DRINKING WATER FOR THE LAST PERSON

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES AND PANCHAYATS

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**Background**

Given the spread of water scarcity, pollution and groundwater overdraft, and the rapid increase in the non-availability of potable water in India, in 2009 the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation issued the National Rural Drinking Water Programme guidelines. The government has set the deadline of March 31, 2012 for 100 percent drinking water coverage of rural habitations, with communities managing their water supply systems and the states ultimately withdrawing from providing water services. The new guidelines envision a decentralised water supply system where the in-village water supply scheme is planned, approved, implemented, managed, operated and maintained by the Panchayat and community itself. In this respect, the village level water security plan becomes the key foundation for implementation, essentialising the involvement of community members.

With this backdrop, CSE conducted workshops in 4 villages of Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh, for the village community on designing their own water supply schemes. The objective was to create an understanding of the need to prepare Village Water Security Plans through water budgeting.

**Mode of work:** CSE collaborated with the NGO Vasudha Vikas Sansthan, based in Dhar to undertake these workshops. Vasudha has been working for the past 8 years directly with village communities promoting sanitation and on rural livelihood issues in Madhya Pradesh. The villages were selected based on physiography, hydrogeology, population profile and the willingness of participants to attend the programme. Participants consisted of panchayat officials, Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) members, anganwadi members and other community members.

**Location:** the district of Jhabua situated in the south-western corner of Madhya Pradesh is home to the Bhil adivasi or indigenous people with the various sub-tribes like Bhil, Bhilala, Patelia and Mankar together constituting 86.8% of the total population (Census, 2001). The district forms an unique agro-climatic zone called the Jhabua Hills in the southern part where it is part of the Vindhya hill ranges and drains into the River Narmada. The northern part of the district forms the undulating hilly edge of the Malwa Plateau and the eponymous agro-climatic zone and drains into the River Mahi. The topsoils are mostly light and lateritic with some fertile patches of the medium black variety. The underlying rock structure is mostly archaean igneous with some hard rock, deccan trap basaltic and sedimentary formations in patches. The first two formations have low primary porosity and permeability and so the groundwater aquifers have poor water retention capacity. While the deccan trap and sedimentary formations are better aquifers they are few and far between (GOMP, 2002). Thus the terrain and the underlying geological structure together result in most of the average annual rainfall of 829 mm running off during the monsoons and consequently the net groundwater availability is only 519 million cubic meters per year (CGWB, 2006).

The workshops consisted of the following broad elements:
1. Trend analysis of the past 30-40 years to observe changes in village resources
2. Mapping of water resources and village to spatially contextualise the issues
3. Water budgeting to assess water demand and availability
4. Identifying actions to ensure water sustainability

**Summary of Workshop Activities**

**Karadavat, Petlavad Block:** This village has a population of around 7000 people, with 50% belonging to the Bhil tribe. Drinking water has been provided to them for the past 11 years from the PHED through pipes and tapped connections. Like most tribal villages, this one too is spread out in several hamlets and only the main village centre with non-tribal population that is economically
better off has access to this piped water facility. The tribal hamlets have hand-pumps and public stand-posts for drinking water. Within the village centre too, only 227 families have availed the facility of individual tap connections and they too hardly pay the monthly rent for it, according to the sarpanch. The panchayat ends up paying on their behalf, which amounts to the entire village subsidizing these few richer families for facilities the rest of the village cannot afford. Most families have land here, except for a few, who do labour. Despite these privileges of water supply and land, the village will largely be defined as poor due to the stresses of daily life owing to degraded resources. This was highlighted by the following exercises done with the residents here –

*Trend Analysis: (complete information under all categories was not possible to get)*

**Population** – the total population of this village was 1500, 30 years ago, 4000, 15 years ago and is 7000 today.

Open Wells – 30 years back the village had 20-25 wells, out of which 2 were used for drinking and the rest for irrigation. 15 years back, the number rose to 40, with those being used for drinking water remaining the same. All new additions were used for irrigation.

Hand Pumps – 30 years back the village didn’t have any hand pumps. 15 years back, around 5 hand pumps were present in the village. Today, the village possesses 30 hand pumps, out of which 6 are dry. Hand pumps are used purely for domestic purposes and drinking.

Tube Wells – no tube wells were dug 30 years back, but 15 years back the village got 2 tube wells for irrigation. Today the number is as high as 150, but many have dried up owing to the uninhibited extraction of groundwater in the recent past.

Surface Water Bodies – The village has 3 ponds and 1 stream on which 2 check dams already exist. These are used mostly for irrigation and cattle.

Rainfall – 30-15 years back, rainfall was about 40 inches, over 4 months. Today this has halved, both in time duration of the monsoon as well as quantity.

Agriculture – the major crops grown 30-15 years back were chana, groundnut, moong, wheat, jowar, rice, til, cotton and chilly.

Livestock – the population of cattle herded by each family has drastically fallen over the years due to insufficient fodder and water. From 2500 cattle 30 years back, it came down to 1250, 15 years ago and currently numbers at 500 only.

**Main Emerging Trends:**

1. While the population has increased more than 4-fold in the past 30 years, all resources have displayed a decline in quantity, even as efforts have been made to tap new sources.
2. Agricultural land has increased at the cost of pasture and common lands, as well as forests.
3. Owing to the above reason, livestock population has drastically fallen, even with a huge jump in the number of families. This has diminished a source of income for the village.
4. Agriculture today is heavily dependent upon fertilizers, pesticides, GM/hybrid seeds and irrigation as soil fertility has come down and agri-business firms have pushed for seed varieties that require these inputs. Today no crop grows without excessive irrigation and fertilizers, while earlier this was not the case. Seeds today are procured from the market, while earlier the crop itself would yield seeds for the next sowing season. Several indigenous varieties have been stopped completely and replaced by hybrid varieties. The overall investment in agriculture has gone up manifold.
**Mapping the Village:** The participants drew a map of their village – the hamlets, roads, natural resources like stream, ponds, hills etc., wells, hand pumps and all other major landmarks. This was done to spatially contextualize the issues at hand and plan interventions accordingly.

**Planning Appropriate Interventions:** Based on the discussions in the workshop, the participants made suggestions for making the village water-secure. While many possibilities came up, there was much debate on what is actually feasible, given the paucity of funds and the difficulty in accessing government schemes. The following interventions were decided upon –

1. Access PHED funds for building check dams on the local stream for retaining the water in the watershed.
2. Access PHED funds for rooftop rainwater harvesting in pucca buildings.

**Mohankot, Petlavad Block:** This village has a population of around 7000 people in 1500 households, with 95% belonging to the Bhil tribe. Spread out in 11 hamlets, it encompasses a vast region, often hampering communication between different hamlets. In fact, a pond dug between hamlets has caused severe transportation issues as now people have to walk around it, which is a long distance, making it difficult to access schools and other institutions located in the hamlet across. The village is flanked by completely barren hills and degraded land. Since all this land is lying unused, there is vast potential for large-scale rainwater harvesting through watershed development like contour trenching, ponds, afforestation etc. The soil type here is largely rocky, preventing rainwater from seeping into the ground. However, storage in ponds is an option.

**Trend Analysis:** (complete information under all categories was not possible to get)

Population – the total population of this village was 2500, 40 years ago and is 7000 today.

Open Wells – 40 years back the village had 12 wells, which were used for drinking and domestic purposes only. 15 years back, the number rose to 25, out of which 15 were used for irrigation. Only 10 had water in them all year round. Today the village possesses 50 wells, 10 of which have water in them all year round. All the wells are now used for irrigation.

Hand Pumps – 40 years back the village didn’t have any hand pumps. 30 years ago, the village got its 1st hand pump and 15 years back, around 7 hand pumps were present in the village. Today, the village possesses 22 hand pumps, out of which 10 provide water throughout the year. Hand pumps are used purely for domestic purposes and drinking. Some of them are fluoride affected, but the villagers continue to use them for drinking.

Tube Wells – no tube wells were dug 40 years back. Today also the number is low – 2 – due to poverty and the inability to invest in them. For this reason, overdraft of groundwater has been prevented here to a great extent.

Surface Water Bodies – 40 years back the village didn’t have any ponds. 20 years back, it got 2 ponds, made by the irrigation department, but used for all purposes. Today the village has 8 small ponds made under the NREGA and other schemes, apart from the 2 existing ponds of a bigger size. Only the 2 big ones have water throughout the year. 2 streams also water this village, one of which has water for a very short time, the other flowing for a longer time. They started drying up around 10 years back.

Rainfall – 40-15 years back, rainfall was for 4 months. Today it is restricted to only 2 months.

Agriculture – 40 years ago agriculture was only rainfed with rice, cotton, til, moong, jowar and makka growing during the monsoon, and chana (which doesn’t need any water) during the winter.
Today agriculture is heavily irrigated and they sow 2 crops a year. Soybean and wheat has been added, while chana has been removed as today that too requires watering, where as earlier it didn’t.

Livestock – the population of cattle herded by each family has drastically fallen over the years due to insufficient fodder and water. From 8 cattle/household 40 years back, it has come down to 2/household today.

Main Emerging Trends: (they are the same as those observed in the previous village)
1. While the population has increased more than 4-fold in the past 30 years, all resources have displayed a decline in quantity, even as efforts have been made to tap new sources.
2. Agricultural land has increased at the cost of pasture and common lands, as well as forests.
3. Owing to the above reason, livestock population has drastically fallen, even with a huge jump in the number of families. This has diminished a source of income for the village.
4. Agriculture today is heavily dependent upon fertilizers, pesticides, GM/hybrid seeds and irrigation as soil fertility has come down and agri-business firms have pushed for seed varieties that require these inputs. Today no crop grows without excessive irrigation and fertilizers, while earlier this was not the case. Seeds today are procured from the market, while earlier the crop itself would yield seeds for the next sowing season. Several indigenous varieties have been stopped completely and replaced by hybrid varieties. The overall investment in agriculture has gone up manifold.

Mapping the Village: The participants drew a map of their village – the hamlets, roads, natural resources like stream, ponds, hills etc., wells, hand pumps and all other major landmarks. This was done to spatially contextualize the issues at hand and plan interventions accordingly.

Planning Appropriate Interventions: Based on the discussions in the workshop, the participants made suggestions for making the village water-secure. The following interventions were decided upon –
1. To build check dams on the 2 streams.
2. To dig farm ponds in the fields.
3. Contour trenching to be done on all the denuded hilly land around the village.
4. Afforestation to be taken up for increasing rainfall as well as preventing soil erosion.

Ramgarh, Petlawad Block: Situated on a hill, this village has suffered from water scarcity for aeons. It has a population of around 2100 in 470 households, with 50% belonging to the Bhil tribe. The village gets piped water from the PHED, which supplies both, sweet drinking water and saline/brackish non-potable water in the same pipe on different days. There is no system to this and sweet water is supplied based on its availability, which varies from month to month. Generally in the monsoon, potable water is supplied once in 4 days and in the summer, once in 2 weeks. This is stored by the residents in large drums. On finishing this, they procure water from other sources like open wells, hand pumps, tankers etc. The village is also affected by highly brackish water in all hand pumps and fluoride in some. They are expecting the Mahi river dam, 40 km away to water their village via a canal by 2013.

Trend Analysis: (complete information under all categories was not possible to get)
Population – the total population of this village was a mere 120, 40 years ago, rose to roughly 900 people, 20 years back, and is 2100 today.

Open Wells – 40 years back the village had about 6 wells, which were used for all purposes. Today the village possesses 100 wells, all of which dry up post November.
Hand Pumps – hand pumps first arrived in this village in 1985. Their number has marginally increased from 3 to 7 today. Owing to the situation of the village on a hill, groundwater is rare and hand pumps have always yielded less water.

Tube Wells – the 1st tube well was introduced to this village in 1995, and today they number at just 4. Their yield is less and their water is brackish. They are therefore, hardly used for irrigation and agriculture is limited to the monsoon months alone.

Surface Water Bodies – the village has 2 small ponds that have water in them only in the monsoon. These were made by the irrigation department and are used up quickly for that very purpose. They also suffer from leakages. There is also a seasonal stream close to the village, which used to be perennial till 20 years back. A stop-dam built on it 20 years ago made water available for irrigation for a few villages around (including Karadavat, the 1st village in this series) and dried up the stream. Water from this stream used to be utilized for all purposes including drinking. Now only irrigation during the monsoon is possible from the reservoir of the dam.

Rainfall – 40-15 years back, rainfall was for 4 months and was heavy. Today it is restricted to only 1 month and is scanty. Roof-water harvesting was done on the hostel building but turned out to be a failure due to lack of maintenance.

Agriculture – this village has practised only rainfed agriculture due to water scarcity in non-monsoon months and bad quality water in tube wells. The crops grown are tomato, chilly, cotton and soybean. In non-monsoon months, 50% of the population migrates out in search of labour work.

Livestock – the population of cattle herded by each family has drastically fallen over the years due to insufficient fodder and water. From 10 cattle/household 40 years back, it has come down to 4/household today. The reason they give is pasture degeneration and encroachment for agriculture.

Main Emerging Trends:
1. While the population has increased more than 10 times in the past 40 years, all resources have displayed a decline in quantity.
2. Livestock population has drastically fallen, even with a huge jump in the number of families. This has diminished a source of income for the village.
3. Water scarcity has been an issue for this village from the beginning, but has become more acute lately.
4. The village has had interventions from government departments like ponds built by the irrigation department, piped water supply from PHED, roof-water harvesting by the panchayat, but none have been very successful due to inadequate maintenance and unsustainable sources.
5. Even if the Mahi dam brings water here, it is bound to have adverse ecological impacts in the long run, as all mega hydraulic projects do. Canal water can thus not be relied upon.
6. With increasing water scarcity, groundwater extraction is bound to rise, leading to a possible increase in the incidence of fluoride.

Mapping the Village: The participants drew a map of their village – the hamlets, roads, natural resources like stream, ponds, hills etc., wells, hand pumps and all other major landmarks. This was done to spatially contextualize the issues at hand and plan interventions accordingly.

Water Budgeting: Based on data provided by the village residents and panchayat members, water demand and availability of the village was calculated, keeping irrigation needs aside. This was done in the following manner –
Demand: \[(\text{human population} \times \text{per capita consumption} \times 365) + (\text{livestock population} \times \text{per capita consumption} \times 365)\]

\[= (2200 \times 60 \times 365) + (4 \times 470 \times 30 \times 365)\]

\[= 50000000 + 22000000 \text{ (rounded off figures)}\]

\[= 72000000 \text{ litres}\]

Supply: \[\text{area} \times \text{rainfall}\]

\[= 820.29 \text{ ha} \times 600 \text{ mm}\]

\[= 5000000000 \text{ litres (rounded off figure)}\]

Conclusively, the demand is a small percentage of the water available in the village via rainfall and a small portion of it can easily be harvested to meet the annual needs of the residents and their livestock.

**Planning Appropriate Interventions:** Based on the discussions in the workshop, the following interventions were decided upon

1. To build a check dam on the stream and reserve it only for potable uses, not for irrigation.
2. To improve, repair and increase the height of the walls of the pond.
3. Roof-water harvesting on pucca structures in the village.

**Rampuria, Petlawad Block:** This village has a population of around 1700 people in 412 households, with a 100% tribal population, distributed in 5 hamlets. The scarcity of water in this village is blatantly related to the land degradation, as the villagers recall how green their currently bone-dry hillocks were 20 years ago and how rainfall has reduced since. The main occupation for this village used to be cattle herding and they had a vast amount of pasture land, which has now been encroached upon for agriculture as that is the dominant occupation now, even though it yields little income.

**Trend Analysis:** (complete information under all categories was not possible to get)

Population – the total population of this village was 400 people, 40 years ago and is 1700 today.

Open Wells – 40 years back the village had only 2 wells, which sufficiently supplied for all purposes. 20 years ago they had 25 wells, which continued to hold water all year round. Today the village possesses 100 wells, all of which dry up post November.

Hand Pumps – 25 years ago 2 hand pumps arrived in this village. Their number has increased to 17 today. Most of them go dry post November. They have sweet water and are used only for potable purposes.

Tube Wells – tube wells hit this village only 7 years back, and today they number at just 5. Their yield is less and are therefore hardly used for irrigation. Agriculture therefore, is limited to the monsoon months alone.

Surface Water Bodies – the village has 1 pond that used to have water throughout the year earlier but now holds water only in the monsoon. It suffers from leakages and less rainfall has limited the supply from the source. When it is dry, its land is auctioned for agriculture. There is also a seasonal stream in the middle of the village, which used to be perennial till 10 years back. A check-dam has been built on it. Water from this stream used to be utilized for all purposes including drinking. Now
only irrigation during the monsoon is possible from the reservoir of the dam.

Rainfall – 40-15 years back, rainfall was for 4 months and was heavy. Today it is restricted to only 1-2 months and is scanty.

Agriculture – this village has practised only rainfed agriculture due to water scarcity in non-monsoon months. The crops grown are cotton, lentils, makka, jowar and soybean. In non-monsoon months, 50% of the population migrates out in search of labour work and 25% of the people (those who have water available to them) grow a winter crop.

Livestock – the population of cattle herded by each family has drastically fallen over the years due to insufficient fodder and water. From a whopping 50 cattle/household, 40 years back, it has come down to 0-3/household today. The reason they give is pasture degeneration and encroachment for agriculture.

Main Emerging Trends:
1. While the population has more than trebled in the past 40 years, all resources have displayed a decline in quantity.
2. Livestock population has drastically fallen, even with a huge jump in the number of families. From a primarily pastoral economy, they have shifted to settled agriculture when actually it is not bestowing them with high profits at all.
3. The currently dry and denuded landscape was once lush green, according to the residents here. Pastures and forests covered the hills and no agriculture was practised at all. Over time, with rising population and settled agricultural practices, people have cut down their forests in short-sightedness.
4. Depleting rainfall is directly linked to the above situation.

Mapping the Village: The participants drew a map of their village – the hamlets, roads, natural resources like stream, ponds, hills etc., wells, hand pumps and all other major landmarks. This was done to spatially contextualize the issues at hand and plan interventions accordingly.

Water Budgeting: Based on data provided by the village residents and panchayat members, water demand and availability of the village was calculated, keeping irrigation needs aside. This was done in the following manner –

Demand: (human population x per capita consumption x 365) + (livestock population x per capita consumption x 365)

= (1700 x 60 x 365) + (4 x 412 x 30 x 365)
= 40000000 + 22000000 (rounded off figures)
= 62000000 litres

Supply: area x rainfall
= 1000 ha x 600 mm
= 600000000 litres

Conclusively, the demand is a small percentage of the water available in the village via rainfall and a small portion of it can easily be harvested to meet the annual needs of the residents and their livestock.

Planning Appropriate Interventions: Based on the discussions in the workshop, the following interventions were decided upon –
1. To build a check dam on the stream and reserve it only for potable uses, not for irrigation.
2. To improve, repair and deepen the pond.
3. Roof-water harvesting on pucca structures in the village.

**Overview of Learning from all Workshops**

1. A major environmental issue in Petlavad is of widespread deforestation and land degradation. This has had a snowball effect of reduced rainfall, soil erosion and a degraded ecosystem at large.
2. Gradually shifting from a thickly forested region where cattle grazing and forest based activities were the primary occupations, to a settled agricultural economy, this region has faced a sharp decline in green cover, water availability and cattle.
3. Where there is piped water supply, domestic water demand has gone up. This has led to the problem of waste water (grey water). There is no system for treatment and reuse of grey water and it is being channelised either to dug wells or local streams.
4. Owing to the type of hydrogeology present here, groundwater extraction is not excessive – either because it is rocky or because the water is brackish. Although hand pumps are found everywhere, tube wells are few in number. For irrigation, villages are using local streams.
5. Given the familiarity villagers have with large structures like dams because that is what the government has focussed on, they express a preference for them, over rainwater harvesting. All suggestions to improve water availability have had dams in them, and villages are not factoring in downstream impacts, even as they themselves suffer from upstream extraction of water by other villages.
6. A key issue is availability of land on which recharging structures can be built. In all 4 villages, we were told that revenue land has been heavily encroached upon. Forest land is both degraded as well as encroached. There is also the issue of building structures in a place that is suitable and beneficial for all. With a paucity of common land, large ponds and other kinds of watershed structures are hard to build.
7. Roof top water harvesting had been initiated in some of these villages in schools, but the systems have not been maintained and have, in effect disappeared.
8. Communities have a sound, if not technical, knowledge of hydrogeology and are self-sufficient in deciding upon the details of a structure. However, communities are not aware or mobilised to initiate the process and need a long period of hand-holding before they can fully take responsibility of managing their water supply systems.
9. The guidelines under the NRDWP say that preparation of Village Water Security Plans (VWSP) are mandatory and the PHED has the responsibility of collecting the VWSP to compile a district water security plan. However, what we found was that there is no awareness at the village level on the need for preparation of these plans.
10. In order to prepare these plans there is a need for baseline data on population, livestock, area, land use, the type of crops, rainfall, soil, geology, and future estimations of population and livestock growth. The panchayats are in no position to even begin initiating these processes unless there is external assistance.
11. Assuming that the data has been collected with external help and plans have been made, the panchayat has identified possible structures for ensuring water security, the question remains: how will the plan get implemented? Which government department will be responsible? The NRDWP guidelines specifically says “Any recharging structure meant for overall management of water resources and does not directly recharge the drinking water sources do not come under the purview for funding under this component.” (Page 57, Annexure III, Guideline for implementation of Sustainability-Swajaldhara project). But the plan will be made keeping in mind the terrain and hydrogeology of the location and their estimated demand and not on the basis of what will get funded.
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<td><strong>Panchayat workshop 2: Mohankot Village, 09/03/11</strong></td>
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<td>5 Sugara Bai Mansuri</td>
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Village Ramgarh

dry and denu ded land s (top) and local pond of the village, used for all purposes (above)

Village Rampuriya
the pond’s land is auctioned off in the summer for agriculture