Annual Report
of
Water, health and education for women and children project
April 2018 – March 2019

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Jodhpur
A home to over 25 million persons, Thar is the most densely populated Desert eco-system globally having 83 persons per sq. km. It stretches through the State of Rajasthan in India. About 13% of the geographical area of India is covered by the Thar Desert. Despite its scanty rainfall with all its variations in time and intensity, the rural economy is predominantly based on agriculture and animal husbandry, which are hardly able to provide sufficient income in years of drought. The livelihood of people is thus very much dependent on monsoon behaviour. GRAVIS, a non-governmental organisation operating in the Thar Desert for the past three and a half decades, has been working with the rural communities in this difficult Desert to mitigate drought and prepare them for water shortages and to minimise its impact. Application of innovation as synergised with the traditional wisdom led GRAVIS further improvise rainwater harvesting structures and support the local communities through construction of such structures and building their capacities to use and maintain them.

Asha for Education and GRAVIS co-ventured the project Water, health and education for women and children in Thar with an objective to give relief to women and girls in drought situation and ensure their health and education through capacity building, exposure and community participation in 6 villages of Jodhpur district. Both these districts form part of the core of the Thar Desert, and receive very low rainfall through the year. Average rainfall in Jodhpur is not more than 200 mm and many years it is even less than 200 mm which is considered drought year in Rajasthan. Amidst these adversities, communities live under severe distress drought led poverty in this region. Drought impacts lives of females and girls significantly and they receive double burden of searching water as well managing household together. The project has chosen 6 drought hit villages and implemented project to address the problem of water, health and education of women and children living in inhospitable condition. The present report is annual description of progress made with the support of Asha for education and its impact on lives of women and girls.
PROGRESS OF GRANT ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

1. Grant Overview

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1.</strong></td>
<td>Grant Period</td>
<td>April 2018 to March 2019</td>
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<td><strong>1.2.</strong></td>
<td>Reporting Period</td>
<td>April 2018 to March 2019</td>
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<td><strong>1.3.</strong></td>
<td>Amount of Grant</td>
<td>Rs 2,275,000.00</td>
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<td><strong>1.4.</strong></td>
<td>Name of Project</td>
<td>Water, health and education for women and children in Thar</td>
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<td><strong>1.5.</strong></td>
<td>List of communities where project is being carried out</td>
<td>6 villages of Jodhpur district. The list of villages is being attached as annexure in Table 1.</td>
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<td><strong>1.6.</strong></td>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td>Women, Girls &amp; other village community</td>
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2. Objective of project

The project has been implemented with a goal of empowering women and girls with reducing their burden, distress and improving their health and education. The project focused on three main objectives listed below:

- Construction of *taankas* for securing drinking water at home capacity building of villagers for the maintenance and management of structure
- Holding up of health camps in the community for adhering to the health issues and refreshing the knowledge of Peer Health Educators on primary healthcare and,
- Facilitating girl child education through supporting primary schools, tracking their attendance rate and conducting exposure visits.

3. Method of selection of beneficiaries:

After finding suitable villages based on secondary data taken from census and Gram Panchayat (village council), our approach was to verify it with primary interaction with people. As we proposed to work in new set of villages, therefore the first approach was to take consent of village community. During Gram Sabha (village meeting), field supervisor discussed about problems of villages and solution to their problem he presented the project among them. After consent of community, Village Development Committees (VDCs) have been formed to create an enabling environment in villages it was insured that representatives from each section of society will be in committees. Participation of women was insured in VDCs. We have formed 6 VDCs project villages. VDCs have prime responsibilities of
project activities from planning, and execution to monitoring and handholding. After formation of VDCs, they have been oriented on role and responsibilities and optimal use of local resources available in their villages in best way. VDCs also have been oriented on genuine selection of families for project and monitoring of activities.

4. Description of activities in the project:
Following activities have been accomplished in one year of project execution.

4.1 Construction and Maintenance of Taanka:
Asha for Education is supporting construction of taanka for socially and economically backward families. The project villages are comprised of unprivileged Meghwal and Bheel communities. 50 rainwater harvesting tanks have been constructed for such families those were not able to do this by themselves. Taanka given to them has capacity of harvesting 20,000 litres water which is sufficient for family of 6-7 members for 7-8 months. Our many families belong to below poverty line (BPL) and some to them have received a moderate pakka house from Panchayat. These families innovatively linked the roof of their houses with taankas. Out of 50 taankas, now 30 are connected with roof and 20 have artificial catchment built around the superstructure of taanka. These taankas are benefiting 50 families (including 350 humans and their cattle) with water security.

Pic 1: Samu with her newly built rainwater harvesting taanka
During an interview with one of our taanka beneficiaries, Samu of Bhakri village reveals that she saves Rs 1500 per month because of taanka. Earlier she has to collect water either from pond which is 3 kms from her house or from tanker which takes Rs 1500 per trip. The water procured from tanker was a costly affair for her and also in lack of taanka she was unable to store much water at a time. After taanks she has started saving of money. Now with saved money she joined women Self help group (SHG) running in her village. She is very happy to invest her saving on education of the children and healthcare of families. She now feels relaxed and free from exhaustive water fetching exercise.

This year along with construction of taankas, two trainings on maintenance of taankas have been organized for these families. In training, community learnt about designing of tanks, importance of catchment, cleaning of tank and protection of catchment and tank from any damage. These trainings have been attended by all 50 families in two parts. One such training was organized at Gagadi centre and second training was organized at Harlaya village.

![Image of taanka maintenance training at Gagadi Centre]

A detailed description of taanka design with sketch has been discussed with beneficiaries. An illustration of sketch shared with beneficiaries is as below. In sketch the roof top rainwater harvesting was drawn and shared with participants. People found this new idea very interesting asked many question about maintenance and preparation of roof for water harvesting. The achievement of these trainings has been observed in form of great participant of women head of families. They enthusiastically participated in both of trainings and also cleared their doubts.
Pic 3: Sketch of roof top rainwater harvesting

Pic 4: Taanka Maintenance Training at Harlaya village
4.2 Medical Camps:

The predominating feature of Thar Desert is comprised of strong winds, extreme heat and acute water scarcity. These all feature make the region difficult for rural folk and they suffer with multiple health issues. With little income often women of families given preference to others and their health is always neglected. Women along with girls deal with water related stress in daily lives and overlooked their health and education. Other obstacles like lack of transportation, absence of healthcare providers and low quality services exacerbate the problems. To address all above problems, GRAVIS hospital does medical camps to remote location of hamlets of villages to give immediate relief to rural communities. Preference is always given to women, children, disabled and older people in treating, counselling and referring to nearest hospital.

GRAVIS medical camps are bridges between community and health care facilities. Medical camp does not insure the full treatment of any diseases but the objective is to generate awareness against much symptomatic diagnosis which adhere to several issues of seasonal and occupational diseases and develop health seeking behaviour among communities. In project, GRAVIS hospital has organized 12 outreach medical camps in 6 project villages and has treated more than 700 patients. During camps we found patients of eye related problems. Those have been referred to hospital for further examination. Our peer health educator along with physician and nurse make every camp successful and beneficial to community.

![Medical camp giving immediate relief to rural women](image)

Pic 5: Medical camp giving immediate relief to rural women
4.3 Nutrition and Hygiene Sessions in schools

Water, Nutrition and hygiene in schools create an enabling environment, which secures children’s dignity, safety, health and attendance in classes. Children are more receptive and quick to adopt and sustain change. They become agents of change among their peers, families and communities. Teachers as influential individuals, also play an important catalytic role. Primary schools are particularly suitable vehicles for nutrition education. They catch children younger, when their habits are still being formed. They reach a larger proportion of the population – in particular girls, who tend to leave school earlier. School-based health programmes are most cost-effective and children friendly to promoting health and diet based learning, improvising their habits and simultaneously reducing absenteeism. In Nutrition and Hygiene sessions following points have been discussed with children in two schools supported by Asha for Education.

- Hand washing before handling food and after contact with feces;
- Safe handling of drinking water, raised and covered storage with a dispenser tap or ladle;
- Use of toilets;
- Water quality-testing and treating with practical demonstrations;
- Garbage disposal – activity-based education where children actually managed the garbage disposal in the school;
• Understanding on Health and Nutrition
• Importance of good health
• Health and Nutrition – related children and their family
• Nutrition and its importance
• Balance diet – Diversification of food basket (use of locally available food)

Four such sessions have been organized in Minno ki Dhani and Ramnagar (Utamber) schools supported by Asha for education.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Pic 7: Nutrition and Hygiene session organized at Utamber (Ramnagar) school**

### 4.4 Refresher training of Peer Health Educators

When the cadre of Public Health Educators was developed last year, refresher training was planned to in next year. In refresher training we added new PHEs too. Our all PHEs are local women able to read and write and willing to work voluntarily for benefit of community. It is expected from PHEs to give symptomatic treatment to minor illness and make referral to hospitals on serious cases as soon as possible. Mr. Mahitosh Bagoria trained healthcare trainer addressed this training at Gagadi centre of GRAVIS. Most of times villagers are not aware of the health issues, due to lack of education and knowledge. To make them understand on health subject, this cadre was developed and trained on health issues. Two trainings have organized for Public Health Educators. Following information was shared in the trainings by the medical staffs:-
- Information about basic healthcare system, location of Primary healthcare centers
- Information about family planning, maternal benefits and safe motherhood
- Information Sharing on Seasonal and vector borne Diseases like Malaria, Dengue, etc.
- Importance of nutritional and balanced diet for women and child
- Sharing information on maintaining cleanliness and hygienic environment

Pic 8: Refresher training of PHEs organized at Gagadi centre

Pic 9: PHEs participated in training received health care kits
4.5 Teachers' Training on Quality Education

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims at ensuring quality education for all. The goal describes ensuring the completion of primary and secondary education by all boys and girls, and guaranteeing equal access to opportunities for access to quality technical and vocational education for everyone by 2030. Without capacity building of teachers it is not possible to achieve this global target designed and agreed by various nations. GRAVIS also wants to insure quality education for children living in hamlets and left-out locations. GRAVIS teachers play active role in mobilizing community to motivate them for education of their children. A school teacher plays act as a mentor for social and intellectual development of students in their formative ages. GRAVIS insures informative curriculum should be taught to children with adequate knowledge of Art and Science according to their age. Therefore the main responsibility come to teachers hands to plan and deliver learning subjects with playful activities that meet student’s needs. Being creative and organized is essential when planning daily classes. This helps in preventing teaching methods from becoming stale and in turn, creates a more exciting environment in which students can learn.

Pic 10: Teacher training on quality education
In order to extend their teaching abilities and talents a two days residential training was organized at GRAVIS center in which 35 participants have participated. The curriculum of training was to provide stimulating environment of learning along with good teaching and disciplinary practice and successful classroom management are the key points which were emphasized in the training. Leadership development among children was also part of training and sessions of national leadership with ethics of Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave was taken separately. GRAVIS also organize Gandhi Vichar Pariksha (A non competitive exam on Gandhian thoughts) and insures that thoughts like non violence and truthfulness should be inherited among children

4.6 Enabling environment for children through event and exposure

With the support of Asha for education, two schools are running at Minno ki Dhani and Ramnagar (Utamber) villages. The strength of these schools is 70 and 40 respectively. The contribution of girls to schools is higher in both of schools and they are comprised of 70 % of total strength. In desert, Girl child is mostly considered fit for household chores and often being barred from getting education. It has been insured by GRAVIS that project supervisor and teacher should visit villages and motivate parents for sending their daughters to schools. It is objective of project that through these two schools we could address the problem of girls not getting education. Though every project village does not have a school but GRAVIS continuously efforts to link them with informal education through Anaganwadi centre.

Pic 11: Children Day celebrated at Gagadi centre
The children day was celebrated on 14th November which is birthday of our first prime minister Pt. Jawharlal Nehru. This event was organized at Gagadi centre of GRAVIS and was attended by children and teachers of Minno ki Dhani, Ramnagar (Utamber) and Gagadi schools (approx. 175 people). The event was graced by Sanpanch of Gagadi village, VDC members and parents of children. The objective of event was to give children playful environment and to do some cultural activities and creative competitions. Once all participants arrived, the event was briefly introduced to all followed by serving of tea and snacks. The event was included with songs, dances, poems and sports performed by children. As we organized event for overall development of children therefore all children received gifts (lunch boxes) for motivation. A lunch full with traditional vegetables and kheer (sweet pudding made of rice and milk) was served to all. As the event was large, GRAVIS also contributed in event along with funds allocated in project.

Another interesting activity was exposure visit to Jodhpur. This time only big kids have been taken for visit. 27 students and 2 teachers and two GRAVIS staffs have participated in exposure visit. These children are living in remote hamlets therefore visiting Jodhpur was a learning experience for them. Thar Desert is comprised of sparse vegetable therefore we decided to visit Botanical Park developed in Jodhpur. This park is full with various kinds of plant species and natural herbs. Children have been educated on name and purpose of these herbs during the visit. They also visited High Court, Collectrate and Madore Garden (a
historical place). Lunch has been served at garden. Children played many games in garden and sung songs with full enthusiasm in entire visit. On the way to return their home they also received fruits and ice creams for refreshment. It was a happy memory for kids and first time experience for all to come out alone.

![Pic 13: Children visited Botanical Park in exposure visit](image)

5. The Impact:

Following has been the main impact of the project during the year:

- Enhanced water security in villages. Women and girls of beneficiary families are free from drudgery. Women **feel empowered** with taanka on their name. Many have part of Self help groups. The project gives them **confidence** and **inclusion in social** gathering.

- Medical team and health workers provided support to patients through outreach medical camps. During the year, as a result, **over 700 patients** benefitted with immediate relief.

- Enrolment of girls in schools is increasing. Knowledge of children on water, health and nutrition is increased. They motivate their parents to adopt good habits learned in schools. **Parents too visit schools** to participate in Independence Day and Children Day and this gave them confidence to send their daughters on exposure visit.
Annexure – 1

List of project villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Implemented from</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bhakri</td>
<td>GRAVIS sub-center Gagadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bhim Sagar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Harlaya</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Saran Nagar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Samrau (Meghwalon ki Dhani)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mahadev Nagar</td>
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</tbody>
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Pic 14: Kids studying in Utamber school