

# ANNA HAZARE

**Anna Hazare was born as Kisan Baburao Hazare on January 15,1940 in Bhingar,Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra. This well-known social worker hails from a modest background. His father was an unskilled laborer and they owned 5 acres of cultivable land. Adverse farming conditions pushed their family into the grip of poverty and in 1952 Hazare moved into his ancestral home in Ralegan Siddhi. He was brought up by a childless aunt who financed his education in Mumbai but financial instability pushed him into selling flowers for a living and he had to quit studies after class VII. Soon after he was recruited in the Indian Army and trained as a truck driver and was given a posting in Punjab. His days in the Army were spent in reading books by great philosophers like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Their thoughts inspired him to devote his life to social work. Two near-fatal mishaps in the 1965 war with Pakistan changed his outlook towards life and seeking voluntary retirement from the army he returned to his ancestral village in 1975. Ralegan Siddhi, his ancestral village, was then in the grip of drought and poverty.**

**For the betterment of the condition of the village he began to work independently. He used his entire savings for the developmental work of the village. He motivated the villagers into voluntary labor by his Gandhian philosophy. Canals and bunds were built to hold rainwater which solved the water scarcity problem and also increased irrigational possibilities in the village. Solar panels were fitted all over the village to provide electricity, biogas plants met the people's need for household fuel and wind pumps too were set-up.**

**The village no longer suffered from water scarcity and it has its own grain bank, milk bank and a school. Poverty no longer existed in the village and Hazare himself has successfully motivated the villagers to give up vices like alcohol. Great emphasis is also laid on education, removal of untouchability and collective marriage and the setting up of the Gram Sabha.**

**Anna Hazare has truly emerged as the "anna" or elder brother of his village and his stature today is no less than that of a saint. His immense appeal was proved when he was once arrested in connection with a defamation case in 1998. Following mass public protests, he was immediately released. His achievements have won him many awards like the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra award,the Krishi Bhushana award, the Padmashree and the Ramon Magsaysay award.**