



Sarv Jal Abhiyaan

A case study on how availability of running water is so difficult in most of our rural areas and how having it made available impacts their lives!



suhridd foundation

ZP School, Kaspada | Taluka Vikramgad | District Palghar: a government-run primary school in

a remote tribal region, yet resolutely determined to offer better quality education and healthcare. In the last year, strong support from **Suhrid Foundation** and close cooperation of the local community helped the school to overcome many obstacles and make significant progress. As a result, our enthusiasm is elevated, which in itself, is our achievement and our strength!

The school now has a wooden fence. It has its own library, sports kit, games set, and first-aid box. The kids get an enriched diet through SUN project. Each semester, there is a health-check camp for the kids. If a child needs medical attention then a visit to a specialist doctor in Mumbai is arranged for. Furthermore, the petty cash scheme helped the child to be clean and tidy at school. Through many such initiatives, Team Suhrid ascertained a close emotional bond with both the school and the local community alike.

In retrospect, the mood of the school has changed from sheer helplessness to overfilled assertiveness; inertia is replaced by action; challenging the status quo has become the norm. The teachers, the parents, the villagers together seek solution to every problem school faces, and whenever needed, Team Suhrid is approached to seek help. No problem remains unattended and no stone is left unturned to find the solution.

This is a brief case study which tells about how the school collaboratively succeeded in what we refer to as **Water Project**.

It is a Supreme Court directive for every school to have clean drinking water and adequate water for clean toilets. Our school had a bore-well with a hand-pump, but the hand-pump was broken-down and despite continuous follow-up with authorities, it was not getting repaired. On one hand, authorities were contemplating disciplinary action against school for lack of drinking water and clean toilets. On the other hand, same authorities were serving show-cause notice if the school children were at times asked to bring water from the nearby river. In either ways, the real issue did not get resolved. Yes, it was unethical to ask small kids to carry water buckets from river to the school, but then, there was a major hygiene issue – as it adversely affected mid-day meal preparation, daily washing of plates and utensils, washing hands and feet before meal, cleanliness in toilet, and in effect, health of so many kids.

In November 2014, we discussed our concern with Team Suhrid. We proposed to install an electric pump on the bore-well and stored sufficient water in a large water tank. It will then be possible to have water through a pipeline to kitchen, toilet and even for plantation in our small school garden. The overall plan and budget was discussed. In addition, the idea was floated among the parents, villagers, teachers and students to get the work done by them voluntarily and reduce the overall project cost. This also reduced the total cost of the project to Suhrid Foundation. One fourth of the overall project cost was taken up by school from their existing funds, plus *shram-dan*, 1-day labor by parents and villagers (for free).



The next step was to get estimate for electric motor, wire, water tank, fitting material, pipe and plumbing. The quotes were taken from all nearby towns – Palghar, Boisar, Wada, and Vikramgad. It was however decided to purchase everything from Vikramgad even though the quote was more by about ₹1500-2000. With a long-term view of next 2-3 years, Vikramgad was a better

proposition as it was the closest town and easier to follow-up on maintenance or repair activities, especially in the event of a breakdown. Boisar or Palghar would have been far away. Vikramgad is perfect.



The work began in the first week of December. The villagers were ready for any labor work that was needed. Unfortunately, the plumbers came on a day when most of the villagers had gone out to Palghar for some other



work. The plumbers insisted to do the work on the same day, or otherwise it would get delayed by another 15-20 days as they were not available then. It was a totally unexpected and awkward situation. Incidentally, a team of about 20 youngsters was passing by; they were going to another village to play a cricket match. We stopped them and requested if they could help us at the work for a couple of hours. To our surprise, all of them, with no hesitation whatsoever, labored for two hours and completed digging a groove of about forty to fifty foot long –leaving aside their

planned cricket match yet not wishing for anything in return. It enforced renewed trust and enthusiasm in ourselves and what we were doing, because it resonated with everyone around.

The work accelerated further. Within the next two weeks, we fitted the electric motor and water tank, got the electricity connection, laid down pipeline to kitchen, toilet and garden, and fitted the taps and hand basin. The parents participated whole heartedly to finish the work in record time and plenty of water is now available in our campus.

Today water is available 24X7, everywhere – be it the kitchen or the toilet or the hand basin or the garden tap! The kids habitually learned to wash hands before taking meal, wash the plate after use, flush sufficient water in the toilets and so on. At the same time, they were also made to understand that water is precious and not waste it at will. In effect, hygiene at school improved significantly. Toilets are clean. Plants are flourishing. Garden is green.





Now, we use water from filter which makes drinking water much easily available than earlier. The kids drink plenty of water and as a result, most common chronic skin diseases are getting eradicated. Kids are showing healthy growth – physical, psychological as well as academic.

Thanks to Suhrid Team for their valuable contribution in making our school happy and healthy and our kids self-reliant and self-responsible in many ways. And, on behalf of kids, parents and teachers, sincere thanks to many kind-hearted people who helped us, directly and indirectly, through Suhrid Foundation. We are truly indebted to you... Thank you!



*Case study was originally authored in Marathi by **Ajit Shankar Gonate**, a teacher at Zilla Parishad primary school at Kaspada in Viramgad. Though, not from the region, he is very well connected with children and people in villages. One of the key stakeholders in Suhrid Foundation. Translated in English by Shailendra Langade.*
