

Tour Report of Secretary (DWS) to Rajasthan

6th September 2008



On an invitation from Jalbiradri, a NGO working in the field of water conservation, harvesting and sustainability measures, Smt Santha Sheela Nair, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water Supply undertook a whirlwind tour, starting early in the morning at 4.15 a.m., to Village Khijura, Block Sapotra, Dist Karauli in Rajasthan on Saturday the 6th September 2008.

2. Jalbiradri had organized a 'Jal Khumb' in hard rock Dang area of Block Sapotra. The pledge undertaken - by Gram Pradhan Shri Roop Singh and other villagers - was to turn the hard rocky area of Dang into 'Paanidar'.
3. After a long tedious journey of about 10 hours, Secretary (DWS) reached village Khijura at 1300 hrs. On arrival she was welcomed by Shri Rajinder Singh, a Social Activist, Shri Roop Singh, Gram Pradhan, Social Workers S/Shri Chaman Singh, Jagdish Gujjar, Shravan and Karan Singh.
4. Secretary (DWS) inaugurated the 'Jal Khumbh' and delivered the inaugural address. At the outset she praised the efforts of the Gram Panchayat and other social activists in the area. She said that access to safe and adequate drinking water and sanitation are key to the well being of our people. Drinking water supply and sanitation are basic needs of any civilization. A need has come to promote sustainable water conservation systems that promote less use of water, treat and recycle the waste streams, keeping in view the geographical variations of water scarce, waterlogged, flood prone areas, hilly and rocky regions. Technology is an extremely critical element of the solutions but they may also be the cause of creating new problems. Therefore, one of the best strategy is to depend on low cost, area specific developmental inventions. The people of the Khijura have shown that concerted efforts and people's active participation can change the desert into green and this is what they have done by conserving and harvesting the water and made themselves self sufficiency in water but also their efforts have made it possible that they are able to produce Basmati Rice in such a difficult and remotest part of the District. She advised to

keep up the good work and in future, if need be, Government of India will help them in promoting such activities.



5. She interacted with the women folk and praised their efforts and expressed that they should work together with men folk and live with high dignity and honour. She said that women are the backbone for any society's development. To enthuse a sense of honour among women folk Secretary (DWS) even accepted to tie up traditional 'Safa' on her head instead of 'Chunari' being offered to women. She said 'Safa' is worn by keeping the Head tall and straight while 'Chunari' is put on the shoulders. Hence women should strive to live with raised Head and Pride.

6. Summing up Secretary (DWS) said that the villagers should make individual household toilets and promote personal hygiene among the children and women. She requested the organizers to work towards promoting good sanitation and hygiene practices, especially for women and children. Secretary (DWS) also requested the Sarpanch that he should promote individual household toilets and strive to village a Nirmal Gram and next year should get Nirmal Gram Puraskar from Government of India. The resolution to Save the Girl Child was also adopted.



7. After the inauguration ceremony, Secretary (DWS) visited the water harvesting site and saw the paddy fields developed. Secretary (DWS) praised the efforts of the villagers and wished many more projects to be developed in near future.

8. Before leaving she interacted with villagers, listened to their problems and participated in the community lunch being served by the Organizers.

9. On her return journey she met Shri Kunal Chander, District Magistrate, Karauli District and requested him to visit the Khijura Village, in particular, and see the various developmental activities undertaken by villagers, in person. Secretary (DWS) apprised DM about the experiences of the villagers. DM promised Secretary (DWS) to visit the area next week positively. Secretary (DWS) directed to develop the Khijura as a model village and a centre for imparting training to panchayat functionaries from across the country to promote water harvesting.

10. Secretary (DWS) directed Shri Joshi, Chief Engineer (Rural) that defunct bore wells should be used to recharge ground water to rejuvenate the same as the area gets around 700 mm annual rainfall which is sufficient to collect water for drinking purposes. Secretary (DWS) also directed the State Government officials to promote rain water harvesting, and they should start doing this with government buildings first and then all other buildings. She stressed that every source should be recharged. Other sources such as surface water and rainwater should also be used in addition to ground water. School buildings must be used for rain water harvesting.


