Mehgal River Basin Oral History Project
Interview Transcript

Interviewers: Alexandra Mouche and Dakshesh Gajjar
Narrator: Girdharlal Narsingh
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Place: Bhanduri Village, Junagadh, Saurashtra, Gujarat, India
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Persons Present: Alexandra Mouche’ (interviewer)

Dakshesh Gajjar (research assistant/interviewer)

Girdharlal Narsingh (Narrator)

(Dakshesh) दास्हेश : तभाऊ नाम दुः छे?  
What is your name?

(Girdharlal) गिर्दहरलल : मारू नाम गिर्दहरलल नरसिंहभाई  
My name is Girdharlal Narsingh Bhai.

(D) दास्हेश : तभाऊ जन्म भ्रां अने क्याः थाहो?  
When and where were you born?

(G) गिर्दहरलल : मारू जन्म १९६० मां थाहो बांधुरीमां थाहो  
I was born in 1960 in Bhanduri village.

(D) दास्हेश : तभाऊ देओतली पेडंऊ अडी रसे छे?  
How many generations of your family have lived here?

(G) गिर्दहरलल : मारू सात पेडंऊ अडी रसे छे  
We have lived here for 7 generations.

(D) दास्हेश : तभाऊ नानापांची देओतली वस्तु तपनेय याद छे?  
What memories do you have from your childhood?

(G) गिर्दहरलल : नानापांची चांदी वस्तु वाढु छे अति तोळांची ततो अत्यासां म्हणून न देवू घेतलीने  
I have many memories from my childhood. I was very  
काव्य करवा अेंठु बुडे गमून  
naughty. I did not pay attention to my studies and roamed  
around harassing people.

(D) दास्हेश : तभाऊ बन बनारे थाय? देओतला अणू दो?  
When was your wedding? How many children do you have?
My marriage was in 1982. I have 3 children.

How many years of study have you completed?

Up to 10th standard.

How did you learn how to farm?

I learned farming from my father. We went to the farm with him and worked, as per his instructions.

For how many years have you been farming?

We have been farming for about 15 years.

In the past what crops did you grow?

At that time only one round of groundnut was cultivated. If we had water we grew wheat, otherwise we just grew fodder for cattle.

When you started farming what kind of tools did you use?
Wooden handles were used, later iron handles were used, and after that bullock carts were used.

(D) गिर्दर लल नरसिंह लल : कैसे तर ते डॅव पाट दो छो ?
What crops did you used to grow?

(G) गीर्दर लल : अल्फार्स घरा पाट डॅव छर तुवेरे, आरेंडा अने मागड़ी डॅव छर घृणो पाट पश्च 
बूटे छोधरे
Today we grow many things. Tuver Dal तुवेरे, Arendo आरेंडा, 
groundnut, wheat etc.

(D) गिर्दर लल : तमारी भेटी कर्वानी रीट देवी कटी ?
How did you farm in the past?

(गीर्दर लल : पैल्लेवानी जे भेटी कर्वानी रीट कटी तेमां पाटीनो बागध खतो अने त्वारे आपणी 
पसे कोटी एवडाला लागण न खतो जोड़ता प्रभावामं ज माज्याचे उत्पादन करता।
In the earlier method of farming, water was wasted and we did 
not have scientific tools back then. People cultivated only as 
much as they needed and no extra.

देश : तमे कोटी संया साधे जोडायेवा छो ?
Do you belong to any organizations?

(गीर्दर लल : ना हुं कोटी संया साधे जोडायेवो नरी त्वारे आमारे काम रचण कटी अमां हुं 
प्रेसिडेंस कटो)
No, I am don’t belong to any organization. Earlier we had a 
Farmers Club, of which I was the president.

देश : तमे क्षम पर्न साधे संया येवा छो ?
What religion do you belong to?

(गीर्दर लल : हुं चिन्तु पर्न साधे संया येवा हुं 
I’m Hindu.

देश : तमने कोटी रोप छे यौरे ?
Do you have any hobbies?

(गीर्दर लल : मने क्रिकेट रमवानो रोप छे 
I like to play cricket.
What do you think about the Meghal River?

The Meghal River is the lifeline of our village life. The water source of today is not like yesteryears. At that time there was good collection of water. Now we have electric motors and they pull water from the well and the water level of the river goes down. If dams are built, it will bring happiness amongst villagers.

When you were little, what was the Meghal River like?

When we were little the Meghal River had enough water. There were not many tools to pull out water from the river so the river always had water.

How is water important to you?

Water is essential for life. There was a source of water, since there were no tools to pull out water. The river had water.

When the Meghal River dried up, what happened?

The effect was devastating on both animals and humans. Employment was badly effected.

When the Meghal dried up, what happened?
When the Meghal River dried up, what effect did this have on your life?

We had to take our cattle to North Gujarat because there was no water at all.

What effect did it have on your family and village?

The effect was really horrific.

When the river dried, up how did you get water for farming?

There was no farming at all.

How did you hear about the footmarch, streetplays, and public performances?

We attended streetplays and public performances that were held in our village; that is how we got to know about it.

Did you participate in these activities?

There is an ashram of our (gurudev) religious leader 40 kilometers away from here. We did a footmarch to the ashram.

What effect did these activities have on you?
These activities were good for our health and also good for our religious beliefs.

What do you do everyday to save water?

We try to use as little water as possible, and not waste it. It’s like the way we think before using expensive stuff: water is also precious. Water should not be wasted.

How did your grandfather use water for farming?

With the help of leather bag and Ret system, we used water.

How do you use water now for farming?

Today we use oil engines and electric motors.

What do you know about water conservation methods?

Water conservation methods, in Gujarat we got electricity only for 8 hours a day, but this was helpful. Farmers, who used large amount of water, had to water their fields in 8 hours and thus used water carefully.
What are your expectations of the water conservation committee?

We have worked in the water conservation committee. The underground water tanks were built in each house, so it has been helpful. It brings us great joy to see this activity prosper in our village.

Do you think the water conservation committee has been effective?

The effect has been great. We hope they continue to develop.

Do you have anything you would like to say about your life?

Whatever your organization is doing, we feel good in encouraging it.