

# **Women Empowerment through Water management**

## **Situation Analysis**

Women in rural areas of Barmer district often trek miles for drinking water due to drought situation. There is no greenery left in the areas and we are not getting any supplies from the government. It seems that the world will come to end. Most of the villages of Barmer district are suffering from sharp depletion of ground water.

People live, are being ravaged by a devastating drought. It has destroyed livestock herds and forced hundreds of thousands of people to migrate to the cities or to irrigated areas in order to survive. Many who remain behind are in a precarious position without access to adequate supplies of food and clean water, facing the dangers of starvation and disease.

Women and children are the most affected groups in the drought. The lack of food, fodder and water in many areas is resulting in migration of men in search for employment. This leaves the womenfolk with increased burden to manage the household as well as trudge several kilometers to access drinking water.

The village Chawaniyon Megwalon ki Dhani also facing the above mentioned crucial situation. This village comes under Ravatsar Gram panchayat in block Sindhari of Barmer district.

The total population of the village is 359 and belongs to schedule caste. During the intervention four beneficiaries identified on priority basis according to criteria for providing Water Harvesting Structure (Tanka) during village level meetings.

Before intervention the beneficiaries were facing problems in fetching water from long distances and there was no adequate water supply in village. Moreover they have to pay Rs 250-300 for potable water.

Due to no storage facilities for potable water benefited women have to face lot of problems like they have to engage whole day in fetching water as per requirement of water and rest of the time engaged in doing house hold activities.

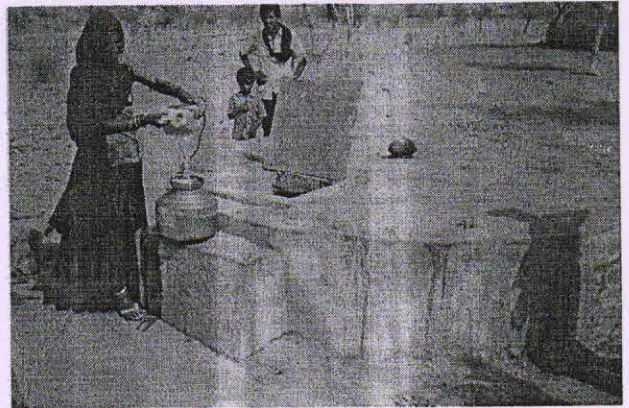


## After Intervention

**Hawa Devi, Kamla Devi, Tijo Devi and Khimi Devi are the beneficiaries of the project are poor widow women heading their families in young age and come under below poverty line.** This is the first intervention for betterment of their life. Previously they haven't received any benefit from government welfare schemes for BPL and women development.

Tijo Devi

Pouring water in pot from Her Tanka



Relatively, women are heading their families so they have the responsibilities of earnings for their families. Due to drought there was no source of income left in the village so they have to move to block or district level. Due to water problem it was not possible to them to look after household activity and water management for the family. As a result of this they were getting day by day poor.

With active role of Village Development Committee women SHG played a vital role in selection of women and aware community on water issues. VDC also motivate the community for contribution in developing water structures for the selected beneficiaries. This will charge community to do the advocacy on water issue to district administration.



Catchment area to harvest rain water

Development of water structure will bring change in life of these women and help in strengthening them and their family. During rain the water tank will be full of water by rain water harvesting method. This water will fulfill the requirement of family for 4-5 months.

It will help women to invest their time in improving families' livings

Through earnings and save their time and money for water for betterment of their families and for themselves.



## Detail of Economically Rehabilitated Person:

1. Name of the Client : **Uthma Ram**
2. Age : 23 Years
3. Name of the Village : Swadaa (55 Km from District Head Quarters)
4. Name of the Gram Panchayat : Swadaa

His parents couldn't say exactly the reason for his blindness. He is also identified under the CBR Programme and availed all the support services. Initially he was not having any high ambitious about his future. Still he was actively participating in all our efforts, like, be it rally of social meeting etc. When we talked about his future last year, he said that he is having any concrete plan. We gave him suggestion to start small grocery store. But he was not confident and said what he can do without anyone's help. We motivated him and promised him that we will train him all ways. Fortunately his family members and the community were very cooperative and they are impressed on how he quickly grabbed the money concept.

Slowly and slowly he gained confidence and said us that he can try starting grocery store. His elder brother gave him Rs.900/- to start the business and the shop was started by the end of November 2002. Our field worker constantly monitored him and helped him all the transactions. Most importantly, in the process of time we see to it that he is not totally dependant on our field worker for future transactions. Today, he goes to the shop (10 Km from his village) with the help of his cousins and he himself deals with the wholesale merchant.

After seeing steady progress, **at present he has Rs.6000/- worth of goods in his shop and earns 1000 per month**, we suggested to open bank account and make some savings in his name. Initially, postmaster was not cooperative to open an account for the visually challenged people. But we told him that there was not such provision in law that prevents the opening of account for the people who are visually challenged. Postmaster understood the fact and helped Uthma Ram to open account in his name. **Today he deposits per month Rs.100/- in his name.**

Apart from this, we are in the process of preparing him as a resource person to facilitate our Economic Rehabilitation activities in Barmer district. We tested this new concept by telling him to convince Netha Ram, who is visually challenged from Jumma Fakir Ki Basti, to start new life. Uthma Ram did this successfully by explaining his own experience to Netha Ram. Our effort bore a good result that Netha Ram too got motivated, impressed and he too started a new business like Uthma Ram.

In short, he is our role model case to facilitate our overall project activities.

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## SUCCESS STORY

<b>Name:</b>	Nabiyat
<b>Project Name:</b>	Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD)
<b>Project Area:</b>	Barmer
<b>Training Center:</b>	Naya gagriya
<b>Funding Organization:</b>	Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India
<b>Implementation By:</b>	Mahila Mandal Barmer Agor



Barmer is the second largest district of Rajasthan State with 28387 sq km. located at the Western frontier bordering with Pakistan in the South West, and surrounded by Jaisalmer district at the North West, Jodhpur in the west, Jalor district in the East and Gujrat state at the South East. Falling under Thar Desert accompanied by various challenges of drought, lack of income sources, education, and transportation has put challenges into life

condition, people are predominantly dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. Frequent droughts and famine have become a part of life of the people. As people depend on agriculture and animal husbandry, the children are too absorbed in the business, helping the family in farming and cattle rearing. Thus many children especially women do not join school or drop out early and remain unskilled. When there is a crop failure, the farmers are forced to take loan from the money lenders at high interest hoping to pay back the debts at the next harvest but if there is another drought following they again seek help from the money lenders and are again debts driven deep in to poverty. The cycle continues, never letting the poor farmers out of poverty. At times of unemployment the whole family migrates to other places including other states like Gujarat in search of wage. Often frequent drought put people in hazard and challenging. Many of the inhabitants in the rural area are settled in sparsely populated hamlets on sand dunes, where there are no basic facilities like roads, transportation or communication facilities, health, potable water supply, electricity etc. The difficult geographical terrain entails very high cost of providing basic services.



Yet another major hazard in the way of village development is the social evils and cultural practices. Mismatch marriage or forced marriage, female infanticide, child marriage, atrocity to women are a part of the prevailing feudal society. The Purdha System-women are kept under veil and restricted to the four walls of the house. Women have a low profile in the society and discouraged for education, health and freedom of economy and decision-making. The major communities of the district are Rajputs, Brahmins,



Banyas, Jats, , Muslims and the schedule castes Meghwal, Nayak, Sansi and scheduled tribes the Bhils. Untouchability is very much prevalent in the urban and rural areas alike.

The socio-economic, education and decision making of minority women in this area is very poor, and due to aforesaid drastic situations of the region life of the minority women are very limited and restrict to surrounding walls of a house.

Nabiyat Belongs to a poor family of Gagriya is always engaged in household work. Being poor don't let her to go for some additional task, despite being quiet knowledge of sewing and art work she couldn't take the initiative of practicing of it because of the risk associated with the work. Fortunately, she become one of the trainee under USTAAD training with us, where she got a chance of practicing her predominant skills with no fear of losing noting, she mastered herself in making



embroidery products with perfection. Her quick learning and grasping ability made her strong confident and a strong leader. During USTAAD training she learned about financial management, purchase and selling of materials and now she started purchasing of raw material by herself for preparing embroidery work and mukka. We are happy to announce that a women from become dependent to independent through this training. Presently she has a capacity of earning approx 7000/- per month and set an example for other women of her community, she now leading to young girls of her community she talks about personal health and hygiene, earning importance of education and skill sets. She is now point of focus of her community, her community and family members refer her as hard working and successful women.



## घूँघट के भीतर से सही, बोलती तो हूँ

नाम:- मथरी देवी  
उम्र:- 50 वर्ष  
पद:- वार्ड पंच  
ग्राम पंचायत:- बालेरा  
जिला :- बाड़मेर

बालेरा ग्राम पंचायत की वार्ड पंच मथरी देवी एक किसान परिवार से सम्बन्ध रखती है। खेती से राजनीति तक का सफर आसान नहीं होता है पर गांव वालों के सहयोग से उन्होंने ये कर दिखाया। अपने पंच बनने के बारे में वे बताती हैं कि “बस्ती के लोगों ने ही जोर दिया कि पंच बन जाओ.....हमारी भी सुनवाई हो जाएगी पंचायत में।” पंच बनने के बाद मथरी देवी ने अपने वार्ड में कई व्यक्तिगत एवं सार्वजनिक टांके बनवाए और 6-7 बी.पी.एल. के लोगों के इंदिरा आवास भी बनवाए।

वे बताती हैं कि “2 दिन के लिए प्रशिक्षण कार्यशाला में गई थी, बाड़मेर तभी पहली बार निकली थी गांव से। दो दिन की कार्यशाला में कई..... नई-नई जानकारियां मिली थी.....प्रस्ताव देने के बारे में बताया था” पढ़-लिख न पाने के कारण प्रस्ताव लिखने- पढ़ने के काम में उनका लड़का उनकी मदद करता है। बालेरा ग्राम पंचायत में पुरुष सरपंच हैं और पांच महिला वार्ड पंच हैं। उनसे यह पुछने पर कि वो अपनी बात पंचायत में कैसे रखती हैं? मथरी देवी बताती हैं कि “ज्यादा जानकारी लेने या कुछ बताने के लिए तो ग्राम सेवक से ही कहती हूँ.....सभी मीटिंगों में जाती हूँ.....जेठ ससुर ना हो पंचायत में तो अपनी बात सबके सामने कह लेती हूँ।”

मथरी देवी को भी शुरू-शुरू में पंचायत में अपनी बात रखते हुए डर लगता था। लेकिन आज स्थिति दूसरी है। वे बताती हैं “पहले पहल बोलने में घबराहट होती थी.....अब बिलकुल डर नहीं लगता है।.....कोई कहेगा थड़े ही.....घूँघट तो अब भी निकालती हूँ.....पर पहले चुप रहती थी.....पर अब घूँघट में से ही सही बोलती हूँ।”

वार्ड पंच बनने के बाद उनकी सोच का काफी विस्तार हुआ है। उन्हें लगता है कि सरपंच यदि महिला हो तो ज्यादा खुलकर बात कर सकती थी। इस राजनीति से उन्हें क्या मिला? पुछने पर बताती हैं “वार्ड पंच ना बनती तो दूनिया देखने को नहीं मिलती.....अब से पहले पंचायत के बारे में कुछ भी नहीं पता था कि क्या होता है” यदि गांव वालों का सहयोग मिले, तो सरपंच बनने का ख्वाब मथरी देवी भी देखती हैं।

हालांकि अपनी झिझक दूर करने और आत्मविश्वास बढ़ाने के लिए, अभी मथरी देवी को और भी कई सीढ़ियां चढ़नी हैं।



## District Administration: Beyond the Flood

*"Do you have cash? Make the arrangement of money we will provide you the kerosene according to your requirement".* These were the words by DSO, Barmer when Mumtaz Ben Chairperson of Mahila Mandal Barmer Agor, Barmer put the requisition for grain and kerosene oil for the Malva people who were the victims of heartbreaking flood and whole village submerged in 40 feet water. Moreover, 39 people submerged in 40 feet water. During relief activities for Malva Mumtaz Ben was doing the arrangement of basic things required for the people saved from Malva village. In this regard, she approached to District administration office for kerosene oil and wheat.

After speaking the above mentioned words by the DSO, he asked to wait outside the office for material. After a long waiting, she entered in DSO office, asked for the status of relief material, and presented the list of requisition for wheat and kerosene oil for people affected of Malva village and looking for the immediate relief. In response, DSO said we have no stock. I am calling to flour mill & Kerosene Dealer you can give my reference and take wheat & kerosene oil by paying cash. For this, I am sending one Inspector of our department for your conveyance.

Along with Inspector Mumtaz Ben purchased the 120 litre of kerosene oil for the distribution in Malva to 105 families, paid cash for the same, and produced the receipt for the same. Relatively, DSO appointed dealer with Mumtaz Ben to monitor the kerosene oil supply to the people of Malva village.

Above mentioned event itself, raise several question on working style of District administration and its officials by ignoring rules and regulations. All rules and regulations are according to officer wish. This is a very serious concern even in normal time but this event happened during emergency. It is very necessary to take action on such activities.

The other questions related to event are

- Why district administration officials not taken initiative of distribution of food and kerosene oil to villages affected from flood. Where there was reach to the relief camp
- There is no responsibility of district administration for the free supply of food material during emergencies for affected people
- There is no responsibility of district administration for the supply of food on free of cost who lost every thing as immediate relief for food security and other basic facilities
- By giving Cash material is in stock but for public there is no stock for relief material
- How the purchase of 120 litre Kerosene oil by MMBA will be entered in government stock record by the DSO

There is a great need of advocacy to district administration on its working and their efforts for relief work and their seriousness on the same and later on in rehabilitation of person affected during flood. Moreover, during distribution of relief material how it will ensure the reach of relief material to last beneficiary with appropriate quantity.