

DETAILS OF INITIATIVE ON WATER CONSERVATION UNDER INNOVATIVE BANDA
BY DM SH. HEERA LAL JI

#	Title of initiative Bhoojal Badhao, Peyjal Bachao Abhiyaan - Banda and Kuwan Taalab Jiaon Abhiyaan - Banda
#	Ministry / Department / State Govt. / District / Organization where the initiative was implemented Banda District Administration, Uttar Pradesh.
#	Area of Initiative - Water Conservation
#	Commencement of the initiative 06 October, 2018
#	Has the outcome or impact of the initiative been audited or evaluated by any independent agency for reality check of the realized benefits vis-à-vis those envisaged? 675 CH Audited & encouraged by: Sh. U P Singh - Sec. Jal Shakti Ministry, GOI Sh. Mahendra Modi (Consultant to U.P Govt - Urban Development) known as Jal Guru Sh. L Venkateshwarlu - Then CEO, U.P Sh. S R Bhoosreddy - Addl.Chief Secretary to Govt. of U.P SKOCH (Leading think-tank on socio-economic issues & inclusive growth) Impact: “As water conservation expert, I inspected initiatives by Sh. Heera Lal in Banda to conserve water & found them to be revolutionary; one having lasting impact” Sh. Mahendra Modi “We went to Banda for an impact assessment and governance evaluation & found that most of the projects and their resultant outcomes, have been completely out-of-the-box” SKOCH

Was this initiative winner of any other award(s) instituted by any other National / International organization? **625 CH**

Smart Cities India Awards 2019

Best Water Project for Bhujal Badhao, Peyjal Bachao Abhiyaan.

Presented by Sh. Parameswaran Iyer, Sec. Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, GOI

Habitat for Humanity India Innovation & Impact Award 2019

Awarded to Sh. Heera Lal for leading a government initiated, civil society supported movement for Water Security in Banda.

Limca Books Of Records

Most contour trenches built and Jal Choupals conducted. Issued in December 2019.

Rajat Ki Boonden National Water Award 2020

For Valuable contribution by Sh. Heera Lal towards Water Conservation in Banda.

Elets National Water Innovation Awards 2020

Jal Prahri Award

Objective of Initiative and how the initiative achieved those objectives.

Context:

Banda, a district in Bundelkhand region, suffers acute water shortage. Evolving lifestyle has moved people away from using natural and self-regenerating sources of water. Hence, rivers, ponds, and wells remain neglected.

According to a study by Ground Water Board, more than 71% of wells under observation are depleting at an alarming rate, adding to the water woes of people. There was no awareness, knowledge and sensitivity towards water conservation among people, leading to household stress, low commercial productivity and overall impaired societal growth.

Objectives:

- To resolve the perennial water crisis for all 471 Gram panchayats and 8 urban bodies of Banda.
- To educate and facilitate people about conserving water and using natural and self-regenerating water sources.
- To conceptualize, lead, facilitate and monitor tangible action to increase awareness and encourage initiatives.
- To dig proverbial ponds and wells in the '*Dil-and-Dimaag*' (Heart & minds) of people, helping them re-establish old relationship with water bodies, as practiced in the past.

Objective fulfilment:

The initiative of Bhoojal Badhao, Peyjal Bachao Abhiyaan and Kuwan Taalab Jiaon Abhiyaan successfully induced a socio-behavioral change among the masses, taking roots as Jal-Aandolan and transforming into a Jan-Aandolan. It helped us achieve all the set objectives and sustained efforts will potentially completely eradicate the water crisis in Banda.

Introducing and implementing an innovative idea/ scheme/project to meet stakeholders' requirement

Introduction:

Water conservation is an often heard, seldom acted upon phenomenon. We conducted primary research where we spoke to local residents, senior citizens, seasoned journalists with historical information on existing water crisis and technical water experts. The insights largely pointed towards a disconnect between people-water source relationship and its neglect, as the root cause of depleting water and its crisis.

The solution | Creation of a Jal-to-Jan Aandolan:

To ensure its success, we adopted a collaborative approach and prioritized mass-ownership as the fundamental strength, starting-off by creating a formal district level Water Committee comprising of key officials from all water related departments, civil society members and technical water experts. This committee became the epicenter of activities under the visionary leadership of Sh. Heera Lal, District Magistrate, Banda.

Strategic resource allocation | Low-or-no-cost model

Wanting to operate on a No-Or-low cost model, we strategically pooled-in funds and resources available in different departments, channelizing their synergies towards our campaign. We initiated phase one with voluntary work and in phase two, we used resources from MGNREGA, Khet Taalab Yojna, RWH etc.

Project sustainability:

Since the initiative of digging trenches was undertaken completely by communities based on triggers towards community action in *Jal Chaupal* around drinking water sources, the upkeep and ensuring that trenches are in place to recharge the ground water rests with local rural communities living in villages and therefore ensuring sustainability. Similarly, the wells were cleaned during the campaign and were made capable to self-recharge by adding roof top rain water harvesting mechanism.

Scalable implementation:

An idea expected to transform consumption behavior of an entire district demands a simple yet scalable implementation model. Given the demonstrated leadership at district level, the model is scalable to conduct *Jal Chaupal* and digging of contour trenches around drinking water sources and in other districts too with meager resources and full public participation. The model does not require heavy funds to implement the campaign and is aligned with local self-governance processes in India using the route of *Jal Chaupal*.

This model of *Jal Chaupal* for triggering peoples demand for water conservation has been integrated in implementation plan of Jal Shakti Abhiyaan and Atal

Key influencer targeting:

Banda's households being the most troubled section due to the water crisis, we ensured local-community participation as a priority, focussing on women as they key influencer in driving home the message of water conservation across each household. More than fifty thousand women from self-help groups of NRLM, became the principal flag-bearers in popularizing the campaign.

Cost effectiveness:

The model of the campaign is very cost effective as its based on voluntary action of communities to dig recharge trenches after being triggered to conserve ground water and make efforts to recharge it and *Jal Chaupal* does not take more than INR 5-10 per capita overall in areas where it has been implemented by civil societies promoting it. The model is hugely cost efficient and more impactful as compared to other approaches tried out for Gram Panchayat/ Village Water Security.

Transparency:

In phase one it was completely voluntary work done by the public after the triggering tool of Jal chaupal was used and in phase two the involvement of all concerned departments and communities ensured that every step of the campaign is executed in completely transparent manner.

Accountability:

The campaign called for people to be accountable for current ground water stress situation based on how their practices (of mismanaging water) and take action for its recharge by providing community contribution towards digging of contour trenches for rain water harvesting, revivals of old well, ponds and digging of new ponds . Therefore, the public accountability was the concept that was built up in core of the Jal Chaupal model that was applied in this campaign.

Bringing perceptible improvements in processes/ systems and building institutions

Collaborate to conquer:

Great results demand out-of-the-box thinking. We worked tirelessly to improve inter-departmental communication and cooperation to ensure that all individual teams working on different aspects around water could come together to achieve a larger common goal - to eradicate the water crisis of Banda.

An inclusive system with an objective of bringing about socio-behavior change was created, which acted like the binding thread for all - administration, people and private technical experts. This not only enabled achievement of great results, it also helped create a model for virtually any issue affecting our society. This not only strengthened the effectiveness of each of our institutions, it helped us realize, practice and prove that with collaboration, all hurdles can be crossed and any challenge can be conquered.

Cross functional Project Authority-Accountability system:

Core committee comprising of:

Chief Development Officer

District Development Officer

Dy. Director, Agriculture

District Panchayati Raj Officer

Adhishasi Abhyanta Laghu Seechai

Adhishasi Adhikari, Jal Nigam

Bhoomi Sanrakshan Adhikari

Policy Manager & Program Coordinator, Water Aid

Director, P.S.I

Director & Project Coordinator, A.B.Samaj Seva Sansthan

One nodal officer per village and urban center, supported by members of gram panchayats and voluntary organization workers at the ground level.

Defining clear roles and responsibilities:

For both phase campaign roles and responsibilities of various stakeholder in the program-

- District administration - Complete leadership, over the campaign covering all of different departments for planning, progress and review and leverage financial resources for programme activities.
- Rural development department: Under MGNREGA- For the cleaning and digging of the pond under this scheme
- Agriculture Department- Implementing of departmental khet Talab Yojana.
- Panchayati Raj Department- For the implementation of Jal chaupal at grassroot level and for awareness activities involving pradhan, sachiv and lekhpals and VLW. Repair, care and development of new water bodies with Gaon Sabha Fund under written direction of DM and as mandate.
- Wateraid & Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Seva Sansthan, Banda- For the technical support and innovation planning of the activities, monitoring and advises changes required.
- Minor Irrigation- For technical guidance in the construction activities and care, repair and development of new ponds from departmental budget.
- NRLM- For focusing on maximum women participation for their benefits and involving them in water activities pro-actively.
- Information Department- For providing information using social media, newspaper, digital media and other media so community can get information and can be part of campaign. Adoption of SBCC.
- Promoted polling of labor of public (free of cost=Sharmdan) for repair, care and development of new water bodies. In past it was the only practice-revival of this old pattern.
- All rich and big land holders farmers are motivated and persuaded to develop new ponds on their land on own expenditure to store and conserve rain water for their own use (apne khet ka pani apne talab me)

Approach and methodology adopted to bring innovation.

Approach:

We operated on a multi-pronged approach focusing on each and every aspect, and all stakeholders. We designed the project in a manner where it includes people at the grassroots level to administrators to technical experts and provided them a platform for a sustainable solution.

Onboarding technical expertise:

Organisations like WaterAid International, Lok Vigyaan Kendra, Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Seva Sansthan along with our internal experts like Jal-Guru Sh. Mahendra Modi Ji were taken on board for technical know-how.

Methodology:

Situational analysis:

- Neglect of natural & self-regenerating water sources and fabricated-inclination towards '*bottled water*' (symbolically speaking) has led to the current water crisis, accelerating depletion of ground water level.
- Lack of basic knowledge, awareness, motivation and scientific guidance towards water conservation.
- Lack of proper initiative and implementation has resulted in inadequate, superficial, short-term solutions, which do not yield results.

Activities & Milestone events:

Jal Choupal: Training and awareness camp held at each gram panchayat and urban center educating people about the idea and benefits of **Water Budgeting** and importance of water conservation.

Trench digging: The project mandated digging water-retention trenches around hand pumps and ponds, thereby enabling rain water to seep through and add to the ground-water level.

Rejuvenation of old water sources: Many old hand pumps, wells and ponds had dried and become unusable due to negligence. Our project took their repair, beautification and complete rejuvenation at war footing and infused life in them.

Creation of new ponds: With the help of local residents, local ground parcels were identified and transformed into ponds, which during monsoons acted as a boon by providing adding additional water supply to the region.

Rain water harvesting: Systematic rain water harvesting systems were built, starting with government office buildings, setting an example which people adapted at their community level.

River Bage, Yamuna & Ken Aarti: Taking a spiritual route to rediscover the lost love for natural water bodies, this Aarti event was organized to inspire and mobilize masses to reignite a feeling of care and respect for nature's gift to mankind, having a direct impact on conserving water and benefiting the people of Banda.

Jal March: A mass walkathon was organized across the city of Banda in which students, professionals, local traders, NGOs, residents of Banda and many others participated. The objective of this Jal March was to increase awareness and educate people about the water conservation efforts and inspire them to make it an individual mission.

Deep Daan: Considered a very auspicious ceremony, Deep Daan activity was conducted again to re-emphasize the significance of natural water bodies and how they need to be loved and respected as they are the giver of water, an essential for life. This not only attracted masses, but also captured their mind space and our message was delivered well.

Tree plantation & Medbandi: Tree plantation on the banks of river and ponds along with Medbandi of farm boundaries helped us achieve reduction in soil erosion and wasteful flow of water.

Jal par Kavita & Mushaira Sammelan: Trying innovative ways of reaching out to people, we organized a dedicated Kavi sammelan and mushaira on 'water' as the theme. Through poetic creativity and entertainment, we were able to deliver our message of water conservation to a large number of people in an engaging manner.

Jal Hasya Charcha: Adding momentum to our initiative was the milestone celebration of mass-participation in our initiative by organizing *Jal Hasya Charcha* with celebrity comedian Raju Srivastava as the chief guest. He deeply encouraged our initiative and appealed to the people of Banda to make this an individual goal.

Executive Summary of the work done under the initiative

Background:

Banda's 85% drinking water needs are dependent upon ground water. Lack of public awareness & insensitivity towards water conservation, has resulted in dangerously depleting water level, making the situation extremely dangerous.

Objective:

To resolve the perennial water crisis of Banda.

To educate and facilitate people about conserving water.

To dig proverbial ponds and wells in the 'Dil-and-Dimaag' (Heart & minds) of people.

Solution:

Bhoojal Badhao, Peyjal Bachao Abhiyaan and Kuwan Taalab Jiaon Abhiyaan.

Implementation roadmap:

i. A district level Water Committee comprising of key officials from all water related departments, civil society members and technical water experts.

ii. Strategic resource allocation | Low-or-no-cost model

Strategic pooling of funds and resources available in different departments.

iii. Key influencer targeting

Local-community participation; focus on women.

iv. Scalability

Easy to implement SoP and stakeholder-collaboration approach.

Activities & Milestone events:

i. Jal Choupal

ii. Trench digging

iii. Rejuvenation of old water sources

iv. Creation of new ponds

v. Rain water harvesting

vi. River Bage, Ken & Yamuna Aarti

vii. Jal March

viii. Deep Daan

ix. Tree plantation & Medbandi

x. Jal par Kavita & Mushaira Sammelan

xi. Jal Hasya Charcha

Impact & results:

Banda became the first district in India to dig mass trenches around its hand pumps and wells.

Jal choupals conducted in 471 gram panchayats, educating people about Water budgeting & conservation.

34732 villagers benefitted directly; 15 lakh indirectly.

2605 trenches built around 2443 hand pumps & wells.

Built trenches have 3930 k.l. conserving capacity, saving 110001 k.l. water annually.

572 old ponds revived; 840 new ponds created.

1536 recharge pits built; Medbandi at 1311 locations.

82 rain water conservation structures were built.

27,62,512 h.m. annual water recharge capacity created.

Recognition:

Best Water Project - Smart Cities India Awards

Habitat for Humanity India Innovation & Impact Award

Limca Books Of Records

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Elets National Water Innovation Awards

INITIATIVE VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQYfpuSicNc>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlgOWXRD_1s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nybA_syvSso&t=50s