

20th Guardian Consult
ICA: Chicago

April 3-5, 1981

MAHARASHTRA AND THE FOUR SECTORS

I want to begin with some poetry by Rabindranath Tagore, one of the finest poets of India.

"Where the mind is without fear
And the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depths of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost
its way into the dreary desert sand of habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into
ever widening thought and action;
Into that freedom my Father let my country awake."

And then I want to read excerpts from two letters:

"We are going to participate in Chikhale-Parval Consult leaving on the 20th. All the business and activities of Maliwada are progressing well. Pen factory, chalk factory, chocolate factory, nutrition food factory, are all running well. People are busy and earning well.

The most important thing is that the looks of the village is transforming. Probably you will not even recognize it on your return! Almost 100 new homes have been built, electrification of private homes is going on and people are constructing toilets in their homes. 17 brick factories are underway, started by young men. The State Bank of India has financed 14 tractors.

Do you remember that ICA only showed us a way--do you remember the pains when nothing seemed to be happening?

It has been the greatest miracle--no village can be the same on the other side of Maliwada Human Development."

From the second letter:

"Last Sunday was the opening of the health center in Panvel block. We took five doctors and compounders out in the jeep. There were about 30 people from Sanjivini Trust plus representatives from Canara Bank, Chikhale leadership and some of our Chikhale staff. A team of Bombay doctors saw 86 patients. Dr. Shah has committed himself to going every Sunday and other Doctors will rotate.

The other exciting thing in Chikhale at the moment is that Canara Bank is really picking up the cluster. They have committed Rs. 35,000 for the Regional Consult, plus some of their staff will attend. One of the men will then continue to work full time with the cluster, I believe he's got expertise in Agriculture methods which would be good.

With the help of Britannia Industries the Bakery in Wardha Block will go well. The visit of Agriculture Minister who is a confidant of Mrs. Gandhi's to Khandala Block will inevitably bring about great breakthroughs.

How obvious when all sectors pour their passion the impossible can be achieved."

This evening I am very pleased and proud to share with you briefly an experience of a small group of people who have begun to give shape to the future of their communities. This story is based in the State of Maharashtra, India where five years ago a village development project called the Maliwada Human Development Project had begun. This story is also a message of hope in the midst of Hopelessness. Often people ask me what is going to happen to my country of 600 million people? How are they going to rise above the swamp of poverty, disease, illiteracy, cultural and religious rigidities? What is the government doing to solve these problems? A few years ago I was asking the same questions and complaining that nothing is ever going to happen. Today I stand here as one who has seen how the change towards a more dignified life can take place. And how the courage and determination of a few people from all walks of life--both urban and rural can effect a significant change.

Maliwada Human Development Project began as a single village project to demonstrate a sign of hope in a time when the whole area had been literally wiped out by a severe drought, even the subsistence level of economy was at a stand still. Basic necessities of life like drinking water, health services, transportation and employment were non-existent. Today the story is different. It gives me great pleasure to receive letters from Maliwada 12,000 miles away here in Chicago. Letters people write describing their own achievements.

In the last five years not only this one village has been the sign of hope to both village and city people but a spark has been enkindled in over 200 village communities and a few cities. The experience that I am sharing with you tonight is our humble effort to respond to just one need, human suffering. In my country India, that is in the form of economic poverty and social injustice. That is perhaps true with all the developing countries--but human suffering I am convinced is not confined to economic poverty alone. It shows itself in violence, crime, isolation, fear and exploitation in all societies everywhere.

With bold initiation of human development projects we found ourselves addressing the need of human suffering specially as it is seen in the wide gap between 15% of haves and 85% have-nots of this world.

We found ourselves asking the questions of what are the alternatives towards a more human existence? We found ourselves asking for models that will train and motivate people. Often answers did not come and when they did come they

were accompanied with pain, frustration and complications. With the determination of people from different walks of life, issues were resolved, solutions were found and alternatives produced.

One example is in the village of Chikhale Ambar Charkha.

In a nut-shell the achievements of the last five years or Phase I & II of Maharashtra Village Development Project are five:

1. Comprehensive single community development in 25 villages.
2. Taking that one community model at the county level to 232 villages.
3. Training models for developing of strong leadership.
4. The prototype of the National Service Corporation created.
5. The genuine participation of four sectors public, private, voluntary, local has been seen.

All this would have been a joke--if it was only done for the sake of Maharashtra and India. Today the villagers of India are very proud that their efforts are being shared by the people of Kenya, Indonesia, Philippines and Egypt etc. They are very proud that the training methods created in their villages are being used both in the developed and developing countries.

Today after five years Maharashtra Village Development Project is looking ahead at the third phase. This phase would demonstrate how effective and rapid development can take place simultaneously in a number of villages, as an impact on the entire nation and other nations.

I had a distinct privilege to participate in the launching of the Third and the most important phase of Maharashtra Village Development Program. It has to do with intensification and focusing our work in strategic locations. First, there will be continued work in 25 projects. They are stunning demonstrations of socio-economic change--demonstrations of transformed lives. Second, 15 villages will participate in Circle extensions. Ten neighboring villages within a radius of 10 miles will be involved in programatic activities. Third, in three places virtually adjoining three major regional cities of Maharashtra, namely Bombay, Puna and Nagpur, an experiment involving a block of 100 villages is being launched through Regional Consults. Fourth, a training program involving 20,000 young men and women, who would otherwise flee to the cities looking for employment opportunities, has been defined. Fifth, a Gram Sabha or town meeting in 3,600 villages is being planned.

The most exciting and at the same time frightening plan, though, is to stage an International Exposition of Rural Reconstruction with a theme of 'Spotlight on Success' in October of 1982. This Exposition is an eventful discontinuity. Three thousand delegates from 40 nations will be involved in a fifteen day long fair. The first part of the exposition will be a symposium which would provide opportunity for people from different nations, cultures, disciplines, and sectors to know one another. The symposium will take place in Bombay. From there delegates will go in teams for the next ten days around the country to visit selected Rural Development Projects started by Government agencies, Private corporations and Voluntary agencies. The focus will be on what it takes for the local sector, the village community to be self-reliant and self-sufficient when other sectors join in the effort of this incredible task. The exposition will serve as a kind of prism collecting a thousand rays of development- success and refracting them as one beam towards the future. It sounds like an audacious dream, does it not? Even an impossible dream.

But give a thought to this for a moment, a dream like this can indeed bring appropriate technology to the farmers, can give an immense boost to rural economy; see landless labourers start both agro-based and non agro-based industries. The mass influx of young men and women to the cities can be prevented with appropriate training in skills which would equip them to be self-sufficient. Functional literacy can be provided for those who have accepted illiteracy as a part of life. Preventive care, medical care in the form of training in hygiene and sanitation can be provided in order to prevent unnecessary deaths from malnutrition and other diseases. Do I have to go on with the list of benefits or objectives that can be realised?

What have been some of our learnings in the past five years?

Discovering our own strength in our own territory (strange and yet true). We made the decision to participate in this immense task and we felt strengthened. I call this an invisible strength although it was obvious that our colleagues, the villagers, friends in Government and business houses gave us the necessary support--the strength was invisible.

At times we have found ourselves utterly lonely. Any historical task is not easy. Forging a bend in history can be most painful and frustrating--especially in those moments when you do not see results of your involvement or when those around you do not seem to agree with plans. It can be most frustrating. It is precisely in these moments we discovered being put in a test-tube by destiny itself asking a simple question, "will you go on or give up?"

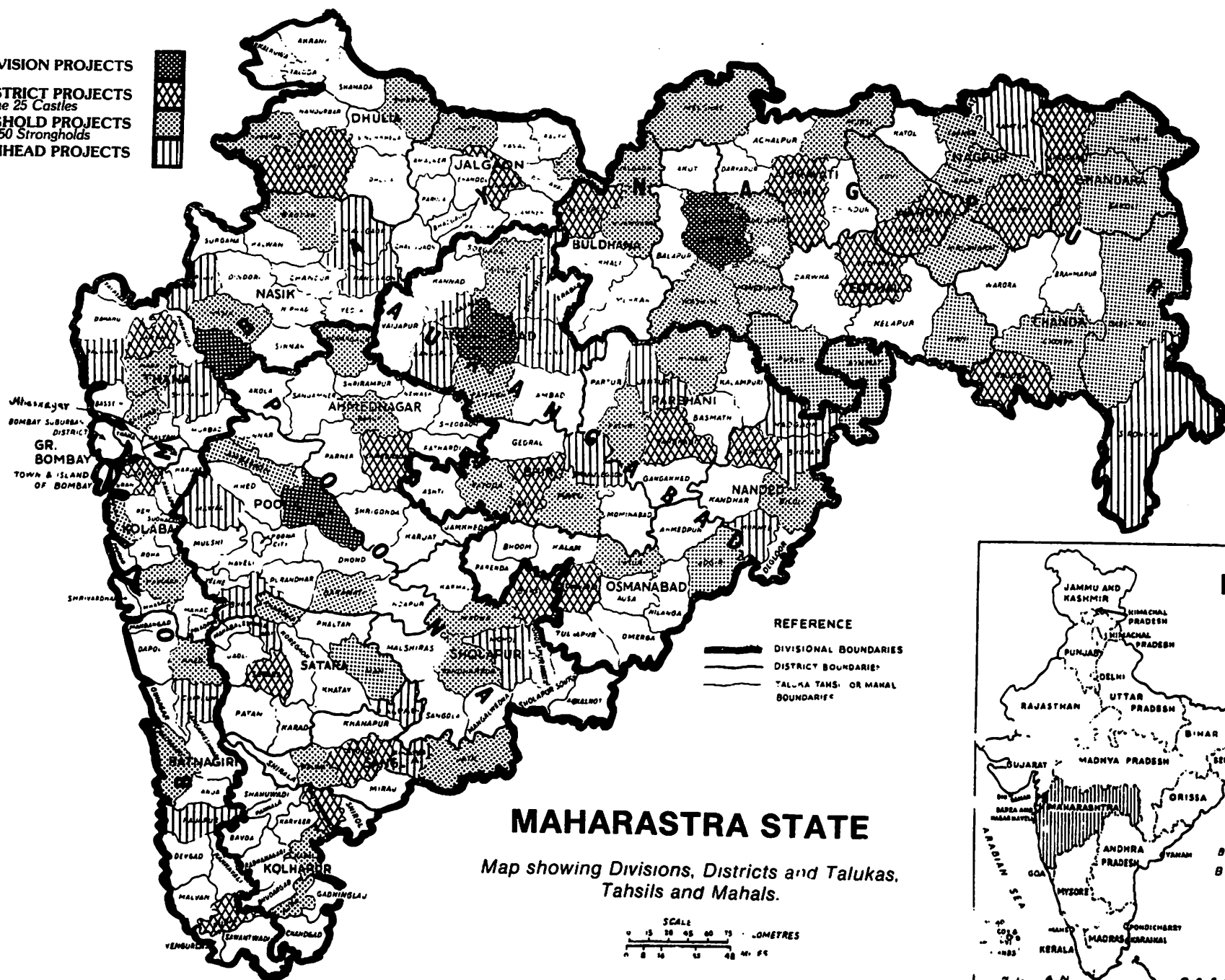
We discovered that only a few are required by history to bring about effective change--e.g. Gandhi's Movement, Human Rights Movement etc., it took only a handful of people to take 5th City to the world.

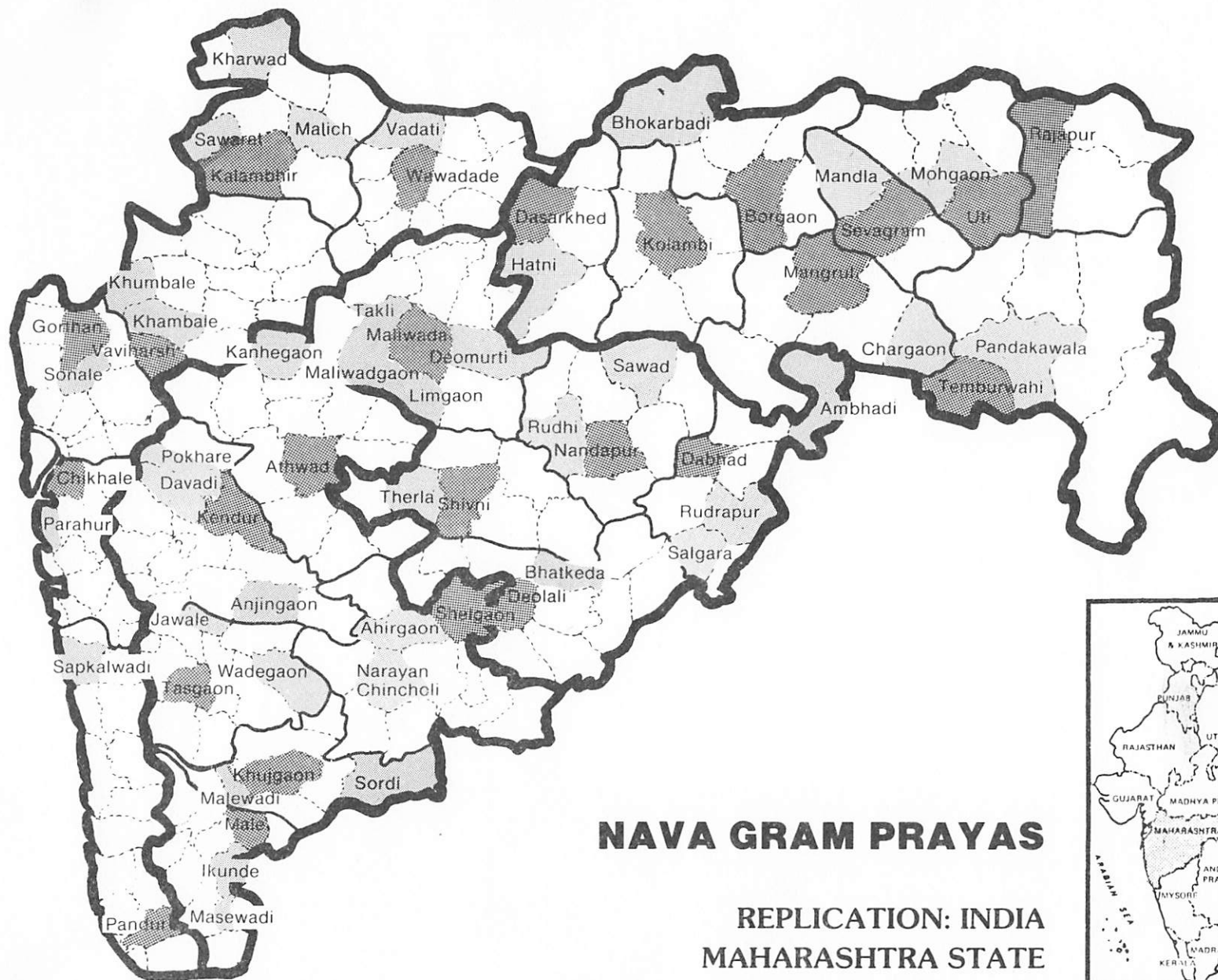
We discovered that there are no ready made answers to problems. Solutions to the problems always come out of struggle, time-consuming struggle. Embracing ambiguity as a friend was always a helpful stance.

Finally, it is only out of sheer concern and care that Human Development has been birthed. Expertise of all kinds was and will be of tremendous value, but what good is expertise without genuine concern for Human Development? It involves spotting caring persons in the Government corridors, corporate offices, voluntary agencies and indeed relentlessly working shoulder to shoulder with the core group of leaders in the community--those who are ready to guide destiny on their backs. I'd like to bring this to a close by raising a few "what ifs" with you.

1. What if the linkages of all sectors, the Private, The Public, the Voluntary and the local that are being discovered in India, Kenya, Indonesia & N.A. were to become a global reality.
2. What if the long tradition and the great gift of volunteerism as in N.A. were to be demonstrated in every region across the globe?
3. What if a few individuals (just a handful in comparison to the present population of 4 billion people) were to risk, decide and venture being a part of the body who was serious about the Human Factor in World Development and were able to say at the turn of this century--by golly, I was a part of the body who was instrumental in bending history.

DIVISION PROJECTS
DISTRICT PROJECTS
The 25 Castles
STRONGHOLD PROJECTS
The 50 Strongholds
BEACHHEAD PROJECTS





NAVA GRAM PRAYAS

REPLICATION: INDIA
MAHARASHTRA STATE



NEW INPUTS SINCE PROJECT LAUNCH

OCT '78

#2
#3

MAHARASHTRA VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										HUMAN DEVELOPMENT										SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT										MAJOR ACCOMPLISH- MENT	CRUCIAL NEEDS																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																									
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