

Jal Saheli and Pani Panchayat

*A Women led based based institutions for
Drought Mitigation*



Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan

Background

- The concept of Water Cadre (Jal Mitra) through **Jal Saheli (Women Water Worrier)** and **PANI PANCHAYAT (Water Panchayat)** was initiated by **‘Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan’** under the project titled **“Establishing Women’s First Right to Water Resources”** in 03 districts (Lalitpur, Hameerpur and Jalaun) of Bundelkhand region in India

Pani Panchayat:

Scarcity of drinking water had been steadily increasing in the region due to scanty rainfall. The Pani Panchayats have been formed to facilitate water security of the village and for managing and protecting water resources in the village. The paani panchayats offer a way out for women who have to fetch water from a distance.

Jal Saheli:

By provided them range of training programme for their capacity building Jal Saheli are silently weaving the water magic to change the scenario by conserving water ponds, helping build network of check dams, and undertaking rainwater harvesting to recharge wells. These Jal Sahelis also force the authorities to install water pumps where needed.

पानी पंचायत नियमावली

पानी पंचायत एक ग्राम स्तरीय संगठन हैं जिसकी स्थापना गांव में पानी तथा आजीविका संसाधनों के संरक्षण, सम्बर्द्धन एवं प्रबन्धन को सामुदायिक सहभागिता के साथ प्रोत्साहित करना जिससे गांव में दीर्घकालिक जल सुरक्षा एवं आजीविका की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित हो सके।

पानी पंचायत के उद्देश्य— पानी पंचायत के उद्देश्य निम्न प्रकार है।

- गांव में पानी, विशेष रूप से वर्षा जल का संचयन एवं सम्बर्द्धन को प्रोत्साहित करना।
- पानी के समुचित एवं विवेकपूर्ण उपयोग हेतु समुदाय के साथ मिलकर कार्य करना।
- गांव में पानी के समान उपयोग एवं वितरण हेतु व्यवस्था निर्माण करना।
- सामुदायिक स्तर पर स्रोतों के रखरखाव को बढ़ावा।
- समाज में ऐतिहासिक रूप से कमजोर वर्गों, महिलाओं, दलित आदि के पानी पर प्रजातांत्रिक अधिकारों को स्थापित करना।
- दीर्घकालिक जल सुरक्षा हेतु समुदाय एवं अन्य हितग्राहियों के साथ मिलकर पहल करना।
- संस्था द्वारा संचालित परियोजना की गतिविधियों/हस्तक्षेपों के नियोजन क्रियान्वयन तथा मूल्यांकन में भागेदारी करना।
- पंचायत द्वारा संचालित शासकीय कार्यक्रमों की सामुदायिक निगरानी कर समाज के कमजोर वर्ग को योजनाओं के लाभ से जोड़ना।
- पानी के उपयोग, रखरखाव एवं नियन्त्रण में महिलाओं की समान भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करना।

Objective

- ❖ To promote women's role in water-livelihood linkages through decentralization and community water management.
- ❖ To engage and strengthen the participatory and decision-making processes in PRIs through women advocacy groups and by promoting women's leadership
- ❖ Ensures drinking water and food security and strengthening their socio-economic and political status

Outreach of Jal Saheli

District	No of Gram Panchayats	No of Pani Panchayats	No. of Jal Saheli	Category wise classification			
				SC	ST	OBC	Gen
Hamirpur	20	26	48	23	0	16	9
Lalitpur	20	40	64	25	4	32	3
Jalaun	20	30	60	45	0	14	1

Jal Saheli and Pani Panchayat Principles

It covered equity, demand management, rights of landless, community participation and sustainability of the resource. Its structure comprised of -

- Water user group for each water body (reservoir/pond/check dam/well etc) which in turn had a representation in the village level Pani Panchayat;
- Election of the representatives of the village level Committee;
- Decentralized decision making with public participation;
- Monthly meeting of the committee to review, plan work and resolve conflicts;
- Ensuring equitable water distribution;
- Maintenance of the scheme.
- Advocacy with government department

Addressing Drought Mitigation

The Pani Panchayat, and Jal Sahelis, have been consistently addressing issues of drought, water scarcity, water conservation, reviving traditional water bodies and overall water management of village.



Jal Sahelis doing excellent work in repairing & maintenance of hand Pumps to mitigate the problem of drinking water in water scares villages



They are also involve in repairing & maintenance of existing wells in the respective villages & also advice villagers regarding effective water management through pond renovation, check dams etc



Pani Panchayat & Jal Sahelis operating community kitchen in twenty villages of Lalitpur, Hamirpur & Jalaun district of Bundelkhand region to provide two times meal to deprived, marginalized & poorer section of societies.



Renovation & Repair of Chandela Tanks

Kanti – Chandela Tank Revival



Bangayan – Chandela Tank Revival



Jal Saheli Operating Kitchen Garden



They are involve in the planning , management and distribution of water through water tankers in different villages.



Some snaps of Jal Saheli & Pani Panchayat



Contd....





WATER WOMAN

First runner up of HT Woman 2015 Award Anuja Devi's efforts make her 'dry' village in Bundelkhand water rich

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The 2011, 'Soakha' (water scarce) was here. Karami village in Bundelkhand was identified as by most people in the area. Today the same village is known as 'Thakur' (water rich). Behind this transformation was Anuja Devi, a Jal Saheli—friend of water—the first runner up of HT Woman 2015 Award.

The day after returning to her village in Madhupur block of Jhansi district with the award, 37-year-old Anuja Devi got busy with what she knows best—water conservation. She and her team of 'water women' began digging a dry pond so that when monsoon comes, water finds a place to collect and stay in.

"The HT Award would help boost my water campaign beyond my village. Now, people and authorities would listen to me even better," says Anuja Devi.

Anuja began her water conservation in 2011 by leading the pond-punchayat team. But calamity struck the family when everything was going smoothly. "My husband Man Singh, a MGNREGA labourer, died suddenly at his work site. The responsibility of livelihood and bringing up our children fell on my shoulders," says Anuja.

But Anuja remained undeterred. In fact, her resolve to make her village water rich got further strengthened. Once the mourning period was over, Anuja devoted herself fully to the pond-punchayat, a campaign launched by Parmarth Sewa Sansthan, Orai in Jhansi. "The sansthan has launched a water library and water sensitisation programme including training in



to how the villagers should tackle and overcome their water problems. After attending their classes, I volunteered to become part of a 20 women water punchayat and was soon elevated as one of the two Jal Sahelis that each punchayat in each village has," says Anuja. Today the pond-punchayat programme has spread to 64 villages in three districts of Jhansi, Hamirpur and Lalitpur of Bundelkhand region. "You know why I did not give up water conservation? Because my husband loved my water efforts when he was around. Within a year—from 2011 and the time in 2012 when he died, our village had turned water scarce. And now we do not need to go out of the village to fetch water at all. All our water needs—drinking, washing, bathing or water for the cattle



is available round the year in the village itself," says Anuja. Before 2011, women had to go out of the village, sometimes walk 20 kms, to fetch water. "Each of us used to make several trips in a day to fetch water. But not anymore," she says. "Anuja was resilient. She understood that the effort and hard work she was putting in then would eventually lead to saving of lot of effort, energy and time and make the village water rich," says Sanjay Singh of Parmarth.

But how did she and the

pond-punchayat do what otherwise looked impossible? "We petitioned the district administration to re-empower the defunct handpump. Our efforts bore results and it was re-installed by digging it deeper and repairing it. One by one we got all the five handpumps in the village functional. I myself learned how to repair and maintain handpumps. We created a water code, which meant that no villager would wash, bathe or feed water to cattle at the handpumps. People will have to fetch water from there, take it home and



(Clockwise from top) CM Akhilesh Yadav and MP Dimple Yadav giving HT Woman 2015 first runner up trophy to Anuja Devi. Anuja teaching a woman how to repair a handpump, digging a pond in the village being created by village women after her return with the award

first use it. When one has to carry water some distance, one realises its value and this prevents wastage."

Then the pond-punchayat dug, desilted and cleaned the main pond of the village. It is now a perennial source of water, even when handpump strokes go dry in peak summers. "The pond also proved to recharge ground water. Now, we are digging another pond," says Anuja.

Anuja's efforts also dismantled caste barriers in the Thakur dominated village as everyone joined hands with the pond-punchayat. Anuja also intervened in other social issues and cases in the village. She was awarded by the district magistrate for her work on prevention of female feticide. Along with village folk, she carried out door-to-door campaigns and kept a watch on pregnancies in the village.

"We sensitised people towards the girl child. I used my two daughters as the poster girls for our anti-female feticide campaign. I treat both

my girls at par with my sons. No discrimination," says Anuja.

Herself an MGNREGA labourer, Anuja also raised voice against delay in payments under MGNREGA scheme. To ensure food security, she also established a Seed and Grain bank with support of the non-profit members.

She has not neglected her responsibilities at home either. She continues to work as MGNREGA labourer, and also tends to her four-acre land. While Anuja herself is a class 10-dropout, her elder daughter and son go to the government senior college in nearby Vagga and the two younger ones go to the school in Karami itself.

Award from minister Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple Yadav. Anuja reveals that the two have given their phone number to her. "If I ever feel the need to call them up for our village's welfare that are beyond our own capacities, then I will surely trouble them," she says.

Jal Sahelis show the way out of water crisis in Lalitpur



Rajesh Kumar Singh

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LUCKNOW: The community pond at Kakrahi village in the drought-hit Lalitpur district is aptly termed 'neighbours' envy and owner's pride'.

The Kakrahi villagers just have to step out of their homes to fetch water from their pond while residents of villages nearby have to take a long trek to collect water from elsewhere.

The seeds of Kakrahi's good fortune were sown in 2013 when Bundelkhand was in the grip of a drought. The men started migrating to the cities nearby—Jhansi, Gwalior and Agra in search of jobs.

The women, who stayed back to take care of the children and the old, constituted the Jal Saheli group to work jointly for water conservation. The experts of a voluntary organisation Parmarth Sewa Sansthan assisted them and several women were motivated to join Jal Saheli group.

Parvati Devi, a Jal Saheli, says,



■ Jal Saheli Parvati Devi standing before a revived pond in Kakrahi village in Lalitpur in Bundelkhand.

"We selected an ancient pond on the outskirts of the village for revival. It had no water and it had become a garbage dumping ground. Jal Sahelis cleaned the pond, repaired the damaged embankment and drains. The monsoon last year filled the pond with rain water. To check wastage, the villagers decided to reorganise the use of water."

Their effort has borne fruit now. And the Kakrahi pond has abundant water when a majority of other ponds in Lalitpur have dried up.

Indeed, the pond has become a symbol of freedom from drudgery for the 150 families in the village.

They easily collect water for domestic use from the pond. The villagers are planning to use the water for irrigation once monsoon sets in.

After Kakrahi's success, the women of Chandapur, Bhuchera, Udgawa, Vijapur, Tindra, Bamhourisar, Daulta and Monto villages have also constituted the Jal Saheli group to conserve water in their respective villages.

Pushpa Devi of Chandapur

village says the women repaired a pond to conserve water. The ground water level has also improved. There is abundant water in the wells and hand pumps, she adds.

"We have permitted the women of nearby villages to collect water from the pond for their domestic use," she says.

Villagers have constructed drains to divert rain water to the ponds.

Oblivious of the political sluffiest between the central and state government over supply of drinking water, the villagers are busy cleaning silt from the pond to increase its water holding capacity.

Sanjay Singh of Parmarth Sewa Sansthan says, "The women have formed the 'jal sahelis' group to promote water conservation in the rural areas of Bundelkhand."

"This achievement of illiterate women is motivating others to join the water conservation movement. It will also check migration and promote agriculture," he says.

Waterman Rajendra Singh feels: "There is a need to revive the ancient ponds for conservation of water. The state government should protect the ponds from encroachment, exploitation and pollution."

Results/outcomes

- Livelihood and food security enhanced
- Water table increased in the areas
- Water source sustainability reported in the areas even in this drought condition many ponds have water
- Income level enhanced
- Reduction in rate of distress migration in the areas
- Coping mechanism and resilience power increased

Way forward

- Promotion of PV Solar Irrigation System
- Interdepartmental coordination
- Convergence approach

Web links

<http://punjabupdate.com/2015/06/11/wont-allow-encroachment-of-water-bodies-up-govt>

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Thanks

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