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AMAZING LIFE IN VILLAGES AND SUSTAINABILITY



SAI BHASKAR REDDY NAKKA

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Amazing Life in Villages and
Sustainability

First published by Council for Green Revolution 2019

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Published by: Council for Green Revolution (CGR): # 1448, Street No.17, Banjara Green Colony, Road No.12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034, Telangana, India. Email: contact@cgrindia.org, Website: <http://cgrindia.org>, Mobile: 9676957000

First edition

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To the people living in the Villages

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Preface

Traditional Villages are very rare to be seen. This is the watermark in history, where the urban population exceeded the rural population. Villages are evolving into towns and cities. The characteristics of the villages are being lost.

This book 'Amazing Life in Villages and Sustainability' written by Dr Sai Bhaskar Reddy Nakka brings various perspectives of the villages. In this book, the glimpses of the villages - past life, present situation and future adaptation options are presented. The sustainability and continuity of villages are shared here by the author. The book is also a historic document on how the villages existed and transformed especially in the last four decades. It covers the values, beliefs, gender, systems and practices in the villages.

The author is having a broad understanding of the villages. He is a keen observer and contributed to the sustainable development of the villages. He has traveled extensively and visited more than ten thousand villages in parts of India and other developing countries. The narration style and the language- including the usage of words specific to Telangana region - makes it most interesting. There is freedom in the expression. A book for everyone interested to know about the villages.

Village visit

I have so many memories of the time spent in the villages since childhood. I was born in Regadi Mamidipally village, it is the native place of my mother located about Seventy-five kilometres from Hyderabad. Assisted by a *Mantrasani* (midwife), was born in the night. It was December month and it was so cool due to winter. To keep me warm in the night, my grandmother, warmed me by the heat of a biomass stove in the kitchen. In those days, the tradition was that daughters always delivered their babies at the mother's place. So, the birthplace was mostly the place of ones mother's home. In those days, for technical reasons, one cannot claim the original birthplace but need to be associated with the native village or the place of education for all purposes in life.

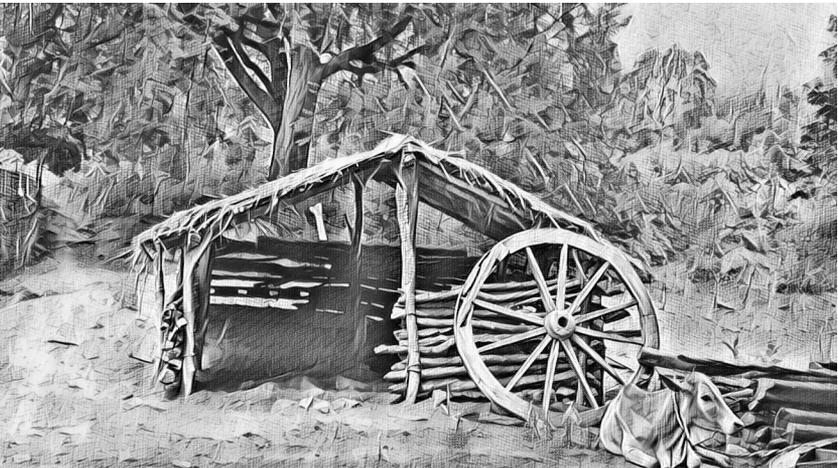
In the 1970s and 1980s, there were very a few transportation's means to go to my mother's village. It was remote in those days. To reach the village, after getting down a bus, we used to walk about Ten kilometres - all the way need to walk from Koukuntla gate, via Chanugomla village and have to cross Sangamla Vagu (a stream) on the way. It was nice to drink some fresh water from the stream. This Regadi Mamidipally village had black cotton soils predominantly, therefore it got the prefix Regadi, it means Black Soil. During the rainy season, it was almost impossible to walk with chappals as the black cotton soil holds the feet and slippers tightly. The Shahbad chappals made up of leather and used tyre

piece as the sole were much stronger.

Especially after reaching the village, it was even more difficult to walk due to the dry thorny branches of *Nalla Thumma* (*Acacia nilotica* plant species) which is used for fencing on either side of the dirt road to protect the fields from domestic animals. Often, the scattered thorns of these branches pierced the wet-feet without any mercy. It was challenging to identify some of the thorns which mixed with the black damp mud and many times they pierced my feet. The embedded thorns were often removed with the help of someone using a safety-pin after rubbing the place with some saliva.

After reaching the village, the guests would be directed to a *Jarat* for washing the feet - it is an open place used for washing and bathing in the centre of the house.

I have visited more than 10,000 villages in different parts of India. Each village has its own charm and identity.



A scene on the way to a village

Smell of manure

In the past, one could easily guess that one has reached a village habitation. At first, one would see and smell the Farm Yard Manure from the *Pentalu* or farmyard manure compost pits located on either side of the road leading to the habitation. Some people also had a *Doddi* near the habitations. *Doddi* is an enclosed place with vegetative fencing as a boundary. The domestic animals such as cattle were kept here and the dry grass used as fodder for them was also stored in heaps. The farmyard manure pits are also located within the premises of a *Doddi*. The waste material collected from a house after sweeping also ended up in the farmyard manure pits. Sometimes the family members also used the place as an open toilet in turns. It was well protected and had some privacy especially for women.

Annually the Farm Yard Manure was taken from the compost pits and spread in the fields in the peak summer, that is done before the arrival of monsoon rains. Often the manure was dug using a *Dante* (a wooden scrapper) and collected in the vine baskets, it was lifted onto the Bullock carts and spread in their respective fields. The well-matured compost appeared in the colour of coffee and always smelled very good. The smell of compost is the smell of the happy microbial life living in the soil. Probably these close observations later in my life helped me to work on biochar compost.



The smell of compost is the smell of mother womb

Water point

The village well is another place for the interaction and socialisation for women every day, especially during the early mornings and evenings. The wells were located in the centre of the habitations. There is always commotion of women drawing water from the well. The *Girikha-chappudu* (noise of the pulley wheel) and the splashing sound of the water while being drawn, mixed with the chatting sounds of the women.

It was a kind of relief for women, after attending the daily chorus. Similarly, another place for gossip is on the banks of a stream and ponds, where women also collected the water, washed clothes and took bath. With the groundwater depletion, almost all the open wells and surface water bodies are dry in the villages. This water is accessible through bore-wells fitted with the hand-pumps or the water is supplied through pipes. Such interaction places for women is a rare thing.

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