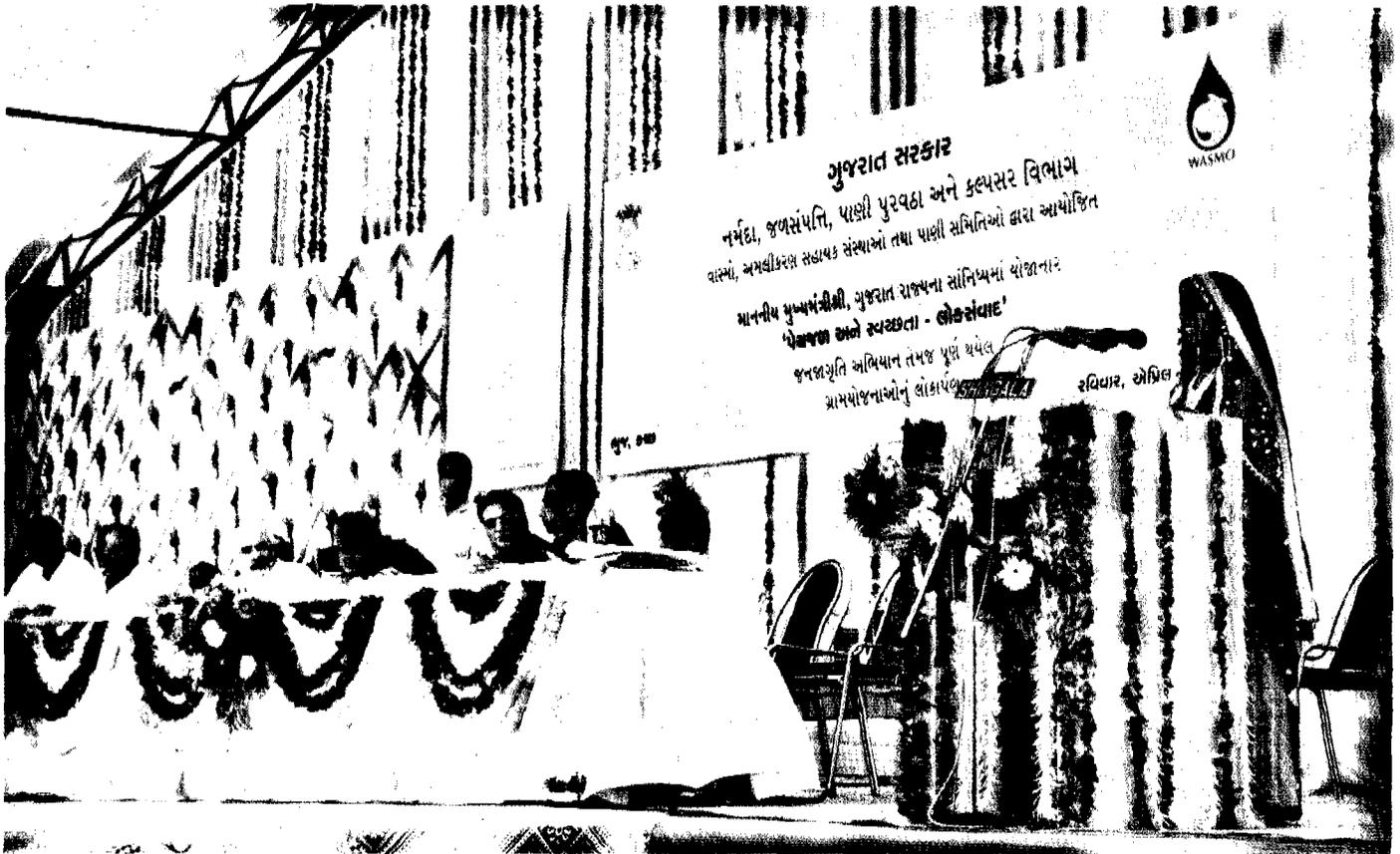




Government of Gujarat

સત્યમેવ જયતે

Empowering women for Improved Access to Safe Water



Water Supply Department
Government of Gujarat

2021.07EM-10058

Empowering women step-by-step



Active involvement in a PRA



Signing MoUs



Monitoring construction



Testing water quality



Facilities at the door-step

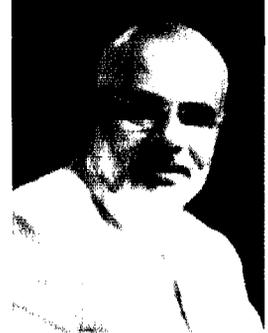


Ending water woes



सत्यमेव जयते

Narendra Modi
Chief Minister,
Government of Gujarat



Foreword

As an integral part of development, Government of Gujarat has focused specifically on reducing the burden on women folk, including the drudgery of fetching water in water scarce areas. Government has worked for involvement of community and women in particular in its programmes. Although specific provisions for this purpose were made by Government to address the issues of gender mainstreaming while planning and implementation, participation in true sense has not been an easy task. The process, therefore, in drinking water service delivery sector was taken up in a 'Mission mode'. The Government of Gujarat reserved one third membership for women in the Pani Samitis and it was rigorously followed by their capacity building on various aspects. The response has been very encouraging.

It is heartening to see this document which presents several examples where women have been trendsetters and have shown the way how their involvement and interventions could completely reverse the scenario in a village. It is quite inspiring to see the great fortitude women have shown in overcoming social and cultural barriers and taking matters in their hands. Quality control in works, proactive role in scheme implementation, collecting peoples' contribution, village sanitation and even operation and maintenance on their own are the true outcome indicators of decentralisation where women could make the difference.

I congratulate all women who have joined the movement of reforms in water supply sector for acting as torch bearers for others to follow. Their courage, enthusiasm and leadership qualities have been a stepping stone for scaling up the reforms to more than 8,100 villages in Gujarat State.

I firmly believe that only through peoples' involvement and participation, efficient and sustainable systems based on local wisdom can be established.

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June 2007

(Narendra Modi)



सत्यमेव जयते

S. G. Mankad
Chief Secretary,
Government of Gujarat



Preface

In most villages in India, where water is not available through tap, it has been the responsibility of women to fetch water from nearby wells or tanks. To reduce their hardship, Gujarat Government has implemented several schemes to provide clean and assured supply of drinking water to villages through pipeline from perennial sources. Women, through Pani Samitis, have been actively involved in planning and construction of rural water supply schemes and also in their management. Pani Samitis have been formed in more than 8,000 villages and experience has shown that the Pani Samitis are efficiently managing these schemes.

The Water Supply Department of Government of Gujarat has documented the examples of empowerment of women in this booklet which not only makes fascinating reading, but also shows that there are invisible leaders in the community, who, given the right cause and motivation can bring about transformation of life in the villages. Experiences have also shown that where citizens, women in particular, decide to maintain services, it can be done efficiently and at lower costs.

This publication captures several inspiring stories of sustainable improvement in water and sanitation management in villages of Gujarat.

June 2007

(S. G. Mankad)

I. Women and Water

Water is a basic necessity of life. Everyone has the same need for it. Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities has been accorded high priority in the Millennium Development Goals. In most societies, women are primarily responsible for the use and management of water resources, sanitation and health at the household level. They select the water sources and determine which should be used for drinking, which for bathing and other domestic uses and which should be used for the cattle. They keep an eye on the water quality and come up with



strategies, time and again, to conserve supplies during times of scarcity. They look after the water sources and standards of quality. Over the years, women have amassed a remarkable wealth of environmental wisdom, being the ones to find water and manage it, to educate children in hygiene matters and to understand the impact of poor sanitation on health.

With the lack of easy access to water sources for drinking and other household purposes, it is not an unusual sight to see women and girls, balancing pots of water on their heads, hauling water from distant sources and spending many hours every day fetching water, which otherwise could be used productively. (In India, it is estimated that the national cost of women fetching water is 150 million woman work days per year, equivalent to a national loss of income of 10 billion rupees - approximately US\$208 million). The burden of water collection is often the number one domestic burden that women face and in many cases even pregnant women and lactating mothers have to bear the burden of water collection. They are even vulnerable to harassment and assault while fetching water.

In the life span of a rural woman, one sixth of the time goes in search of water. Yet, this does not necessarily guarantee them a regular supply. The search for water not only brings drudgery to their lives but deprives them of basics like education and a cherished childhood. This calls for a change. Gujarat has made a considerable change in a short span of time, but there is still a long way to go.



Water, sanitation and hygiene deliver outcomes across the MDGs. Improved and safe water supply reduces the burden of domestic tasks on women and also the incidence of disease in the household. Thus it provides women more time, which can be used for income generation activities, caring for children and the aged in the family, and participating in activities at community level. Appropriate water and sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion can greatly impact girls' education. With reduction in the burden of domestic chores on them, attendance rates can go up, drop-out rates can go down, the number of girl

children completing their school education can significantly increase and performance in school can improve with the reduction in the incidence of water and sanitation related illness.

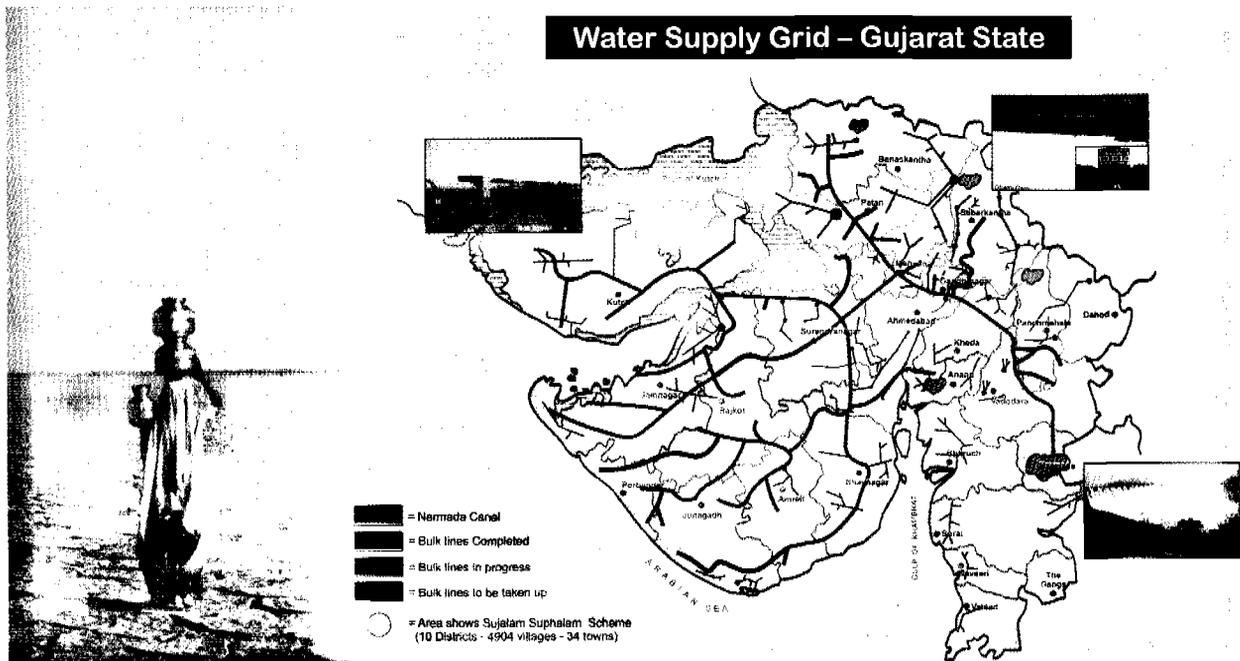
II. Initiatives in Gujarat for Water Security

Freshwater resources in Gujarat are limited and unevenly distributed. On an average, the State experiences a drought once every three years. These conditions, together with increasing demand of water by the agriculture sector and deteriorating quality of water, puts very high pressure on the availability of potable water on a sustainable basis. Water availability in rural areas has been a concern, particularly in Saurashtra, north Gujarat and Kutch and in the past tanker deployment as a part of emergency arrangements for drinking water during the summer had to be done, although more recently this has drastically come down.



Statewide Water Supply Grid

Lack of adequate and safe drinking water affects the socio-economic conditions and health of the people as well as sets drudgery in the daily lives of women who travel miles in search of water. To overcome the problems of failure and poor quality of groundwater sources, the Government of Gujarat has envisaged long-term sustainable solutions by shifting the focus from groundwater to surface water. Through projects based on sources and structures like the Sardar Sarovar dam, Narmada canal, Mahi based pipeline, Dharoi dam etc., the State is moving towards creating a 'Statewide drinking water supply grid' to provide adequate, regular and safe water to all its citizens. Approximately 60 per cent of the population has already been covered by this grid and on completion of these projects it is planned to cover more than 75 per cent of the state population under the network.



Community-management for Water and Sanitation

Another initiative of the State has been to involve communities at local levels for efficient service delivery mechanism in villages. For this Pani Samitis are established as a sub-committee of the Gram Panchayat, which take care of drinking water infrastructure and service delivery at the village level. The task of participatory management at local levels has been taken up on a mission mode in the State. For this purpose, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in the form of Water and Sanitation Management Organisation (WASMO) was created in May 2002 by the Government of Gujarat. WASMO serves as a facilitator and



coordinates the programme by extending social, technical and management support at local levels. A paradigm shift, wherein role of the Government is changing from provider to facilitator is gradually being achieved by this process. In Gujarat State, more than 8,014 Pani Samitis have been formed, of which, more than 2,590 Samitis have commissioned their own in-village water supply systems and are managing these systems through collection of tariff decided in the Gram Sabhas. In another 1,907 villages, schemes are under implementation. In 1995, the Gujarat government passed a resolution, which was amended in 2002, on the formation of Pani Samiti as a sub-committee of the Gram Panchayat to provide an institutional mechanism for in-village water supply management. The Pani Samitis have representatives from all communities in the village, including marginalised communities. The strength of this committee is about 10-12 members, and of these, **one-third are women.**

Constraints to Participation of Women in Community-managed Programmes

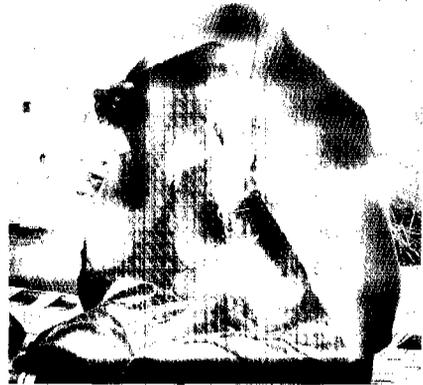


Women empowerment and water management are two closely related themes that are inevitable for integral development. Women are the prime carriers, managers and end-users of water and are therefore directly affected by its availability or non-availability. They traditionally carry the burden of bringing water from distant sources, irrespective of their age, be it a girl child or an old woman. **Yet, women, who have the most at stake in regard to water, are hardly consulted about the location and design of water facilities.** Despite their number and their prominent roles and responsibilities, women often have no voice

or choice in decisions about the kind of water and sanitation services they need.

In the current development scenario, although community participation is the catchphrase and there is a thrust on adopting a gender approach, it takes considerable efforts by women to

break into the world of water and tread into men's territories. In order to participate effectively in management of water, women may have to overcome specific social barriers that restrict their participation in community-based forums or consultations that can influence policies on water. Even in meetings it is commonly seen that women remain seated at the back, are silent and hardly participate because of a feeling of powerlessness, fear of overstepping their customary roles by speaking in group meetings, and lack of experience in working with groups. There are several commonly occurring reasons why women are often excluded or poorly represented.



- *Cultural barriers and taboos that in one way or another eliminate women.*

In traditional situations, it is difficult for a woman to sit down with unrelated men in a public place and discuss community issues. In cultures where women's mobility outside the home is restricted, it imposes constraints on their participation and leads to lack of experience in dealing with public matters, outsiders and formal organisations. Social, political and religious leadership therefore usually rests with men.

- *Low social status of women that has established the traditional pattern for public leadership and decision-making.*

This, in turn, influences any new organisational forms. For instance, traditional male domination of the Gram Sabha (village council) in Indian villages establishes expectations for the newer Panchayat or for Water and Sanitation Committees. Although some projects have shown that once women acquire higher social status, they are more accepted as members of community organisations, this usually takes time.

- *Women's lower educational achievements, which are often reflected in a lack of reading, writing and numeracy skills.*

Women have lower levels of literacy and skills, which also results in the belief that women should not, or can not, do technical jobs like maintenance of systems established. This is one reason men represent the household in public matters and organisations.

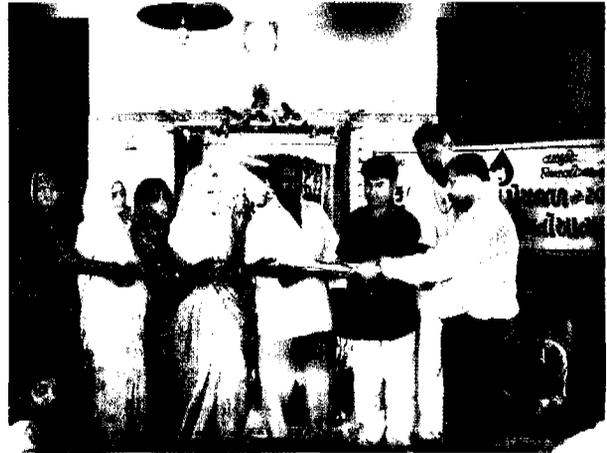
- *Women's workload, which prevents their attendance at meetings or incurs opportunity costs in terms of income-generating activities.*

Several studies have noted women as saying that they simply "do not have time" to go to meetings and that they would rather make better (more productive) use of the time they would spend at a meeting. Moreover, meetings are often held at night to accommodate men's work schedules, but it is not considered appropriate for women to go out at night.



Women as Active Project Partners

Water is at the core of women's traditional tasks. Providing access to clean water close to the home can dramatically reduce women's workloads, and free up time for other economic activities. For their daughters, this time can be used to attend school. **Therefore, the State of Gujarat has started seeing women as 'partners' and not as mere 'beneficiaries' in water management plans.** They need to participate as decision makers in decentralised water supply systems in the villages. The main issue is access to potable water on a regular basis to all. Therefore, it has been the prime objective of WASMO programmes to encourage and include views of women, while developing in-village water supply systems.



Intensive efforts of ISAs and teams of WASMO in building the capacity of Pani Samitis and community at large and providing alternatives and choices of technologies to suit their needs, has brought out active participation. The community has been able to achieve building up efficient water distribution systems and equity, so as to include poor people living on the fringes. Revival and sustainability of local sources is the cornerstone of the programme. The community has brought water quality parameters in their distribution system and women have been leading the campaign for sanitation and personal hygiene in their villages.

Inclusion of women in all the aspects of project implementation is not limited to their physical presence; they are given an opportunity to express their needs. Inclusion of women in Pani Samiti, while setting up the in-village water supply and sanitation facilities, gives them an opportunity to decide about the facility and its location, which they frequently use. From the inception of the programme the idea is to include women in all the core activities of implementation, monitoring and maintenance of the facilities. It gives them a sense of ownership and they attend meetings, exposure visits and workshops for various important aspects of decentralised water supply systems. Many of them are signatories of bank accounts and monitor the construction work.



Gender concerns are included in all the programmes through specific capacity development initiatives. It includes trainings, workshops, exposure visits, experience sharing and interaction with other women leaders. Continuous IEC efforts are made to help women realise their true potential and come to the forefront. Separate meetings are held with the women so as to provide them a space to speak up without inhibition and elicit their views on their water requirements and convenience in this connection. These meetings help to get a

realistic feel of the requirements of the village as well as consider the locations and types of infrastructure for the village.

Capacity building is based upon the philosophy of adult learning where participants are fully involved. Women's participation in all types of trainings from orientation and pre-construction, to post-construction O&M is ensured. The main methods used for training are lectures, group discussions, peer group interaction, demonstrations and case studies. Hands-on training is done for certain topics such as record-keeping to ensure that concepts and guidelines are understood. Awareness generation forms a major and essential part of the capacity building initiatives for which a variety of media are used ranging from print to the use of All in India Radio and Doordarshan. The popular radio programme 'Gam no choro' was sponsored in Bhuj and Surendranagar wherein women from the village narrated their experiences of participation in the community-managed project and the impact that the programme has had on their lives. For the women of the villages, going on air was a unique experience to reach out to other women facing similar problems and also helped boost their own morale and confidence.



IEC and Capacity Building Initiatives for Women

Exposure visit of Pani Samiti members

Pani Samiti members of Muda village of Rapar taluka, in Kutch were taken on an exposure visit to Galpadar village by the ISA. It was a different experience for the Pani Samiti members and it helped them to understand the implementation process and observe the changes taken place in the village. They learnt about everything from collecting O&M to managing it and realised the extent of responsible work, which ordinary people are capable of. Overwhelmed with the work seen in Galpadar village, Bhaniben Patel along with other Pani Samiti members took initiatives to replicate the work in their village.

Collecting water during summer becomes tougher for the women and men alike of Navagam village, Surendranagar. The Panachayat arranged tankers, which only irked the community further because of the insufficient water it supplied. Although people were not ready to give contributions when the programme was initiated in the village, they later on realised its importance. All were taken on an exposure visit to a nearby village to understand the components of the programme. This prompted them to pay contribution. Works undertaken in the village are almost near completion and people are happy that finally women Pani Samiti members could bring water to the village.



Radio spots: inspiration to take on community-managed village activities

Rising early to complete household chores and to leave for fetching water is the daily activity of a woman on a normal day. Hansaben, of Majewadi village of Junagadh district, as usual was listening to the regular radio programme in the morning when she came to know about Swajaldhara programme in the nearby villages and its benefits. For a couple of days she listened carefully and understood the concept thoroughly and then with the support of other women from the village Hansaben met the officials. The village is now on the way to have household connections based on Narmada water.

Under all the community-managed programmes of WASMO, occasions like Republic Day, Independence Day, World Water Day, Women's Day etc. are observed and the community is mobilised for the cause of water and sanitation. Programmes are organised particularly on environmental sanitation, water quality, and health and hygiene with special attention given to generating awareness among women on various related issues.



Women's Day Celebrations in Surendranagar

World over 8th March is observed as International Women's Day. Women come together at various platforms and introspect on their own development and lives. In many countries this day is even observed as a National holiday. To commemorate Women's Day, a workshop for village women including members of Pani Samitis from villages of Surendranagar was organised on March 8, 2007. The objective was to make women aware of their role in village water supply and sanitation systems as well as to felicitate the women leaders who have achieved exemplary results under such programmes.

The workshop was organised in association with Nairita Foundation, Ahmedabad and Surendranagar Bar Council Association. From 130 programme villages of Surendranagar, around 586 women members were present at the workshop. Ms. Trupti Paul, CEO, Nairita Foundation talked about the pivotal role women could play in Panchayati Raj Institutions and motivated the women to realise their



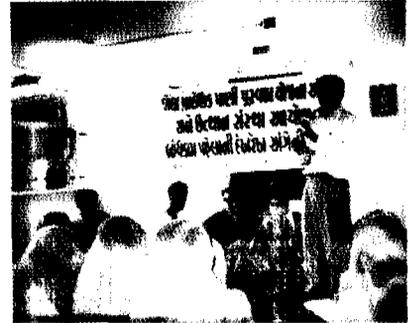
own potential to achieve positive results. The District Judge of Surendranagar, who was present along with other members of the Bar Council Association talked about fundamental rights of women and the legal provisions for them. Unit Manager of CMSU Surendranagar, Mr. P. G. Majithia, appealed to the sensitivities of women and encouraged them to take lead in constructing household toilets which provide privacy and safety for women and increased their self-respect. On the occasion, '*Nari tu Narayani*' a street play, was presented by the staff of CMSU, which sent across the message that a woman who keeps her household clean, fulfills her duty towards keeping the village clean.

Women Pani Samiti members from villages where works have been completed shared the experience of their journey - from initial reluctance, to realisation, trials and challenges faced, new lessons learnt, and achievements - while going through the process of implementing in-village water supply and sanitation facilities. While Lilaben of Bubvana village recalled the enthusiasm and spirit with which women carried out the sanitation campaign in her village, Pankhuben of Nagdaka village shared success of in-village water supply scheme. Kailasben of Velavadar village affirmed that it has been two years since women in her village have not carried water on head. The women all participated in one way or the other. Some took an oath to attend all Panchayat meetings regularly and actively, while others sang songs on women's role in village development and participation. Even women who had never come onto the stage and addressed a crowd were persuaded to say a few words about themselves and their village, so as to build up their confidence. The event thus gave the women a chance to share their experiences as well as get new information about water supply and sanitation systems, their role in the Panchayati Raj and legal provisions to protect their rights and interests.

Programme Process to Facilitate Community Management

The community-managed approach of WASMO typically follows eight sequential stages:

- 1. Initiation of dialogue and introduction of the project:** The multi-disciplinary team of WASMO visits and meets the leaders and the citizens. They introduce the concept of the community-managed in-village water supply system to the villagers.
- 2. Participatory rural appraisal and community mobilisation and empowerment:** After initiation of dialogue, once demand is made by the villagers, a PRA is conducted in the village and a tentative need based plan is prepared involving all the sections of the community. Potential members for the village level water and sanitation committee are also identified.
- 3. Meeting of village (Gram Sabha):** A meeting of the entire village is then conducted and the scheme so developed is discussed for its formal approval from all sections of the village community for its wider acceptance.
- 4. Village Action Plan:** The village committee, in continuing consultation with the community develops a Village Action Plan (VAP). It makes decisions on technical options, social considerations, and operational and cost responsibilities. It is again discussed in the village assembly. Project formulation is then done and project is submitted for approval of district level water and sanitation committee. Before approval from district committee, it is mandatory to collect about 10 per cent of the total capital cost of project as community contribution to ensure the participation from all villagers.
- 5. Capacity building and work organisation:** Work is undertaken by the Pani Samiti with the support of the community and includes calculating costs, sourcing material, and arranging for the implementation of the activities. To be able to perform their various roles, on-the-job training is given at regular intervals on different themes.
- 6. Community-managed implementation:** The planned works under the project are either contracted out or constructed by the community under the supervision of the Pani Samiti. Before giving out contracts, rates and quality of works are considered by the committee members.
- 7. Operation and Maintenance:** The completed works are then operated and managed by the community. Training for O&M is provided in managerial, technical and financial matters so that the people are equipped with the know-how for maintaining the assets.
- 8. Tariff System:** For operation and maintenance of the infrastructure after commissioning, a tariff structure is formalized in the village assembly wherein all the village households contribute for O & M.





Changing Role of Women

The empowerment process has proved to be a step in the right direction and one notices women participation in activities like collecting contribution and monitoring construction, as well as exhibiting the right to question decisions. Women have proven themselves to be truly concerned and participative in such activities. They are Pani Samiti chairpersons and in many instances have showed exemplary courage by stalling the construction of sub-standard work or being able to collect money when men failed. The process of social mobilisation with the active participation of women helps in making the programme efficient and sustainable.

Chairpersons of Pani Samitis: *More than 24,000 women are members of Pani Samitis and are heading Pani Samitis in 879 villages.* There are several Pani Samitis which are solely constituted by women members. Empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj system and the constitution of Pani Samiti as a sub-committee of Gram Panchayat has provided an enabling environment for women to participate in decision-making and administration.

Finalising Village Action Plans – Women play an important role in assessing the possibilities and deciding the facilities of drinking water depending on available water sources and need of the community. They participate actively in formulation of schemes in many villages.

Implementation of programme – Programme implementation is actively supported by the women members of the Pani Samitis. They are given trainings to handle the nuances of programme implementation. In several villages programme implementation is independently handled by women.

Monitoring – Monitoring implementation, maintaining records and accounts as well as quality checks are also done by women.

Maintenance – Many active women have got interested in operation and maintenance (O&M) of schemes and facilities. They also help in collection of tariff regularly and in many cases they take up the responsibility of payment themselves. Their involvement is a key factor in effectiveness of O&M.

Women members closely participate in all the above mentioned processes. Irrespective of their socio-economic status, women show sensitivity for equity and bring important facets of the programme into focus.

III. Changes brought by Women

In the project villages of WASMO, instances are aplenty to understand the role of women as the constant force of encouragement, the mediator to resolve age-old disputes, and the leaders and managers of community-managed systems. There are various roles played by the women and replicates of each role in many villages. The stories of bold and intuitive measures taken by them are bringing forth women as TORCHBEARERS in the decentralisation process. Their role has been in taking charge as Sarpanches, Pani Samiti Chairpersons and users; taking a proactive stand where men have not taken interest, collecting community contribution and contribution for O&M; conflict resolution, monitoring of work and ensuring quality, upgrading sanitation and hygiene conditions; holistic development of sustainable in-village systems; mobilising the community, particularly women; and much more. It is therefore, nearly impossible to encompass the social, attitudinal and behavioural achievements of women in figures. Presented in this documented are examples of the extraordinary dedication and grit that women have shown to make a difference in their own lives and their surroundings.

We have discovered springs of hope when we were able to mobilise women. They germinated ideas for project/works and they led the way to many successes.

Amita Shah
WASMO's engineer

Women at the Helm

- **As Sarpanches**

- **Saraswatiben, Pushpaben Bariya and Manjulaben Tandel - Valsad**



Moti Doldungri, Nargol and Dandi villages in Valsad district have women as their Sarpanches. These villages faced water scarcity, with Dandi and Nargol experiencing salinity problems as well. Being women themselves, these Sarpanches were sensitive to the daily struggle the women underwent in accessing water. When the Swajaldhara programme was introduced in their villages, they made sure that lack of contributions from the communities would not stand in the way of achieving water security. In Moti Doldungri, Saraswatiben generated awareness among women of the village regarding the benefits of the scheme. The motivated women of the village raised Rs. 68,000 and

implemented the scheme, which they desired in the village, ultimately benefiting one and all. The case was similar in Nargol village, where the Sarpanch, Pushpaben Bariya encouraged the people to contribute and the Pani Samiti collected over Rs. 40,200 from the community.

Proximity to sea accelerates salinity ingress in Dandi village of Valsad and in summer wells dry up and groundwater level goes down. Though the village is covered under a group water supply scheme, due to low pressure and low technical facilities water does not meet the requirement. To solve these problems villagers decided to join in the Swajaldhara programme. Although the programme was accepted, when it came to collecting community contribution, people were reluctant to come forward. In fact, at one point of time the programme had to be withdrawn due to the lack of community contribution. The village Sarpanch, Manjulaben Tandel brought the project back. After a series of meetings and talks with the community, the project was reintroduced. As a result of her perseverance, the Pani Samiti account received Rs. 1.03 lakhs from the people.



Ramaben, Mankanpur village - Jamnagar

Ramaben, the Sarpanch of Mankanpur village of Dwarka taluka firmly believes in exercising her powers to fulfill the responsibilities of a Sarpanch. Her leadership convinced people in this no-source village to have faith in the programme of WASMO. She not only established an efficient water supply system, but also persuaded each house to have soak pits. Water harvesting has helped them to have assured water supply. She is confident and has a long agenda of village development waiting to be fulfilled.

Vilasba, Morchand village – Bhavnagar



Earlier Morchand village had three hand pumps and two public wells, but in summer the sources would dry up. Under the WASMO programme Vilasba, the Sarpanch of the village, collected people's contribution for the scheme with the help of the ISA. The construction work was awarded to an agency but when they failed to complete it, the Pani Samiti took over all the construction. Today, there is one ESR, one sump, three check dams, distribution pipe line, 20 stand posts, three washing facility, three school sanitation units, underground tanks and two cattle troughs. Under the leadership of Vilasba and her perseverance in mobilising people the Pani Samiti completed all the construction work without compromising on quality. Vilasba is always supported by her husband Babuba Gohil in the work she undertakes.

Chanchalben Rathodia, Vayadpura village – Vadodara

People of Vayadpura are enjoying the success of the initiatives they have taken for the in-village water supply and sanitation programmes. With the construction of an ESR and distribution line the villages are getting stable water supply. The credit goes to Sarpanch Chanchalben for making the development work possible in the village. She says, "Women had to toil in the farm whole day and then queue up at the village tank for fetching water at midnight." This prompted her to take a step towards the implementation of the programme and she decided to collect the community contribution from every household.

Vasantben Makwana, Rangpar village - Bhavnagar



Rangpar is an ordinary village of Bhavnagar district. The issue of low literacy rate had always been a hindrance in Rangpar for development initiatives. In such a situation when Vasantben became the first woman Sarpanch, villagers were skeptical as well as they had expectations from her. With the complete support of community and Gram Panchayat, Vasantben brought progressive changes in the village. One of the changes was a solution to scarcity of drinking water through Swajaldhara programme. Bhimjibhai, Chairperson of VWSC provided full support to Vasantben and with the consent of other Pani Samiti members it was decided to regularise water supply through stand posts and cattle troughs. They were sure that it would instill confidence among the community to take house connections. It proved true and villagers came forward for house connection and paid required tariff.

Kalpnaben Mehta, Jawanpura village - Sabarkantha



Jawanpura village is a part of the Group Panchayat, which is headed by a woman Sarpanch, who is also the Pani Samiti Chairperson. Kalpnaben took the lead in implementing Swajaldhara programme in Jawanpura, which also benefited Sapavada and Sadatpura village. When Kalpnaben was elected as the Sarpanch of the village, availability of drinking water within the village was a distant dream. She realised this dream through Swajaldhara programme and now people in all the three villages are getting adequate and regular supply of drinking water. Kalpnaben also motivated people to achieve complete sanitation and encouraged people to construct toilets, as a result of which, all the households in Jawanpura village have toilets.

• As Pani Samiti Chairpersons

Pani Samitis headed by women chairpersons

Project	No. of Pani Samitis formed	No. of Pani Samitis headed by women chairpersons
Ghogha	82	21
ERR	1211	180
Swajaldhara & Sector Reform Scheme (State)	5888	620
Sector Reform (Pilot)	833	58
Total	8014	879

Note: Through all the Pani Samitis formed in Gujarat more than 24,000 women are involved in development of community-managed in-village water and sanitation systems.

Sumitraben, Bavka village - Dahod



Sumitraben is the young and dedicated Pani Samiti Chairperson of Bavka village of Dahod district. She cherished the dream of becoming the Sarpanch since childhood and her determination won her the position of Sarpanch as well as the Pani Samiti head. Sumitraben took initiative to construct a common hall, rooms for village school, and kindergarten, bore wells and houses for economically marginalised families. But apart from all these achievements, her real aim was to bring a solution to the water problem, especially to benefit the women. Sumitraben continuously laboured for this and

finally her dream came true through WASMO. She came forward and formed a Pani Samiti with fifteen women as its members. Bavka Pani Samiti has clearly shown how women can get together to resolve their main time consuming activity – that is of fetching water.

Shobhnaben, Verasara village – Kutch



Being a village dominated by the Darbar community, the role of fetching water was being traditionally handled by the men folk of the village. They used to fetch water from the outskirts of the village in a 'kavad' (a horizontal bamboo to which pots are tied on either side), which was very time consuming. Effectively the men were not able to go for work in time. Under the leadership of Shobhnaben, the Sarpanch and a member of the Pani Samiti, a habitation-wise needs assessment was done and three underground tanks were constructed in the village whereby all households had equal and easy access to safe, regular and adequate drinking water. Shobhnaben says, "As the Sarpanch, it was my duty to do everything possible to solve the problems of my fellow villagers. In turn, they too have given me all support required." The men from the village are all praise for Shobhnaben's initiative and they say, "Until now it was the women who would come to us with their problems. But, one lady (Shobhnaben) has set an example by solving the problem suffered by men."

• All women's Pani Samitis

Varshamedi village - Kutch

After lot of consultations in Gram Sabha the Sarpanch Shri Sajubha Jadeja expressed that if women of the village were ready to take up decentralised water supply programme in the village, he would hand it over to them. Few of the active women offered to be the members of the Pani Samiti, constituted an all women members Pani Samiti in the village and elected Sitaben as chairperson. Each hamlet had a representative and took up the responsibilities of collecting contribution from each household. The difficult task gradually moulded them in to an efficient team, and they not only collected contribution from each household but efficiently managed the office work including dealing with bank. They grew in confidence as the work progressed and ensured quality construction work, by active supervision. They are proud of their achievements, and enthusiastically show their work to Pani Samitis members visiting from other villages. Their example has motivated others. Sitaben says, "We have learnt to take lead in other development work, we are confident that we are building our children's future. We have changed the behaviour of men towards us."



Gelada village – Kutch

Gelada village also like other villages of Kutch district saw destruction by a massive earthquake that struck the area on 26th January, 2001. The rehabilitation process brought out discord in the village, and it was an uphill task for Vivekanand Research & Training Institute – an Implementation Support Agency (ISA) of WASMO – to introduce the community-managed water supply programme in this village. The Panchayat and its members were not interested in the programme. In one of the Gram Sabhas, the active Mahila Mandal took the lead and its

chairperson Monghiba, inspired the women of the village to form a Pani Samiti, as the problem of drinking water affected them the most. They constituted an all women's Pani Samiti. Monghiba took up the lead and now she says, "In the beginning two members were active, but as we progressed, the team gelled together and took up the full responsibilities for supervision of works. The times when we had to run for collecting water at night have passed. Now we have adequate and regular water supply at our doorstep." She further says, "Women save at least two to three hours a day and that time is utilised in making 'papads', which gives us a regular income." The women say that, "This income has given us an opportunity to contribute for O&M of the systems, which ensures us regular water supply."

Bubvana village - Surendranagar

The women and other members of the Pani Samiti of Bubvana village were taken to Raj Samadiyala to interact with the villagers and get ideas on how to maintain village and household sanitation. The exercise proved fruitful and the women, inspired by what they saw, resolved to make Bubvana an ideal village. They met frequently to strategise on how to cope with waste and sewage. Every Sunday, between 2-3 pm, they decided to clean up the village. Every street was provided with discarded oil drums as dustbins, which were later replaced by dustbins provided by WASMO. Every household was also encouraged to construct soak pits and toilets. As fame of these women spread, they were invited by AIR Rajkot, to share their experiences in the 'Gam-no-choro' programme. Once a village where the community visited other villages to get inspiration, Bubvana soon became a source of inspiration for others to follow.



Khanda village - Vadodara



Swajaldhara, when introduced in Khanda village by Shroff Foundation Trust, was accepted as a programme, but they could not form a Pani Samiti as the community was divided on the choice of members. Failure on the part of male members to form a committee gave a chance to women of village to get together, and after a few consultations they were able to form an all women's committee. During the floods in 2006, their village got badly affected. So the Pani Samiti swung into action, and they used knowledge acquired from water quality surveillance trainings. Each house

was visited by them and chlorination process of drinking water was demonstrated at household level. It was ensured that each woman does chlorination for next seven days. Surekhaben Padhiar, Pani Samiti member says, "Now we are determined and confident of getting Swajaldhara programme in our village, we will start collecting contribution soon."

• Ordinary women as users

Sudadhara Moti village - Kutch

Sudadhara Moti village in Kutch has women in the majority in the Pani Samiti. These women believe that since water is their 'problem', they should be included in managing this resource. In fact, the locals say that with the inclusion of women, they feel more comfortable in talking about their problems. Although the Pani Samiti is a part of the village Panchayat, the general feeling is that this sub-committee is more participatory and less political than the Panchayat.



Varli village - Kutch

Recalling the adverse times faced by the villagers due to water shortage, Bhalbai a member of the Pani Samiti of Varli village says, "From the wee hours of the morning till afternoon we used to be engaged in collecting water from 'virdas' in the village pond and often we were unable to even take care of our children's needs. The water shortage was very acute and posed problems particularly during social functions like marriages etc. It was very difficult for us to even perform last rites for the people who passed away."

Although the villagers were skeptical about the community contribution and participation concept initially, their confidence was gained as the work progressed. The tradition bound women who found it difficult to participate in community issues, have gradually opened up and become more confident. Bhalbai says, "The situation has changed with the implementation of water supply and sanitation programme in the village. We get adequate water at our doorsteps now and are spared of performing the back-breaking task of fetching the water from afar. Although the women of the village are not literate they are able to understand the duties and responsibilities of Pani Samiti as well as importance of sanitation and good health."

Mamsa village - Bhavnagar

Babyben of Mamsa village says, "All responsible work in the village is looked after by males, women's view is never taken seriously. But with WASMO's intervention everything has changed. Women now monitor even the construction work of water supply structures apart from being active in all meetings and decision making." All this could be possible due to a series of training and exposure visits arranged for them to learn from observing the changes that took place in nearby villages and districts. Babyben says, "It is not that we have never faced any difficulties, but we are together now and that strength helps us overcome all the difficulties."



Aanda village - Jamnagar

Women Pani Samiti members of Aanda village of Jodiya taluka, Jamnagar, have always been a great support to complete all the procedural work of programme implementation. Active participation in discussions and meetings is synonymous with the women Pani Samiti members. Noteworthy is the fact that it is not only the Pani Samiti members who are active, but other women are also as active as Pani Samiti members.

Taking Initiative for Self-help

Alang village - Bhavnagar

Alang village of Bhavnagar district is a small coastal village and also known as Asia's largest ship breaking yard. It faced problems of water scarcity and salinity for several years. A few Darbars owned tankers, and water was supplied without charges to their own households and those of the neighbours. The inhabitants from lower castes were excluded and had to spend long hours on the road, waiting for some tanker to arrive.



Although Alang was covered under the Ghogha project, it was difficult to begin construction for as long as two years. The men were reluctant to raise the community contribution. The issue was discussed at the Gram Sabha where the women silently witnessed the reluctance of the men. The next day, ten women met at the village temple. They reasoned that if men could raise Rs.7 lakhs to construct a temple, then it was certainly within their means to raise Rs.30,000 for solving their water problems. Despite their logic, solutions were not that simple. The women had never set foot outside their homes without their husband's consent. Yet, determined, they went ahead to raise money from their village. For one of the women, who had come to Alang as a bride and had lived there for 12 years, collecting the contribution gave the opportunity to step out of the house and she saw the entire village for the first time. Within few days, the women collected the stipulated amount and entrusted it to the men to pay the contribution for the project.

Conflict Resolution

Kharva village - Jamnagar

People could avail the benefit of the water and sanitation programme only because of the grit and courage shown by the women in Kharva village of Dhrol taluka of Jamnagar. Like the name itself, water in the village was saline and unusable. In the beginning due to some internal disagreements implementation could not take place. When the women learnt of the internal tussle regarding the programme, they thought of resolving the matter by themselves and collecting contributions from the community. During the Gram Sabha, the issue of WASMO programme was completely dealt by women. At present the Pani Samiti of Kharva village has an all-women team to look into issues of water and sanitation from mobilising the community and developing VAP, to monitoring construction and water quality testing.



Women as Motivators

Kesharben, Mota Bhadukiya village – Jamnagar

Kesharben of Mota Bhadukiya village of Kalawad taluka, Jamnagar, prepares women to take lead and work for the village development. She says, "It is our involvement in the programme that has given us the courage to speak for ourselves and for the development of the village at large. Earlier we were so intimidated to speak in front of people or in Gram Sabha, but now everything has changed and increased our confidence." Women, now have no reluctance to come forward to make their village a better place to live. They now travel long distances not to fetch water but to attend meetings and trainings to gather details and information about projects and schemes as well as to motivate other women in the village.

Kiranben, Gangva village – Banaskantha

Kiranben Suthar hails from Navavas village (Danta) and works as a school teacher in Gangva after completing MA and B.Ed. She was always inclined towards gathering information on developmental schemes for the village. Her interest was instrumental in implementing Swajaldhara programme in Gangva village. Kiranben initiated street-wise meetings in the village and generated acceptance among the villagers towards the concept of community contribution. Especially, women were encouraged by Kiranben to take their decisions for the benefit of the village. At present, the community undertakes regular cleaning of the village tank and the villagers are being sensitised to drink chlorinated water. Also the school has more number of girl students as they are free from the burden of fetching water. Kiranben herself is an example of the changes that proper education could achieve. Now it has become Kiranben's motto to, "Make our immediate surrounding a better place to live even before thinking of improving the world."



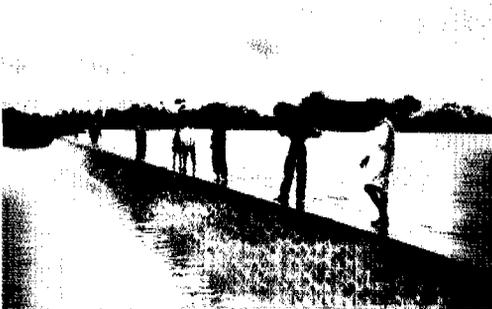
Collecting Community Contribution

Sharifaben, Mota Asambia village - Kutch

One meeting with Sharifaben of Mota Asambia village is enough to get a glimpse of the traditional temperament of the people of Kutch known for their resilience. The earthquake of 2001 had caused considerable damage to the water supply infrastructure in the village and the women faced great difficulty in fetching water for their drinking and daily household requirements. When the community-managed programme was introduced in the village, Sharifaben resolved to make it a success and ease the woes of the women in the village. As a member of the Pani Samiti, Sharifaben took the lead in making house-to-house visits, explaining the benefits of the project to the villagers and cajoling them into making the community contribution. She maintained the records, operated the bank account and when the repair and reconstruction work was on, monitored it very diligently in order to ensure quality works. The village now has functional in-village water supply distribution and women do not have to trudge long distances.



Diluben, Tarasara village - Bhavnagar



The Pani Samiti was formed in Tarasara village of Bhavnagar keeping in mind the active participation of people from all the communities. But when the matter of community contribution came to fore, people were reluctant to join in. Diluben, a vegetable vendor decided to make the programme a success and went from house to house to collect contribution with some of the other women from the village. In this way they collected Rs.20,000 and Diluben contributed from her own pocket for some of the economically underprivileged families.

The result is that community contribution for the in-village water supply system based on Mahi was hundred per cent. The villagers believe that they are getting year-round safe drinking water at the price of one gallon of water and have started paying the O&M for the water supply system.

Khengarpar village - Kutch

This village is inhabited by Maldharis, a community where the men stay away from home all day as they take the cattle for grazing. At times they even migrate in search of grazing grounds for their cattle. In one of the Gram Sabhas, Shrujan – an ISA of WASMO – with a long standing presence in the village, introduced the programme. The women felt that by joining the programme, their drudgery of fetching water from a distance of four kms. would end. They showed willingness, but when told that they have to contribute ten per cent of the cost of the scheme, their hopes vanished and there was a complete silence.



One of the women boldly asked the others if they would pay towards the community contribution for the much wanted pipeline, and all of them said "yes" in unison. They contributed from their personal savings. They learnt to keep accounts and write receipts. The secretary of Pani Samiti Deviben Mahera says, "We have learnt to work for ourselves, we had never imagined that we would be able to accomplish what we desired. It has changed our lives."

Galpadar village – Kutch

The male members of Pani Samiti of Galpadar did not want to contribute to the community-managed water and sanitation programme, as in the past (after the earthquake) they had been cheated. Their reaction was of despondency and the Pani Samiti refused any contribution. In one of the meetings of members from WASMO and VIKSAT with Pani Samiti, there were signs of hope. Kuvarben Ahir, a member of Pani Samiti declared, "The women of this village have decided to join the programme and contribution will start from me. I will pay from my savings." She says, "When I mobilised the other women in the village, I had not only faced opposition, but even got disgraced sometimes, but I continued persuasion and pressurized people till everybody paid. I told myself that I have a responsibility to fulfill. Now everybody gets regular, adequate water in their houses and I have become a leader. I am not the chairman of the Pani Samiti, but I do whatever is required to be done." She is proud that she had an occasion to talk to the Chief Minister of Gujarat, about their accomplishments at an exhibition.



Naranpar-Gauripar village – Kutch

Women and youth of the village collected contribution from people for the water supply system. The respective Pani Samitis of Naranpar and Gauripar collected Rs. 2,50,000 and Rs. 4,00,000. Thereby, construction works of ESR and pond deepening began. Villagers, especially women were happy to have water at their doorstep after all the years of laborious digging of virdas and fetching water from distant places. Women also take the lead in maintaining sanitation in the village and conduct regular meetings.



Supervision and Quality Assurance

Jekuben, Chhaya village - Bhavnagar



Jekuben is an example for all other women Pani Samiti members of the state. She is a fearless decision maker who stood against all odds to put a stop on construction malpractices. Jekuben a member of the Pani Samiti, used to regularly visit the construction site and monitor the work being done. During one such visit, she realised that the contractor is not using the building materials in prescribed quantities. Without wasting time, she rallied together other Pani Samiti members and brought the sub-standard construction work to a halt.

The Pani Samiti members did not allow the contractor to continue the work until he gave an assurance that no malpractice would take place in the future. When the contractor threatened to leave the work incomplete, the entire village got together and took the task of completion on itself. Jekuben confidently attributes all this to the pre-construction training, workshops and exposure visits conducted by WASMO for Pani Samiti members. She says, "I had attended the pre-construction training of WASMO and hence realised that the contractor was cheating us. I could not allow such compromise on the quality of work which was meant for the benefit of the entire village and therefore decided to put a stop to the work with support from others." Two years after the project has ended, the people in the village are quite satisfied with the water supply system established. The Pani Samiti is still functional and meets 2-3 times every year and maintains financial records.

Shayaraben, Vadinar village - Jamnagar

Vadinar village of Khambhaliya taluka has two parts - Vadinar and Vadinar Dhar, with communities from both always at loggerheads. This only aggravated the shortage of drinking water and implementation of community-managed water and sanitation was difficult due to the internal discord. During the Gram Sabha, when people showed lack of interest to collect community contribution, Shayaraben, along with other women shared the difficulties they faced to fetch water from distant places. As a result one more Gram Sabha was held in the area where the water shortage was acute and a Pani Samiti was formed consisting only women members. The Pani Samiti members collected community contribution amounting to Rs. 60,000., by visiting all households at night after completing all the household chores.



The women also took interest in monitoring the construction work. They looked after the laying of pipeline, construction of structures and were present till all the work got completed. To monitor the construction work they adopted a unique way of measuring the depth with a one metre log of wood. They carried it to all the places where digging was in progress to check the depth. The construction agency was also regularly asked to adhere to the prescribed norms. Women took turns to monitor and keep a check on them. The dedication of all women Pani Samiti members ensured high quality construction and pipeline work in the village.

Sanitation, Hygiene and Safe Handling of Water

• Use of toilets

For sanitation and the use of toilets, motivating factors apart from benefits to health and environment need to be found. Since most villages have strong patriarchal systems where men make the decisions, the choice of whether or not to have toilets is made by males and is often based on economics. In several communities such as the Darbars and Muslims, there is a strong tradition of protecting women and excluding them from social activities. Messages have been found to carry greater persuasive power when the sensitivities of men are addressed and they are explained the benefits of toilets such as increased self-respect, privacy and safety for women and girls.

Nani Virani village - Kutch

The village of Nani Virani in Mandvi taluka of Kutch has a population of around 2000 and the people are sensitized regarding keeping their village clean, especially women. The Pani Samiti of the village has an office and this helps them from the trouble of visiting each household for collecting contribution and tariff. There are 200 households in the village out of which 83 have toilet facilities. The villagers realised that sanitation is the only solution to make Nani Virani a model village. This prompted them to take initiatives to keep the village clean. Pani Samiti makes payments from the money collected as



O&M charges to a valve man (operator) and sweeper. If a new house is constructed in the village, Rs.100 for household tap connection is collected. Women Pani Samiti members visit each household with no toilet facility and encourage them to have it by explaining its advantages.

Badanpar village – Jamnagar

Before the implementation of water supply and sanitation programme of WASMO, the people of Badanpar village of Jodiya taluka of Jamnagar were dependent on water supplied through tankers for almost 40 years. In such circumstances, it was the women who came forward to solve the shortage of drinking water. Now the village has a pump house, machinery for pumping, RRWHS, PVC pipeline, sump with a capacity of 70,000 litres, underground gutter line and everybody gets water at the doorstep. People are aware of the importance of sanitation and take efforts for this. This is evident from the fact that 257 houses have soak pits and 240 houses have toilets of their own. Used water is disposed off safely through the underground gutter line. All the above aspects were taken care of by the women of the village while finalising the Village Action Plan keeping in mind the situation and need of the people.



• **Environmental Sanitation**

Babiben, Khandek village - Kutch



Babiben, the Sarpanch of the village and a member of the Pani Samiti as well, decided to take on the work of sanitation awareness and cleaning the village on a mission mode. She started with addressing the women of the village and making them aware of good sanitation and hygiene practices. The women started by first cleaning their own houses and also taking interest in the cleanliness standards of their children. Next, the people in the village were gathered together and informed not to leave waste outside their houses and on the streets, and were motivated to clean the streets. The villagers, under the keen leadership of Babiben worked hard to bring success to the sanitation campaign. The village

came to a consensus on giving 15 days time to people to clean their streets and the surroundings after which a fine was imposed.

Gada village – Kutch

This village Pani Samiti constructed an efficient system of water distribution, to provide house connections. But when VIKSAT suggested that along with household connection, each house has to construct a soak pit, so that water does not overflow in streets, there was a stalemate. This was broken by the lead of Devuben Rabari, who made the first soak pit so as to demonstrate its usefulness. She proudly says that it has helped in adoption of soak pits by others. She feels that the soak pits have made the village cleaner and it has helped in reducing flies and mosquitoes, resulting in reduced incidence of diseases.



Naliya Timba village - Kutch



It is a small village having Darbar (Rajputs) households. Traditionally in Darbar villages water is fetched by men, because women are not allowed to leave the premises of the house. A representative of Manav Kalyan Trust – an ISA of WASMO – had visited this village many times to introduce community-managed water supply programme. In one of the visits she talked to women that if they make soak pits within their premises, their streets would be cleaner and they will be able to stop the breeding of flies and mosquitoes. Chandrikaben

Jadeja was the first to dig a soak pit and prevent the spilling of water into the street near her house. Very soon the breeding of mosquitoes and flies reduced. She became a beacon of light for others and gradually other women have also took to constructing soak pits. They are proud that they have solved their problem.

Mosuna village – Kutch



The concept of kitchen garden is integrated with the water supply and sanitation programme in this village. Women of Mosuna village have shown others how cultivation of vegetables can help in keeping the surroundings clean. They have diverted waste water into soak pits in the courtyard. Fifty-eight year old Valbai uses vegetables from her own garden and also sells it to raise income. She, along with others feels that getting water in each household was like a dream come true, and absence of soak pits, would have made their village dirty. She says how WASMO's

intervention along with the ISA Ashapura Foundation has changed the face of the village through usage of waste water.

Harkhuben is one of pioneers in bringing women to the front. Bijalbhai, Sarpanch says that in the beginning when meetings were conducted only Harkhuben used to attend. After the meeting she would share the decisions and discussions of the meeting with other women members and this led them to become a part of the programme. Harkhuben initiated collecting of contribution and kept day to day account of financial matters. Her work is not limited to this. Harkhuben looks after O&M and collects water tariff regularly to run the scheme smoothly. Also a system of penalty from those who fail to pay tariff on time has been put in place.

Bhojpara village - Surendranagar

Bhojpara - a small village of Maldharis – is abuzz with lot of enthusiasm, and their achievement in the last one year is a story of courage shown by women. They have converted themselves into a vibrant community, which hitherto was a rather lackluster one. Being a part of a bigger village Panchayat and separated from it by a distance of two kms., had over the years resulted into deprivation of basic facilities. They were neglected and excluded from development. Jadiben led the women and now the village has assured regular, clean water supply, well kept community latrines and troughs for their cattle. She says, "This programme has opened doors for us to see the development and we are proud that we have done it for ourselves. Now we are thirsty for development, while our thirst for drinking water is quenched."



Rethal village - Ahmedabad

Rethal village has a population of more than 5000 and is served by Naynaben – the Pani Samiti Chairperson and Sarpanch since last four years. She has completed matriculation and is dedicated to usher in changes in her village. For water supply the village had only on old tank which could not be used for people living in the heart as well as on the fringes of the village.

Women fetching water from distant places was a common sight. When Naynaben came to know of the Swajaldhara programme, she contacted the DWSC and applied to join the programme.



When the question of collecting community contribution arose, a Gram Sabha was called to make everyone understand about the need and details of programme. In a few days community contribution was collected and under Swajaldhara programme work of Rs. 14,91,000 that consists of water tank (ESR), pipeline, sump, cattle trough etc. was sanctioned. Apart from this Naynaben regularly attends meetings and training programmes organised by DWSC. She shares the information with other village women and also makes it a point to adhere to all that she has learnt about sanitation and safe handling of drinking water. All this has resulted in proper disposal of used water

and regular chlorination. Naynaben says, "Because of Swajaldhara programme, almost all the houses are getting adequate drinking water and the rest shall be covered when the programme is completely implemented. It has saved our time and children are free to pursue studies. Now it is my dream to make Rethal village a model for sanitation by motivating people to have toilets in all the households."

Kharva village - Surendranagar

Kharva has a population of 3,100, which consists of a mixed community. The main occupation of the people is farming. The only source of water is a well and collecting water from early morning till dusk is the main work of women. Though the village had a potable source of water, there was no proper system for distribution. With WASMO's intervention a Pani Samiti was formed and with its efforts a proper system was set up to distribute water in every lane of the village. A small water supply camp is in place in Kharva and people pay water tariff of Rs. 25 per month/per connection. To maintain cleanliness in the village a penalty of Rs. 100 has been fixed. Sarpanch of the

village, Shardaben, is convinced that not even her own relative or friends shall be spared if they are found littering the place. Narrating an incident she says, "Recently a new family has come from America and was letting the used water to the village by-lanes, so we approached them and demanded a fine. When we learnt that they are reluctant to pay, we asked them whether they did the same in America too! They paid the fine in no time and also agreed to arrange for a proper waste water disposal system at their house."



Manamora village - Jamnagar

It is very rare that the villagers, especially women make a demand for a washing facility or *snanghat* owing to several reasons from scarcity of water to rigid customs. But women of Manamora village of Jodiya taluka, Jamnagar specifically demanded a washing facility when the VAP was being formalised and they got it approved too. The *snanghat* was a genuine requirement of the village and is being used regularly.

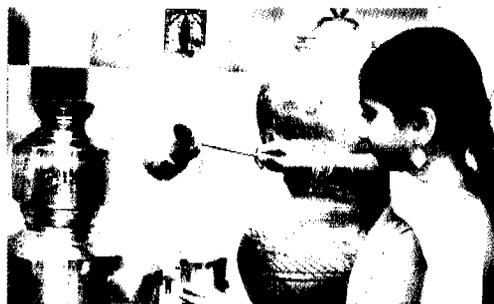
• **Safe Handling of Water**

The chance to contract diseases is large when water storage and handling for drinking and cooking is not done safely. WASMO project activities aim to generate awareness among women through information dissemination and demonstration of safe water handling since they are the primary agents for handling water.

Once women become practitioners of improved hygiene, they are able to inculcate it even among their children and family. Soiled hands and the practice of not bathing and cutting nails constitute risks to health. IEC activities have identified and targeted these aspects and have sought to bring about improvement in traditional hygiene practices. The main means of communication have been mass media such as the radio, folk media, street plays and interpersonal communication since these have a greater impact on women.

Nizamia village - Kheda

Jamnaben Parmar, is the concerned and aware Sarpanch of this village, which has a population of about 500. The people relied on two hand pumps which are the main source for water and when the water availability from these hand pumps reduces in the summer people draw water from private sources. The main occupation of the people in the village is farming and animal husbandry, which only adds to the water requirements of the community. Under the Sector Reform Scheme (State), the community collected the ten per cent contribution towards capital costs and implemented a scheme of Rs. 2,99,000, through which a system including a water tank, pipeline and stand-posts was developed. When the aspect of water quality monitoring was introduced in the village, the women under the leadership of Jamnaben took initiative and said, "Since we are the ones responsible for household water needs and we take care of filtering the water and keeping it safe, we will also take on the responsibility of water quality testing." Now with support from elders in the village and the school teacher a water testing team has been formed with all women members. This team checks the quality of the water from both the hand pumps once every month, and informs the community regarding the results. The team has also taken initiative and organised a sanitation drive with the school children.



Operation and Maintenance of the System

Manguben, Thana village – Banaskantha

Manguben of Thana village, Danta-Banaskantha, got the job of pump operator after the death of her husband who served as an operator. The job of operator was a blessing for Manguben, and it helped her to overcome the difficulties of raising a family. The responsibilities of a pump operator were not an easy task to accomplish, but Manguben used to accompany her husband at times and was therefore aware of the basics. Due to erratic supply of electricity in the village, pumping and distribution of water are carried out at night, so that water is available in the morning and the community does not suffer. She takes care of operation of the system and minor maintenance works by herself. She has also contacted the health centre and gathered information regarding purification of water. Earlier she used to chlorinate water only once in a week but after realising the importance of purifying water, now chlorination is being done everyday and she cleans the water tank once every month.



Village Sarpanch, Jyotiram says, "Manguben is exceptional in her work and she does everything with so much dedication. She keeps the water tank clean and does chlorination regularly." Ask anyone in the village, and all have their own story of Manguben's dedication for the work. In the beginning when people were reluctant to have chlorinated water, Manguben took help of the Sarpanch and other Pani Samiti members and helped people to understand the importance of having chlorinated water. Manguben says, "I will always be there for the people of my village, who have helped me in my difficult time. I will never put them in difficulty."

Jamnaben, Nagdhaniba village – Bhavnagar



Jamnaben, of Nagdhaniba village, Bhavnagar is not only an efficient home maker but works as the village pump operator. Majority of the villagers belong to the Darbar community, which is known for its patriarchal customs. In a normal situation Jamnaben would have never got a chance to venture out of her courtyard. Thanks to her enthusiasm, today the village gets water twice a day. Even though she is not a Pani Samiti member, Jamnaben has been active in all the work from monitoring the construction to attending trainings and meetings. She is a

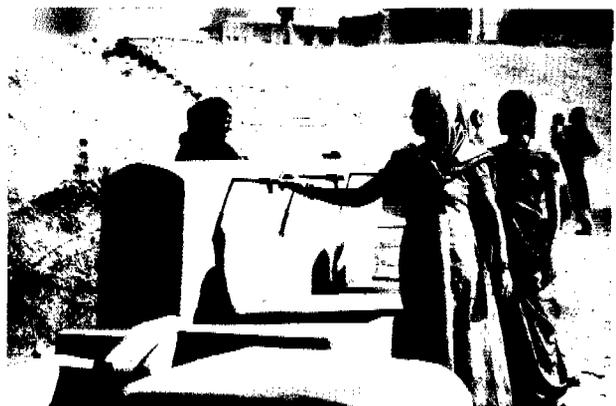
diligent pump operator who even at midnight, (which is when electricity is supplied), unfailingly switches on the motor in order to ensure water supply to the village. She has encouraged other women to work.

Collecting O&M Contribution

The following are women Pani Samiti members taking the initiative in setting and collecting O&M charges.

Rapar taluka

- In Amarpar village, women Pani Samiti members have been instrumental in setting the monthly tariff at Rs. 15 per household per month. They have also convinced the villagers to pay Re. 1 per animal per month.
- In Naliya Timba, Chandrikaba successfully explained to the villagers the need to pay Rs. 30 per household and Rs. 1 per animal per month.
- In Dedarva Versara village, Sarpanch Shobanaben ensures that the villagers pay Rs. 15 for O&M every quarter.
- In Bandhadi village, Rambhiben Bachubhai Ahir is the lady Sarpanch. Right from the start Rambhiben was actively involved in the programme. She started collecting community contribution by visiting each household and was successful in collecting Rs. 49,000. She did not stop there but went ahead and has taken the initiative to sustain these new facilities by starting the collection of water tariff at the rate of Rs. 5 per household. As a result, the Bandhadi Pani Samiti collected Rs. 800 for O&M to start with. She personally maintains the tariff register and issues a receipt on payment.
- Other villages where women Pani Samiti members have taken the responsibility of collecting O&M charges include Naranpar, Gauripar, Mevara and Vanoi.



Abdasa taluka

- In Asapar and Deedadromoti villages, women are actively engaged in deciding on the methodology and rules and regulations for O&M.

Nakhatrana taluka

- In Rampar Roha village, a women Pani Samiti member has taken the full responsibility for collecting O&M charges from all in her falia. She collects Rs. 50 per household annually.

Mundra taluka

- In Gelada village, Pani Samiti member Monghiba played a central role in collecting contribution from the villagers to meet 10 per cent of the capital costs and monitoring construction activity. After completion of the scheme, she has taken it upon herself to collect the water tariff which has been fixed at Rs.5 person per year.

Anjar taluka

- In Varshamedi village, 90 per cent of the Pani Samiti members are women. These women have distributed the faliyas amongst themselves for collecting Rs. 250 for every new household connection and O&M charges.

Bhuj taluka

- In Gado village, 50 per cent of the Pani Samiti members are women, who have take their responsibility of collecting O&M seriously.
- In Galpadar, Pani Samiti member Kunwarben has taken the lead in collecting O&M charges.
- In Kotda Athamana, Harijanvas women are actively involved in O&M collection.

Thordi village - Bhavnagar

The total population of the village is 3500 and there are 590 households. It is a multi-caste village with Patels, Darbar, Rajput, Muslims, Brahman, Valand, Harijan, Darji, Luhar, Raval and Khumbar living together. The village has an Anganwadi and a community hall and the major occupation of the people is agriculture, diamond polishing and labour work.

The Pani Samiti of Thordi village has successfully completed all the work under the project. Madhuben, a Pani Samiti member took the initiative of collecting people's contribution and spreading the message on sanitation and hygiene practices. In the village a SHG has been formed with 19 members which collects Rs. 100 per head. As of today Rs. 80,000 has been collected by the members of the SHG.



Benefits of Women's Participation in Water and Sanitation

Efficiency, effectiveness, equity and affordability are the main gains of adopting a gender approach on water and sanitation and empowering women to participate unequivocally. People who have stake in something, work at it and experience a sense of ownership over the infrastructure/assets. Where women participate in the development of community-managed water and sanitation systems, they appreciate the need to conserve supplies, use them optimally and also monitor the quantity and quality. They take interest in the operation and maintenance of the systems which provide them access to safe and sustainable drinking water.

A gender approach in water resources management can lead to greater:

- Effectiveness: the infrastructure, as well as valuable freshwater resources, will be more widely and optimally used and sustained by all user groups, rich and poor, women and men.
- Efficiency: with limited funds and resources, the sector agency can reach more individuals.
- Development: the service and its social processes will not only bring water, it will increase consumption, production, income, environmental security, health and overall family welfare.
- Sustainable use in freshwater ecosystems: Women's and men's direct and fair participation in research and project implementation can increase the potential flexibility and creativity in responding to environmental insecurity and changes in resource systems.
- Equity: Burdens and benefits will be shared more equitably between women and men in the household and in the community at large.

Source: *Mainstreaming gender in water resources management: Why and How; World Water Vision*

The benefits as perceived by women also are many. Some feel that the community-managed water and sanitation systems have brought an end to their drudgery and never-ending test of physical endurance. There are others who are very happy with the time that they now have on hands, which they put to various uses. Some like spending more time with their children and taking interest in their education, health and the general well-being of the entire family, while others are glad to have the extra time to put to productive use in activities like farming, animal husbandry, weaving, embroidery etc.



On the occasion of World Water Day on 22 March 2007, the Chief Minister of Gujarat held a videoconference with Pani Samitis of Patan district of Gujarat, which has a long history of drinking water scarcity, as it is adjoining the Rann of Kutch. 390 of the 517 villages in the district have adopted the community-managed approach to drinking water and sanitation systems. There are about 100 villages in the district which have 100 per cent household connections and about 50 villages have systems which provide water round the clock.

Speaking with the Chief Minister, during the videoconference, Giraben Vaghela of Baspa village said, "Twenty-three self help groups of the village resolved to use the saving for contribution towards Swajaldhara and each of the members contributed Rs.500. The men were not interested in giving contribution because they did not fetch the water. We have now regular, adequate water supply in each house and the women's committee is responsible for day-to-day maintenance and operation." Another woman from Umadi village said, "Earlier whatever we could lay hand on, be it saline or dirty water, was fetched and used for drinking. After we have built up our own systems, we get clean water at our doorsteps and it has made our life easy." She further said, "Two of my elder daughters were deprived of basic education, as they spent all their time traveling long distances to fetch water. Thanks to the community owned water supply system, my third daughter is lucky and is able to go to school."



Women in Gujarat participate in the community-managed programme whole-heartedly and in all stages of the programme, be it planning or post-project O&M. They have been the source of inspiration to both men and women alike, in taking matters into their own hands and deciding what is best for them to meet their own needs. All the NGOs who work with WASMO as ISAs have been instrumental in getting the women to the forefront and contributing with their ideas and knowledge. The result is that even in a district like Kutch, where rains are elusive and rains completely skipping parts of it not unusual, women appreciate and realise that along with regional water supply schemes supported by Narmada water, their own sources are the key for water security. Today they are proud project partners with high levels of awareness and boosted morale and proclaim that they are building a '*Pani Sanskriti*'.



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Building partnerships and working together



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