikas Vekhande – Village Coordinator, Apta and Tembhurli Sub-centre
- Ms. Nisha Walimbe – Village Coordinator, Alyani Sub-centre
- Ms. Vishakha Nipurte – Village Coordinator, Piwali Sub-centre
- Ms. Lata Varkute – Village Coordinator, Dehna Sub-centre

AMCHI core team reports to Dr. A. L. Sharada, Programme Director, Population First



List of Winner Villages

Sr. No.	Village	Award	Name of the Recipient	Prize Amount (Rs.)
1	Tembhurli	Swachha Gaon, Sunder Gaon (Clean & beautiful Village)	Mrs. Sadhana Jagannath Chaudhary	5000
2	Newra	Adrash Anganwadi (Ideal Anganwadi)	Mrs. Sheela Shelavale	2500
3	Vachkole	Adrash Anganwadi (Ideal Anganwadi)	Mrs. Kanta Rajaram Bhere	2500
4	Alyani	Swastha Mule (Healthy Children)	Mrs. Kamal Damodar Vishe	5000
5	Khor	Adarsh Samiti (Ideal Committee)	Mr. Kaluram Shende	5000
6	Dehne	Adarsh Shala (Ideal School)	Mr. Abdul Shaikh	2500
7	Kanve	Adarsh Shala (Ideal School)	Mr. Dashrath Vitthal Vishe	2500
8	Mohili	Adarsh Gaon (Ideal Village)	Mrs. Mohini Ware	10000
9	Vitthalgaon	Swajaldhara (Safe Drinking Water)	Mrs. Shobha Ghodvinde	5000
10	Piwali	Upkendra Balkatikan (Strengthening of Sub-centre)	Mrs. Jyoti Gharat	5000
11	Taharpur	Hagandari Mukta Gaon (Open Defecation-free Village)	Mrs. Shashikala Nipurte	5000
12	Bhavsas	Stree Shakti (Best Women's Group)	Mrs. Pushpa Godhade	2500
13	Newra	Stree Shakti (Best Women's Group)	Mrs. Surekha Shelavale	2500
14	Gegaon	Janani Suraksha (Safe Motherhood)	Mrs. Surekha Dongre	5000
15	Alyani	Vikasdoot (Best Youth Group)	Mr. Suresh Walimbe	5000



Annexure 3

The external jury members :

- Ms. Lidwin Dias, Faculty Member, College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan
- Ms. Surekha Pednekar, Programme Assistant, Don Bosco Development Society
- Mr. Vilas Parave, Coordinator, Karm
- Dr. G. P. Nichat, Medical Officer, PHU, Dhakne
- Mrs. Suvrata Gharge, Manager, ER & D, Mahindra Tractors
- Ms. Rekha Talmaki, Faculty Member, SNDT Women's University
- Ms. Pradnya Shinde, Health Specialist, Ambuja Cement Foundation
- Ms. Vibha, Freelance Consultant, Delhi
- Ms. Shraddha Shringarpure, Coordinator, AROEHAN, Mokhada, Thane

The internal jury (PF team) members :

- Dr. A. L. Sharada
- Ms. Nivedita Sinha
- Ms. Kalpana Gaikwad
- Ms. Mercy Barla
- Mr. Bhairav Desai
- Ms. Bhavika Jain



Population First

Improved communication skills of grassroots service providers, awareness about available services and increased access impacts the quality of health services for women, children and adolescents. Initiating activities that improve the sanitation and hygiene practice also add to a healthier population.

Population First has been working in the area of preventive and promotive health care in families and communities in Shahapur block of Thane district for the past three years through its project, "Action for Mobilizing Community Health Initiatives (AMCHI).

AMCHI is a field based primary health care project aimed at:

- Mobilizing communities to encourage preventive and promotive health care in families and communities,
- Create demand for quality services at the community level, and
- Strengthen the communication skills of the service providers and reinforce their role as change agents.

Trustees : Keshub Mahindra (Chairman), Rajashree Birla, Jamshyd Godrej, J. J. Irani, Urvi Piramal, Deepak Parekh, M.S. Swaminathan, S.V.Sista (Executive Trustee)

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Donations to Population First are exempt from Income Tax under 80 (G) of IT Act.

Our websites : "www.populationfirst.org", www.creative-excellence.org", www.laadli.org .

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