Mehgal River Basin Oral History Project
Interview Transcript

Interviewers: Alexandra Mouche and Dakshesh Gajjar
Narrator: Ambali Mohan Higalajiya
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Persons Present: Alexandra Mouche’ (interviewer)

Dakshesh Gajjar (research assistant/interviewer)

Ambali Mohan Higalajiya (Narrator)

(Dakshesh) दाक्षेश : तमारू नाम शुद्ध छ ?
What is your name?

(Ambali) अंबालीबाई: मारु नाम अंबालीबाई मोहनबाई हिगलाजिया
My name is AmbaliBhai MohanBhai Higalajiya.

(D) दाक्षेश : तमारू जन्म द्वारा अनेक फमारे वचो ?
When and where were you born?

(A) अंबालीबाई: मारू जन्म वंदुरीमां १९६१ मां वचो
I was born in Bhanduri in 1961.

(D) दाक्षेश : तमारू दुःरी देखी अदी रहे छ ?
How many generations of your family have lived here?

(A) अंबालीबाई : तार दास देखी अदी रहे छ
We have lived here for 5 generations.

(D) दाक्षेश : तमारू नामप्रथमी द्वारा वस्तु तमारे दुःरी बाबी यांट होम ?
What memories do you have from your childhood?

(A) अंबालीबाई: नामप्रथमी मां बग्ता बच्चता बाब।
In my childhood I played and I studied.

(D) दाक्षेश : तमारू वजन कमारे वचा ? दुःरी भावो ?
When did you get married? How many children do you have?

(A) अंबालीबाई: मारू वजनने १९८८ मां वचा। वे बाबो छ एक दिक्री अनेक दिक्रो
My wedding was in 1988. I have 2 children: 1 son and 1 daughter.

(D) दलेश : तमें कैसे अन्याय करीं?

How many years of study have you completed?

(A) आंबालीबाई : में घोरडा १२ सूची अन्याय करों

Up to 12th standard.

(D) दलेश : तमें बेटी कैसे रोले शीघ्र?

How did you learn to farm?

(A) आंबालीबाई : अमारा आपडाया बेटी करता तेमांधी अमे बेटी करता शीघ्र.

My ancestors farmed, so that is how I know how to farm.

(D) दलेश : तमें कैसे वर्षसी बेटी करो छो?

How many years have you been farming?

(A) आंबालीबाई : ह्यं वर्ष वर्षसी बेटी कुडूं छुं

I have been farming for ten years.

(D) दलेश : तमें बेटी करता वटा ल्यारे डेवो पाक लेतो दतो?

In the past, what crops did you grow?

(A) आंबालीबाई : अमे बेटी करता ल्यारे मे पाक लेवता पाली बाजरों न छतुं. मुझें दो पाक मॉनसॉना आपारे लेवारे जेट्टा पाली होम ते प्रमाणे. घउँ बाजरों नेवो पाक लेता.

When we were farming we could take two round of crops, because there was less water. More groundnut was grown in the monsoon. Depending on how much water we had, we also grew wheat and millet.

(D) दलेश : तमें बेटी खु दरी ल्यारे डेवा ओजारो कता?

What tools did you use when you began farming?

(A) आंबालीबाई : ल्यारे छाँवना ओजारो भावना बण्डहोसी बेटी बती हती

At that time hand tools and bullocks were used for farming.

(D) दलेश : ल्यारे डेवा पाक उडाडो छो?

What crops do you grow now?
Now, since we have enough water many kinds of crops are grown. Some people grow two rounds of crops each year and some grow three rounds.

Earlier, local methods like bullock carts were used for farming.

We are a part of the Aga Khan Organization and Atma Project.

I belong to the Vaishnav religion.

My hobby is to play cricket.

Small check dam should be built on the Meghal River and lots of water should be collected.
When you were little, what was the Meghal River like?

At that time very little water was used. There were no electric tools and water was stored.

Why is water important to you?

Water is extremely essential; life without water is not possible.

When the Meghal River dried up, what happened?

When the river dried up, how did it affect your family and village?

The effect was extremely horrific.

People’s lives were difficult and they were depressed.
When the river dried up how did you obtain water for farming?

(A) Ambali Moha

With the help of tools we pulled as much water as we could from the dry riverbed, after that we had to sit and wait for the monsoon to arrive.

(D) Higalajiya

How did you know about the foot march, streetplays and public performances?

(A) Ambali Moha

We learned about the foot march and public performances done by the Aga Khan organization.

(D) Higalajiya

Did you participate in any of these activities?

(A) Ambali Moha

Only after I joined the Aga Khan Organization I started participating. Earlier I did not participate.

(D) Higalajiya

What was the effect on your life after you participated in these activities?

(A) Ambali Moha

People are now more aware as a result of these activities. Water should be stopped. Water is life.

(D) Higalajiya

How do you save water everyday?

(A) Ambali Moha

People are now more aware as a result of these activities. Water should be stopped. Water is life.
Nowadays we use drip irrigation and the fountain system to water the crops, so no water is wasted.

(D) दलेश : तमारा दादा अंतति माटे पाशीनो उपयोग केवी रीते करता?
How did your grandfather use water for farming?

(A) अंबालीबाई : अमारा दादा अनिवारी पाशी अंतति माटे उपयोग करता
My grandfather used engines to get water for farming.

(D) दलेश : तमे अत्यारे अंततीमा पाशीनो उपयोग केवी रीते करो छो?
How do you use water for farming nowadays?

(A) अंबालीबाई : अमे अत्यारे इलेक्ट्रिक मोटरमॉन उपयोग करिं के छीने.
Now we use electric motor.

(D) दलेश : जब ब्याव पत्थर विशो नु जागो छो?
What do you know about saving water methods?

(A) अंबालीबाई : अत्यारे जे अगाजान संस्था द्वारा जे योजनामाउं वाले हे वेनकेम अंतथा कोटीगो बने हे तेमां जागौं के छीने
The Aga Khan Organization has schemes to build check dams, for which meetings are held, so we attend those meetings.

(D) दलेश : तमे जब ब्याव समिति पाले नु आशा रणो छो?
What are your expectations from the water conservation committee?

(A) अंबालीबाई : आशा ब्यावी राजनीति के झीवं संस्था तो जचुं करे पसव बालको जाग्नू वाय ते महतवुं छे जबब्याव समिति कारे हे तिटीगो पसव करे हे
We have lot of expectation. Organizations do everything, but it is important for the people to be aware. The Water Conservation committee organizes performances and meetings.

(D) दलेश : जब ब्याव सममोली जे कार्य करे हे ते क्षेत्रुं असरकर्ड छे?
How effective is the water conservation committee?

(A) अंबालीबाई : जचुं असरकर्ड हे.
Incredibly effective.

**D** दशेश

: तमारी श्रीकृष्णी के वात जे तमे कहते मांगता तो कही शको छो?

Do you want to say anything else about your life?

**A** अंबालीभाई

: अमारी श्रीकृष्णी मां दुकान पडु छतो त्यारे अमारु पशुमान नामु घरी गुं घरी गुजरातमां वारो बेवा जवा पडु छतो पशुमाने टेट्ट खेमां मूंवा जवा पडु छतां. मार्फते पूरा ज दु भी बांधा छता

In our life, during the drought we lost our cattle and animals. We had to go to Gujarat to get fodder. We had to leave our cattle with the Animal Care Centers. The condition of the people was very miserable.