

## 10. Watershed Development work

---

### MSS Turned 7 Water Scarcity Villages to Water Sufficient Villages

For many years, the seven villages of Samudrapur block were facing extreme water scarcity. For drinking water, these villages were annually paying rupees 2.40 crore to the water tanker owners. The water crises culminated in an economic crisis that led to migration, violence, cattle mortality, epidemic, and exploitation by water sellers, etc.

The water crisis got aggravated during the summer months when women and girls were forced to tread 3 to 5 Km. to get ahead load of water. The constant stress and strain of carrying water resulted in early menstruation and a decrease in the height of young girls. The situation became grave when families of other villages refused to get their daughters married to boys of these water-deficient villages.



MSS worked for 5 years with assistance of local people and turned these seven water-deficient villages to water-sufficient villages. The water conservation structures introduced in these villages resulted in raising the water level of wells by 1 to 1.5 meters; conserving 10,000 cubic meters water; saving 42,000 CTM topsoil from erosion.

By introducing watershed structures, 2800 Hectares land has been brought under irrigation and 450 Hectares of wasteland has been recovered and brought under cultivation. In these villages, with year-round availability of water, the risk of crop failure is reduced and consequently, thousands of farmers shifted from single to two or three crops. Hundreds of farmers took up horticulture, floriculture and vegetable farming.



The women Self Help Group members (trained in nursery techniques) were helped to set up forest plant nurseries. One-lakh trees procured from these nurseries were planted in the watershed area. This tree cover, of one lakh trees, facilitated in decreasing soil depletion; changing the quality of soil; and increasing the water retention capacity.



migration decreased.

Now, these water tanker free villages are saving crores of rupees that were earlier spent on water tankers. As the water level increased, Gram Panchayat constructed overhead water tanks and provided individual and community water taps. The water-related violence, threats, and diseases reduced. The village economy improved considerably and the level of

