

Trust, emergent learning and building of communities of practice: Lessons we can draw from the case of drought proofing in Maharashtra, India

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Background

- Maharashtra, India
- Drought in 2012
- Drought in 2013

- Average rainfall was 50% less than usual



Drought of 2013

Rest of Drought affected parts of Maharashtra

7075 villages receive water from 2280 tankers daily for survival.

Villages around Hiwre Bazaar were receiving water through tankers.

Fodder camps opened by the government

Village: Hiwre Bazaar, Ahmednagar

- Village is green, water and fodder is available

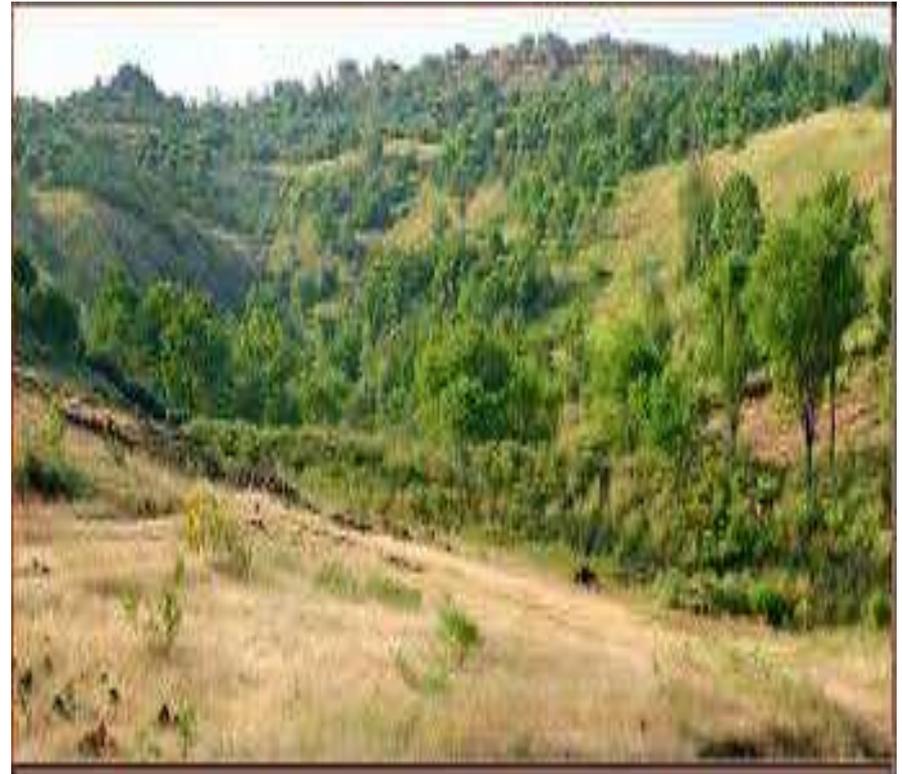


Changed context

- Hiwre Bazaar before 1994



- Hiwre Bazaar in 2013



Question: How did this change take place?

Conceptual framing of question

- Social resilience and ecological resilience are inter-dependent upon each-other in any given eco-system
- Disturbances in either can affect the other negatively
- (Adger, 2000; Blakie et al 1987, Gadgil et al 1988, Gadgil and Guha 1992; Jodha, 1988)
- Examples:
- Indian Forest Act, 1927;
- National Forest Policy 1952

Research Question

Knowledge gap

- Yet very little is understood about the social processes under which ecological and livelihoods *revival* takes place
- What social processes have led to the ecological regeneration in Hiwre Bazaar (HB)?
- Field work: 2013, 2014
- Village profile:
 - No of HH: 236
 - Multi-caste
 - Village HH: landless (11%), < 2 hec (34%); < 4% (30%); >4 (26%)

Finding 1: Formations of new social institutions and rules of behaviour to harness village unity

- Voluntary labour for village work: Shramdaan (principle: equalising everyone; and ownership of work)
- Liquor drinking within village stopped (principle: Social cohesion)
- All fights settled internally within village (principle: Social cohesion responsibility is individual and collective)
- Contributions to repair of temples (Principle:social cohesion)
- Cutting of trees and building bore wells to exploit ground water for agriculture: not allowed (Principle: Respect Nature and Collective natural resource)
- Election of Panchayat head by consensus (Principle: avoid adversarial and divisive factionled electoral politics)

Finding 2: “Linking environmental question with that of hunger”: Undertaking ecosystem based livelihood and resource planning to lead to positive ecological changes

- Watershed development
- Water budgeting and cropping patterns
- Alternative livelihoods to landless/marginal farmers
- Need based infrastructure built: Water pipelines to every house; Total sanitation and building of toilets; Child care centres, Schools, Health centres revitalised in village
- Retention of ground water
- Drinking water available in all seasons
- Fodder and fuel wood also available
- Small animals now found in the village forests

Finding 3: Harnessing Gramsabha (village) leadership in ways that links authority with Trust

- Transparency about use of funds in the village
- Gram sabha work promotes schemes which further collective rather than individual needs (as it leads to competition and factionalism amongst scarce government schemes)

“When we are transparent, then village follows. There are always some people who oppose for sake of opposing, but if you ensure transparency, then people dont listen to them..... Change does not take place through money. You can develop infrastructure, but who will use it if not good? Who will maintain it? If you develop quality infra-structure, then people will use and maintain it. For example, when the dam is built without use of proper cement, due to corruption, then water will not come and flow. Then people will say, what is the use of this? They will not cooperate. But when they see that what is built is of use to them, then people follow. People plant trees, when they know that they will get fodder out of it. Then they will save the trees”.

Finding 4: Enabling a process based emergent learning that furthers leadership and trust

- “As we did work, we had problems. As we had problems, we went around discussing them. Because of discussion, people developed confidence that things are happening. People started trusting the leadership. Trust between people and leadership is very important. They started believing that what is happening is of use to them. Unfortunately, in many places people are given what they don't need. That is of no use”.

Finding 5: Replication of this success needs development of communities of practice as a positive social movement

- Initiatives are on to undertake develop new villages along similar lines
- Exposure visits to HB
- Motivational work
- Awareness about how social change and ecological changes go together
- Social cohesion work (furthering principles of unity)

Overall conclusions

- Social learning strategies that emphasise the links between social and ecological change leads to ecological revival.
- Building of new social institutions of trust through emergent learning is vital for sustainability.
- Conscious strategies of building communities of practice as a positive social movement can lead to drought proofing or more generally DRR.

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- Thank you...

Annex 1: change in poverty and ecological well being status of HB

	Pre-watershed (1991)	Today ^{\$} (2011)
No. of families	180	236
No. of BPL families	168	3
No. of landless families	22	6
Annual per capita income (Rs.)	832	30,000
Medical facilities	None	PHC [#]
Education facilities (Std.)	Upto IV	Upto X
Literacy (%)	30	95
Groundwater level* (feet)	90-120	15-40
Area under irrigation (ha)	125	650
Area under summer irrigation (ha)	1-2	80
Cropping intensity (%)	94	164
No. of dug wells	97	284
Area under drip irrigation (ha)	0	250
No. of milk producing cattle	<100	650
Milk production (litres per day)	150	3500
Fodder availability (tonnes)	1500	6000
Main workers ^ (as % of total pop)	42%	51%
Main workers in cultivation (%)	76%	76%
Main workers as agri labourers (%)	19%	10%