

A STUDY ON DRINKABLE WATER PROBLEMS AND TRIBAL WOMEN AT DAHISAR PADA IN THANE DISTRICT

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Abstract

From ancient times, Indian tribal population gets good sources of naturally occurring water. However, India has the highest volume of groundwater overuse as well as misconduct in the world (Barlow and Clarke, 2004). In addition, many substances get mixed with water, some of them float in the water, and some substances dissolve in water. Consequently, water looks unclean, impure and muddy which create water polluted, harmful and unhygienic.

Through the ecological way, nature herself is the experiment and women as agriculturalists, water resource managers and traditional natural scientists. As a result, women and nature's connections are the backbones of eco-feminism (Vandana Shiva, 1988). In addition, as women's birth, monthly cycle, pregnancy and women's consciousness brings women close to nature.

This research paper highlights and study has been undertaken in one of the tribal regions of western ghat from Thane district in Maharashtra. The basic aim of this study is to realize the different challenges in the social life of tribal women due to scarcity of water. Both quantitative as well as qualitative data was used. Besides this probability sampling techniques were used.

The area under study receives a lot of water but it is salty, therefore there is shortage of drinkable water. They have to manage their home with small quantity of water, have to fetch water from several miles and have suffered a lot which affect their daily routine lives. Lack of family support to women and male dominance factor further noticed.

Key words: Eco-feminism, Ecological, Agriculturalist, Managers, Scientist

Introduction

Eco-feminism is the social and political movement that observes the drive of women and nature as interconnected. Vandana Shiva in her book, 'Eco feminism' says that, nature and women are first sustainers of every community. Thus eco-feminism school of thought attempts to highlight that, whenever nature is destroyed women get affected. Women have given this evidence of their self-assurance in protecting forest, land, tree, water resources and environment through *Chipko* movement, *Appiko* movement, *Chilika* movement, *Bhopal gas* tragedy, *Narmada valley* movement, *Sardar Sarovar* movement and *Pepsi* movement in Kerala.

The drying up of India is like Africa, is a man-made rather than a natural calamity. Approximately all states in India unlike Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra's largely villages are facing water scarcities created by maldevelopment and a reductionist science (Vandana Shiva, 1998).

Research study area as a Dahisar Pada is situated at the foot hills of *Vaitarna* dam. This village has hills with huge density of forest to its West and North. Majority of population from this village are of *Agri* and *Koli* tribal community. The majority populations are uneducated,



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unemployed, unconscious and reluctant but having the ability to defending every problem and issues in their daily life. They are economically poor, lack specialization in their life and unaware about new developed technology and governments different schemes entirely for us.

Drinking water is a distress in this area. Various schemes and plans are introduced by the State and Central Government for tribal community in all over the India, but still the question of drinkable water remains unsolved. Eventually, these peoples are struggling for getting enough food, besides water, is equally as severe for them.

The problem of drinking water is an alarm in this region because of unnecessary additional sand extraction form Dam. The *Vaitarna* dam approximately one kilometre from Dahisar Pada where an average of 1,500 trucks of sand is being extracted from this dam regularly for construct the buildings in Mumbai region. This results in the coherence of water level of ocean decreased by some meters. The decline sea level shows its impact in surrounding soil by spreading its salty water in the nearby lands which is replacing drinking water sources in to salty water. This creates the issue of scarcity of drinking water.

Traditionally women are the water experts, pace-makers for water purification, source of knowledge and skills for providing safe water. Thus water is the lifeline in kitchen for women and disappearing water sources meant new burdens and new drudgery for them.

Therefore, women have to manage their home with small quantity of water, have to fetch water from several miles and have endured a lot. It affects not only their daily routine lives but also social life.

Review of Literature:

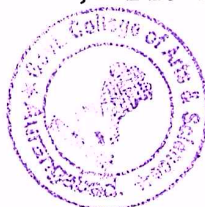
The present research is grounded in a series of observations and assumptions made by multiple scholarly critics and experts. The review of these observations is a necessary part of beginning the inquiry into central issues of this research paper. Thus selective list of such critics' observations is provided here for reference.


1. Vandana Shiva :

Vanadan Shiva in her famous book "*Staying Alive*" focused on women, water and new development policies for tribal people. She holds a very important point of Women's intimacy with the nature for her family's survival. So as for them nature is most important valuable as it's not only worshiped but they know the importance of water at the true large scale. Many of the development schemes are been upcoming or had been started from earlier has made the resources that's the natural resource deepen to a very great extent. Ultimately women are as the water saver, providers and manager, but due to disappearing water sources new burden and new drudgery for them in the form of physical, economical, psychological and etc.

2. Amita Baviskar:

Amita Baviskar in her book "*In the Belly of the River*" stated that, rain is the only life - giving water source to fields. It also hold major importance of water, because of it the forest are accessible and tribal people gain major benefit in the form of fodder, fuel, fibre, fruit, house-building material, medicine and edible gums. It plays a major role to build up their social and economic status.




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3. Shekhar Pathak

As per the Shekhar Pathak in his book "*The Chipko Movement*" assured that, Chipko movement protest forest as well as the water scarcity. It clearly notifies as the technology of dry pipe is not recommended when the water supply scarcity is faced a huge. The people aren't accessible enough pure water in those mere zones or particular area. It needs a deep understanding of water management planning a lot because it's a live spring and it doesn't hold any rule.

4. Neera Burra

Neera Burra in her Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine "*Tribal Woman's struggle for water in India*" (2005) has stated that, the tribal women of Naupada tells us that the women can hear the nature voice so as they started with natural process of grassroots efforts to make way for not just a community to be fulfilled with water but also the nature. It is a true saying that if we protect nature so as nature will protect us from the upcoming disasters.

5. Ramaswamy R. Iyer

Ramaswamy Iyer in his book "*Water perspectives, Issues, Concerns*" observed that, apart from the Union and State, a third tier governance bodies in the constitutional structure, created by the 73rd and 74th amendments. It includes primary focus on drinking water, water management, watershed development, sanitation and accountability afford to gram *panchayat* and *nagarpalika* through village and town respectively. It seems likely that, in future this third tier governance will come to play an important role in relation to water resources and its development. However, the processes of decentralization and devolution are still evolving, and the role of the third tier is yet to emerge fully.

6. Uma Shankar and Esha Shah

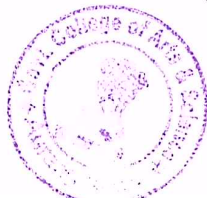
Through the book "*Water Management Traditions in India*" Uma Shankar and Esha Shah pointed out water management traditions of India thoroughly. There are many rules, regulations, norms, values, beliefs, ideas, emotions, perceptions, stereotypes in the villages to distribute the water. Distribution of available water from every village is differing from another village. There is no a single universe or fixed rule of water distribution in villages all over the Nation. The water management system is top to tail formula wise.

7. K.V.Rao, P.K.Mishra, G.R.Korwar, Kate B.Venkateswarlu

In this article "*Myths about Small Water Harvesting Systems*" historical and holistic approach of water management is define *methodically*. A long history of sustaining water harvest approach of India which has been neglected after the creation of large storage structures and popularization of bore well technology and development policy. By the end of the decade, it was becoming clear that, development itself was the problem. So as said by Gustavo Esteva has called, development is a permanent war waged by its promoters and suffered by its victims.

8. Jayanta Bandyopadhyay

In his "*Water System management*" book, author determined on a universe problem of potable water in India. Eventually, we have high skilled many people's but here technology doesn't works out more such where the nature voice has the deep bonding with the



people who stay live their life there. That is the importance of water and how to improvise water scarcity can with the help of their views, ideas and modern thoughts too will soon lead to many successful upcoming projects ahead. Since its purity should also be major taken in to an account safe water safe life, but before that proper management and so as respective with the sociologists and authors concerned their ideas too. Also hold the huge part into it most but the role of women plays major not just in books but in reality too.

Research methodology

1. Objectives

1. To understand the scarcity of drinking water at Dahisar Pada in Thane District.
2. To know the impact of water scarcity in women's social life of Dahisar Pada.

2. Hypothesis or Research Questions

Research questions are as follows.

1. What is the profile of Dahisar Pada tribal women?
2. What are the familial, educational and economical profiles of these tribal women?
3. How does these women perceive to water scarcity?
4. What problems have they faced in family due to water scarcity?
5. What are the main challenges faced by women in daily life?
6. How does the social life of women is affected by water scarcity at Dahisar Pada?

3. Need and Importance of study

These studies make public social, economical, educational, political, psychological and spiritual status of women in this region. The prime victim in the deceased family is women because woman is the main care taker of water in majority family. Therefore, the major thirst to concentrate on women and water and its challenges due to scarcity of water. The coping mechanism of women with water is highly considerable for the post traumatic condition. This study will throw a macro light to design water policies in Indian village to successful implement.

4. Theoretical Perspective

This study is very close to gender and functional approach.

As a gender perspective-water is the basic fundamental need which maintains, sustains the equilibrium of family and entire society by the women especially.

As a Function perspective- we can't predict the lives without water and as a result, scarcity of water impact on daily routine life of women and particularly on physical, economical and psychological health of family.

5. Tools of Data Collection

Following decisions or strategies are to be included under the design of research. Mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) of social research and interview schedule having a set of questions are used as effective tools of data collection. In addition, observation method is used whenever required.



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6. Data Processing and Analysis

The data of the present study has been processed both manually and electronically. By using the Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS), the variables are analyzed individually and statistical procedures such as single and Bi-variate frequency table, percentage are used to analyze the data.

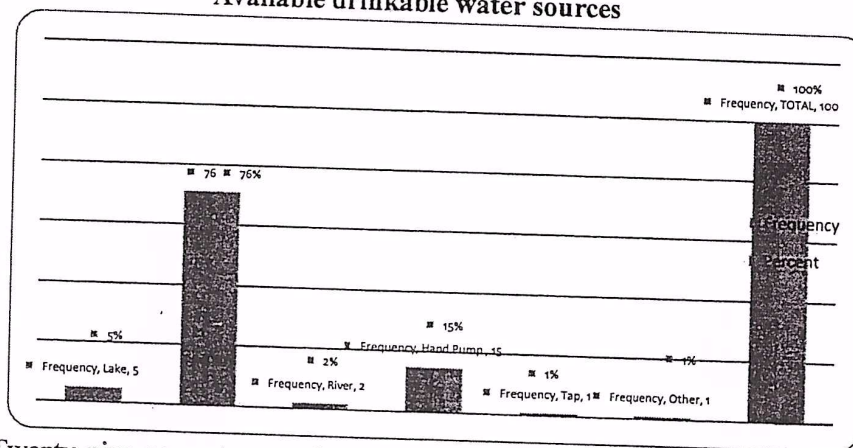
7. Universe and Sample

Samples of hundred women are selected by probability sampling techniques from Dahisar pada on random basis after the list was taken from the gram panchayat. Primary and secondary sources are used to complete the study.

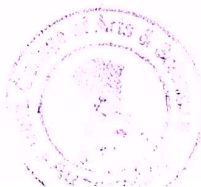
Discussion, interpretations and Analysis

The scarcity of drinking water forces people to travel 2-3 kilometre for one hour daily to fetch water. Majority family skip the school of girls and send them to obtain water from long distance for their daily needs. Hence there is high drop rate of girls in school. The village *Panchayat* is not providing water purification antidote like *jeevan drop* enough to every family on regular basis. Therefore these women are continuously using unclean, muddy, polluted and unhygienic water for their family. As a result their physical and psychological health gets affected. In short, water is one significant issue which impact on entire life of women and their survival. The table no.1 explains the available drinkable water sources in this Dahisar pada.

TABLE NO.1
Available drinkable water sources



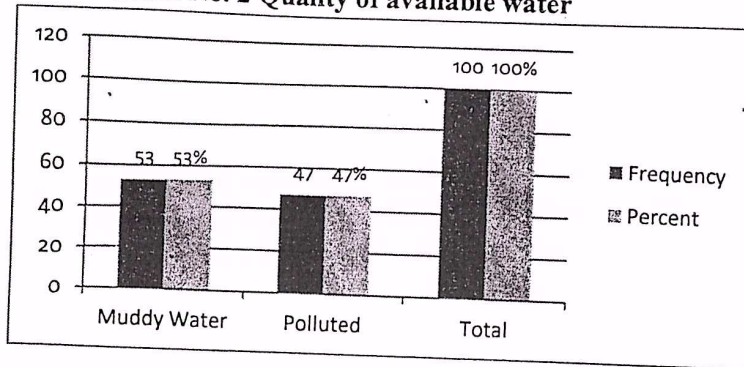
Twenty nine percent respondents have understood that sources of drinking water are available in village but raised question of its qualities. On the other hand 71percent respondents have rejected the availability of drinkable sources in village. Eventually, 76 (76%) wells are available in village but in very poor and critical in position. Fifteen (15%) hand pumps, small 5 lakes are available surround the village, 2 rivers and 1 water tap are the main available source for water in village. Only hand pump is the more hygienic resource comparatively out of available other water sources. Out of 5 hand pumps, 3 had broke down and not yet maintained, one is not working properly and one hand pump is working well but continuously long queue



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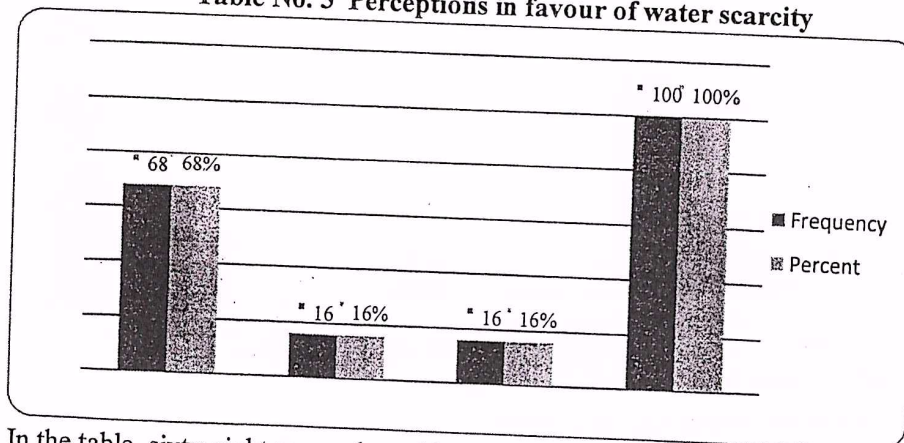
for it in entire day and night. Table no. 2 highlights the quality of the drinking water in the area of concern.

Table No. 2 Quality of available water



It has been noticed that, 50 percent of the respondents are suffer water problem from month March to June in yearly basis. Majority of respondent somehow deal with reachable sources of water for 8 to 9 months. Large numbers of the respondents walk for more than hour and walk 3-4 kilometres to deal with or to fetch water daily. Fifty three percent of the respondent believe that, the available sources of potable water are very short, thirty percent respondents agreed to say imperfect and 17 percent of respondents have said availability of water sources are more in number but drinkable source are quiet insufficient. Sixty percent of the respondent agreed that water scarcity is their daily routine problem. In addition to, 53 percent respondents' opinion that water contains muddy and 47 percent respondent are agreed that water quality is polluted. The table no.3 explains very clearly the perceptions of water scarcity among the respondents.

Table No. 3 Perceptions in favour of water scarcity



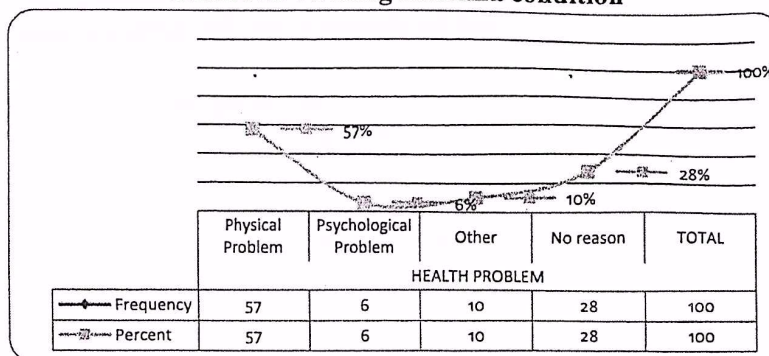
In the table, sixty eight respondents (68%) have accepted that the scarcity of water is a routine problem for them from a long time. Hence they consciously ignore that, water as issue in their daily life due to enough food dilemmas. It means that, they have lack of awareness, knowledge and illiteracy of pure water and its utility to physical and psychological health and great effort to enough daily food. Sixteen (16%) respondents are serious and same respondents



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are very serious about scarcity of water problem although they failed to do any major preventative measures to overcome this problem. Table no. 4 highlights the dilemma faced by the respondents.

Table No. 4 Facing dilemma condition



Women have to manage to keep water in their families in all possible ways. Thirty two percent of the women have to suffer on their daily wages. It has been noticed that major time has to spend to fetch the water which affect on their work and wages too. Thirty three percent of the respondent has strong opinion that due to water problem they have to suffer family problem. In many family women spent lot of time to fetch the water physically in a day and can't give enough time to their children which affects low literacy rate among their children. Only eleven percent of the respondents said that water problem is affected on farming occupation.

It has been found that, 57(57%) women have has to suffer health related problems like as pain in knee joint, elbow, legs, spine and shoulder etc. due to recurring manage to go fetch water many times in a day. Due to hectic entire daily schedule for water has enormous impact on women's social life as a result, six percent women faced the psychological problem like stress, strain, over workload and role conflict in family, at work place and in community.

Conclusion

Water scarcity is an emerging social issue which impact on women's entire social life. Development model of modern India is being enforced by the West. It is acquiring such technology and strategy which oppose to our diversity, dominating and create pressure on nature's destruction and women's defeat. It has been found that, majority women are suffering health related problems because of to fetch water many times in a day from long distance. Low literacy rate of girl children are created here for the reason that many girl children are giving their almost time in a day to bring and store water for their home. Many women are losing their daily wages due to shortage of water. Many women are psychologically depressed caused by stand and wait continuously in long queue for water. In short, Woman's entire social life is facing physical, spiritual, economical, educational and psychological challenge due to water scarcity at Dahisar pada in Thane District.



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Recommendations

- i. Government should encourage to “community participation approach” awareness campaign in village.
- ii. It should be very regular check up of water quality and centre of attention of villagers.
- iii. Rapid local provision should be adopted to provide sufficient drinkable water to every house.
- iv. Water storage, water distribution and water testing provision should be healthy and it should be vigorous motto of Indian village.

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