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Where There's A Well, There's Hope.

Action for Social Advancement (ASA)

"The Farmers House" Plan-C, Tulip Greens, Vill. Mahabadia,
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Smt. Surli Bai standing beside her prized possession - *the well*.
📍 Laffangaon Village, Barwani District.

“Ensuring
livelihoods
with equity
& dignity”





Smt. Limbu Meda has a big family of four children and six grandchildren! She has tirelessly worked all of her life to help her family have opportunities to achieve great things. Finally, through her flourishing farm, she can do just that.

📍 Kaaliabadia Village, Jhabua District.

Preface

This book is written and compiled to acknowledge the arduous efforts of Mr. Oliver Croom-Johnson in supporting Action for Social Advancement (ASA)'s dug well project.

This project was initiated in 2009 to help smallholder farmers of Madhya Pradesh by creating dug wells to irrigate fields that would otherwise be fertile only during monsoon season.

From food security to increased farm income, the project has helped prove the significance of dug wells in eliminating poverty in its varied dimensions in the targeted regions over time.

This book is a celebration of the heartwarming tales of transformation that ASA and Where There is a Well Foundation have brought into the lives of thousands of smallholder farmers from the hinterlands.

Message from the Director



Ashis Mondal, Director

"Farming isn't a battle against nature, but a partnership with it. It is respecting the basics of nature in action and ensuring that they continue."

- Jeff Koehler

At ASA, this quote is not just a quote for us. This is our guiding principle. We are an organisation dedicated to promoting, supporting and ensuring sustainable farming. We feel our work is all the more crucial because it paves the way for the sustainability of future generations.

For around three decades, the organisation has been tirelessly working for the upliftment and social transformation of the underserved farming community and supporting them to lead empowered lives. And, keeping the pace of the technological and economic development of the country, we have been expanding ASA's horizon in capacity building, incorporating issues related to land and water management, most notably keeping farmers at the heart of all our efforts.

Our Dug Well Programme (DWP) caters to the longstanding problem of a dearth of domestic water supply and irrigation, affecting farmers deeply. It is a constant drive for all of us here at ASA to know that the integration of modernised systems and traditional methods has expanded the irrigated area, thereby producing record annual agricultural growth over the years.

From food security to increased farm income, the DWP has resounded the significance of dug wells in reducing poverty in its varied dimensions. A matter of extreme pride for us is seeing the phenomenal growth of our women beneficiaries. It fills our hearts to see how women have come from merely sowing seeds in the fields along with their menfolk to now taking initiatives where they harvest success.

We thank Mr. Oliver Croom-Johnson and his foundation - Where There's a Well, for their enormous diligence in the programme, which has been an inevitable factor in the accomplishments of DWP implemented by ASA.



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Action for Social Advancement

About ASA

www.asaindia.org

Founded in 1996 by a group of development professionals, Action for Social Advancement (ASA) has emerged as a pioneer organisation for the promotion of farm-based livelihoods of small and marginal farmers for land and water resources development, promotion of sustainable agriculture, and the creation of access to markets for the farmer's produce, inputs and services.

ASA currently works in nearly 3,800 villages in 49 districts of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat directly reaching out to about 7,60,000 families. There are more than 180 professional staff in the organisation and more than 300 para-professional staff.

Aerial view of one of our beneficiaries' dug well.

📍 Harthall Village, Ratlam District.

Insight into the Project

ASA Dug Well Programme (DWP) is generously funded by Mr. Oliver Johnson Croon's organisation - "Where There's a Well Foundation", and has been delivered by Action for Social Advancement (ASA) since 2008. The dug well project was undertaken with the noble aim of accelerating the irrigation facilities and promoting sustainable livelihood. The families that benefit from this programme are primarily small and marginal farmers of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

We seek to provide them with security and sustainability through different initiatives under the programme.

Given suitable geological conditions, dug wells provide a low-tech solution to the challenges of rural water supply and can be implemented with a high level of community participation and locally available material and tools. As a result, they can provide a viable alternative to unhygienic, unprotected water sources while avoiding the investment and maintenance costs associated with more sophisticated water supply systems.

The average depth of these dug wells is 20-30 feet.



Shri. Kali looks into his dug well.
📍 Bavdi Badi Village, Ratlam District.

Oliver's Story

'India! Where do I even begin? India is not just a country for me. India is an emotion. India is an opportunity. India holds a very special place in my heart.'

Oliver's words are reflected in the primary school in Ratlam, housed in a nondescript building painted in the orange, white and green of the Indian national flag adding a dash of colour to the once arid, dry area. Smiling children running around screaming in glee are small indicators of joy not witnessed around these areas in western Madhya Pradesh earlier.

The epic changes the village's cavernous, hand-crafted well would bring were never part of any grandiose plan as Oliver set out 'just wanting to build a well'. Born in London, he moved to India at the age of 6, staying for seven years, triggering a special bond with the country. During these formative years, Oliver and his family often travelled to the countryside, and farmers always held his attention. "There was just something about their work that enamoured me, and I spent hours looking at them tirelessly in their fields." Despite their hardships, he saw something about their contended smiles that captivated him.

This special bond led him back to study Hindi at the University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, as part of his University program, where another British Civil Engineer highly influenced him,

often discussing the poor conditions farmers lived in due to the lack of water. 'Given this special bond I formed with India and its farmers, I always knew I had to do my bit there to give back to a country that taught me so much.'

Determined to implement the challenging, age-old practise of well digging through the 'Where there's a well' foundation led him to "the right people, at the right time". ASA's passionate and skilled team would help him implement his vision through informed actions that brought about sustainable changes in rural Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Unaware that his small drop would result in a grand plan that ultimately broke the shackles of generational poverty, Oliver, with the support of his family and friends, wants to touch and empower by 'throwing a light at the end of the tunnel and from there, the farmer does the work.'

With 700 wells since 2008, "Where there's a well" has given farmers a chance to fulfil their potential and create a life away from poverty. These now-possible realities are a part of Oliver's pioneering vision: to create a world where every farmer receives a fair start, a chance to learn and grow, giving them a path that is easier to follow and a chance for a brighter future.



Mr. Oliver Croom-Johnson, Founder of Where There's a Well Foundation, is also the Founder - Director of BlinkTV, a media and production company. His experience includes marketing, business management, mentoring, and helping start-ups grow.



Aerial view of one of our beneficiaries' dug well.
📍 Harthali Village, Ratlam District.

Investing in Water is Investing in Livelihood.

"The earth, the land and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So, we have to hand over to them at least as it was handed over to us."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Water is a crucial resource for life on earth due to its irreplaceable role in sustaining the functioning of the environment and societies. Humankind uses water resources for almost every aspect of life like, basic household and consumption requirements, and regular activities. But, in rural areas, it also works as a source to perform economic activities. Among them, **agriculture is the most water-demanding**, claiming more than 85% of human water consumption. Good seeds and fertilisers only achieve their full potential if plants are optimally watered.



India at the Waterfront

During the 2011 census, India entered the league of water-deficient nations. A nation is considered water deficient if the per capita availability falls below 1700 cubic metres per person. Though the rate of depletion has reduced in the last few years, we are still consuming much more than is being replenished by nature, wherein lies the danger.

Therefore, improving India's agriculture water management is essential to a sustainable and productive agro-food sector.

The traditional and widely used mechanism to obtain water from groundwater sources in rural areas is through hand-dug wells. In contrast to surface water, groundwater is considered to have higher water quality. Before constructing a dug well, the geological sustainability of the area, acceptance within the community and capability of operating and maintaining the system have to be assessed. In addition, the types of sources and soils must be allowed for safe excavation to construct a dug well.

The cornerstone of all our initiatives has its roots in establishing “sustainable solutions for better livelihoods” for our family of farmers. With the provision of a reliable water source, farmers can improve their yield in terms of the quality and quantity of their produce, generating higher income to sustain their families. We at ASA take pride in our mission and will continue to work towards that.

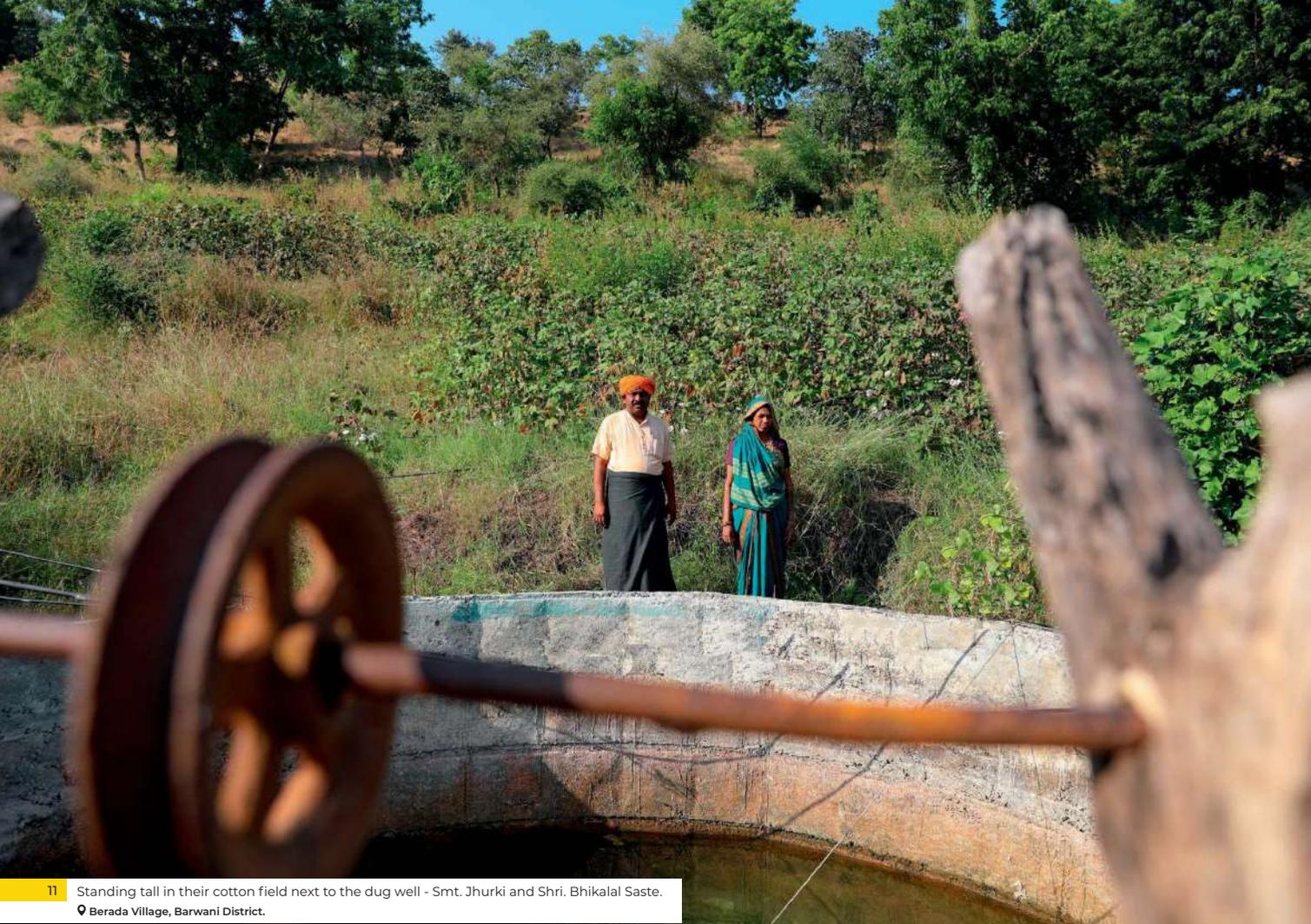
The Situation

These smallholder farmers mainly depend on rainfed crops. The water shortage to irrigate the field in the lean months prevents the farmers from cultivating their lands to harvest Rabi crops, and there is little or no scope for summer crops. So when these crops are sold, to make up the difference, the farmer joins the vast army of migrant workers who travel to the conurbations or larger farms in search of work.

With ASA's dug well programme and our partners' support, we constructed dug wells to rejuvenate the agricultural fields that would otherwise be fertile only during the monsoon season. It provides the farmer with year-round irrigation and ensures the reliability of the water from the monsoon period. In addition, it enables him to upgrade his crop (e.g. from gram or maize to wheat) and to grow three crops per year alongside the small vegetable garden he is encouraged to keep.

The dug wells have provided the farmers with a sustainable source of irrigation. It has resulted in the development of self-reliant economic growth and prosperity of the vulnerable poor, bringing them to par with mainstream development.

From food security to increased farm income, the project's outcome has been evidential to prove the significance of dug wells in eliminating poverty in its varied dimensions across the targeted regions over time.



Background

Most of rural India's population is involved in agriculture and agri-allied activities for their livelihoods and economic means. Therefore, their well-being majorly depends on the judicious usage of natural resources. For instance, in India, a small farmer needs approx. ₹ 1 00,000 per year to sustain. However, given that the agricultural economy is heavily dependent on rain, the farmer does not have it easy. A monsoon crop from their fields yields just about ₹ 25,000-40,000 per year. To fend for themselves, they often migrate to nearby cities for work. The irrigation and rainfed cultivation cleavage is a major influence on agricultural productivity, earning opportunities, and the welfare of the rural population.

India has the second-largest irrigated land in the world, but still, limited irrigation poses a grave threat to the sustenance of farmers. Only about 40.6% of arable land is irrigated, and, the remaining 60% depends on rainfall.

Having a proper irrigation facility promises a complete shift in their sustenance. With adequate water availability for irrigation, the land can be used for cultivation twice a year.

Considering the issues and concerns regarding the problems of over-exploitation of groundwater resources in the country, as well as ensuring sustainable water resources management and assured irrigation facilities in the affected areas, **the dug well project took shape in 2008 to aid our family of farmers.**

The traditional and still most common method of obtaining groundwater in rural areas of the developing world is by means of hand-dug wells. (WaterAid 2008).



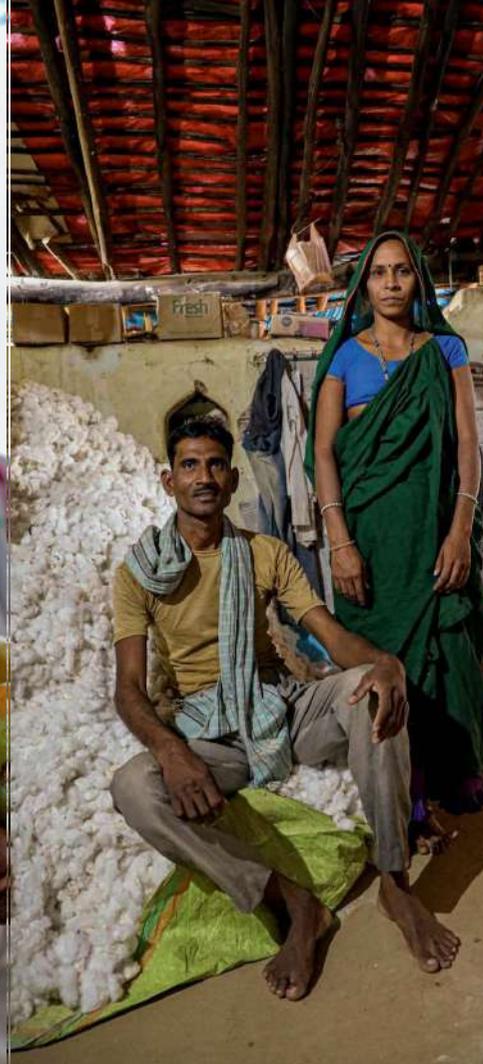
Creating livelihood through sustainable agriculture. Shri. Vesta Hatila and Smt. Hatila outside their marigold farm.
📍 Gavsar Village, Jhabua District.

Impact

Pathway to Transform Farmers' Livelihoods.



15 Diversified means of livelihood - Added benefits of the dug well.



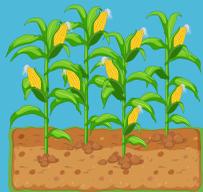
Assured irrigation meant assured farm income. As a result of the project, the villagers experienced a difference in their produce not only quantitatively but qualitatively as well. They could reap good harvests from their lands, which would have otherwise remained fallow for most of the year. Rabi harvest was made possible due to an assured water supply, and vegetable crops helped fulfil the community's nutritional requirements. Some of the apparent improvements were - increased food security, reduced migration and improved economy at the household level.

The local community's participation has been a contributing factor to the success of the project. They were involved at all stages, from the genesis to the construction and maintenance of the dug wells.

Overview

4,166 acres

of additional land brought under cultivation

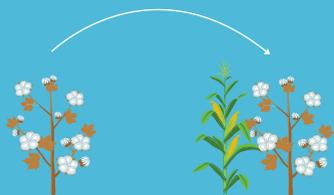


2,000+ families

benefited from dug wells

3,000+ acres

converted from single crop area to double crop, many are going for a third crop too





Building Resilient Agricultural Systems through Dug Wells

Since water provides the foundation for all life, it naturally makes sense that water services be designed with this resource's many uses in mind.

The high popularity of recharging dug wells.

Building dug wells as a private asset has been an extremely popular intervention in ASA's livelihood development strategies for resource-poor farmers. Dug wells tap the water from the sub-surface level and are recharged during the monsoon.

ASA's efforts in soil and moisture conservation in the upper ridge ensure that the recharge is even higher. It is an effective tool to eradicate poverty, especially for small farmers.



Empowering Rural Communities

Irrigation impacts have economy-wide effects through backward and forward linkages and have contributed significantly to poverty reduction in tribal-dominated districts. Better irrigation infrastructure has contributed to crop intensification and crop production, which has improved farm and non-farm income in the form of labour earnings, capital assets, human capital, and food availability. Impact reports of the project suggest that rural poverty is substantially low in well-irrigated villages than in rainfed villages. Additionally, dug wells have shown an increase in farmers' income by 20% on average, to be precise. The proportion of wells, in turn, directly impacts the value additions in the assets possessed by the farmers, like agricultural equipment, which further has an add-on impact on agri-productivity.

Thus, irrigation has a clear nexus with poverty reduction and is a crucial input in accelerating agricultural growth and empowering rural communities.



Shri. Galiya with his motorcycle, fulfilling a dream never imagined before.

📍 Dhabaipada Village, Ratlam District.

Smt. Limbu Meda proudly sits behind the tractor wheel depicting women-led development.

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Growth through Natural Resource Development



Water scarcity, land degradation and poor agriculture productivity are the critical challenges of dryland ecologies (Schlaepfer et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2019). These areas experience recurring dry spells and flash floods during the monsoon season, resulting in poor crop yield and failure (Middleton and Sternberg, 2013). Globally, drylands are inhabited by marginal and small farmers, with about 80% of households earning their livelihoods from agriculture and allied sectors (Robinson et al., 2015).

The natural resource management framework offers pragmatic approaches for addressing water scarcity and land degradation through decentralised soil and water conservation practices at the micro and mesoscale landscapes. Water harvested through these measures can be utilised within the landscape, unlike large irrigation projects in which catchment and commands are entirely different, raising stakeholder conflicts.

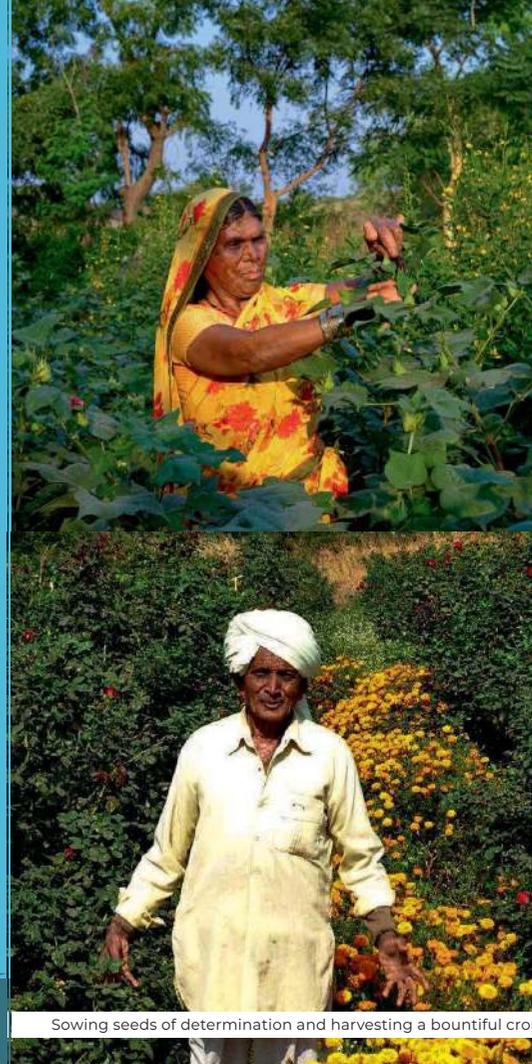


Smt. Jhurki and Shri. Bhikalal Saste harvesting cotton.
Berada Village, Barwani District.

Beneficiary – 'The Selection of Target Groups

With the support of gram panchayats, and self-help groups (SHGs), ASA identified farmers who had abandoned farming or had meagre produce due to the scarcity of irrigation facilities. Baseline surveys identified target groups to ensure the benefits reached those most needed, eventually serving farmers and saving farming.

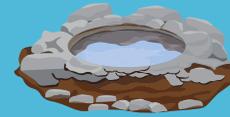
Minimal conditions were imposed, wherein the families benefitted were requested to share the water from the dug well with three neighbouring farmers. Operations were initiated in villages where watershed management activities were in place to ensure good water availability where wells were dug.



Sowing seeds of determination and harvesting a bountiful crop of strength and success.



Benefits of the Programme



Groundwater recharge through dug wells in favourable catchments like agricultural fields.



Improved groundwater quality, especially in fluoride-affected areas.



Strengthened institutional framework, created awareness and capacity building of beneficiaries and **overall community involvement** in water resources management.



Sustainability of wells during lean periods, and **drinking water availability**, thereby improving the quality of life of the people.

Sowing Seeds of Resilience for our Farmers

We've fostered a culture of resilience that has helped farmers develop the skills and mindset needed to bounce back from setbacks and challenges owing to dwindling water(irrigation) sources.

With persistent efforts, the programme has helped them maintain and sustain their livelihood and break the spell of generational poverty.



29 Shri. Kanti Kalu Singh stands behind the dug well that helped break the shackles of poverty.
📍 Gavsar Village, Jhabua District.



Smt. Jhurki wife of Shri. Bhikalal Saste by their dug well. 30
📍 Berada Village, Barwani District.

Shri. Bhagirath Parmar

Year of Installation: 2008-2009

Location: Badchakra Village, Ratlam District.

Area: 9.3 acres

"Life has been very tough. But I won't have it any other way."

- Shri. Bhagirath Parmar, Badchakra village in Ratlam.

The transformational journey of communities is best epitomised by this 72-year-old self-assured and proud Bhagirath Ji when he confidently stands on his land that was once a wasteland. His journey, which started with him being forced to be a migrant labourer, is now a tale fondly narrated to every child in the village. He was heartbroken when he had to move out of his village to search for work. But, it was a requirement for he had to fend for his family. So, while physically he was somewhere, his heart always yearned to be 'home'.

His radiant smile speaks volumes of his joy as he repeats, "just one well changed my life". From a thatched hut to a row of houses and owning his tractor and motorbike, he inspires his community to break the spell of generational poverty.

"Life has changed," says the proud grandfather, who smiles as he talks of his grandchildren, two of whom are Civil engineers and his granddaughter, who now owns her beauty parlour. "Just one well" he repeats proudly.



The story of family farming underscores a legacy of sustainability.

Smt. Limbu Meda

Year of Installation: 2017-2018

Location: Pitolkalan Village, Jhabua District.

Area: 4.94 acres

From women development to women-led development

From not having enough water to live on to now selling water to water tankers, earning her thousands of rupees, Smt. Limbu Meda's journey exemplifies how the dug well proved to be a healer, restorer and resurrector. Her 18-member family comprising five men, five women, and eight grandchildren, lived on an average of 6 months of food over the entire year. This all changed with the building of the dug well in 2008 with the support of the Where There's A Well Project. Limbu, who from starving, is now growing excess vegetables that she sells in the weekly market. Earlier, her sons were forced to move out to supplement the family's income, but now all four have found work in the village.

Limbu smiles as she watches her grandson play outside her 'pucca' house, eager and motivated to help and empower other women in her village.



Shri. Damdiya Singh

Year of Installation: 2015-2016

Location: Lafangoan Village, Barwani District.

Area: 4.94 acres

Shri. Damdiya Singh, from village Lafangoan, is so proud of his wife Surli, who, before the dug well, single-handedly struggled in the fields while he worked miles away as a migrant labourer. The irony is not lost on them as they stand next to the dug well, recalling when Surli and other women from the village walked an hour back and forth to carry back water. "Earlier, we had to walk for nearly two hours to fetch water, which made us dizzy, says Surli. "With the dug well, we save time, and my headaches are gone!" Both smile as they remember their struggles, from barely having food on their plate to doubling their yield and feeding others.

Access to the well allowed this Adivasi couple to multi-crop with just four acres of land, rejuvenating agriculture and entirely changing their fortunes. They now plan to start the construction of their new house for their children and grandchildren.

The dug well has revolutionised not just their lives but the lives of 6-7 families who can now aspire for unimagined lives. "ASA has given the entire family and village new hope," says Surli as she discusses plans to expand her fields.



Shri. Vestta Hatila

Year of Installation: 2008-2009

Location: Gavsar Village, Jhabua District.

Area: 4.94 acres.

Shri. Vestta Hatila smiles as everyone addresses him as 'Seth (local businessman)'. His home in Gavsar village, in Ratlam, has four generations, comprising his parents, wife, two sons, their wives and grandchildren, living under one roof. Every line on his face tells his story from a migrant labourer to a 'businessman'.

The severe water scarcity restricted them to sowing just one crop in the season, forcing him to work as a migrant labourer far away from home. But, with the dug well in place, he made farming a lucrative affair and is reaping a profit of Rs 2.50 lakh per annum. He now also has five cows, four buffalos, and five goats that yield 40-45 litres of milk per day which supplements his income.

Judiciously using every inch of the field, intercropping, he does not want to restrict his income to farming and has also installed a Dal processing unit. Multiple sources of income have enabled him to open a ration shop and a tent house in his village. His educated son now works at ASA as a Field Mobiliser and his daughter as a teacher. He laughs every time he is called a businessman and jokes, "I will employ workers on my farm and earn from these sources when my bones give up".



Shri. Noora

Year of Installation: 2012-2013

Location: Bavdi Badi Village, Barwani District.

Area: 5 acres

From having very little water for irrigation to planting sugarcane, one of the thirstiest crops, Shri Noora from Bavdi Badi's life is nothing short of a miracle. However, like everyone else around him, Noora and his six sons were forced to leave the village to work as migrant workers.

Since the dug well installation, his cultivable land increased manifold to 1.5 ha land, which exemplifies crop diversification at its best. The well allowed his vision to split his resources to yield better results.

He now grows a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and valuable forest plant species on his farm. These include teak, which he has planted as many as 800 saplings and expects to gain a whooping profit in the long run.

"The dug well has renewed my vigour for farming and got my life on track", says the burly farmer as he stands on his farm surrounded by greenery.



Smt. Ladki Bai and Shri. Lakhan Singh

Year of Installation: 2018-2019
Location: Limbi Village, Barwani District
Area: 7.5 acres

Age is no bar to learning.

“Farming is who I am; it runs in my blood and defines me. Traditional farming methods with the help of the dug well have helped me increase soil fertility. The dug well has helped me break old farming patterns that were earlier destroying the soil”, says 73-year-old Lakhan Singh Ji.

Shri. Lakhan Singh inherited an eight-acre farm. However, only half of it was used for cultivation as the rest of the land was rendered useless due to the use of pesticides and fertilisers to maximise yield. He converted to organic farming methods with the dug well and began growing other crops, including vegetables, which improved soil fertility. As a result, he now cultivates 8 acres of land, growing diversified crops and was able to pay a bank loan of Rs. 45,000 that he availed for installing drip irrigation and buying other inputs to enhance cultivation.

“The ASA team found that I was using only some of my lands. And enlightened me about how a dug well and crop rotation could make my remaining four-acres cultivable. In addition, they taught me about organic farming, organic methods of boosting soil fertility, and the benefits of mulching,” says Lakhan Ji.

This model farmer, whose pesticide-laden fields now bear organic crops, feels he's hit the jackpot paving the way for other farmers. "Age is no bar to learning", exclaims Lakhan Singh.



06 | Sowing Seeds of Resilience for our Farmers



Smt. Jhurki and Shri. Bhikalal Saste

Year of Installation: 2018-2019

Location: Berada Village, Barwani District

Area: 5.5 acres

When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

The once barren five-acre farm on a sloping hill is now lush and green with several varieties of plantations. The village Berada had always been vulnerable to scarcity and stresses, but Smt. Jhurki Bai and Shri Bhikla Saste's resilience helped them convert their land into a self-sustainable green farm which now produces 5-6 quintals of watermelon and muskmelon, with vegetable plantations. 'Bad loans, crop failures and low yields hovered over us like dark clouds and dug well appeared like a silver lining. Our cultivable land increased from 20% to 100% in five years! This is no less than a miracle,' exclaims Bhikhla.

Their success is grounded by the harsh realities they have faced. Looking beyond her green fields, teary-eyed Jhurki remembers how hard it was to make both ends meet before the dug well." Now we have everything that was once a distant dream. We married all our sons with the same pomp and show what we dreamt of. My youngest daughter is off to a nursing college, and I could not be more proud. We succeeded a little late in life, but so what? Now, I am living my second innings with my grandchildren, and I'll make sure they live the life they aspire for".



Shri. Kodar Damor

Year of Installation: 2011-2012
Location: Lakhiya Village, Ratlam District.
Area: 6.25 acres

“Water helped build my pucca house”, jokes Kodar Ji, who never imagined he'd see greenery and grow vegetables throughout the year! With the dug well-increasing water availability fourfold throughout the year, the drivers of agricultural transformation have been multidimensional and interrelated for him. With every extra produce, he saved up enough to acquire a tractor and buy a harvester! This enabled him to double his harvest ahead of the production of most of the farmers in his village. And, since then, there has been no looking back.

“I owe my success to every drop from the dug well”, he says.



Shri. Munna Thawri

Year of Installation: 2013-2014
Location: Bavdi Badi Village,
Jhabua District
Area: 12 acres

Shri. Munna Thawri was responsible for fending for 32 family members; five men, eight women, twelve boys and seven girls. They lived on an average of 3 months of food availability per year because only 6 of their 12 acres received irrigation. Bone dry land, due to the over-exploitation of resources, forced all the male members of his family to work as migrant labourers. But one dug well changed it all and his irrigated land increased to 12 acres! Now the family has sufficient food on their table all year round.

Overall prosperity around the area are indicators of a resilient community given the proper assistance. "All the children in our family are pursuing higher studies, the first generation to do this! This has been our biggest achievement," says Thawri Ji.



Shri. Badrilal

Year of Installation: 2010-2011

Location: Harthali Village, Ratlam District.

Area: 2 acres

Making a fortune out of flowers!

Badrilal Ji shows pictures of his flower fields on his mobile phone. His story proves that successful agricultural interventions provide opportunities for farmers to raise farm productivity by allowing the mix of production to include higher-value crops like flowers. But, unfortunately, the scarcity of water never allowed him his aspirations till the dug well. He then dared to shift from growing conventional maize and cotton crops to cultivating flowers on his two-acre land along with vegetable crops.

"The shift wasn't easy to digest for many farmers in the village," Badrilal says, as, according to him, he would often face taunts from other farmers for "destroying my fields by choosing the flower crop over maize." However, he recently earned a whopping income of Rs 8 lakh from selling flowers and other cash crops and bought himself his first mobile phone!

He now has hired four to five workers who plough, sow and pluck the floral yield. In addition, he has leased another two-acre land to expand his floriculture business.





“It feels good at the end of the day to know you made a product that other people are going to enjoy.”

Smt. Janta Singh
from **Bavdi Badi Village,**
Jhabua District.

“With my increased revenue, I want to build a pucca house for my family.”

Shri. Nanuram Gamira
from **Rajpura Village,**
Ratlam District.



“Every drop has helped integrate farming!”

Shri. Puna Ji
from **Ratitalai (Dharad),**
Ratlam District.



“Drip irrigation through the dug well increased my land yield. So, for me, every drop counts.”

Smt. Tikadi Bai from **Limbi Village,**
Barwani District



“With the right environment and basic amenities, my children are excelling in their studies. The quality of life has improved, and I feel like a rich landlord.”

Shri. Kailash from Limbi Village,
Barwani District.



“I can now be the king of my farm which is better than being the emperor of the world.”

Shri. Galiya from Dhabaipada Village,
Ratlam District.

“The well gave me everything that moved me away from a life of penury.”

Shri. Rajaram son of Shri. Ganpat
from **Bhulgaon Village,**
Barwani District.



“The dug well has initiated a second innings of our life.”

Smt. Kamla Bai from Maherban Village,
Barwani District.





“ Nothing compares to the feeling of successfully leaving a legacy that your family can hold onto. The well was a legacy for Nanuram Ji. He was among the first farmers to join the Where There's a Well programme. He will be happy knowing the farm is thriving just as he left it.”

Shri. Giriraj Katariya (Grandson of Nanuram Ji), Smt. Radha Katariya (granddaughter-in-law of Nanuram Ji) with their son Achit Katariya (great-grandson of Nanuram Ji) from Dholka Village, Ratlam District.

“ This dug well has become one of our permanent assets, and we look forward to cultivating seasonal vegetables. The endeavours have changed our lives for good and enabled our children to get proper education too.”

Smt. Wali from Gavsar Village, Jhabua District.



“ Since the dug well, I tried multi-cropping and estimated that I could increase my crop by forming a wire fence and planting creepers and climbers on them. I also fixed a pipeline by my first-year profits.”

Shri. Subhash son of Shri. Shankar from Ghusgaon Village, Barwani District.



“In dug well, I have found meaning in life. It's not just quantity that matters but quality too. And, our dug well has given us that richness in quality.”

Shri. Ramesh and Shri. Chandra from Harthali Village,
Ratlam District.



“I don't consider myself uneducated. I believe to be a farmer is to be a student forever, for each day brings something new. And, as my grandchildren call it - dug well has been the best project of my life.”

Shri. Ramkishan Singhad
from **Harthali Village,**
Ratlam District.

“Debts had become our shadow. But, I wanted a better life for my family and proper education for my children. Since we started making gains, we finally managed to pay off the debts, send our sons to a private school in the city and even construct a small house in the village!”

Smt. Leela from Kakradara Khurd Village,
Jhabua District.



“The dug well helped us irrigate approximately five acres of our own land and improve our cultivation while ensuring clean drinking water availability.”

Smt. Ruhali Bai from Limbi Village,
Barwani District.





“Success is not a dream but a reality since the dug well.”

Shri. Nandu from Badchakra Village,
Ratlam District.

“Since the dug well, I have developed an uncanny flair for growing diverse crops such as wheat, rice, basmati, turmeric and marigold.”

Shri. Kanji Ambru from Dhabaipada Village,
Ratlam District.



“We were once struggling to get a regular income, but now, we are even getting advance orders for my produce. Certainly a first in our family farming journey.”

Smt. Kanchan from Gavsar Village,
Jhabua District.



“Dug well materialised the dreams I had for years!”

Shri. Kali from Bavdi Badi Village,
Ratlam District.



“It's hard to describe how happy this dug well has made our life.”

Daughter in-law of Shri. Babla Madiya from Gavsar Village,
Jhabua District.



“I could pay off all my loans with the profits I earned every season. But, the best investment has been my touch-screen phone; with this, I keep a tab of weather updates!”

Shri. Harji from Rajpura Village,
Ratlam District.

“My husband and I spent decades cultivating the small piece of land and resigned ourselves to yielding only enough to sustain our family. But, with the dug well, we not only farm on our land but have leased out another two acres!”

Smt. Ginti Bai from Palwat Village,
Barwani District.



“I had a thirst to grow, and the dug well quenched that thirst.”

Shri. Nanuram Garwal from Harthali Village,
Ratlam District.



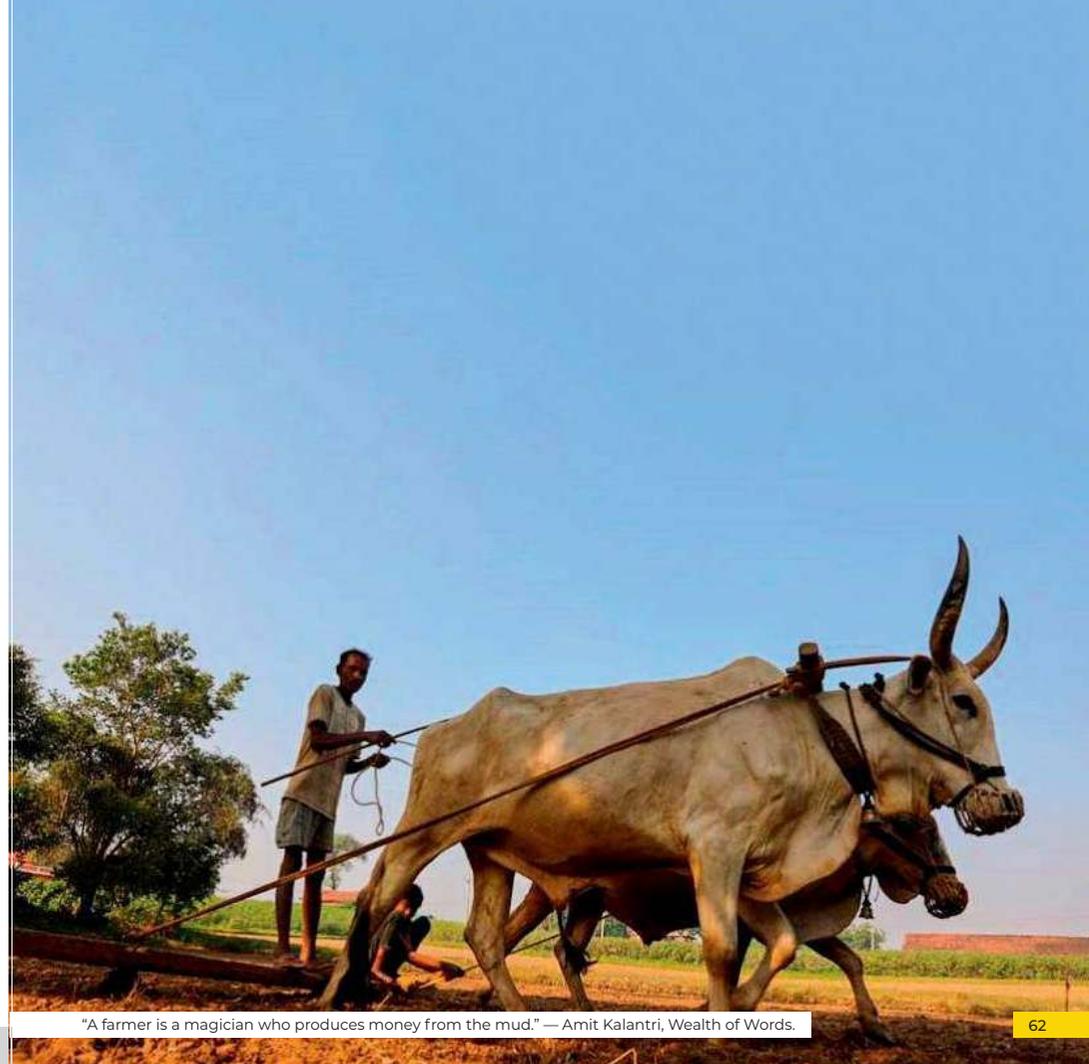
Pathway for New Avenues

The Dug Well Project (DWP) vision paints a quintessential portrait of agricultural renaissance.

What began as a simple yet powerful thought of 'digging wells' has broken the spell of multi-dimensional poverty and created a conducive environment, marshalling economic growth and prosperity for generations to come.

Starting from 2008 till now, 700 dug wells have been built, benefitting around 2,000 families, and with each passing year, we want to broaden our horizons manifold.

The future is hard to predict and even harder to speculate about. But, we seek to work with the same vigour, triggering agricultural growth-led economic progress, which can lead to opportunities for a healthy and productive life and enable farmers as rural entrepreneurs.



"A farmer is a magician who produces money from the mud." — Amit Kalantri, Wealth of Words.

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