

Sharing Series 2

Water: Bridging the Gap



Impact Study on
Bala Vikasa
Water Programs
(BVWPs)



Bala Vikasa Social Service Society

Background

In 1977, Bala Theresa Singareddy Gingras, together with her husband, founded “Partage Reddypalem” in Canada, and registered it under the name SOPAR (Society for Sharing). In 1990 Bala Vikasa was established as an Indian counterpart organization in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh. In 1991 it became a registered, secular, non-partisan, non-profit, voluntary, social service organization to effectively implement development programs supported by SOPAR-Canada. In 1995, Bala Vikasa assumed a dual role, that of an implementer and a fund provider. Over the last decade, through its collaboration with donor agencies in Canada and Europe, and with its committed personnel and partner organizations, Bala Vikasa has successfully implemented its programs to uplift the rural poor throughout Andhra Pradesh and in one district of Karnataka

Philosophy

Bala Vikasa’s development paradigm is based on the premise that people themselves have to be the true agents of change. Its conviction is that development is primarily for the people and by the people and thus its motto is ‘to help people to help themselves’. It strongly believes that empowerment of women is of prime importance in the development of rural areas.

Objectives

- Provide support for socio-economic development of the rural poor
- Implement, monitor, evaluate development programs
- Provide institutional support to partner organizations
- Impart required training for interested community based organizations, to share and deepen their experience.

Strategy

Towards holistic development programs, Bala Vikasa:

- pays attention to ethical, social and economic development.
- concentrates primarily on the intrinsic social and ethical aspects of human interaction and gradually leads women/community to economic development.
- helps build confidence and a desirable value system by inculcating discipline and human values, like dedication to work, self esteem, respect for the environment, solidarity, harmony, sensitivity to the less privileged, and willingness to participate in community development activities.
- imparts guidance for adult education, improved health and hygiene, and helps change attitudes to move with the times.
- assists in improving the economic status of the rural poor, and accelerates progress by providing small Vikasa (developmental) loans to initiate and manage micro-enterprises and income generation activities.
- gradually increases the loan size, as members grow confident in utilizing and managing funds and develop financial discipline of prompt repayment.
- interacts with group members on a continuing basis through its field staff, for effective implementation of its programs.
- builds partnerships and linkages and networks to share and work together with the people
- concentrates on replicable, manageable, accountable and sustainable development programs.

Development Programs supported by Bala Vikasa

- Drinking Water through Bore Wells, Over Head Tanks
- Surface Water Management through desiltation of traditional water tanks
- Farmers Cooperatives
- Integrated Women Development Program
- Promotion of human dignity: prevention of child labour through community sponsorship and scholarship for orphans and poor rural students.
- Education in Information Technology
- Training in Community based development through its People's Development Training Centre

Sharing series, published by the Bala Vikasa People Development Training Center(P DTC), as the name suggests, is based on Bala Vikasa's eagerness to share the outcomes of research and studies conducted at the grass roots in collaboration with the people for whom development programs were and are intended, with like-minded organizations and donor agencies, who could use the insights gained to plan and implement their own programs.



Sharing Series 1 (SS- 1), “ Before and After ” published in April 2004, is based on the Impact study conducted on Bala Vikasa Integrated Women Development program (IWDP).

This publication, **Sharing Series 2 (SS-2), “ Water: Bridging the Gap ”** is a product of Bala Vikasa People Development Training Center (P DTC) . It is an educational tool for Bala Vikasa and other organizations working with Water programs. P DTC acknowledges the diligent services of Ms. Rita Ratnam in editing this document and in enhancing this publication through the analysis presented in the last chapter.



ISBN

P DTC is equally keen to gain from the studies and research conducted by other organizations which would help save time and resources in re-inventing the wheel. For information about P DTC and its Sharing Series please contact:

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A water droplet is shown falling from the top center of the frame into a pool of water below. The impact has created several concentric ripples that spread outwards. The water is a deep blue color, and the light reflects off the surface of the droplet and the ripples, creating a shimmering effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of blue and white.

Water: Bridging the Gap

Impact Study
On
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(BVWPs)

F O R E W O R D

Andhra Pradesh is one of the states in India which has experienced decreasing rainfall over the last 41 years. It received normal rainfall only between 1997 and 2003 and the lowest rainfall was recorded between 2002-2003. Out of 23 districts, 15 were declared drought-affected. Almost all the districts experienced drought conditions thrice during the past six years. The State government categorized 1,035 mandals out of the total 1,109 mandals, as drought-affected. Crop coverage and crop production reached an all-time low compared to the previous 30 years.

For the 7.573 crore people (7,57,30,000) of Andhra Pradesh, especially those living in the rural areas, shortage of water was a bane in their life. Ground water which was generally expected to last 2-3 years even during dry periods, was over-exploited, resulting in the lowering of the water table, leaving very little water in the village wells. A large number of people had no access to clean, potable water. The absence of piped water system in remote villages further aggravated the situation. Living conditions worsened, as people, especially women, were forced to trudge miles to collect few pots of drinking water. Villagers' life, livelihood and their livestock were severely affected by the acute shortage of water. This dismal scenario was the rationale for Bala Vikasa's interventions.

Bala Vikasa's Water Programs (BVWPs) is spread over 3 decades. From installation of Bore Wells (BWs) and Overhead Tanks (OHTs) in the 70s, to a Surface Water Management Program in the new millennium, BVWPs have revolutionized the lives of over 7.5 lakh people of Andhra Pradesh. By providing drinking water and assisting in a green revolution through desiltation of village tanks, Bala Vikasa has lifted the rural people from the morass of famine and poverty to a life of sustenance and improved quality. Water, bridged the gap.

To evaluate the impact of the water programs on the economic and social life of the people, especially that of women, their families and the community, Bala Vikasa People Development Training Centre (PDTTC) was commissioned to conduct a study. The study team selected nine villages at

random, and through a participatory approach, interacted with the recipients of the programs, who illustrated the conditions that prevailed in their villages and in their lives before and after BVWPs were implemented. Valuable information was received from people's retrospection. Factual assessment by the people themselves revealed the actual impact of BVWPs. The narrations in Telugu have been translated to English.

This booklet – Sharing Series 2- contains two important features. Firstly, it presents a summary of the study team's findings, which eloquently demonstrates SOPAR/Bala Vikasa's success in addressing the issue of acute water shortage. The findings are primarily intended to enhance the planning process of SOPAR/Bala Vikasa Water Programs for the next phase, 2004-2007. Lessons learned will be equally useful to other voluntary organizations in planning their developmental interventions and training programs. The insights documented will also serve as guidelines to donor agencies.

Secondly, it portrays the outcomes of BVWPs evaluated within the framework of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It presents an analysis of SOPAR/Bala Vikasa's objectives and outcomes in co-relation to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals i.e. reducing poverty, promoting human dignity and equality, achieving peace, democracy, and environment sustainability. The rationale for this analytical review was merely to identify if, and to what degree, Bala Vikasa was effectively responding to the United Nations call to civil societies and NGOs, to 'Advance Development and Reduce Poverty by 2015'.

A detailed report of the impact study is available with Bala Vikasa People Development Training Centre (PDTC).



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THE IMPACT STUDY

Background

In 1974, due to acute shortage of drinking water in Andhra Pradesh, the founders of SOPAR and Bala Vikasa helped construct the first overhead water tank in the village of Reddypalem. It has for the last 30 years, provided potable water to the villagers, and today, it stands testimony to a development project that has significantly transformed the lives of the villagers. After SOPAR was registered as a voluntary organization in 1977 in Canada, it initiated a drinking water program through an Overhead Tank (OHT) in 1982. A year later, in 1983, it installed bore wells with manual pumps in 10 villages. These projects were managed by SOPAR's Indian partners. Since the establishment of Bala Vikasa in 1990, the Water Program has been implemented by Bala Vikasa in

coordination with its executing partners.

With a long-term vision of dealing with the fast depleting ground water, at the beginning of the new millennium, Bala Vikasa embarked on a Surface Water Management Program (SWMP), in partnership with the rural communities. From then on, Bala Vikasa has focused on two water sectors:

- drinking water program through Bore Wells (BWs) and Overhead Tanks (OHTs).
- Surface water management through a desiltation program of traditional water tanks and natural water tanks, for farm irrigation purpose.



These initiatives came to be referred as Bala Vikasa Water Programs (BVWPs)

Purpose of the impact study

Over the last two decades, BVWP initiatives have significantly increased. The magnitude of Bala Vikasa's development interventions in 2,935 villages (enumerated up till May 2003) have been measured by BV staff in quantitative terms:

- **2,511 Bore Wells have benefited 4,59,517 villagers**
- **377 Overhead Tanks have supplied water to 2,73,848 people**
- **62 desilted water tanks have helped 10,902 farmers in 109 villages.**

was keen to fully comprehend the changes that BVWPs had brought about to the overall lives of the people. More specifically, Sopar/ Bala Vikasa was eager to assess the congruence of its development results to its overall development goals of reducing poverty, enhancing gender equality, promoting human dignity, and preserving the environment in a sustainable manner. Consequently, in May 2003, PDTC was commissioned to provide an objective evaluation of Bala Vikasa Water Programs.

Evaluation objectives

The overall aim of the study was to evaluate the quantitative and qualitative impact of BVWPs on the daily lives of the rural people, before and after they had access to water. The impact was assessed at three different levels:

-
- Qualitative impact considered more
- significant to development
-
- outcomes, SOPAR/ Bala Vikasa

- **individual-especially women**
- **family**
- **community**

Methodology

The study was conducted with the assistance of Bala Vikasa staff and through field visits. Its approach was to:

- collect statistical data from Bala Vikasa records and Project Completion Forms.
- interact with the villagers and through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology obtain qualitative data.
- analyze the data collected
- review the impacts of BVWPs within the framework of UN's Millennium goals.

Source

Primary data was obtained from the quantitative data documented by Bala Vikasa and from the qualitative data gathered from villagers at all levels, who evaluated their social and economic lives before and after the implementation of drinking water and desiltation programs.

Data was obtained from:

- Focus group discussions with community members
- Semi-structured interviews through a series of open-ended questions with both men and women in the villages
- Priority true 'seeds' activity, web and graph designs- in which village men and women separately prioritized their perceived long-term benefits
- Individual interviews with 2 women in each village who



through their real life stories and anecdotes illustrated details of their life before and after BVWPs

- Social mapping of villages before and after water was accessible, with the active participation of Sarpanch, members of the Panchayat, Water Committee, Irrigation Water Users' Committee, Education Committee, Mothers Committee, Mahila Mandals (women groups), anganwadi teachers, village elders, youth leaders, para-professionals, school teachers, civil supply members and others.

Samples

In total, nine villages were selected at random to assess the changes brought about by each of the projects. The year in which the project was initiated was also randomly selected for the study. A

total of approximately 450 local community people were consulted and interviewed during the study.

Three villages were selected for each of the projects, i.e. Bore Wells (BWs) Overhead Tanks (OHTs) and Desilted Tanks (DTs), to study the impact of each project separately on the population.

One overhead tank, bore well and desilted tank was chosen to examine their usefulness to the people over the years, between the period randomly selected up to 2003.

Selected projects.

- Bore Wells drilled in 1991.
- Overhead Tanks constructed in 1992.
- Traditional tanks desilted in 2000.

Process

During May 2003, the study team visited the nine randomly selected villages and firstly explained the purpose of the study to the villagers. Using PRA methods, villagers belonging to different age groups and social status, were informally interviewed. Approximately 1000 people participated, individually or in groups. In a reflective mood the villagers compared their past lives when there was no water or little water, to their present, after water was made available for drinking and for cultivation. The impact of BVWPs was learned through people's own candid assertions and lucid illustrations.

ASSESSMENT OF BALA VIKASA WATER PROGRAMS

General Observations

In the remote villages of Andhra Pradesh, where dried up wells and acute shortage of water threatened the very existence of people and their livestock, SOPAR/Bala Vikasa's drinking water projects, through bore wells with hand pumps, and overhead tanks with pipe connections to individual household taps, metamorphosed rural Andhra Pradesh. Bala Vikasa's development concept perceives issues holistically. Impacts of its programs are conspicuous not only in numbers, but in the changed social, economic and ethical fabric of the recipients' lives as well.



Approach

The premise that development is 'for the people and by the people' is amply demonstrated by Bala Vikasa mobilizing rural communities to become active partners in the development process for the common good of the community. In its approach, Bala Vikasa has successfully endorsed its motto, "help people to help themselves", by laying the onus of becoming true agents of change on the people themselves. It is manifested in people contributing to the projects through manual labour and finance. Success of Bala Vikasa's people-centred approach is apparent in the villagers becoming decision makers. This has imbued them with a sense of pride in the ownership of the projects, which in turn has contributed to the sustainability of the projects. A noteworthy outcome of Bala Vikasa's development approach is the changed attitudes of the people.

They are now more positive than fatalistic, concerned more about the collective welfare of the community, irrespective of caste or class, than their own individual interests.

Implementation Process

Bala Vikasa believes in decentralization and partnership. For the implementation of BVWPs it selected reliable NGOs, who with the collaboration of the local community effectively executed the projects. Partner organizations helped organize the villagers into groups: farmers, women, youth, etc., and provided need-based training programs.

Capacity building being the highpoint of Bala Vikasa's project implementation process, training the trainers was provided on an on-going basis. Bala Vikasa's projects became entry points for an integrated development program, with its multifarious activities being implemented directly or through its partners.

IMPACT THROUGH QUANTITATIVE DATA

Statistical data has helped appreciate the magnitude of the BVWPs. The overall findings are: More number of Bore wells have been installed (BWs) than Overhead Tanks (OHTs).

Drinking water has been provided to villages, with a population of less than 200, living largely in backward, poverty stricken areas.

BVWPs have covered more than 2,935 villages in Andhra Pradesh out of a total of approximately 26,586 villages .¹

Assessment of Overhead Tanks (OHTs)

Period selected for the study: 1992

Villages selected: Gandadevipillai, Mallakapalli, Kota Venkatapuram

During the year 1992, Bala Vikasa implemented 39 drinking water projects through OHTs, most of them having a capacity of 40,000 litres. They were installed in 39 villages across 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh and benefited approximately 20, 000 people who contributed Rs. 13,29,335 towards the construction. It was executed through the assistance of 7 partners organizations. ²

¹ Following this impact study, which includes the number of OHTs up to March 31, 2003, 14 OHTs were installed between from April 2003 and March 2004 in 14 villages for the benefit of 6300 people.

² Following this impact study, which includes the number of bore wells drilled up to March 31 2003, 225 bore wells were drilled between April 2003 and March 2004 in 180 villages for the benefit of 33 750 people.

Findings

- Overhead Tanks provided potable water for the needs of the entire village.
- In 30 villages the beneficiaries were satisfied with the project .
- In 9 villages, villagers had inadequate water as there was insufficient water at the water source, i.e., bore well, open well, open water reservoir, to feed the OHTs.
- Water in 37 OHTs was 'sweet' (potable) while in two, the water was 'alkaline'.
- All the OHTs were maintained by the community.
- The villagers' contributed approximately 15% of the total cost of the project.

Assessment of Bore Wells

Period selected: 2001

Villages selected: Dammannapeta, Pasaragonda, Peesara

During the year 2001, Bala Vikasa implemented 269 drinking water projects through bore wells, in 250 villages spread over eight districts of Andhra Pradesh. While 70 of these were managed by Bala Vikasa, the other 199 bore wells were supervised by 7 partner organizations.

Findings

- Bore wells were drilled in villages where there were less than 200 families
- On an average, bore wells benefited 1/3 of the total village families.

- The water yield from the bore well was equivalent to 10-16 litres per minute
- The depth of the bore well was between 120 and 200 feet.
- The water in 263 wells was qualified as 'sweet' (potable) while in 5 wells, it was recorded as 'salty'. The water of one bore well was alkaline.
- All the 269 bore wells were maintained and managed by the Village Water Committees
- The villagers contributed approximately 15% of the total cost of the project.

Desiltation of Traditional Water Tanks

Period selected: 2000

Villages selected: Ionavalu, Bhramanapalli, Ookal

Bala Vikasa initiated desiltation of traditional water tanks in 2000, as a logical long-term solution to the gradual depletion of the water table. This Surface Water Management Program, has, within a short span of time, impacted the lives of the villagers, especially the marginalized/ small farmers. ³

3 From April 2001 to March 2004 inclusive, Bala Vikasa desilted 110 tanks. During this period 11,11,252 cubic meters of silt were excavated; 20,217 acres were fertilized in 165 villages.

Findings

- 19 tanks were desilted in 2000
- 1,52,989 cubic meters of silt was excavated and 6,136 acres were fertilized
- Application of silt in the field increased yield by more than 20% **per acre ???**, from 7 quintals before silt to 9 quintals after silt)
- Savings from non use of chemical fertilizers amounted to approximately Rs.44,16,200.
- Water table improved and water levels in wells, within a perimeter of 2 kilometers, increased appreciably: the 19 desilted tanks helped regenerate 11 to 38 wells per tank
- Approximately 60 % of the desilting cost was borne by the beneficiaries

Water programs	Contribution of beneficiaries in Rupees	Contribution of Bala Vikasa in Rupees	Total cost in Rupees
Drinking water - Bore-wells	1,13,59,306	6,44,05,403	7,57,64,709
Drinking water-Overhead tanks	1,40,32,882	7,95,19,663	9,35,52,545
Desilted traditional water tanks	61,10,460	28,98,030	90,08,490
TOTAL	3,15,02,648	14,68,23,096	17,83,25,744

IMPACT THROUGH QUALITATIVE DATA

Bala Vikasa program partners' appraisals of their lives, before and after the implementation of BVWPs speak volumes on the qualitative impact of BVWPs.

This is how they summed it up in unison:

“Water not only quenched our thirst but also dramatically changed our lives for the better. Our dreams became realities.”

IMPACT OF OVER HEAD TANKS

Villages: Gangadevipalli, Mallakapalli, Kota Venkatapuram

Participants: Members of Water Committee, Irrigation Water Users Committee, Mahila Mandal, Education Committee, Mothers Committee, Civil Supply, Elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions, Anganwadi teachers, village elders, youth leaders, para-professionals and school teachers.



People Reminiscence :

Raja Mouli, of Gangadevipalli village, first Chairman of the Water Committee said :

“For the people of Gangadevipalli, the relation with Bala Vikasa is more than a decade old. Our village is an exemplary village today, because of Bala Vikasa ‘s OHT program. We learnt the basic principles of development from the training and the implementation of the OHT program. We will never forget our earlier years and how Bala Vikasa helped us usher in a developed Gram Panchayat .”



Kusa Narayana, a retired Head Master said:

“After my retirement, I could have settled in the town of Warangal, but I decided to settle in Gangadevipalli as there is sufficient and clean, potable water in the village, thanks to Bala Vikasa. In the town the water supply is only once a week. I am happy to reside here as water has brought unity, peace, cordial relationships and harmony.”



Vijaya, a Mahila Mandal member commented:

“We women will never forget the difference Bala Vikasa has made to our lives, through the construction of OHT and tap connections. We have no more conflicts over water and there is peace now. Our self-respect has increased in the family and in the community, as we are able to spend our spare time in useful activities like participation in the SHGs, learning from the regular meetings conducted by Bala Vikasa, and in income generating activities. We also have more time now for the welfare of the children.”



Gone Rajaiah declared:

“Our personal and community hygiene has remarkably improved due to building of toilets and availability of sufficient water. We are able to save a lot of money as our frequent visits to the doctor has considerably reduced.

Chenchu Rajaiah proudly announced:

“Since the beginning of the water project, the Water Committee has saved a huge amount of Rs.3 lakhs from the people’s monthly contribution. It serves as a reserve fund for emergencies and maintenance of water system.”

A villager asserted:

“As a Water Committee member, I have attended a few training programs conducted by Bala Vikasa. Through the exposure visits to Nagarkurnool. I have learnt a lot about the value of water and its judicious usage. My family members and I are utilizing water very economically..”

Jayasudha, is a Upa Sarpanch (Deputy Sarpanch) of the Panchayat.

She said:

“The people here struggled a lot due to lack of sufficient drinking water in the past. If not for Bala Vikasa’s OHT project, women’s lives would have continued to be a drudgery. We have also learnt to value water and use it sparingly. My husband who is a Water Committee member ensures that in our street no one wastes water and defaulters are fined.”

Allam Rayapareddy said:

“Water is now sufficient not only for us but also for our livestock and other dependents in the village. Water can be used any time once the tank is filled and we do not have to depend on electricity. As we do not have to waste time on collecting water, we spend the time saved working in our fields.”



IMPACT OF BORE WELLS

Villages: Dammannapeta, Pasaragonda, Peesara

Participants: 25 men and 15 women participants were drawn from the Gram Panchayat office bearers, like the Sarpanch, village Secretary, Ward Members, school Head Master, retired teachers, village elders, village men, women. and youth



Background

Pasaragonda is one of the backward villages of Atmakur Mandal in Warangal district, with a total population of 2200 (500 families) consisting of different sections of the society. Villagers and their 250 cattle suffered from shortage of drinking water. Peesara, one of the biggest villages of Dharmasagar Mandal in Warangal district, has a population of 4200 of whom 55 per cent live below poverty line.

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"As water was scarce and a precious commodity, we could not bathe regularly and therefore our level of personal hygiene was very poor. We became easy victims to infections."

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"Our hygiene has improved and thus we are now less prone to diseases."

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"Men harassed women if there was no water in the house. I shudder even now when I think about it."

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"There is considerable domestic harmony now."

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"Often we (daily wage coolies) had to miss work because we would get delayed, spending hours fetching water."

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"All this has changed with the presence of bore wells. Since we go to work regularly our income has increased."

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"Due to limited availability of drinking water, we had to restrict the number of guests at our social gatherings."

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"Availability of water has helped restore traditional practices and has improved relationships within the community"



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"As a lot of time was spent in fetching water, a lot of money was spent on dhobis, buying vegetables, flowers, etc."

"With enough water now, we do our own chores, grow our own vegetables and flowers, and all this has helped save money. We even grow trees around our house."

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"Individual houses had no tap connections. Due to lack of water and sanitation facilities people were prone to diseases."

"Easy access to water and sanitation facilities have improved general hygiene and health."

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"Earlier there was no community feeling. We were only interested in our individual needs."

"The village is well organized now and several committees help supervise the development activities of the village for the betterment of the entire village community, irrespective of caste or class."

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"Conflicts arose in sharing little available water."

"The water project has brought not only water, but harmony as well."

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"Schools did not have sufficient drinking water and there were no toilets, which led to a high drop out rate among girls."

"Sanitation has improved and drop out rate has decreased."

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"Village community had no funds."

"People's contribution has helped set up a community fund and has enabled us to be self-reliant. Funds have helped maintenance of bore wells which has ensured sustained water supply."

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"Life was difficult without water and there was no time for environmental considerations."

"Availability of water and Bala Vikasa training programs have made us more aware of the need to conserve environment. In Peesara, the number of plants have steadily increased. Over the last two years, we have planted 1,500 plants and the survival rate is 85%. Now every woman has planted two to four fruit plants in front of the house. Water has helped Green our village."

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"I never used to come out of the house before becoming a member of Bala Vikasa program."

"Now I have become courageous, able to express my opinion and take decisions. At home, my husband and I consult each other and jointly take decisions. In the gram Panchayat meetings too, we women play an active role. Men now cooperate with us in implementing policies."

"Previously we did not know anything about government schemes."

"Thanks to Bala Vikasa, we now get government help as our efforts at developing ourselves has been recognized. Government has introduced a project in our Gangadevipalli village. 23 women have been trained in making different types of jute bags. Exposure trips to Srikakulam has helped us learn about market linkages, etc. We now get a lot of encouragement and cooperation from other government departments. All this has raised our status within the family and in the community."

IMPACT OF DESILTED WATER TANKS

Villages: Ionavalu, Bhramanapalli, Ookal.

Participants: 22 men and 13 women, consisting of farmers who had lands with wells and bore wells, immediately below the tank, farmers who had transported the silt for their fields away from the tank, fishermen whose survival depended on the tank, village elders, Ward members including women, and village youth.

Background

Ionavalu, with a population of 6000 (nearly 2000 families) was inhabited by 1142 schedule caste families, 701 backward class families, and 157 families belonging to schedule tribes. A nearby hamlet had 200 families of the forward and backward castes. There were altogether about 250 buffaloes and 300 cows.

The scenario before the implementation of BVWPs is summed up thus:





B.Kotaiah said:

“Before Bala Vikasa’s help, our cattle had no water to drink”

B.Raju said:

“The most unfortunate part was that there was nobody to take up these serious issues. We had to depend only on rains, which failed us year after year. Our prayers for water was finally answered through Bala Vikasa.”

T. Marredy said:

“Till the year 2000, only three families enjoyed the right to use this water from the tank. Dhobis (laundry-people) had no access to water”.

Impact of desiltation on the traditional water tanks

- Enlarged the storage capacity of the lakes.
- Helped replenish the water table.
- Enhanced soil fertility.
- Increased farm production.
- Improved income of small farmers.
- Strengthened organizational capacity of villagers.
- Boosted self-confidence of villagers to replicate desiltation programs in other villages.
- Raised people’s respect for the environment.

Case studies

1. Kotaboina Venkanna used silt and received high yield. He used less pesticides and fertilizers and saved a lot of money.
2. Water in Sothi Sommaiah Goud's well and bore wells increased and he had grass for fodder in plenty, even during the drought.
3. For women like B. Sammakka it provided an opportunity to come out of their homes and mingle with other villagers. Their increased participation enabled them become Ward members, and implement activities for the common good. Such involvement of women, was unheard of in the past.
4. A farmer in Mariapuram spread 300 trucks of silt per acre. The capital investment came down to Rs.4500/- saving Rs.1500/- per acre. The yield increased from 20 bags of paddy to 25.
5. Thomas Reddy changed his agricultural practices in his 20 acres of dry land. His bore well provided sufficient water for his crops and fodder. He allowed his neighbors to draw water from his bore well without charging them any money.

From the difference exemplified by the people, before and after the implementation of BVWPs, it is abundantly clear that water provided through Overhead Tanks, Bore wells and Desilted tanks, had enormous impacts on the lives of the people. Most significantly, water reduced poverty.



HIGHLIGHTS OF BALA VIKASA WATER PROGRAMS' IMPACT

The assessment of the participants - men and women, both young and old, and of all castes, especially the marginalized- clearly demonstrates that water for drinking and cultivation, together with Bala Vikasa's capacity building training programs, made positive impacts on individuals, especially women, their families and community. Critical discernment of the people's verdict highlights the impact of BVWPs.

Impact on Women

- *Improved health:* 80% of energy was saved with easy access to water which had a direct impact on the health status of women. Clean and safe water also played a significant role in enhanced health conditions.
- *Saved time:* 4-6 hours were saved from the drudgery of fetching water.
- *Diverted time and energy on productive work:* with time and energy saved, women were able to devote more time to the welfare of the family, especially children, personal development through participation in Bala Vikasa meetings, income generation projects and other productive activities.
- *Improved finance:* availability of water, time and motivation received through training, encouraged women to develop kitchen gardens which helped cut cost and save money.
- *Restored dignity and harmony:* trudging long distances, balancing heavy pots of water on the head, and getting into conflicts over collection of water, all ended with water made available through a turn of a tap. Living in harmony raised women's dignity.
- *Increased self-worth:* active participation in governance- as village committee members and elected members of the

Impact on Community

- *Built Solidarity:* cooperation and participation of all villagers for the common good of the village community, improved and strengthened solidarity.
- *Imbued a sense of responsibility:* villagers organized themselves into various committees to supervise various development activities of the village, take decisions and the responsibility for equitable distribution of water and maintenance of the projects.
- *Changed mind-sets:* villagers learned to look beyond their individual needs and become more community oriented. Their changed attitudes enabled them to think and act for the common good of the entire community.
- *Motivated self-reliance:* the active participation and the experience gained by women, men, and youth in community welfare work, made them more self-reliant. Self Help Group initiatives also provided the impetus.
- *Increased environment awareness:* Bala Vikasa training programs made people more aware of environmental practices like the need to recharge water table, stop felling trees, plant more trees, use gobar gas, apply sustainable environment practices, etc.
- *Enhanced attentiveness to health and hygiene:* awareness training provided knowledge on water sources, water borne diseases and ways and means to improve hygiene and health.
- *Augmented agriculture produce:* adequate water and excavated silt helped improve agriculture yield and the overall economy of the villages.
- *Reduced poverty:* increase in village resources and income helped people move from being poor to being 'better off.'

EVALUATION OF BALA VIKASA'S DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES:

CO-RELATION TO

THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the beginning of the new millennium, the United Nations called for a compact among nations to:

- do all they can to eradicate poverty
- promote human dignity and equality
- achieve peace, democracy, and environment sustainability.

It also gave a clarion call to civil societies- i.e. organizations, professional associations, women' groups, network of non-government organizations, (NGOs), to advance development and reduce poverty by the year 2015, or earlier.

The Millennium Development Goals, emanating from the Millennium Declaration, bind countries to do more to attack inadequate incomes, widespread hunger, gender inequality, environment deterioration, lack of education, health care and clean water. Towards this, eight goals have been set.

The impacts of Bala Vikasa Water Programs on the ethical, social and economic dimensions of the people, and the outcomes of BVWPs have been analyzed within the framework of the UN Millennium Declaration. They have been reviewed from a broader perspective, to assess the co-relation between Bala Vikasa's development objectives and the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 2: To Achieve Universal Primary Education

The outcomes of BVWPs indicate that with easy access to safe drinking water, children who had to bear the burden of fetching water earlier, were no longer required to do so. Equitable distribution of water irrespective of caste being Bala Vikasa's pre-requisite, it contributed to a significant increase in the number of marginalized children being drawn towards schools. School attendance in all Bala Vikasa program associated villages considerably improved, and drop out rates became negligible, especially of girls, with the availability of water and improved sanitation conditions in schools. Overall, a marked increase in numbers at the Primary and High school levels was noted.

BVWPs not only provided water, but

- helped remove barriers which
- prevented children from attending
- schools, motivated parents,
- especially mothers, through

awareness programs, built solidarity, sensitized the community to the debasement of human dignity through forced child labour, and encouraged collective action of the community in caring for the less fortunate like destitute and handicapped children, so that access to education became universal. Bala Vikasa's thrust on prevention of child labour and promotion of education for all children synchronized with the goals set by the UN.

Goal 3: To Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Bala Vikasa's development initiatives are people-centred, focusing on individuals, especially women, families and community. From the women's own assertion, it is evident that there was inequality of responsibility in fetching water, and the burden of providing water for the family rested largely on women. It all changed with BVWPs providing water at their door steps.

Water management, by both men and women as members of Water Committees, promoted greater gender equality.

In all Bala Vikasa's development programs, promotion of gender equality is an integral dimension. In BVWPs, the training programs created greater awareness on various issues pertaining to the day-to-day life of women, and became effective instruments in empowering women. To accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment of the BVWP women, Bala Vikasa introduced a new policy in 1995. It integrated the Water Programs to the Integrated Women Development Program (IWDP), and entrusted the management of 51 bore wells to SASSS, a partner organization of IWDP. This illustrated Bala Vikasa's strategy to sustain the promotion of gender equality and women's

empowerment. The impact study reflected the benefits received by women through regular capacity building programs in leadership, adult education, other literacy programs, management of loans through Self Help Groups, micro entrepreneurship, etc. By gradually removing roadblocks to gender equality, Bala Vikasa advanced the development of BVWP women. Overall, it raised the status of women and empowerment brought about a sea change in the lives of the rural women.

Bala Vikasa's future intent is to initiate 70 drinking water projects and entrust the management of the projects to the women groups of Bala Vikasa's Women Development Program,¹ This endorses Bala Vikasa's on-going and continuing response to the U.N.'s Millennium goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women.



Goal 4- 6: To Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health, Combat HIV, Malaria and others

Bala Vikasa training programs, integral part of BVWPs, provided women and men, extensive education on health and hygiene, and equipped the rural people with knowledge to combat and halt the spread of diseases. Need-based training programs helped reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and created a greater awareness of HIV/AIDS, which enabled early detection. Bala Vikasa's campaigns also helped stem social stigma attached to AIDS affected people and families.

Bala Vikasa understands the problems at the grass-roots and while malaria and other diseases have shown a definite decrease through its initiatives, it recognizes that more has to be done on a war footing to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. Bala Vikasa is aware that controlling and preventing the

spread of HIV/AIDS requires a great deal of cultural sensitivity and thus more time. Yet it is hopeful to achieve the goals set by the U.N. before 2015.

Goal 7: To Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Bala Vikasa's concept of development embraces the five pillars of sustainability: social, economic, political, cultural and environment. These dimensions were well integrated in the planning and implementation process of BVWPs. From the outcomes it is apparent that with overall sustainability of the project in view, Bala Vikasa involved the rural people from the outset of the project, especially in the decision making process, even in matters concerning positioning of the OHT so as to benefit the entire community. Peoples' involvement provided a sense of ownership and pride which in turn encouraged them to sustain the projects.

constructive partnerships with national NGOs, government departments, national institutes like the National Institute for Rural Development, Andhra Pradesh Academy for Rural Development, Care India, and Caritas India. It has sustained its long-standing partnerships with international organizations in Canada like the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Coady International Institute and the Cardinal Leger Foundation, and with partners like Rabobank and ICCO in the Netherlands, Misereor in Germany and Manos Unidas in Spain. These global partnerships for development have greatly enhanced Bala Vikasa's role as an agent of change. Bala Vikasa continues to form new partnerships globally to effectively respond to the United Nation's call to alleviate poverty.

Review Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be reasonably concluded that Bala Vikasa Water Programs have not only helped find solutions to daunting challenges such as acute scarcity of water, but in the process have helped reduce poverty and hunger, improve education, prevent infectious diseases, stem the spread of deadly diseases, promote gender equality and human dignity, empower women socially, economically and politically, and help villagers -men, women and especially the youth - realize the need to be involved in democratic governance and work towards peace and social justice. Its multifarious initiatives, have enabled it to achieve in varying degrees, the goals set forth by the UN in its Millennium Development Declaration.

Epilogue

The critical analysis of what Bala Vikasa has achieved till date in congruence with the U.N. Goals



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(Footnotes)

¹ For more information about Bala Vikasa Integrated Women Development Program, refer to Bala Vikasa Sharing Series 1, "Before and After", *Impact Study on Bala Vikasa Integrated Women Development Programme (IWPD)*.

Strategy

Towards holistic development programs, Bala Vikasa:

- pays attention to ethical, social and economic development.
- concentrates primarily on the intrinsic social and ethical aspects of human interaction and gradually leads women/ community to economic development.
- helps build confidence and a desirable value system by inculcating discipline and human values, like dedication to work, self esteem, respect for the environment, solidarity, harmony, sensitivity to the less privileged, and willingness to participate in community development activities.
- imparts guidance for adult education, improved health and hygiene, and helps change attitudes to move with the times.
- assists in improving the economic status of the rural poor, and accelerates progress by providing small Vikasa (developmental) loans to initiate and manage micro-enterprises and income generation activities.
- gradually increases the loan size, as members grow confident in utilizing and managing funds and develop financial discipline of prompt repayment.
- interacts with group members on a continuing basis through its field staff, for effective implementation of its programs.
- builds partnerships and linkages and networks to share and work together with the people
- concentrates on replicable, manageable, accountable and sustainable development programs.



