

## Water and Sanitation Management Organisation

### Gandhinagar

#### Participation and team work ensures round the clock water supply

People residing in the school faliya of Jogvel village of Valsad district faced severe drinking water problems. They sourced water from 'khankas' (small holes dug in the ground) and as each khanka dried up they would dig new ones. Once Dhakalbhai, a resident of the faliya got details of the Swajaldhara programme through television and the local office of water supply, people, in a very short time, collected Rs 60,000 as the community contribution for the scheme, as it served their most urgent need. Somebody offered land for construction of the ESR, while another person donated land for the pump house, stand post and the cattle trough.

The community decided to do the work themselves, with the women not far behind. Taking interest in all the work, they even ventured out of the village to get construction materials like bricks and steel etc. from different places. People contributed in the form of labour and also supervised the work very diligently. Pani Samiti meetings were held regularly and Gram Sabhas were called for all important decisions and sharing information on the expenditure.

Water is now available round the clock at the two stand posts, while 25 households in the faliya have got house connections through which they get water for 15 minutes twice in a day. To keep the area near the ESR clean, the people have constructed a small concrete platform at the base. Vanitaben Somabhai says, "Prior to the scheme we had to drink turbid water that we got from the khankas and in summer we had to dig new khankas regularly. The house connections have now really eased our lives. And even on special occasions water is available round the clock at the stand post."

#### Assuming varied responsibilities

#### Self-Help Groups strive for drinking water

Speaking to the Chief Minister of Gujarat during a video conference on the occasion of World Water Day, Giraben Vaghela from Baspa village of Patan said that 23 self help groups of the village resolved to use their savings for contribution towards Swajaldhara programme. The men were not keen on making a contribution because the struggle to fetch water everyday was not theirs. On the other hand each woman member of the SHG contributed Rs.500 without any

hesitation. The village now has regular, adequate water supply in each house and the women's committee is responsible for day-to-day O&M.

### Motivating women

Kesharben of Mota Bhadukiya village of Kalawad taluka, Jamnagar prepares women to take lead and work for village development. She says, "It is our involvement in the WASMO programme that has given us the courage to speak for ourselves and for the development of the village. Earlier we were very intimidated to speak in front of people or in Gram Sabha, but now our confidence has increased. They now show no reluctance to travel long distances to attend meetings and trainings to learn about other projects and schemes as well as to motivate their counterparts in other villages."

### Operation and maintenance

After the death of her husband who served as an operator, Manguben of Thana village, Banaskantha got his job. Responsibilities of a pump operator did not come easy, but Manguben used to accompany her husband at times and was therefore aware of the basics. Due to erratic supply of electricity, Manguben carries out the pumping and distribution of water at night (when continuous supply of electricity is available), so that the community gets water in the morning. She takes care of operation of the system and minor maintenance works. Realising the need for chlorination, she has increased its frequency and she also cleans the water tank once every month. It was Manguben, who with the help of the Sarpanch and Pani Samiti members, explained the importance of having chlorinated water and convinced the people for it.

Village Sarpanch, Joyitram says, "Manguben is exceptional in her work and does everything with dedication. She keeps the water tank clean and does chlorination regularly." The job of operator was a blessing for Manguben, and it helped her overcome the difficulties of raising a family. In return Manguben says, "I will always ensure that the people of my village who have helped me in difficult times are never put to risk."