



My Village – An Ideal Village

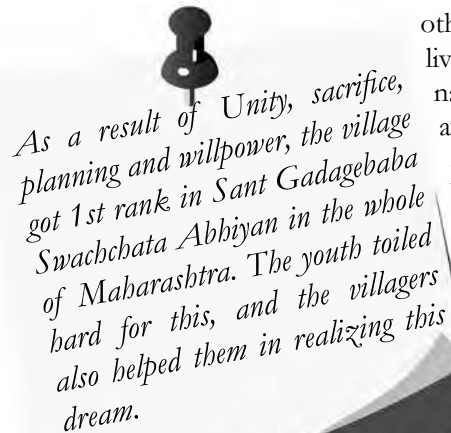
The journey of my life....

On the banks of the river *Krishna*, in the *Koregaon Taluka* of the *Satara District*, is the quietly set lush green, tranquil village of *Dhamner* – a place of great spiritual importance, once upon a time known as *Dharmapuri*. The village gives a vibrant and cosy feeling as; mother earth has given all her blessings. To the north is '*Nigadi*', where the revered '*Rangnath Swami*' had his '*Dnyanapith*'. A village fair was organized every year in the auspicious month of '*Shraavan*,' in *Dnyanapith*.

Historical accounts state that in the river *Krishna* near *Dhamner*, *Swami Samarth Ramdas* found the ancient idols of *Anglai Devi* and *Prabhu Ramachandra*. He placed them ceremoniously at *Sajjanganrh* and *Chaphal*.

In the earlier times, his holiness *Sant Gadage Maharaj*, who lived in *Dhamner* for nearly two years, also laid the foundation stone for the *dharmashala* in *Bramhapuri*. People still have fond memories of those golden days. In 1949 this village earned the title of the "Ideal village." *Dinkar Dhondi Ksheersagar* - aged 99, was the *Sarpanch* then; under his leadership the village prospered, but over the course of time, it perished.

In spite of the advancements of the 21st century, *Dhamner* and *Bramhapuri* remained largely underdeveloped, as if forgotten and lost in time. The village remained isolated and backward. The main occupation was agriculture, but some tried, jobs in the cities, while



As a result of Unity, sacrifice, planning and willpower, the village got 1st rank in Sant Gadagebaba Swachchata Abhiyan in the whole of Maharashtra. The youth toiled hard for this, and the villagers also helped them in realizing this dream.

others decided to devote their lives in the service of the nation. Prosperity was a far away dream.

However, over a period of time the village was torn apart in rivalry and was recorded as a notorious place in the records of the police. The enmity soared over, social and customary relationships and

the people who had once united in harmony, were now divided in self-consuming hatred.

Weddings did not see guests and funerals had silence mourning. People fought for petty reasons and enmity was sustained.

After many years of the chaos and the bloodshed, one seed of humanity sprouted and began to bridge the distraught segments of *Dhamner*. It took time but eventually the positive intentions of the few villagers, overcame the negative mind sets of the many. People slowly started understanding the importance of friendship, humanity and togetherness. Strength in unity and optimism spread waves of hope and harmony. Violence soon dug a deep grave for itself and buried itself vanishing from the life of the people. People felt the need for development and unity.

The leadership of the Zilla Parishad member, *Shri Vijayrao Kanse*, late *Induatyia Pawar* and the current *Sarpanch Shri Shahaji Ksheersagar* influenced and encouraged the people.

In this era of “The Global Village” everybody was dreaming of limitless development, and through the hard work of the people, in 1992, the ‘*Neburu Youth Committee*’ of the village got an award for progressive development from the central human resource ministry of India.

Slowly under the leadership of the ‘*Sarpanch*’, the village united. It turned into a symbol of social responsibility, hygiene and cleanliness. Roads and infrastructure underwent a tremendous development and in the year 2005 *Dhamner* received the 1st prize under ‘*Gadagebaba Gram*

Swachchata Abhiyan’ at the state level. This prize was awarded to *Dhamner*, in Pune by the then ‘Rural Development Minister *Dr. Raghvansh Prasad Sinha*’, in presence of the C.M. of Maharashtra – The late Mr. *Vilasrao Deshmukh*, The late Home Minister *R.R. Patil*, Water Resource Minister *Ajit Pawar* and Rural Development Minister of Maharashtra *Vijaysinha Mohite Patil*.

Since 2000 to 2005 *Dhamner* received for *Swachchata Abhiyan* 1st rank at the district level from. As a result of unity, sacrifice, planning and willpower, the village got 1st rank in *Sant Gadagebaba Swachchata Abhiyan* in the whole of Maharashtra.

On 24th February, 1st ‘*Nirmal Gram*’ (clean village) award was given to *Dhamner* by the then President of India ‘Missile Man’ *Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam*. During his tenure *Dhamner* also received an award for the eradication of the cast spirit – being called *untouchable* in 2001. Today we witness the feeling of understanding and fraternity among the people.

Sarpanch Shahaji Ksheersagar also had received the award of the best *Sarpanch* at district level by the Guardian Minister of *Satara*, *Ajitdada Pawar* in 2002 and by the famous social worker *Medha Patkar* in 2003. He also gave a speech at *Vidnyan Bhavan* in Delhi, at the prize distribution of *Nirmal Gram* which is the 1st incident of a *Sarpanch* giving a speech in front of the President. Thus *Dhamner* has made *Satara* and the whole of *Maharashtra* famous.

The transformation of a once backward unclean, disintegrated village into a clean, developed and united village is an exemplary episode in the history of our country. People should study it, and derive motivation from it. It shows that a village can change, if the villagers decide firmly, stand unitedly : after all “charity begins at home.”

