Mehgal River Basin Oral History Project
Interview Transcript

Interviewers: Alexandra Mouche and Dakshesh Gajjar
Narrator: Jessi Darbar
Interview Dates: March 22nd, 2012
Place: Ajab Village, Junagadh, Saurashtra, Gujarat, India
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March 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2012

Persons Present: Alexandra Mouche’ (interviewer)

Dakshesh Gajjar (research assistant/interviewer)

Jassi Darbar (Narrator)

Note: Jassi Darbar is not literate in Gujarati so we read the informed consent release form to her over the recording and got her verbal consent for the interview. Listen to the Mp3 file for the consent.

(Dakshesh) 

What is your name?

(JessiBen) My name is JassiBen.

(D) What is your father’s name?

(J) My father’s name is JivaBapa.

(D) When and where were you born?

(J) My birthplace was in Lakhodara.

(D) How many generations of your family have lived here?

(J) Many generations ago, my mother lived here.
We have been living here for many years.

(D) दक्षेश : तमारी नामपणे ढेटली वस्तुनाही तमाने यांवा किंवा?

What do you remember from your childhood?

(J) जसीबेन : अमार्यांनी शैक्षणिक वातावरण म्हणून हेरीला हता जमीन – ज्यातात न छाती पैसा न छाती मृत्यूरी करता. महानात्मक करता अंगे करता बाह्य मोठा वाटा घरव्यावहारासाठी मांडव्या किंवा मांडू छाती हव्यासाठी मारला होय तसा पर्यंत किंवा घटून नसलेली आव्यूह पहिली १ व्या १० विधा जमीन म्हणजेच आव्यूह फडवणासाठी शहानासाठी बहुत घडून घडून अंती वाचाने घडून घडून आरू बेहद आरू बेहद.

We were very poor and our lives were weak. We had no land, no property, and no money. All of us worked as laborers. We worked hard and grew up like that. Now everyone has started working and it is good and useful. Even after my marriage we had nothing. Later, after coming here, we had 1 to 10 Vighas land. Earlier we sold vegetables, then we bought a shop, then a house. Now life is good.

(D) दक्षेश : तमाने वन लेण घरांसाठी किंवा?

When was your marriage?

(J) जसीबेन : मारा वननं ग्रीष्म वर्षास तरा भी छोडूना अनेक छोडूना.

I have been married for thirty years, with two sons and one daughter.

(D) दक्षेश : तमें क्या अन्यायास कराई?

How many years of study have you done?

(J) जसीबेन : अन्यायांचा फ्राउ.

I am illiterate.

(D) दक्षेश : तमाने पेती करता आयव्या किंवा? किंवा रीती शीत्या?

Do you know how to do farming? How did you learn to farm?

(J) जसीबेन : या, बघून ज आव्या किंवा आपल्याकडून पेती करता हता अनेक पण
Yes I know everything. Our forefathers used to farm and we also accompanied them to the farm and saw how they did it, sowing and cutting. I also learned to lift Mandvi. There was no cart so everyone had to carry it on his or her heads. That is how we learned, by observing them.

(D) द्वेश : तभे उदाध वर्षाथूनी भेटी करो को?

How many years have you been farming?

(J) जस्सीबेंन : अभे वर्षासोही भेटी जे करून छींगे भेटी नथी

We have been farming for many years. We did not study.

(D) द्वेश : तभे भेटी करता त्यारे देखो पाणे हतो को?

What kind of crops did you grow in the past?

(J) जस्सीबेंन : त्यारे पाणे अधूः सार्थे न हतो हतो देखो पाणे अधूः सार्थे शाय छे

At that time the crops were not very good and now the crops are good. It used to rain a lot and there were famines so the crops were not so good. We had no tools, no money, so the crops were not good.

(D) द्वेश : तभे भेटी करता त्यारे देखा साधनासो हो प्रमोग करता अत्यारे

At that time what kind of tools did you use, and now what kind of tools do you use?

(J) जस्सीबेंन : बाक्क्ये छाते हता अत्यारे हेक्स्टर आवी गया छे

Earlier there were wooden ploughs, now we have a tractor and iron tools. There were wooden handles, which we took to the carpenter to repair when they
broke. To pull out water there were Kosi. There were no machines.

(D) डेशेश : तमारी अती गर्वानी रीत देखी दती?
What is your method of farming?

(J) जस्सीबेन : अंती गर्वानुम नृत्ये छ बयु आवडे छे.
I know how to farm. I know everything about farming.

(D) डेशेश : तमेको संस्था साथे जोडायेवा छो?
Are you part of any organizations?

(J) जस्सीबेन : ना कोई संस्था साथे जोडायेवा नथी
No I’m not part of any organizations.

(D) डेशेश : तमेको क्या दर्भ साथे संक्रामणवा छो?
Which religion do you follow?

(J) जस्सीबेन : श्रमिक
Hard work

(D) डेशेश : तमेको कोई शोषण छे भरो?
Do you have any hobbies?

(J) जस्सीबेन : मने बघ्नाना बघिन गावानो, मृदीर दर्शन करवा बघ्नानुबात दात्युं गामे.
I like singing religious hymns, doing darshan at the temple and reading religious books.

(D) डेशेश : तमेमेखल नदीमा विश्वे चुं विख्यारो छो?
What are your thoughts about the Meghal River?

(J) जस्सीबेन : मेखल नदीमा पानी आवे छ तो बघाने मना आवे छ पानी न होय छ वायस्तेल आवे. पीवानु पानी क्याथी वाचे पानी वगर कोई रक्षि शस्त्रै नाडी पानी आपल्यां शीवन छ.
When water comes to the Meghal River everyone is happy. If there is no water how they will grow crops? Where will they get drinking water from? No one can survive without water. Water is our life.
(J) Jessi Darbar

What was the Meghal River like when you were young?

(J) Jessi Darbar

It wasn’t great. I was little.

(D) Dinesh

How important is water to you?

(J) Jessi Darbar

Water is very important, without it there is no life.

(D) Dinesh

What was the effect when the Meghal River dried up?

(J) Jessi Darbar

When the Meghal River dried up, people were in great trouble. There was a shortage of drinking water. Water tanks were called but even when the tanks came women would fight for a chance. Water is important.

(D) Dinesh

When the Meghal River dried up, what was the effect on your life?

(J) Jessi Darbar

People are in great trouble without water. Without water it is difficult to bathe, wash clothes or cook food. Without water nothing is possible.

(D) Dinesh

How about the effect on your family and the village?
The effect was huge. The government started relief centers. We would take our food and water and work hard as laborers during the day in the heat and get Rs. 10 to 15. This kind of life I have lived. We sold our gold and silver jewelry to survive that year.

Once the water dried up, from where did you arrange more water for farming?

When the river dried up there was no farming at all.

Have you participated in pad yatra (foot-march), sherinatak (street show, play) and lokdayro (public performance)?

I have done Leeli Prakrima (foot-march) 4 times.

When you did Leeli Prakrima, how did it affect your life?

In the beginning we would feel the fatigue and we would feel we should never come here again. Then we would sit to eat poro and we would feel like we should come here again. Once the pilgrimage is finished we feel like coming here again. This way I did 4 foot-marches. It was a lot of fun.
(D) दोष : रोज पाली ब्यावाब माटे बुंदारे छौँ?
What do you do to save water on a daily basis?

(J) जस्सीबेन : रोज पाली ब्यावाब नहीं बंध करायते।
To save water daily we stop the river.

(D) दोष : तमारा गाडा अंती माटे पालीनाल उपायाण कहिल रीते करता?
How did your grandfather use water for farming?

(J) जस्सीबेन : दादाना वफळतमा कोष कर्तो कोष बांधने पाली बंधता पालीनाल।
In the time of my grandfather, Kos was used to pull out water from the well. The use of water has increased since the motor has been introduced.

(D) दोष : जब ब्याव रुपमित गिसो कहै जानो छौँ?
Do you know anything about the water conservation committee?

(J) जस्सीबेन : जब ब्याव रुपमित छूँ कहै जानती नयी।
I don’t know anything about the Water Conservation committee.

(D) दोष : पाली ब्याव रुपमित अहिले कर्च्छ कहूँ छै ते तमाने केटेकू असरकारक लागे छै।
According to you, how affective has been the efforts of Water Conservation Committee?

(J) जस्सीबेन : बहुत ज असरकारक लागे छै चेंचेझ क्रम कर्च्छ छै तेने पूर्ण नूतकृल अमिताब्ज पाली त्यायाकृ ते पूर्ण सारो मागल करेक।
They have been very effective; I congratulate the people who have done this. The person who saves water should be a great man.

(D) दोष : तमारी जिजीर्णी कोई पाल केलेया भांगता होय ते कही शको छौँ?

Is there anything else you would like to say about your life?

(J) Jessieb: Earlier there were great sorrows in our lives. Now by the grace of God we are happy.