

CONDITION OF ADIVASIS IN
SHEOPUR

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ABSTRACT

This report is based on interviews taken of the adivasi people in the adivasi villages of all 3 blocks of Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh. This report seeks to study the issue of “Scarcity of Water”, especially Drinking Water in these villages along with other issues prevailing.

Sheopur is a district of Madhya Pradesh state in central India. The district is located in the north of the state and forms part of Chambal Division. The district comprises three sub-divisions (Blocks): **Sheopur, Vijaypur and Karahal**. Sheopur sub-division consists of two tehsils: Sheopur and Baroda. Vijaypur sub-division also comprises two tehsils: Vijaypur and Veerpur. Karahal sub-division comprises the lone tehsil of Karahal. There are two nagar palikas in this district: Sheopur and Baroda and a nagar panchayat, Vijaypur.

There are a total of 527 villages in Sheopur governed by an approximate of 226 Panchayats. Out of this 50 falls under Karahal, 81 under Vijaypur and the rest comes under Sheopur. Some of the Adivasi villages in these blocks are listed as below :

Sheopur :Raipura, BardhaBuzurg, Hanuman Khera, JatKhera, etc

Karahal :Jharer, Dabli, Ajnoi, Syavri, Kalmi, Silpura, Aameth, etc.

Vijaypur :Ghunnipura, Aghra, Benipura, Kaathon, etc.

The sample size of the study was 45 adivasi households, majority of them being small and marginal farmers and structured interviews were conducted across the villages.

INTRODUCTION

India has traditionally been the home of different cultures and people. Unity in diversity is one of the most prominent features in the people of India. Among the diversified population a significant portion is the adivasi people, the original inhabitants of the land. Adivasis are known to be the autochthonous people of the land. India has the second largest adivasi population in the world, the first being Africa and adivasi Communities are the integral segment of Indian society. The adivasi culture of India and their traditions and practices pervade almost all of the aspects of Indian culture and civilization. In India one can find almost a new dialect, culture, and different people after moving 50 kms in any direction. Likewise the adivasi population is also very much varied and diversified. The adivasi people have rich traditions, cultures and heritage with unique lifestyles and customs. Mahatma Gandhi called

them the **Girijans** - The Children of the Forest God. Despite some regional variation, the tribes share many common traits, including living in relative geographical isolation, and being relatively more homogeneous and more self-contained than the non-tribe social groups. They live in the forest hills and naturally isolated regions known as a rule by different names.

These people, in our country, are treated as low, despised and untouchable by the prevailing adherence to manmade social norms and caste system. They are compelled to perform duties which are considered inferior and degrading like flaying the dead animals, cleaning the latrines and removing the garbage, guarding the cremation grounds and graveyards, weaving, drum-beating, entertainment of upper caste people etc.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

After Independence, the Government of India spent a lot of resources to improve the life of the Scheduled Tribes through legislations, developmental programmes and various progressive welfare schemes. They have also been given provision in the Constitution –

Part X (Article 244 & 244 A) of the Constitution is concerned with the administration of Scheduled Areas and Adivasi Areas. The Constitution makes special provisions for the administration of certain areas called Scheduled Areas, presumably because of the backwardness of the people of these Areas. Subject to legislation by Parliament, the power to declare an area as a “Scheduled area” is given to the President and the President has made the Scheduled Areas Order, 1950, in pursuance of this power.

Article 15(4) and 16 (4), (4A) provides special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or SC/STs and protective discrimination respectively.

Article 335 provides that the claim of the members of the SC/STs shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of efficiency in the administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in the Centre and State level. In reality, however, the number of SC/ST members in higher echelons of administration, still remains low in proportion to the reservation offered.

Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. It has also been called the **Forest Rights Act**, the **Adivasi Rights Act**, the **Adivasi Bill**, and the **Adivasi Land Act**. This Act aspires to give justice to these deprived communities by recognizing and vesting the rights to use, manage and conserve forest resources for their livelihood.

Apart from this, the Government has made provisions for their adequate representation in the services. To facilitate their adequate representation certain concessions in age, standard of suitability, etc have been provided

EKTA PARISHAD

Ekta Parishad is a people's movement dedicated to **non-violent principles of action**. Its activists work towards building community-based governance (gram swaraj), local self-reliance (gram swavlamban) and responsible government (jawab deh sarkar). Its aim is to see India's poorest people gain control over livelihood resources, especially land, water and forest. Ekta Parishad is a federation of approximately 11,000 community based organizations and has thousands of individual members. It is currently operating in 10 states working for the land and livelihood rights of India's most marginalized communities (adivasis, dalits, nomadic communities, agricultural laborers, small and marginal farmers, etc.) in over 20 Indian States.

Ekta Parishad works towards meeting these responsibilities by adhering to the spirit of Satyagraha (truth-force) and Ahimsa (non-violence) demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi and by providing a platform for the voices of the oppressed, the disenfranchised and the marginalized communities of India. The organization follows the principles of **Satyagraha and Ahimsa** to organize collective non-violence campaigns with the objective to convert the sources of violence to the doctrines of peace and unity through exemplary action.

BACKGROUND

Ekta Parishad evolved as a people's organization in 1991. Prior to that, it had been a loose grouping of NGO training institutes that had created a large base of community development work. It first articulated the agenda of "people's control over livelihood resources" in 1996 in the process of consolidating its vision around the key issues of land, forests and water rights. The majority of the people in Ekta Parishad at the time of its inception, were adivasis or adivasis, who had been increasingly alienated from their lands because of constant displacement.

These Adivasis were also suffering due to being barred from entering adjacent forest areas, because of the 1980 Forest Conservation Act. This problem was aggravated with hijacking of water resources for the use of industries and large-scale agriculture. Without land, forest and water, people (and especially forest-dependent communities such as the adivasi groups) could not hope to survive on the land. This was the impetus that brought the groups into a larger social formation after 1991. By the end of the 1990s, Ekta Parishad had gathered around it a constituency of about 2 lakh (200,000) members.

In 1999-2000, the first padyatra (foot-march), which traversed from western to eastern Madhya Pradesh (before the partition of Chhattisgarh), was organized. During this padyatra, Ekta Parishad discovered that “walking” was an enabling tool, one that allowed the marginalized people to participate readily and with dignity, since it only demanded their physical prowess and not funds or political patronage.

Following that first foot-march, about a dozen marches took place in different states of India on various issues. However, they did not have the desired societal impact. It was then decided to hold a national march in October 2007 in the Declared Year of Non-Violence, starting on the UN day of Non-Violence, October 2. The march was named “**Janadesh**”, which means “People’s Verdict”. A total of 25,000 people came together in Gwalior walking along the national highway, attracting the attention of people from all walks of life. After the arrival in Delhi, the government reacted swiftly and promised to meet their demands. It was one of the largest non-violent actions in human history.

The success of this march was followed by an international march in October 2012 called the **Jan Satyagraha** ("People’s March for Justice") when 1, 00,000 people will again be walking to Delhi from Gwalior, and different actions will occur in 60 countries around the world. In the year 2018, the organization plans to call another Janadesh with around 10, 00,000 people walking from Madhya Pradesh to Delhi.

Through all of this, the main work of Ekta Parishad has emerged: the mobilization of people. This is critical for any kind of social reform.

OBJECTIVES

- Ø To determine accessibility of water service to the villages and other social issues prevailing.
- Ø To compare the current water supply trend with the previous year.
- Ø To identify water conservation techniques and hygienic practices.
- Ø To determine the level of awareness among the adivasis regarding different aspects of life among the adivasis.
- Ø To analyze the drought impact of the previous year – 2016.
- Ø To analyze administration arrangements for water scarcity and other issues arising.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this present study is to examine, analyze and understand the issue of Scarcity of Water in the adivasi villages of Sheopur district, M.P. This required an appropriate methodology.

In this study, an effort has been made to know about the history of the people and the natural resources in the adivasi villages of Sheopur. From this perspective, the present is not always seen objectively. Hence, it is necessary to examine the real situation as it is found in the day-to-day life of the villagers. This has been done through intensive fieldwork at the village level in all 3 blocks of Sheopur. As almost all adivasi village were facing the same issues therefore all of them shared the same situations they come across in day-to-day life

Though observation as a method of data collection was used to some extent, the chief method of data collection was that of **intensive interviews and narratives (Primary Data Sources)** covering a wide range of topics along with the major issues.

Two types of persons were interviewed. In the **First** place, any person we found on the streets of the villages was interviewed. **Secondly**, the head or an adult member of each of the sample households was interviewed. People were interviewed in groups also inside the villages. The sample consisted of 45 households. But it was not possible to get reliable information from 8 of those households. At the same time, it was felt that the information gathered from 37 households was adequate for analysis and interpretation.

The **Secondary Data** includes previous year reports, case studies, documents, articles, etc provided by the organization for assistance.

The data collected was rough and varied and it had to be segregated to lure out the information relevant to this study.

ASSIGNED WORK

During the first two weeks, I visited the adivasi villages in all 3 blocks of Sheopur as the organization wanted me to come across the issues – the major being **Scarcity of Water**, especially **drinking water**, prevailing in these villages and work on them. I visited around 15 villages with the organization's volunteers in these two weeks. Following this, I had to prepare a document of my own study over the issues in these villages after going through the earlier reports, presentations and case studies of the organization.

For the next two weeks, I specifically visited the water resources (wells, handpumps, bore wells), especially **ponds** being constructed (under MGNREGA) in adivasi villages by District Administration and monitored by Ekta Parishad in a collective effort. Following this I prepared a document about the situation of construction work going over at that point of time after going through the previous year condition of these water resources.

Along with this, I was also part of the organization's Childcare Campaign on June 12 – World Child Labour Day.

ADIVASIS OF SHEOPUR

Over the years adivasi people in these villages have been living in isolation. They live deep inside the dense forests. Because of this their connectivity with the outside world hangs up in a fix. Apart from this, the **absences of basic amenities** have jeopardized their existence in the present day. Whether its Sheopur, Karahal or Vijaypur, every adivasi household is facing the same problem of basic amenities which are just a dream for them. Adivasis are known for their dependence on natural resources. But day by day the unavailability of these natural resources are adding to the miseries of these Adivasi people. Their access has got completely cut off from many of these. To people like me who live with all the facilities it sometimes seems as how these people even in this present day world of advancement and technology live without basic amenities which is the birth right of every individual in this world. It pushes me to take responsibility to fight for the fulfillment of their needs and demands.

When I say, that the adivasi have been deprived of the basic amenities, the issues that arises are the issues of Water - especially drinking water, electricity, less sanitation, issues of connectivity to the outside world, etc.

Some other issues which are linked to the above mentioned issues are - rising malnutrition and irrigation of land (field).

Apart from this the issues of unemployment and illiteracy can be seen extensively everywhere.

Throwing light on all the issues hereby I first come to the issue of **Scarcity of Water**. Adivasi people from the whole district are suffering due to lack of both - water for daily usage and the most important-drinking water. When I visited the villages, I found that the land of all the villages of all 3 blocks - Karahal, Sheopur and Vijaypur is rocky due to which they find it difficult to draw the underground water. From this one can derive the level of problem that the underground water in these regions are somewhat around 450-500 ft below the surface. Sources of water in the villages are :

Ø Hand Pumps

On an average every village has an approximate of 3 to 4 hand pumps (in some villages the total number of hand pumps doesn't even exceed after the count of 2). Out of this what I found out after visiting there was that the number of working hand pumps in these villages are half of total hand pumps i.e. only 1 or 2.

In some villages I even found that hand pumps are not working at all due to which there very limited resources of water are left for the villagers. Even when the water can be fetched through these hand pumps, it requires around 4 to 5 people at a time to draw water from the hand pump. Through this, we can induce the glitches these Adivasi people have been facing in this particular scenario. The above issue arises due to the availability of water deep down below the surface.

Also due to the less number of working hand pumps almost the whole village gathers around a single hand pump which creates havoc among the crowd. Due to this havoc and formation of large queues around the hand pumps, even the cases of disputes were told by the villagers. One can see small children and women fetching water in small utensils on their heads for about 400-500m every day.

Ø Boring Well

This process of drawing water has helped villagers by receding the burden of manual labour for them over the years. However it has helped them only to an extent. In some villages, I found that the generators either do not work completely or even if they work, they don't work properly. Issues of no diesel inside the generator were also seen. Also the distribution of generators has not been done keeping in mind the overall population of a village.

Example - Jharer village (Karahal) even after having more population than its neighbor village Daabli has less generators than the later.

Now the second issue which arises here is about the quality of water. The villagers said that sometimes the water is red in colour which can't be called adequate water in all norms. Hence even if the generators work properly they are of no use until and unless the quality improves.

Ø Wells and Ponds

The Wells and Ponds are handy only when the monsoons arrive. Other than that they remain dried up for the rest of the year. Both wells and ponds are an important source of water if maintained and monitored properly.

Example - In Bhel Bhimlat, the quality of water in the Bawdi of Bheemlat was below normal. On inquiring, I was told that people even drink the same water they use for other daily chores. This crisis of water increases during the summers as then it's a double debacle - severe heat and insufficient water (especially drinking water). Along with this, the villagers even face the problem of irrigation of the fields as there is no water for this purpose.

OTHER ISSUES

From this issue of scarcity of water, another issue that has come into light is of **Malnutrition**. This condition arises due to deficiency of nutrients in a person's diet. Either the nutrients are not enough or are too much such that the diet causes health problems. The issue of malnutrition is an integrated issue which can be caused by many other issues.

Again the **poor quality of water** comes into play here as one of the main causes of malnutrition especially in the case of children. When I focus on children I do it on the basis of the number of malnutrition cases reported in recent times - in which the deficiency of nutrients was reported mostly in children.

It is generally because when these children consume the contaminated water every day, they start puking which is a symptom of bad health. The situation starts deteriorating when these small children starts suffering from digestive problems which causes them loose motions. It worsens further when these loose motions keep going on for many days due to which they undergo weight loss and there is a downfall from their actual certified weight category. Finally when these children are weighed under MUAC (Mid Upper Arm Circulation), it is determined whether one falls under the category of malnutrition or not.

The deficiency of nutrients also arises in the 'Adivasi' people due to carrying forwardsame type of eating habit everyday. Due to lack of access to the outside world, lack of guidance, dry fields, etc. Adivasis have been eating only a single type of food everyday(mainly roti, chutney and onion). They

never had have diversity in their meal. This makes them vulnerable to malnutrition and they suffer because of it.

Insanitariness is also one of the major causes of this prevailing issue in these villages. In the vicinities of their houses I noticed a lot of dirt lying around in the form of garbage (plastic bags, wrappers of eatable items thrown around, etc). After these items are thrown, various mosquitoes breed on them which increase unhygienic level and make these people more disease prone as compared to earlier.

Another issue which is interlinked as a **cause of malnutrition is pregnancy at an early age**. The root cause for this is the “**Early Girl Child Marriage**”. They marry and get impregnated at such an age which is not adequate for them. Also the cases of ‘pregnant women’ eating soil during the pregnancy were both told and reported. Adivasis terms this as a desire of women during pregnancy. Along with this some traditional norms such as a female should eat less during the pregnancy - prevail among the Adivasi people. According to them, a child will have better features if a woman eats less during pregnancy.

Around 70-80% Adivasi women consume harmful Guthka even during the pregnancy, unaware of the repercussions later on. Hence if a mother is not healthy both during her pregnancy and afterwards, how can we expect an infant to be healthy?

In the recent years also many villages in all 3 blocks of Sheopur - Golipura(Vijapur), Unchi-Khori(Karahal), Kalharna(Sheopur) have witnessed severe cases of malnutrition in which many people, especially small children even lost their lives.

Another issue the Adivasis are facing is of **Electricity**. There are still some villages - Jharer, Ajnoi and Budhela (Karahal),etc - where electricity has not reached since Independence. There is not even a single electrical post in these villages. People are dependent on solar panels for electricity which is not sufficient for a family of 4 to 5 people. Even in the modern world with all the advancement and technology these people have been deprived from one of the most indispensable medium of connectivity today. Talking about other villages where there is electricity, it can be said (based on inputs of villagers) that it's just for the sake of name. Even after living in the town of Sheopur, one has to suffer from the power cut at least once in a day, then one can imagine the conditions of Adivasis who receive electricity only for a few hours every day.

There are some other issues like during the monsoon some villages like Girdharpur, Ajnoi(Karahal) gets cut off completely due to **water logging** in the area due to which they cant travel outside. Also one of the main issue surrounding the Adivasis is Unemployment. With the decreasing production(and increasing population of adivasis) of Tendu, Gond, Cheed – which has been their main source of livelihood from the earlier times and the recent constraints under Forest Rights Act (FRA) and other forest conservation policies of government has compelled them to sit at their houses and has put them in a fix.

One of the main **reasons for this Unsanitariness is Open Defecation**. Due to unavailability of proper toilets in these areas, these people have to defecate in the open and that too in the nearby areas. By this one can infer how unhygienic is prevailing in these areas. Also, fields can't be irrigated due to scarcity of water. Because of this these people even have to incur heavy losses on their crops. Even though there are villagers who have migrated to cities for work, still around 80% of people stay jobless in the Adivasi villages.

Most of the villages I traveled to had **schools only till 5th or 8th grade**. For further studies they have to travel far away – at least 3 to 4 km. Moreover, based on the inputs from children, I got to know that either the school teachers don't turn up or if they do, they pay very minimal attention to the studies which is very neglecting and careless on their part.

Adivasis have been living such a tragic life for the past many years. Scorching heat in summers, insufficiency of basic amenities like drinking water, electricity, roads, etc add to their plight. also they have to bear exploitation through the hands of some dominating castes in the villages (whose situation is not up to the mark but still better than Adivasis) like – Patel, Bheel, etc. The outside world consider Adivasis inferior without even knowing their actual existence and their excellence in knowing nature – which is why their appeals are also not considered by the authorities. It is only in the past few years that their voice got recognized with the help of some NGOs who have put forward their plights and sufferings in front of the Administration.

EKTA PARISHAD'S INITIATIVE

When the organization saw Adivasis situation in 2016 - which was same as earlier times, it found that villagers were in huge trouble due to draught in the area. the villagers were deprived of water completely. Above that the irrigation of land was not possible due to this scarcity of water only. They had to incur huge loses as the crops they had sown were of no use without water. Relating to the situation, the villagers state that the situation was that worse that they had to starve at some days – both due to insufficiency of food items and their poor financial condition. With each passing day,

villagers(s) hygienic condition was also getting worse as they did not use to bath for 3 to 4 continuous days due to huge problem of scarcity of water.

Looking at the miseries and plights of villagers, Ekta Parishad's district wing – Mahatma Gandhi SewaAashram, Johra initiated Draught Relief Campaign – in villages Syavri, Adhwada, Rampura Dang, Kapuria and BardhaBuzurg, to provide assistance to the Adivasis. Also when Ran Singh Parmar Ji (Ekta Parishad's National President) got to know about the condition of Adivasis in these villages, he visited and examined the hand pumps, borewell, wells and ponds. He found that there was no water in any of these. The laziness of both administration and gram panchayats was also taken into notice as none of these seriously paid any heed on the plight of villages.

Taking matter into its own hand, Ekta Parishad first started supplying water to all the Adivasi villages in all 3 blocks by **sending water tankers in the villages**, that too without charging any cost. There was no role of administration in this. In the meantime, the organization started looking for a permanent solution in these villages. **The consensus was formed on renovating the damaged ponds in these villages.** Every pond is spread across an area of 3 to 4 hectare. The decision of renovating the ponds was made on the basis that if a pond is renovated, it will automatically recharge the wells, hand pumps and other water sources around it. Along with this, new wells were also constructed in some villages like Ajnoi, Daabli, etc – which came to the rescue of villagers.

There is a complete list of the help by Ekta Parishad in different villages under the draught relief campaign

Village	Help
Kapuria	Arrangement of generator.
Mayapur	Repairing of water tank. Arrangement of motor and pipe.
Hanuman Khera	Repairing of water tank. Arrangement of motor and pipe.
Saisaipura	Repairing of water tank. Arrangement of motor and pipe.
Gandhi Colony (Village Bhela)	Supply of water tankers (drinking water).

Pannar	Arrangement of diesel in generator.
Ajnoi	Arrangement of diesel in generator and Supply of water tankers (drinking water).
Syavri	Supply of water tankers (drinking water).
Daabli	Supply of water tankers (drinking water).
Bardha	Arrangement of diesel in generator.
Kalmi	Supply of water tankers (drinking water).
Adhwada	Arrangement of diesel in generator.

Another **idea to reconstruct ponds was to eradicate the issue of unemployment** in the villages. There was no work for the villagers due to the issue of draught. People had to face the situation of famine due to unemployment only. The inactiveness of administration in providing employment was completely visible as even after NREGA being there over the years, the situation was completely worse. It was only then Ekta Parishad thought of creating employment opportunities for villagers through renovating ponds. The villagers grabbed this opportunity with both the hands and unitedly started working to improve the water issue and for the betterment of their respective villages on a larger scale. In return every worker was rewarded with 10kgs of wheat for digging a water structure pit of 10 sq ft, **authenticity of which was confirmed by me through Adivasis and District Magistrate's office**. It also helped in keeping a check on the migration process that used to take place.

The villagers of all 4 villages appreciated the efforts of both MGSA and Ekta Parishad as they got solution to both their issues – scarcity of water and unemployment. It **enabled them to stand on their own feet** which couldn't be done by NREGA over the years. What they couldn't get from the administration was provided by Ekta Parishad to them without any outside help.

To overcome the issue of malnutrition, there is an ongoing program – **Food Security and Nutrition Diversity program** under Ekta Parishad. They organize **Participatory Learning Action (PLA) in every 2 to 3 months**. In these meetings, their trainers train Aanganwaadi workers of every village on

the issues of malnutrition and other basic civic sense. Acting as a mediator between Adivasis and the trainers, these Anganwadi workers call upon community meetings in their respective allotted villages. There they aware the Adivasis about the preventions to be taken to remove malnutrition – like proper nutrition should be given to a child, stop ‘early girl child marriage’ among others, child vaccination, etc.

Women also share their experiences in these meetings and keep updating Anganwadi about increase in nutrition, etc. they have started understanding that Anganwadi Child care centre is for their use and unlike earlier, now they are happy in accessing these services (sending children for mid-day meal, etc). The Adivasis are also encouraged both by Ekta Parishad workers and Anganwadi’s to grow **Nutrition Gardens (Kitchen Gardens or PoshanBaadis)** in their houses. The real motive behind this is to increase their nutrition level as when they will have variety in vegetables and other eatable items- it will leave their health in their own hands unlike earlier.

Last year, Adivasis planted many vegetables (brinjal, tomato, etc) and fruits (jamun, lemon, amla) in their Nutrition Gardens and the change was evident. Also, to overcome the issue of insanitariness (through open defecation, etc) **families constructed toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission** after an assurance of a reward of Rs 12000 per family.

Looking at the work of Ekta Parishad for the betterment and bright future of the Adivasis, in 2017 the District Administration of Sheopur sanctioned an amount of **14 crores for the construction and the renovation of ponds in the villages**. Among these, **90 old ponds will be renovated and 77 will be constructed**. Considering the total amount every pond would have received a sum of around 8 to 10 lakhs. Looking at the past works of Ekta Parishad in all the developing projects in Sheopur, the **Administration handed over the responsibility of monitoring** – both the construction and renovation of these ponds to the former. Like the earlier 4 villages, **here also the idea of employment (under NREGA) for villagers was kept in mind both to eradicate the issue of unemployment and migration** as when the District Magistrate once visited the village Syavri he asked the villagers that if they migrated, who will take care of their nutrition gardens to which they told him about the issue of unemployment. Noticing the same issue of employment in almost every village the above solution was found out.

The Adivasis saw this as a great opportunity and happily agreed to work for the betterment. Under NREGA, every person who digs a pit of 10/10 sq ft will be paid Rs 172. The money would have been directly transferred to their official bank accounts. Finally the work got started around the month of January, 2017. Even though every pond is spread across an area of 3 to 4 hectares, there are some exceptions also like the pond of Adhwada which is spread across an area of 7 to 8 hectares. The latter is the work of Ekta Parishad solely without any outside involvement.

Along with this, the organization has also been running a Childcare Centre to eradicate Child Labour and Child Marriage issues along with other issues related to children.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Ø What measures should be put in place to alleviate the problem of water scarcity in the villages?

Ø What are perspectives of the villagers on the causes and impact of water scarcity in villages?

Ø In spite of the constitutional commitments to the adivasis, why is there lack of employment opportunities and unawareness about higher education in these areas even till

now? Is the state supposed to continue developing only old financial centres of India established by the colonizers?

Ø What are the strategies of the state for reducing malnutrition in the villages?

Ø Why there is improper implementation of State initiated policies (Swachh Bharat, MGNREGA, etc) by local administration?

FINDINGS

However, similar to the previous year, **this year also the condition of Adivasis remains same.** When I visited some villages of all 3 blocks, what I saw was really disturbing. All the issues which are discussed earlier in the document still prevails around mostly in 90% villages.

Among all, the **biggest issue of all is of scarcity of water.** It can be seen even till now, especially drinking water. Villagers toil hard everyday, standing in long queues just to fill a small utensil. Moreover, even after the scorching heat trapping Sheopur, there are no proper and steady arrangements made by the District Administration to deal with this ongoing situation. In some villages like Ajnoi, Girdharpur, etc – either the hand pumps aren't working at all or even if they are working, it requires involvement of many people to draw out the water.

In Bhela-Bheemlat, **not even a single hand pump was working.** Even the bore wells were not in use due no diesel inside the generators. Small children could be seen fetching heavy utensils filled with water from long distance and that too barefoot and without any assistance. Adivasis didn't even have water to irrigate the fields. On listening to them, I got to know that crops are of no use in some villages, which will in turn lead to a situation of famine gradually. Due to this scarcity even the **animals are helpless and were even losing their lives** on a regular basis in almost all the villages.

The issue of electricity had also been circling around the Adivasi villages. Even till the present year, some villages were completely deprived of electricity.

Example – Syavri, Pannar, Bhela-Bheemlat, etc.

The **toilets** which were constructed last year (under SBM) **aren't used mostly by villagers due to scarcity of water** only, which was somewhat correct also as they don't even have water to drink. Along with that many Adivasis had not received the assured payment of Rs 12000. This simply meant that open defecation was still prevailing in most of the villages which is the root cause of various diseases spreading – malaria, diarrhoea, etc.

One of the **main issues prevailing this year was the delay in the payment of the workers** (Adivasis) working for the construction and renovation of ponds. Every other village of all 3 blocks was stuck in this issue. Due to this villagers in almost every village had postponed the work. They had been complaining that their wages were due for a long time. Some villages from Ajnoi even told that even though they worked for almost 20-25 days, still they didn't receive even a single penny. Taking this into note, Ekta Parishad intervened as they were afraid that if the work didn't start in time the soil erosion due to monsoon would spoil the whole party. Thereby, Ekta Parishad brought this into the light of District Administration after meeting the District Panchayat CEO Mr Rishi Garg, after which the amount was released for the workers in almost every village.

Even till now there were some **villages where work had not started at all**. The name of the villages under which these ponds fall were: Magardha, Pachnaya, Kishanpura (Vijaypur). If we take the account of time, there were even some **villages where the ongoing work is progressing very slowly** like Parvatibadoda, Itwai, Iklor, Daudpur, Jasmani, Chathi (all Vijaypur) Other than that the work of some villages like Kathon (Vijaypur) had started almost on the eleventh hour (in June only) which is not a positive sign for the village. In the village Hagra, instead of building a new dam, the work was going on the old dam only.

Ekta Parishad had been **continuously updating the District Administration** since the inception of pond constructions but it was because of the negligence of District Administration only, that the work got hung up in the air.

Also, there were some ponds which had technical issues in their structures – like pond of Goras, Daabli, etc. Some villagers had also been ranting about the faults in their job cards.

On a positive note, the **PLA meetings organized by Ekta Parishad had shown results** as compared to earlier, in the present year there were less cases of malnutrition among the Adivasis. This can also be confirmed through Nutrition rehabilitation Centre (NRC) where the malnourished kids are hospitalized. The efforts of both Ekta Parishad trainers and aanganwadi workers have brought positivity as now more **Adivasi women have got aware of balanced diet** – both for themselves and their children. Compared to earlier times, their tally had also raised up in attending community meetings which was a way to keep themselves aware. They were now taking good care of the meal of their children and sent them regularly to Aanganwadi centres so that they can have a proper and balanced diet.

On the contrary, the plants in their **nutrition gardens across almost all the villages had dried up due to scarcity of water**. Among all the villages I went through, the only village where I found some lively nutrition garden was Syavri, where people are still enjoying the luxuries of it. Other than that, all other villages had **almost given up on their nutrition gardens**. They all gave the same reply when asked the reason i.e. scarcity of water. Hence, the main issue of Sheopur is of water only. Even after the toiling efforts of Ekta Parishad, there was a huge problem of water (especially in summers) as there was very less assistance by District Administration than it's required.

Girdharpur

Pannar

Kalharna

Goras

Lahroni

Ajnoi

Work in all these Ponds (including more) is lagging behind even though the monsoon is on head

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The water scarcity issues for the region's present generation are primarily over distribution of water within the society and preservation of water quality. For future generations, the concerns are to ensure adequate water supplies, preserve the quality of the environment, and achieve greater equity in distributing water throughout the region. Along with shortage of water, there is a void of other basic amenities through which we can distinguish between our life style and their life style.

The study reminds us of how to value even basic things in life. It shows how things which are of less concern for us plays a huge role in the daily life of others. Hence, there is a need to study the critical situation of adivasis in Sheopur. There is a need now to look at the problem more comprehensively, in a holistic way, from a sociological prospective. **The outcome of the study will help in understanding the socio-economic aspects and environmental dynamic of livelihood sources in rural and adivasi India.** It will highlight the adaptive and **coping mechanisms and survival tactics** of the people. Understanding the livelihood strategies and people's dependence on resources is crucial in building alternative sustainable livelihood strategies.

Social aspect of any study provides the real picture of village and to know what is the real problem in resource allocation and problem of implementation of development policy and distribution of Government welfare scheme. In rural area, due to lack information about development scheme as well as their educational level, people are not in position to take benefit from development schemes through Block but the economic data is uniform most of the times whether the benefit is taken or not. There is a need for understanding crisis in adivasi villages of Sheopur as people are deprived of the most basic things.

SPECIFIC REASEARCH

Unawareness about higher studies is also prevailing in almost every Adivasi village. In the first week, I met some children who had completed their senior secondary recently, I inquired about their future plans. It is then I got to know of the prevailing unawareness about higher studies in villages. I provided them the required knowledge about the concerned thing. Those of who wanted to enter into the government sector afterwards, I provided them the information about the various criteria required – whether the eligibility or entrance exam. Also, I told them about the necessary books and asked them to buy the books. During my last days over there, I met all of them and made sure if they bought the books or not.

I also prepared a **list of kids suffering from Malnutrition** to the villages I visited and after a month's gap, I matched my own list with the organization's volunteers to see if there had been an improvement. After going through both the lists, I found that the improvement was evident.

CONCLUSION

India, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, possesses one of the most powerful parts of the world population. It nearly matches the most developed part of the world in terms of luxury,

comfort and lifestyle, though available only in some parts of India. There is so much brightness and growth shown in media circles these days in the image of India. However, just as a painting has an image on the front, but its back still remains blank, even the growth mechanism of the Indian economy has **forgotten the ones who have always been exploited**. Due to holding of power in few hands, the upliftment of the downtrodden is still far from action. The section which was earlier also the least powerful in society still remains in the same state.

On a basic comparative side, in spite of constitutional provisions, the **downtrodden** are kept in a state of negligence than the privileged ones. The structure of society continues to be exploitative as the system is not competent enough to provide for everyone. The powerful class keeps exploiting the inferior ones for their own benefits and the later ones don't even know about the system, leave aside the talk of them using the system for their benefits.

Therefore if this negligence on the part of the District Administration keeps on going then the days are not far when this situation will become worse from bad and will get detrimental. The completion of **construction of ponds will be a huge achievement and will act as a permanent remedy** to solve thus water scarcity issue – only if done in time till the monsoon arrives. It will also recharge the wells of the villages, the underground water and other resources of water. The issue of open defecation (as people will use toilets) and nutrition garden will also be overcome through this. Hence, this will be an overall win only if the District Administration gets active and remains active throughout.

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