

Wo Todti Pathar (She Broke the Rock)

(A Story on Hardship of Women for Water at Rajuwa Village)

Rajuwa is one of the WARM villages coming under Rajuwa Gram-panchayat of Sagar Block in Sagar district. It is about 12 kms from district headquarters and 18 kms from MVSS head quarter. This village is occupied by different communities in different pockets like the surrounding villages based on their culture and practices. Such a pocket in Rajuwa village is called “TAPRA” which is mostly occupied by ST (Scheduled Tribe community) mainly Gond tribe. Their main livelihood is daily wages and Beedi making. People from this community always face problem for water scarcity for daily usages and for agriculture. There is only one hand pump working in the locality for around 120 households and in summer this hand pump gets dried up. Even before the onset of summer season, community people face problem for drinking water.

Community Level Reflection and Mobilisation: Ms. Rajni Sen is one of the village women leaders belonging to the SHG named Jyoti Swayam Sahayata Samuh and she is also the secretary of the SHG. She has very good understanding of the community problems and understands the importance of water for drinking and irrigation needs of agriculture in the village. During drought in summer, she motivated all members from her community to save water and work on water problem. Then they approached the panchayath president of the Rajuwa grampanchayath for some assistance for digging an open well in their locality, but they did not get any help from the panchayath.

Process of Change: Refusal of assistance for digging an open well made them more stronger and persuaded them to go ahead with digging an open well in their locality though there is no help from any quarter. Then all the SHG members decided to dig the well and started digging a pit on hard laterite rock on the earth surface for water. Slowly under the support and guidance of MVSS WARM team these women changed the pit to an open well for community. During their digging, hard rock for water Rajni says “Koi Sarkari Sahayata Nahi Mil Rahi hai” (There is no help from government department) but we ourselves will make things happen”, exclaimed Rajni. Finally, their efforts became fruitful and now there is 5ft water in the open well.

RESULTS: Some of the main changes brought about as part of the programme are the following:

- 1.The effort of the group has brought a 15 ft deep open well with 5 ft water column in the locality.
- 2.It will eventually become instrumental in recharging the ground water level of the locality which will indirectly recharge the nearby water bodies.
- 3.For the time being, the water from the well is being used by about 15 families of the village.

4.As far as the women group is concerned, it is a big success for them and they were appreciated by Mr. Shivraj Singh Kurmi, the Sarpanch of the panchayath, MVSS and local community for the good effort.

Community Ownership and Sustainability: In Rajuwa village there are three CBOs with 35 members such as a women SHG, a Farmers Club and a Water Management Committee besides 10 Paani Mitr (Water Friends). All of them have appreciated the digging of open well by the women's group. As scarcity of water is a common issue of the village, the water friends have taken the leadership of looking after the maintenance of the well.
