



## ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION THROUGH THE STRATEGIES OF THE MASS EDUCATION AND CONSTANT RESEARCH. (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AFARM)

**Vidya Avachat, Ph.D.**

*Assoc Prof & Head, Dept of Sociology, S. P. College, Pune.*

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### Preamble

The exploitation of natural resources to fulfil human desires has ultimately resulted in nature taking revenge in the form of several global environmental crises. The depleting resources coupled with environmental imbalance are now becoming a serious cause of concern for survival of this planet. In this situation, there is a need to develop an environment conservation approach through various strategies and programme. The awareness about environmental problems is growing worldwide and there is now a global concern about the preservation of natural resources. Thus, mass education and constant research strategies to ecologically sustainable development requires the involvement of many social institutions. Some of these institutions are government agencies, NGO's, panchayats, research and development agencies etc.

The aim of the paper is to understand the environment conservation strategies of NGO's and to determine the utility and effectiveness of their activity. Mass Environmental education, Laws, Adaptive management, Innovation, substitution, Recycling, constant research, these Strategies can be adopted in Environmental conservation. But in this paper researcher focused only on the two types of strategies i.e., mass education and constant research.

In Pune district there are several NGO's working in this field but the focus of the study on one NGOs i.e., AFARM (Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra).

**Objectives of the Study:** 1) To Study the profile of AFARM

2) To study the strategies and activities of AFARM in the field of environment conservation.

3) To study the impact of AFARM' s activity on participant.

**Methodology:** - The present paper is based on both the primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data include field observations, informal discussions with the social workers and office bearers of the organization, whereas the secondary sources of data include annual reports, newspaper articles etc.

The Paper opens with a discussion of fundamental concepts. In the next part, a brief profile and evolution of NGO is also described. After presenting briefly the nature of activities, expansion and diversification of this NGO, the researcher has attempted analysis of the impact of these activities. The paper will throw light on the qualitative and quantitative changes because of the activity of the NGO.

**Types of strategies for environment conservation:** The strategies of non-Governmental organizations regarding environment conservation are very important. Hence researcher studied the strategies of NGOs. Most of the NGOs followed the various strategies such as, mass education, law, adaptation management, innovation, substitution, recycling, constant research etc.

- 1) Environmental Education: Creating public awareness is an important step towards pollution control. Till the individual is unable to understand his role and importance of environment he will not be able to appreciate any efforts towards conservation and pollution control. Contribution from every individual can make a huge difference as in case of generating garbage or plastic wastes in cities.
- 2) Constant research to reduce the consumption of the resources or for the better utilization of limited resources is another method of conservation. Industrialized nations of the west are spending huge sums of money on research to find out alternative preferably renewable or inexhaustible source of energy.

**AFARM:** (Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra is an association of voluntary organization working in the field of Rural Development. )

**Historical development of AFARM:** The AFARM was informally started in 1967 with the joint efforts of seven missionary organizations and was registered as Trust and Society in 1969. Prior to 1967, Missionary Organizations were engaged in making available the drinking water to the rural communities who were facing scarcity of drinking water. The independent work of the missionaries in the said programme later on aroused the need of coordinating organization. Therefore, seven Missionaries came together and informally started coordinating the programme of supplying drinking water to the rural communities as Maharashtra Regional

Water Resource Development Group'. Later on, it was registered as "Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra" (AFARM) on 18 November 1969. The seven Missionary Organizations that formed AFARM. Being an Apex Organization, AFARM has a wide network spread all over the state. Presently more than 250 NGOs are members of AFARM Network. It is one of the first voluntary organizations to operate as a forum for other voluntary organizations. It has work at local, and state and national level. It works rural as well as in the urban level.

AFARM is a member of recognized national organizations namely Creditability Alliance, Confederation of NGOs in Rural India, Voluntary Agency Network India, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, Community Enterprise Forum International. AFARM is actively contributing its experience and learning to strengthen these networks. Among the International Development Partners/Organizations, AFARM has worked in the programmes supported by agencies like Christian Aid, UNICEF, MISSORIOR, DFID, AWO International, KFW, EU, World Bank, etc.

**Objectives of the AFARM:** AFARM has established with to strengthen the efforts of VOs for Natural Resource and Human resource development, socio economic development and community development amongst poor and marginalized communities.

A study of the objectives revealed that AFARM has wanted to develop, train strong organizations and social workers for working the issues of rural development that is useful for protection and development of nature. And also to develop innovative sustainable technologies for integrated rural development and propagate the same amongst the similar minded stakeholders. (People, NGOs, Government, and CBOs and PIs). Hence AFARM want to work as a master, as a guide for the other organizations in the area of nature conservation.

#### **Financial status of organizations.**

Studies of the financial status of the organization researcher collect the information regarding their funds. The sources of own funds include membership, fees of training courses and selling their own publications and developmental products. These funds are 38% of the annual income.

AFARM's external sources of income is various government grants which 29% to their annual income. Donations from various national/ international and social/ personal agencies, which is 33% to the annual income. This donation is in the form of award, books and sponsorships of any programme.

The study shows that percentage of Government grants (29%) is little less than own funds and Sponsors grand. However, the contribution of internal source (own funds) is less than external funds.(Government grants +Sponsors grants).It shows that AFARM is finically dependent on other sources.

Study shows that AFARM has follows Mass education, and constant research Strategies for environment conservation. AFARM has organized various education activities for NGO and for Gov Body. Through this, stratagem AFARM give information regarding various environmental issues.

### **Activities regarding environment conservation.**

Study shows that for the water conservation AFARM gives the priorities for the investigation, supply of safe drinking water and analysis of water. To this objective AFARM has developed Jalwad and Sholapur model hand pumps. This development won acclaim from multi-lateral agencies such as UNICEF.

AFARM has completed the drilling of more than 6200 bore wells and installation of hand pumps. More than 5000 ground water investigations were completed in Maharashtra, Goa Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh States along with Vos and individuals especially for drinking water purpose.

AFARM Participated in technology mission for drinking water and conducted drinking water awareness and environmental sanitation programme AFARM also analysed 450 water samples.

AFARM Played a crucial role in designing the framework of project implementation. Apart from watershed development (WSD), AFARM also planning and designing projects related to Rain water Harvesting, Agriculture Development; Lift Irrigation, Drinking Water supply etc.

Hence for environment conservation AFARM has focus on watershed development programme including developments of hand pumps, investigation of ground water, analysis of water, planning and designing projects related to Rain water Harvesting, Agriculture Development, Lift Irrigation, etc. To fulfil this purpose, which is an objective of AFRAM, conducted workshop, training programme, survey studies involve in policy making and designing.

Soil conservation. More than 1200 soil samples were analysed and guidance provided to Vos and farmers for necessary improvements in fertility status and cropping pattern.

The Programmes based on natural resource management and sustainable agriculture is being taken up for the dalits, tribal and rain fed marginal farmers from stress prone ecologies. The

main activities of the said programme are in situ moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, organic farming demonstrations including integrated pest management, enhancement of soil quality through green Manuring, vermin composting and adoption of alternative land use for converting non-productive marginalized land in to better productive asset.

AFARM took up the programme of instituting of the models and demonstrations with regard to organic farming at Marathwada Regional centre for the farmers, activist, agronomist, Vos etc. Technical guidance and assistance in field of procuring outlets for the organic farming products is done by AFARM.

Hence, for the soil conservation techniques AFARM has given information of green Manuring, vermin composting and adoption of alternative land use method, and organic farming to hold the soil in place and maintaining soil fertility, which is soil conservation. AFARM analyses soil for converting non-productive marginalized land in to better productive asset. These prove that AFARM is working in the area of soil conservation.

Plantation.

AFARM is promoting Kitchen Garden Programme through NGOs in Maharashtra. In year, 2007-2008 more than 4300 families are supported through 16 NGOs for cultivation of twelve vegetable varieties. This endeavor helped to improve health condition of women and children as tribal and drought proven areas families could get nutritious vegetables to eat at least for some months in the year.

Hence through promoting Kitchen Garden Programme AFARM has provide strengthen for the other NGO. This efforts of AFARM fulfilled the objective to develop natural and human resources. Study shows that through this activity AFARM not only success in improve the plantation but socio-economic development and community development amongst poor and marginalized communities.

Study shows that for the water and soil conservation AFRM used constant research strategy through developed Jalwad and Sholapur model hand pumps, analysed 450 water samples and promote kitchen Garden programme .

### **Mass Education Activities:**

#### **Training programmes:**

AFARM has its own well-equipped Training Centers at Pune and Latur with audio visual and residential Facilities and demonstrations on Organic agriculture, rainwater harvesting etc. The training centre facilities are availed to various organizations including NGOs, Government

department corporate agencies and education institutions for their trainings, workshops and other activities.

AFRAM has also developed the -Modules of different methods of roof top rainwater harvesting and organic farming at AFARM training centre.

AFARM conducts short as well as long duration training courses on variety of subjects for capacity building of NGOs, CSOs CBO's, Government. officials engaged in Rural Development.

Major trainings/ courses conducted by AFARM such as Hand pump Installation, Repairs and Maintenance (3 to 5 Days), Agriculture Management, Nursery Raisig,and Horticulture Mgt (3 to 5 Days), Watershed Awareness Camps (1 Day,1000) , Training on Integrated Watershed Management(1 - 1.5 Months), Role and Scope for Women in Watershed Development (1 Month), Specialized Training on Watershed Development (3 to 7 Days), Diploma Gramsudhar, Watershed Development & Leadership Development(1 Year) ,Participatory Natural Resource Management (30 days) Diploma in Participatory Rural Development(90 Days), Organic Farming (1-3 Days).Rural Water supply and Sanitation (Sector Reform and Jalswarajya)(4-5 Days), NGO Management (3-5 days), Training Programmes related to Women Empowerment (3 Days).etc.

A topic of the courses shows that all this are related to water conservation. Through this course, AFARM has given training for various techniques of watershed development. Hence, through this course participant aware about water management techniques also aware about how to conserve water. AFARM has work as a pool of internal and external resource persons for these training courses. Its institutional knowledge, publications, state-wide network, linkages and collaboration with Government departments and training infrastructure is the major strength for providing training services to interested stakeholders.

In this way In order to enhance beneficiaries' skill and bring about refinement in their work, the training programmes played a crucial role. It has resulted in innovative ways of information dissemination patterns reaching up to the beneficiary.

#### **Lecture series:**

The Lecture series on the socially relevant issues for the masses by the distinguished and eminent Personalities was started on the foundation day of AFARM.

Sustainable Development versus Exploitative Development (Shri. Sundarlal Bahuguna, (Senior Environmentalist) , Liberalization and Indian Agriculture. (Dr. Padmakar

Dubhashi Economics Expert), Employment Opportunities in Agriculture Sector (Shri. Aurn Firodiya Chairman, Kinetic Group), Future of Indian Agriculture ( Smt. Vandana Shiva,(Agriculture, Environment Expert and Social Worker),Farmers and Special Economic Zone Prof. N.D. Patil (Chairman, Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, Satara), Society, Culture and Environment Dr. Madhav Gadgil (Senior Scientist and Environmentalist) , Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security (Dr. Raja ram Deshmukh Director, Agricultural Sciences & Technology, Vasantdada Sugar Institute) ,Indian Agriculture in 21st Century Hon.Shri.Balasaheb Vikhe Patil (Former MLA, President Maharashtra Pani Parishad).

Some topics shows that AFARM has majority covered the issues of agricultural development. Study shows that through this lecture series AFRAM give emphasis on land development including productivity of land by eco-friendly methods. AFARMS soil, water conservative methods show that for environment conservation this NGO gives preference to rural development.

AFARM has prepared a booklet in local language containing the lectures delivered by these personalities. Hence, AFARM provide information and create awareness among the masses through these lecture series.

### **Forums:**

AFARM has promoted and hosted numbers of forums working for common cause. The forums have provided an opportunity to its members to share and learn from each other's experiences as well as built pressure group on identified issues

### **Library:**

AFARM has collection of more than 4000 books covering Variety of aspects of rural development and social development sector as well. Referential library service is available to any interested stakeholder with priority to AFARM member agencies. Apart from NGOs, many individuals, students, trainees, researchers and others are using this service.

### **Documentation center:**

AFARM documentation center has a selected collection of relevant news clipping, important Government Resolutions policies and reports, project proposals, study and evaluations reports. posters and photographs, periodicals, magazines, newsletters annual reports of various voluntary organizations.

### **Publications.** News bulletin

AFARM has regularly published an informative news bulletin (previously monthly and now a day's Quarterly) in local language. It has state wide subscribers with current circulation over 500 including CSOs, NGOs, CBOs, individuals and related government departments. The newsletter focuses on the news regarding the happenings in the voluntary sector along with articles on issues related to the sector by eminent personalities and studied editorials are the characteristic of the newsletter.

In addition, AFRAM Following are the some of the well-appreciated AFARM publications in water and agriculture sector

- 1) Manual on soil and water conservation
- 2) Handbook on participatory watershed management,
- 3) Booklet on Rain water Harvesting and Ground water Recharging
- 4) Booklet on Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture practices.
- 5) Nursery planning and Management,
- 6) Manual- participatory Rural Appraisal.
- 7) Pani probhodhika

Theme based video films on watershed Development

**Award by AFRAM:**

To encourage people for rural development AFARM has started award since 1997. Through this award AFARM appreciate issues of rural development and as well as work of social worker. AFARM has try to fulfil their objective to build the capacity of Vos and their staff / volunteers to enhance the effectiveness of voluntary sector and also to create a trained team of professional social workers for development of rural communities

**Impact of NGOs activity:**

One of the objectives of the present study is analyze impact of the Non -Governmental organization activity. For the study of impact of AFARM activities researcher has used secondary sources including various reports and for the Primary sources researcher collect information from participation who had done AFARMs courses and researchers observations also used

Department of Rural Development and water conservation, GOM (Government of Maharashtra) has recognized AFARM as mother NGO in Satara, Sangli, and Kolhapur and Dhule districts from 2002 for the watershed development programme sponsored by Ministry of Rural Development. As a mother NGO, AFARM provides various capacity building services



to both Governmental and Non- governmental project implementing agencies. These services mainly include training of various project functionaries, monitoring, community organization, community institution building and field services during implementation.

AFARM is playing a leadership role amongst the other Mother NGOs and provides moral support for their effective functioning.

Participant told that at the time of Training programme, members from AFARM gave information about the development activity. This helped to build a strong confidence amongst people and we give correct information regarding environment conservation issues. AFARM circulations of books, publications journals, reports also enhance our knowledge on environment conservation.

Study of impact of AFARMs activity concludes that this NGO is devotionally work in the area of environment through mass education, research and developing alternative techniques.

#### Participants Opinion.

Researcher contacted AFARMs beneficiaries at the time of Environmental conference which was organized by another NGO. This participant had attended a number of workshops, course on environment conservation issues organized by AFARM. All these participants are personnel of another NGO.

All these beneficiaries /participants are minimum graduates, between the age group 25 to 45 all are male. 30 % of them are working in rural area.

According more than 80 %, participant AFARMs courses were useful for the organized programme and run the activity regarding environmental activity. They also stated that this NGO is very good in their work.

- 1) Increased knowledge about soil and water environment conservation scheme.
- 2) Rural communities have to imbibe certain basic disciplines and change their attitude and behaviours with respect to natural resources.
- 3) According to the beneficiary in the first meeting, the leader of NGO changed the mindset of the beneficiary regarding various economic and environmental issues. All these things help to create an environmental awareness among the people.
- 4) Technical advice and knowledge is readily available through the NGO offices of the soil, water, and energy conservation service Hence researcher observed that Ignorance is now rarely an adequate excuse for the misuse of land, water and energy.

Hence NGOs activities are of help to the participant to adopt necessary environment conservation practices.

In this way, AFRAM is working as a national NGO in the field of environment conservation. With the funding of CAPART, Ministry of Rural Development and other funding agencies this NGO is working in the water and soil conservation activity. Mostly AFARM is giving training to various NGOs and government department in the field of environment conservation. AFARM being Apex institution / association provides common platform for different stakeholders including government to share views, ideas, experiences and leanings with respect to development, promotes issue based networks, built the pressure groups and promotes the campaigns to advocate pro -poor policies and programmes, disseminates the best practices in the sector, organize issue based workshops, seminars and consultations for the benefits of voluntary sector in general and its members in particulars. In this way apart from information dissemination, AFARMs newsletter, publications, lecture series, training centers build solidarity among the voluntary sector. It is also covers the work of advocacy and campaigning on issues concern to the sector and challenges before them. Hence, AFARM plays the role of link between Voluntary workers, members and associates.

Hence, AFARM plays the role of mediator, advocacy, and infirmaries through mass education and constant research activity for the environment conservation.

Study shows that in theoretical perspective/ framework of this NGO is Professional and developmental organization. This NGO is clear in the concept of development and are aware of the vision and mission of the clear objective and appropriate strategies. This NGO is working for people's development with people centered and process-oriented approach. Activities of AFARM show that this NGO is gender, class, and caste sensitive. This NGOS intervention is pivoted on capacity building of the people and hence this creates sustainable people's organizations, programmes and systems. Researcher observed that AFARM is success to bring positive impact of their activities through appropriate strategies and clear objectives.

. Hence, AFARM has created awareness through lectures, seminar, workshop, training, research among various people to build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations through Action Research. AFARM also functions as mediator in streamlining the project implementation, doing advocacy for environment conservation policy, as a committee member, of various government programme AFARM contributed in designing programme policies and frameworks and participated in monitoring of programme implementation.

Hence study of the activities, objectives, and impact of this NGO shows that National NGO AFARMS Role is as awareness creator, capacity builder, as a mediator between people and organization, advocator, designer and implementer of environmental policies, awareness Campaigner, Facilitator of various Government policies and programmes is remarkable for environment conservation.

### **Conclusion -**

The researcher has observed following importance of strategies from the study of AFARM

- 1) To educate the people at large and to create general awareness among masses organizing training camps/workshops, public meetings such type of activity are helpful.
- 2) In favour of conservation, NGOs can constitute a valuable source of information and could be responsible for collection, presentation of such Information on an ongoing basis to government agencies
- 3) NGO can play a pivotal role to make people's participation possible to protect and conserve the nature.
- 4) NGO can play important roles in involving the local population in imparting training as well as the demonstrating the viability of alternative technologies and interventions in local –socio cultural economical and ethnographical settings

In this way both strategies of NGO help people to discover the symptoms and the real causes of environmental problems. It also helps to increased sensitivity, knowledge, problems-solving and values clarification at every grade level. Village people have acquired awareness and knowledge; developed attitudes, skills, perspective regarding environmental issue through NGO's strategies. This environmental education helps to sustainable development.

**Findings:**-It was found that a major qualitative change has taken place in the life of the people. Hence for sustainable development mass education and constant research strategies is important in the area of environment conservation. The issue of environment conservation in India needs the appropriate strategies for environment conservation.

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