

## Marching together against odds

### Rajapara village, Dwarka taluka, Jamnagar

Rajapara was chosen because of its long history as a no source village. With only six inches of annual rainfall, villagers learnt to cope up with available water. WASMOs initiatives were accepted but with a fraction of non-cooperative villagers supporting the Sarpanch it was difficult to move with further plans of supplying water and providing sanitation facilities. The Sarpanch's attitude did not hamper the spirits of the villagers. With the support of Up-Sarpanch and WASMO officials, they fought against injustice withstanding political pressures and attacks on Pani Samiti members. Such personal assaults only brought the villagers together to work towards a common goal. An FIR lodged with the police forced the Sarpanch to hand over the documents of the Pani Samiti and details of bank account. Later on, the Up-Sarpanch was entrusted to continue all the development work with the support of other Pani Samiti members and villagers. After the upswing, construction and repairing work was resumed in the village.

### Sosiya village, Talaja taluka, Bhavnagar

The village of Sosiya has two distinct warring factions, one supporting the project and the other vehemently opposing the whole idea. It was difficult to plan or initiate any activity in the village. An old Darbar woman took matters in her own hands and called women's only meeting at her own place. The entire project, its entire conditions, benefits in the future and impacts were explained. After discussion all the women felt that the men folk would not be willing to contribute to the project in any way, either cash or kind. Not to be disturbed the women decided that they would all write to their parents and ask for Rs.150 to meet the O&M costs. When this decision was conveyed to all the men, they were quite shameful of their reluctance to pay for O&M and they promptly agreed to work together for the implementation of the project and contribute in cash and kind. Thus the women were able to exert some pressure on the men and get them to participate in the programme.

### Rampar village, Bhavnagar district

In Rampar village of Bhavnagar district there were two distinct groups, one with loyalty to the current Sarpanch, Nakubhai and the other loyal to Dhirubhai, a former Sarpanch. These two conflicting groups were the cause of major hurdles in the progress of the village. Meanwhile, villagers were facing problems due to lack of drinking water for several years. No solution

appeared in sight as the groups refused to work together. When the Ghogha project was introduced in the village by the NGO Medhavi and WASMO, initially there was no positive response from the community. Not willing to give up easily, efforts by these two organisations continued. Gradually the villagers began to understand the novel approach proposed and the benefits that would accrue. The two leaders decided to bury their past differences and work together. They convinced the community to get involved. Both of them took active part in construction activities. Their efforts bore fruit when the in-village water supply scheme was commissioned and they assumed responsibility during the Atmarpan ceremony on November 30, 2004. The village now has two water sources, piped water from the Mahi pipeline and the local well. O&M contribution and salary for the scheme operator is being collected regularly. The local sources are strengthened and water quality has improved due to well upgradation and recharge activities.