

Stories of Parivartan

Project Code: P0981
Implementing Partner Name: Arpan Seva Sansthan

State: Madhya Pradesh
District (s): Bhopal
Block (s): Phanda
Village:- (FARM POND CONSTRUCTION) Khokhariya, Toomda, Barkheda Salam, Bakaniya, Dehariya Kalan & Hataikhedi.

The Challenge: *Farmers in Khokhariya, Toomda, Barkheda Salam, Bakaniya, Dehariya Kalan and Hataikhedi villages face many challenges in farming. Rainfall in these areas is limited and irregular, making it hard to get enough water for crops. Because of this, irrigation is not regular, leading to poor crop growth and frequent crop failures. Farmers mostly depend on borewells, but due to overuse, groundwater levels have gone down, and getting water has become more expensive and difficult. The soil in these areas also doesn't hold moisture well, which reduces its fertility and makes it more likely to dry out. These problems have also affected livestock, as there is not enough water and fodder, which has led to a drop in milk production. Together, these issues have made farming very tough and increased the financial burden on families.*

Our Intervention

To address the growing water-related challenges in the villages of Khokhariya, Toomda, Barkheda Salam, Bakaniya, Dehariya Kalan & Hataikhedi Arpan Seva Sansthan, with support from HDFC Bank Parivartan, initiated the construction of farm ponds as a sustainable solution. This intervention was designed to improve water availability for irrigation, reduce dependency on borewells, and support both agriculture and livestock. The initiative focused on enhancing water storage at the local level, improving soil moisture, and building climate resilience among small and marginal farmers. Active community participation, technical guidance, and a focus on long-term impact ensured that the farm ponds not only addressed immediate needs but also promoted self-reliance and sustainability within the farming communities.

Impact:

Under this initiative, 13 farm ponds were constructed, resulting in the storage of approximately 28,700 cubic meters of water. This has enabled 196 acres of land to be covered under irrigation, directly benefiting 65 farmers by ensuring timely water availability for crops and enhancing their agricultural productivity and incomes.

Community Mobilization and Awareness

- 1. Interactive meetings were conducted with Village Development Committees (VDCs), farmers, and local stakeholders to create awareness about the growing water crisis and explore community-driven solutions like farm ponds.*
- 2. Special focus was given to sensitizing the community on the long-term benefits of water conservation, including improved crop productivity, better soil health, and increased income through sustainable farming practices.*
- 3. Awareness campaigns, group discussions, and on-field demonstrations were organized to showcase the working and advantages of farm ponds—such as their ability to store rainwater, support irrigation during dry spells.*
- 4. Farmers played a key role in identifying the most suitable sites for farm pond construction by sharing their insights on seasonal rainwater flow, land suitability, and usage patterns—ensuring technical feasibility aligned with local knowledge.*
- 5. Feedback from these sessions was used to design and implement farm ponds in a way that met the specific needs of each village, building trust and promoting long-term community involvement.*

Site Selection and Survey

- 1. Technical expert, along with local farmers, conducted field surveys to identify suitable sites for farm ponds by assessing land slope, water flow patterns, and soil type.*
- 2. Farmers contributed their traditional knowledge to help mark locations where rainwater naturally collects and suggested spots close to their fields for easy access.*
- 3. Natural drains and seasonal water channels were considered during the survey to ensure maximum rainwater could be captured and stored effectively in the ponds.*

Resource Mobilization and Planning

- 1. The Village Development Committees (VDCs) worked closely with Arpan Seva Sansthan to mobilize the required resources, including construction materials, skilled labor, and technical support, for farm pond development.*
- 2. Community members contributed through **Shramdaan** (voluntary labor), which helped minimize costs and encouraged a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the ponds.*
- 3. A clear timeline was developed to complete the construction before the arrival of the monsoon, ensuring immediate water storage and use from the first rains.*
- 4. Regular planning meetings were held at the village level to monitor progress, resolve any challenges quickly, and ensure transparency and participation throughout the process.*

Construction Phase

1. *The construction of farm ponds began with site leveling and careful excavation to shape the pond structure according to the natural slope and catchment area.*
2. *Earthen embankments were built using compacted soil, and inlet-outlet channels were designed to regulate water flow and prevent erosion or overflow during heavy rains.*
3. *Spillways were integrated into the design to safely manage excess rainwater and maintain the pond's structure over time.*
4. *The construction process created local employment opportunities by engaging both skilled masons and daily wage laborers from the villages, supporting short-term livelihoods during the implementation period.*

Community Training and Maintenance Plan

1. *Farmers and local villagers were oriented on the importance of maintaining the farm ponds to ensure long-term benefits from rainwater harvesting.*
2. *Basic training sessions were conducted by field staff to build awareness about regular desilting, repairing minor damages, and maintaining the inlet-outlet structures to keep the ponds functional.*
3. *Discussions were held at the village level to encourage collective responsibility and promote a shared understanding of sustainable water use practices.*
4. *Informal maintenance plans were developed in consultation with farmers, focusing on seasonal upkeep and voluntary contributions for small repair works when needed.*

Beneficiary Testimonial:

Mahendra Verma, Farmer – Khokhariya Village

“The farm pond has brought a big relief for us. Earlier, we used to depend completely on borewells and rains, which were never reliable. Now, with water stored in the pond, we are more confident about irrigation. I’m planning to grow vegetables and pulses this season, and also keep some water aside for my cattle. This pond has given us hope for better farming and a more stable income.”

Image:





