

‘Adhawan Model’ village of Banda (Bundelkhand): A successful case study for Rejuvenation of Ponds

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Abstract : The water scarcity and its related issues of management, preservation and conservation is a global issue. Bundelkhand is one such region which is severely affected with water scarcity and scorching temperature despite of bulks of budgets granted to the region to curb this devastation. The reason of the failure is often blanketed as climate crisis. But, no one is bothered about the ground reality which is layered under the climate crisis. The traditional system of water harvesting in Bundelkhand was popular since the reign of Chandelas and Bundelas which is on the verge of extinction. This system of indigenous knowledge of water harvesting needs to be revived as the ponds are the lifeline of Bundelkhand. This paper is an attempt to analyse the role of ponds in lifeworld of rural communities through the perspective of socio-cultural traditions popular in their everyday lived experiences. This will be an ethnographic study with descriptive analysis. The study area will be Adhawan village in Banda (Bundelkhand). This village has been appraised by Honble PM Narendra Modi in his Mann ki Baat program on 27th June, 2021 for the implementation of the effective methods of pond restoration through shramdaan (volunteerism) for the preservation and rejuvenation of the pond ecosystem through ‘Khet ka pani khet mein, Gaon ka pani gaon mein’ mission.

Keywords: pond rejuvenation, water in lifeworld of rural communities, shramdaan (volunteerism), community participation

Introduction :

Since ages, the human civilizations have evolved around the water bodies as they are an essential part of the human life and they became a part of their socio- cultural life, not only as resources but also as cultural or religious entities which have shaped their life-worlds contextually. Water acts as a socio-cultural force for the village communities (Gomes, 2005). Water has great significance in the evolving culture of the people so different communities have different rituals and traditions interconnected with it. Therefore, water resources have played a sacred role in one’s life. If one observes the rivers like the Thames of London or the Ganges of India, the holiness of the rivers is well recognised but when it comes to small water bodies it becomes regionally or locally limited. For example, the wells and ponds are culturally sacred in India in different communities in plethora kinds of birth-to-death rituals. But today, the water resources of the

village communities, especially ponds (talabs) have become reminiscence for the village people. Ponds has its own culture as it contains the culture of water.

Moving to the water scarcity and its related issues of management, preservation and conservation of water has become a global issue. No one region has been left out with this calamity. The policymakers have tried to tackle this calamity in such a way as if they were waiting for its ghastly form as disaster. This paper emphasizes on the pond ecosystem and its rejuvenation and conservation as the area chosen for the study is Bundelkhand of India.

Bundelkhand is one such region which is severely affected with water scarcity and scorching temperature. As India is celebrating 75 years of independence in the form of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', we still observe the recurring issues of water crisis despite of bulks of budgets granted to the region to curb this devastation. The reason of the failure is often blanketed as climate crisis. But hardly anyone is bothered about the ground reality which is layered under the climate crisis. The traditional system of rainwater harvesting in Bundelkhand was popular since the reign of Chandelas and Bundelas which is on the verge of extinction (Mishra, 2016).

The Bundelkhand region comprises of seven districts of Uttar Pradesh (Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Lalitpur, Banda, Chitrakut and Mahoba) and the six districts of Madhya Pradesh (Datia, Tikamgarh, Panna, Damoh, Chhatarpur and Sagar). Each of these regions have ponds which are in dilapidated condition now because the rural communities have shifted to modern techniques of water extraction like bore wells, tap water, handpumps, etc. ignoring the reason of why the 'ponds were the lifeline of Bundelkhand since ancient times?' which were once the ancient traditional water harvesting systems.

The objective of this study tends to analyse the effectiveness of the establishment of the interconnectedness with the ponds through contribution of volunteerism as an act of saviour and henceforth leading to pond rejuvenation and conservation.

Literature Review

When one reviews the academia related to the study of pond culture, the researches being performed immensely belong to the natural sciences consisting of the measures of BOD, COD, species culture, ecosystem, etc. Very few studies emerge in the anthropology and sociology disciplines which have discussed about the pond culture and their relationship to the rural communities. The water has played a major role as a religious entity if one observes the cultural traditions and rituals across the globe and so the water bodies in the form of rivers, ponds and tanks are symbolised as sacred entities which have some significance with the communities inhabited around them.

Global Perspectives of Ponds

1. Structural and Functional Overview of Ponds Landscape:

The study pertaining to the ponds are dominantly structural and functional which can be categorised as 'rural landscapes as an integral part of the agricultural systems of the area used mainly for watering stock and draft animals as well as aiding drainage' (Upex, 2004)

But no proper definition of the ponds exist which can truly make it visible anywhere on the earth and its related issues. D. C. Richardson et al. (2022) have tried to put forth the functional definition of the ponds scientifically as 'Ponds are small and shallow waterbodies with a maximum surface area of 5 ha, a maximum depth of 5 m, and < 30% coverage of emergent vegetation. Ponds will have light penetration to the sediments if water clarity permits and can be permanent or temporary and natural or human-made.' Ce're'ghino, R., Boix, D., et.al (2014) emphasized that the ecological role of ponds is now well-established but authoritative research-based advice remains needed to inform future direction in the conservation of small water bodies and to further bridge the gap between science and practice.

2. Ecosystem Services of Ponds:

Ponds worldwide contribute significantly to various ecosystem services, including water storage, biodiversity conservation, and groundwater recharge though they are the least studied aspect of the aquatic ecosystem and are not included very much in plans for water management (Biggs et al., 2017). A. Ghermandi and E. Fichtman (2015) offer the first quantitative evaluation of the public use from the ponds' utilization in terms of recreation and education as they acknowledge the importance of cultural ecosystem services gained through these small waterbodies. D. Landuyt et al., (2014) performed an evaluation of ESS delivery under the three alternative pond management scenarios of extensive fish farming (EFF), intensive fish farming (IFF), and natural conservation management (NCM) for which a Bayesian belief network model was created under which a probabilistic cost-benefit analysis was carried out, taking into account the advantages of ESS distribution as well as the expenditures related to pond management techniques.

3. Management Strategies of Ponds:

Mitsch and Gosselink (2000) highlights the importance of sustainable management practices for ponds, considering factors such as nutrient cycling and hydrological dynamics. The European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN) has produced first Pond Manifesto for promoting the awareness, understanding and conservation of ponds in European landscape. (EPCN, 2008). It has mentioned that how ponds are important for our culture and promotes the ecological balance between people and wildlife. They play important role as an asset for the ecosystem services like agri-tourism, water resource management, etc.

4. Role in Climate Change Mitigation:

Downing et al. (2006) indicate that ponds play a vital role in carbon sequestration, acting as sinks for organic carbon and mitigating the impacts of climate change. He has described the importance of ponds at global level. He claims that small water bodies are often ignored globally but these small lakes and ponds play very intense role in balancing the global cycle of the biosphere and act as better carbon sequestration places than larger water bodies. So, these ponds are necessary to conserve and rejuvenate as soon as possible. (Downing, 2010)

5. Spiritual and Cultural Importance:

Ponds hold cultural significance globally, as discussed by Finlayson et al. (2013), emphasizing their roles in supporting diverse cultural practices and traditions. Hosseiny et al. (2021) elaborates the significance of water's role as a cultural entity shaping the various civilisations since the evolution of human history. So do ponds have significant role in various communities around the world.

Indian Perspectives of Ponds:

Indian civilization and its ancient culture are very magnificent and diversified. Indian history is famous for its Indus civilization and its drainage system which presents the best example of the indigenous knowledge of water usage and storage (Singh et al. 2020). But we haven't valued the ancient techniques of water harvesting so the water sources like the wells, tanks and ponds have turned into remnants. The ponds in India play a significant role in the social structure of the Indian system.

1. Historical importance of ponds: Anupam Mishra (1993) has presented a detailed historical account of ponds in which he has discussed about the origin, local terms, cultures, beliefs and traditions associated with ponds in the form of narratives. He has also thrown light on the plight of ponds due to industrialization and modernization of technology and emphasized on the relevance of ponds in villages. Deka et al. (2021) give account of historical ponds of India as they have played a major role in shaping social and cultural values of people. The ponds were often included in the architecture of the historical sites which supported the communities residing nearby, so the ponds became an essential entity for them. In India, ponds have historical importance in water management and agriculture (Azim, et al. 2002). Traditional water harvesting structures like tanks and step wells have played a crucial role in sustaining communities.

2. Current status and challenges: Research by Hill et al. (2018) provides insights into the current status of ponds in the world and India, highlighting challenges such as pollution, encroachment, and unsustainable water use but

has missed the community participation as an important part of the pond ecosystem. Panigrahy et al. (2012) have detailed about the wetlands of India through geospatial techniques and provides the scientificity of the wetlands regardless of the communities. Many studies are based on aquaculture and pond culture with vast number of policies and recommendations but somehow lack in connecting them regionally or locally. The contemporary scenario of ponds has worsened consequently. Pond culture exists economically but pond as a culture is waiting for its extinction.

3. Impact on Livelihoods: S. Singh (2021) highlights the socio-economic impact of ponds on rural livelihoods in India, emphasizing their role in fisheries, irrigation, and agriculture in the Bundelkhand region and presents pond conservation as one of the methods to prevent water scarcity but not so clearly. The ambiguities in policies are explicit in the nature of recommendations. Pond rejuvenation is the need of the hour to eliminate the problematic issues of livelihoods with a new approach of implementation and efficacy. The process of implementation is a necessary tool which needs enlightenment.

4. Government Initiatives: Government initiatives like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have attempted to rejuvenate water bodies, including ponds, to enhance rural livelihoods and water security (MGNREGA, 2005) but if one looks at the data provided by PIB, crores have been spent under these schemes but faced failures and the blame game was blanketed under climate crisis. One interesting thing was found that there is no Uttar Pradesh in the water conservation list of MGNREGA (PIB, 2019). Har Ghar Jal initiative under Jal Jeevan Mission (Bundelkhand) has been lauded by PM of India but the reality on the grounds is different as the authors observe like it may remain only skeleton of pipes filled in grounds waiting for another drought to creep in.

5. Community Participation: Research by Narain et al. (2016) explores the importance of community participation in pond management in India, underlining the need for a collaborative approach for sustainable rejuvenation. Community participation has always been a decisive tool in managing water resources.

6. Spiritual and Cultural Importance: Gomes (2005) has mentioned water as 'an eco-cultural reality' and analysed the vosaad (Goan talab) and the folklores, water baths and beliefs, the communities connection to the vosaad and so on. Nawre (2013) has used the 'concept of frames' of Goffman and describes 'a talaab as a 'lamine' hosting normative activities and acting as a situational/interactional space determined by culturally governed temporal and ideological principles'.

So, in India, the traditional water harvesting system are in negligence due to modern techniques of extraction of groundwater like borewells, tapwater and

submersible pumps and most of them have become extinct or turned into dumping sites due to increasing water pollution and land pollution which has resulted into ecological imbalance of the environment.

Bundelkhand's lifeline: Ponds

The value of water in Bundelkhand is too precious for the village people of Bundelkhand. A very famous folk proverb prevails amongst the rural women while fetching water from distant water bodies which is 'Dhaura tera pani (Water of Dhaura pond), gajab kari jaye (do such a magic);

Gagri na foote (our pots don't break), khasam mari jaye (instead our husbands die)' meaning that the women pray to the ponds expressing their immense necessity of water requesting that their earthen pots full of water shouldn't break while travelling back to home as they face lots of hardships and for this, if they need to sacrifice their husband's life they are ready to do so because they carry water in very difficult situations for their family and all household chores.

Ponds are the pores of the Earth through which the Earth maintain its water level and if we clog them, the consequences would be worse than expected. The same has happened in the water scarce regions of India where ponds have become extinct. Bundelkhand has a rich history of Chandela and Bundela tanks which were very effective in traditional rainwater harvesting methods (Gupta et al. 2014 pp. 66-67) but they are on the verge of extinction.

Why ponds are more effective source of water as compared to other sources of water?

According to Chourasia & Jhariya (2020), the reasons are hard terrain/ rocky landscape of Bundelkhand which hinders groundwater accumulation and surface-water assimilation. The wells do not accumulate much water as the groundwater overexploitation and depletion with time.

'...local people follow traditional and indigenous method for conserving water, i.e. through open dug wells and ponds' (Chourasia & Jhariya, 2020)

So, the traditional system of water harvesting is necessary to be followed as these ponds can restore the ecological imbalance created by the anthropogenic factors like dumping wastes, illegal encroachment, etc.

Many initiatives were taken by the government and the NGOs but of no use because one of the interviewees explained her experience which was an eye-opener for us. She expressed her grief narrating 'humlog to pani ka muhh taakte hi hai bhari garmi me, ab ee sarkar jo nal lga rahi hai...wo bhi pani ko taakenge' (we wait for water every day in scorching heat, the handpumps supplied by the government will too wait for water) . This depicts the real picture of the water scarcity solutions provided by the policymakers.

Methodology:

Methods of Data Collection

This paper puts forth the interconnection of religion with the ponds and the ways in which they are mobilised to perform shramdaan for the pond rejuvenation in their particular village. The data are collected in the form of narratives of elderly people. The focus group discussion was used in the form of pani chaupal. The data of water use and consumption was collected through survey method of 30 households in the village. The author himself belongs to the Adhawan village, so the observations and narratives are closely linked to his lifeworld.

Pond rejuvenation and restoration in Adhawan village of Banda

Banda has 3265 ponds according to Revenue Department of Banda. The population of Banda is 1,799,410. The number of Revenue Villages are 761. There are Five Tehsils namely Banda, Naraini, Baberu, Pailani and Atarra comprising eight blocks of Badokhar-khurd, Jaspura, Tindwari, Naraini, Mahua, Baberu, Bisanda and Kamasin form the present district of Banda.

Pond ecosystems are very important to maintain in the contemporary times of global warming and climate change. They play a major role in ecological balance of a region. Ponds are not only important for the environment but also the local communities residing near them.

So, the pond conservation and rejuvenation can be the solution for the current situation to mitigate the climate change and other natural hazards occurring in Banda.

Restoration methods of ponds:

The restoration of ponds is not possible until and unless we involve the rural communities residing near the ponds because they are the key to restoration and conservation of ponds. If these communities will become conscious towards the ponds, then more than half of the problems will disappear regarding the drought situation in Banda. So, the methods of restoration of ponds discussed here is based on the case study of Adhawan village of Banda (Bundelkhand).

1. Pani Chaupal

It is a type of group discussion of 8-15 people based on the concept of Gram Panchayat which is held at public places like schools, colleges, temples, masjids, etc. and especially near the water sources like talabs, wells, pokhars, canals, handpumps, etc. The rural communities are taught the methods of conserving water in easy ways embodied in their everyday life practices and their suggestions are also appreciated regarding the restoration of ponds. These decisions are made under the supervision of Gram Panchayat and regulated by it.

Pani Chaupal has been implemented in Adhawan village since 2014 which has resulted in effective change in the nature of using ponds and people have

come forward to revive this traditional water harvesting system through their own conscience efforts.

2. Talab Mahotsav

As the name suggests, it is a type of festival celebrated every year in Kartik Purnima near the Bajrang Sagar pond in order to rejuvenate and revive the lost culture surrounding the ponds. This tradition was lost few years ago due to deprivation of life of village people in Adhawan. So, the researcher has tried to revive it again in new manner. The kanya puja is held with all the religious activities in which women, youth, farmers, priests, administrative officer take part and ponds are worshipped with the worship of young girls. After worship, local people participate in dangals (wrestling) held near the ponds and the winners are gifted a plant sapling. At last, the people volunteer to clean the ponds and plant saplings around the ponds. In this way, Bajrang Sagar pond is restored again and is filled with water now and a great area has been recovered as village forests.

3. Talab Prabhandan Samiti

Talab Prabhandan Samiti is formed in democratic way after the Pani Chaupal. It consists of a chairman, a vice-chairman, a manager and a secretary and few members who belong to the local area of ponds. Female participation is 40% in this samiti. The members also include the priest of the temple near the pond and the current Pradhan of the village. We try to involve the members of communities which are dependent especially on ponds like Nishads, Kahaar, Kumhar, Kakshi, etc. One such samiti has been constructed from the location of Sundar sagar pond of Adhawan village since 2015. This samiti has performed their duties in righteous manner and has observed all the activities taking place near this pond which has helped to rejuvenate this pond effectively.

4. Water Literacy Mission

This mission connects the people with the awareness of cleanliness of water, water conservation, water harvesting methods, etc. through various leaders assigned to a specific region in the form of Jal Mitra, Jal Saheli, Jal Yoddha. They organise this mission through these steps:

- **Wall painting:** This involves the awareness of water conservation through different wall paintings related to water conservation and preservation which are done by the school children of the village with the help of Jal Mitras. It is organised in the form of painting competitions in which school children participate happily and the best paintings are awarded also which motivates the children too in this awareness.
- **Water mapping:** It is done during the Pani Chaupal or in the meetings of Talab Prabhandan Samiti which involves all the members of the village and they get to know the current situation of water sources in

their locality like number of ponds in use, ponds under encroachment, ponds used as dumping sites, ponds in disrepair, number of handpumps used, number of wells used, etc.

- **Slogans:** The slogans related to water conservation and preservation are written on walls, delivered in primary schools, colleges, public places, near the water sources like wells and ponds, to spread awareness of water in all forms.
- **Street shows:** These are effective shows which are displayed in the form of short plays or dramas in public places in the villages. This attracts huge public in the form of audience. The participants are mostly youth and led by Jal Yoddhas and Jal Sahelis who organise the plays regarding water scarcity, water pollution, water conservation and restoration and deliver the message of implementing them in their daily lives.
- **Water conservation through folk songs and dances:** Diwari folk dance is famous in Bundelkhand which is celebrated during Diwali in which folk people perform their fighting skills with a traditional stick. It begins one week before Diwali and ends after one week of Diwali covering all the districts of Bundelkhand. This platform provides an opportunity to deliver the message for conserving water in an efficient manner. Due to huge audience of people from young children to elderly and women; all get a chance to know about water problems and solutions.

Folk songs are also helpful in water conservation as the importance of water is sung by women when birth of a child takes place in any home and the mother steps out from home for special kua puja.

5. Pani yatras: These are padyatras (walk on foot) in which traditional knowledge of water harvesting is delivered to local people. Women also participate by carrying a pot filled with water and give message for conserving water. Till now three Pani yatras have been held in Adhawan village for the awareness raising which was delivered through Diwari folk dance and folk songs, street shows, wall painting with effective slogans.

6. Water conservation through social media: Social media platforms can be the best platform for spreading the awareness of water conservation. The Whatsapp group, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube channel, etc. This virtual platform has been effective in timely requirements of volunteer labours, registering complaints and other mishaps related to the water sources.

Hence, these restoration methods of ponds are embedded in the lifeworld of the rural communities and can be easily implemented at the grassroots level which can result in fruitful change perception of rural people towards traditional water harvesting system and inculcate these methods in their daily lives.

Pond Restoration in Adhawan village of Banda (Bundelkhand): A case study

Adhawan village comes under Baberu taluk in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

The total land area of Adhawan is around 756.34 hectares (1868.95 acres). which consists of a total household of around 333. The nearest village to Adhawan is Baberu (14 km).

The total population of Adhawan is around 2091 according to the data from census 2011. In this, male population is around 1139 and female population comprises of 952. (Source: <https://villageatlas.com>)

According to the narratives of folk people of Adhawan, there was a great famine and drought in 1981-82 due to which all the creatures and human beings were dying of water scarcity. Then they decided to build a pond named Jhaliya talab through volunteering labour to conserve and preserve water.

Key Findings and Results Discussion

The water sources present in current scenario are tubewells, borewells, handpumps, wells and ponds which are in poor condition. The rich people of the village have borewells in their farms and homes. Few middle-income people have handpumps and submersible pumps of their own and the wells are used by the common people of the village. The ponds are polluted or have turned into flatlands due to illegal encroachment and some have made their private property in the form of agricultural lands. There are three wells used for drinking water and six ponds out of which only two have been restored and the rest are under encroachment.

The agriculture is the main occupation here with animal husbandry as a part of it. So, the rural communities are mostly dependent on the rainfed season for the crop irrigation or they have to ask the rich landlords of the village to provide water from their borewells. Canal irrigation is also done through interlinking riverwater but power dynamics also occurs in it. At last, the poor people are the sufferers as the common sources of water are difficult to reach and they are the most affected due to water scarcity.

Due to water scarcity and scorching heat waves, the rural people lost hope as the ponds and other sources of water bodies went dry in the village due to low levels of groundwater.

Then we decided to organise Pani Chaupal in which 15-20 people were involved. The discussions were held on the problems of water shortage, restoration and preservation. Hence, we decided to locate the ponds and the ways of restoring them. After this, we took out a talab darshan yatra on the banks of Bajrangbali talab in the village and organized a Pani Chaupal on its bank and formed a Talab Prabhandhan Samiti.

The Talab Prabhandhan Samiti decided to renovate the pond through collective shramdaan. When shramdaan was opted for the restoration of the pond in the village, the people of the village came in very small quantities and some other Talab Prabhandhan Samiti members did not even participate. Some people said that the renovation of the village pond will be done by the gram panchayat/ gram panchayat of the village. Why should they do the governments work? Some people continued to make many excuses for not doing shramdaan in the restoration of the pond. But at the same time, few people's courage was worth seeing, in the first labour practice, there were hardly 5 people. The next week, shramdaan was performed in which 5-10 people participated and the others ignored it, this continued for about 3 months, but nothing changed.

Establishment of Interconnectedness of Shramdaan and Religion: A miraculous effort

We thought that this labor practice should be linked to Bajrangbali (a Hindu God) with an approach to enter the minds of people through religion. After holding frequent meetings/ chaupals, we were not achieving effective results and very less participation of people was observed. The only method for the renovation of this pond was shramdaan and we had very less time due to the coming monsoon of 2021. Few people of the village suggested that Ramacharitamanas readings should be recited every Tuesday in Bajrangbali's temple and a small bhandara or prasad (food) distribution ceremony would be held to attract people for performing shramdaan. So, such an event was organized the next week and many devotees attended the Ramcharitamanas Paath (reciting prayers offered to Lord Ram) but only a few cooperated in the shramdaan taking it as the Gods work. Active mass participation was a hindrance for us. After the distribution of prasad, a lot of pondering was done to pitch the problem and a chaupal was organized again in which it was said that the way we are cooperating in the distribution of prasad of this Ramacharitamanas Paath and Bhandara; in the same way the pond is also a form of God which needs cleanliness and preservation. The shramdaan for the restoration of pond was motivated on the form of offerings to God Bajrangbali and those who will not contribute would suffer some kind of curse. In such a situation, many people decided that Ramacharitamanas will be recited on the upcoming Tuesday and prasad will be distributed on the next day after mass shramdaan of two hours being performed. We observed a miraculous effect after this decision; more than 150 people participated in the mass shramdaan that Wednesday for rejuvenating the pond. As a result of shramdaan, a large amount of silt accumulated in the pond was removed and it was deepened and desilted. This effort took place continuously every Wednesday with an acceleration of the village people participation considering it an act of virtue for God. So, the renovation of this pond could be achieved in a year in this manner, with the participation and cooperation of the villagers at no cost. Today this pond is full of water. We named this pond as Dev Sagar as the shramdaan was performed in the name of God.

This pond is about 11 bighas. There were many old trees planted on the banks of this pond, in which Peepal, Banyan, Mango, Jamun, Sycamore, Palash, Neem, Bel, Kadam etc. are present. Now, some new trees have also been planted on the banks of the pond. The greenery on the banks of the pond and the water of the pond are worth seeing, with an essence of comfort and peace. Too many birds have begun gathering and perching here. The ecosystem here has been completed. The groundwater level in the region has also increased. Irrigation of surrounding farming is also being done from the pond. Talab Mahotsav is also organized every year on Kartik Purnima (a festival celebrated in the month of Nov-Dec in India) in the village on the banks of this pond.

‘Khet ka Pani Khet mein, Gaon ka Gaon mein’ Mission was initiated by Rambaboo Tiwari in Adhawan village as a pilot program in 2018 in which he motivated the farmers to build small mud fences (medhs) of 2-3 feet high surrounding the farmlands and planted small trees through the slogan Khet par medh, medh par ped which became vocal in Covid period of 2019. He took help of migrated farmers who returned back to the village and promoted agriculture in their barren lands through preservation of rainwater on the agricultural lands by making medhs and planting trees on the medhs which helped farmers in producing better quality crop yields. This method of using local slogan was so provocative that the farmers begun taking interest in farming and conserving rainwater on their farmlands which not only helped the farmers in agriculture but also the environment in maintaining the temperature and greenery in the village. It also helped in groundwater recharging and its consumption was utilised appropriately. This mission was successful when the interviewees were happy enough to reply that 300 bighas of farmlands were utilised in an amazing way through rainwater conservation and planting trees around them to protect the environment and other village farmers should learn from this village.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- The lifeworld of rural communities should be the priority for every policy-makers to understand their in-depth requirements and struggles which they face in their everyday lived experiences before forming any policies.
- Communication is very important tool for any problem solving and its effectiveness. So here, the communication involves the expression of people, their emotions and folklores, their traditions and cultures which needs to be focused in right direction to make any idea or concept successful.
- The community participation is successful when the thoughts of people’s mind get connected with the aim of the mission or scheme or any social work. Community mobilisation is possible when we are

able to understand the social realities embedded in the area. Indian society is deeply rooted in its rich culture and religious traditions and beliefs. So, this socio-cultural facet can be important tool for the active participation of the communities.

- It is necessary to raise consciousness amongst people towards natural resource management which will help them to conserve and preserve the natural resources as the part of their everyday life activities.

Conclusion :

The pond rejuvenation was not an easy task to achieve through shramdaan. We have to find ways as to how to interlink the people's perception towards this work according to their lived experiences and situations. The case study of Adhawan village is an example of collective shramdaan in the form of religious activity. So, the analysis of the lifeworld of the people is very necessary to motivate people towards innovation and effective results. We need to understand that the problem lies in the grassroots level where poor people are discriminated and suffer as they are the consumers of the common property resources. So, once the people change their ways of using water, conserve water through water harvesting methods and protect water sources like ponds from encroachment and pollution; there will be enough water for them for consumption. This is possible through the positive approach of collective action.

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