Mehgal River Basin Oral History Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewers: Alexandra Mouche and Dakshesh Gajjar

Narrator: Jivan Valki

Interview Dates: March 22nd, 2012

Place: Kodasa Village, Junagadh, Saurashtra, Gujarat, India

Program: Fulbright-Nehru Grant 2011-2012

Date completed: June 23rd, 2012
March 22nd, 2012

Persons Present: Alexandra Mouche’ (interviewer)

Dakshesh Gajjar (research assistant/interviewer)

Jivan Valki (Narrator)

(Dakshesh) डक्षेश : तमारु नाम शुं छे?

What is your name?

(Jivan) जीवनभाई : मारु नाम जीवनभाई वाडी छे

My name is JivanBhai Valki.

(D) डक्षेश : तमारो जन्म कहाँ, कहाँ थायो?

When and where were you born?

(J) जीवनभाई : मारे जन्म वाडियामा १९३६ मा वयो ४-५-१८३६ मा थायो

I was born in Vaadiya in 1936, 4th of May.

(D) डक्षेश : तमारी केट्टी पद्मी अभी रखे छो?

How many generations of your family have lived here?

(J) जीवनभाई : वरसो थ्या.

Many years.

(D) डक्षेश : तमारी नामप्राप्ती कोई अभी वस्तु याह को?

What do you remember for your childhood?
When we did farming we had 8 to 10 vigah\* of land, and we did not have a pakka\† house. Instead we had a kachha\‡ house. We worked as laborers for 12 hours and got rupees 100. For 12 hours Rs. 1 Bharti and that was

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* 17452 sq ft
† Permanent house
‡ Temporary house
our living standard. When we did not get millet and wheat, at that time when we worked for 12 hours we got Rs. 100. We worked bare feet and bare head whether it was summer or winter. My forefathers had 10 Vigah land, today I have 12 acres land. I cultivate it twice or thrice. We have joined the Aga Khan Core Group; whenever there is work related to water or irrigation we take active part in it. Good arrangements were done in 1995 for building the Bhakra dam, Rs. 16 Lacs were spend on building the dam. Today 150 wells have water because of this dam and we have been able to educate our children, I have a bungalow now. Today I am a member of the Core Group, people call me in time of need and I help them.

(D) दशेश : तमेआगाखानमाँ दाबल क्यारे थाया?

When did you join Aga Khan?

(J) जीवनबार्क : १९७८ मा आगाखानमाँ दाबल थाया.

In 1978 I joined Aga Khan.

(D) दशेश : तमारा बागन क्यारे थाया? अनेक तमारे देखा बाणको
When did you get married and how many children do you have?

(J) जीवनार्थी : माझा वण १९६० मध्ये घ्या आहे आणि अनेक हाकरी.

I got married in 1960 and I have 2 sons and 1 daughter.

(D) दक्षिण : तमे केटाव अब्यास केंद्रू?

How many years have you studied?

(J) जीवनार्थी : ह्या वर्ष खोपडी भजेल्या होय.

I have studied until the 4th Grade.

(D) दक्षिण : वेगी डेवी रीते शीव्या ?

How did you learn farming?

(J) जीवनार्थी : पक्का माघसोबी पेटी वाटी बणघी वेवानी शूदत न कती जात

मझनत्तीला कंटों पेटर्ना करते होय या ते माझा जोळे कंटां न काळी अने तो पाक वेवानाचे नवे अल्पारे परिस्थिती वाजी या ते ह्या लक्ष्याच्या भेंती करून या अल्पारे वातावरण होय ते कसर सारी वात अल्पारे पाशीना तज उडा गेला या ते कसर वारते तो पात्र वर्षवर नौकरी जात.

Earlier we did physical labor ourselves because we couldn’t afford bollocks. We removed thorns from the entire field with our hands. If we didn’t remove the thorns they would not let the crops grow. Today the situation is different. I use tools today. If the year is
good then we get a good output crop. Water levels have
gone deeper. If we cultivate, we can earn enough to
earn our home (basic living) expenses.

(D) दक्षेश : अभी अंतर 20 वर्षों करते हो?

How many years have you been farming?

(J) जीवनभारी : लगभग 30 वर्षों अभी करते हैं

For the past 30 years, approximately.

(D) दक्षेश : अभी करता त्यारे केवा पाक चतो हो?

When you did farming, what was the output (crop) like?

(J) जीवनभारी : पाक बांक न चतो गोरो धाव दुकान परे सुका आये त्यारे

There wasn’t a lot of output. During the times of
drought the farmers had to step back 2 or 3 times; the
situation was critical. Animals had to be sold off or else
they would die. Today, due to boriband’s, we get water
easily and it stays for 2 to 3 months, it doesn’t go into
the ocean easily.
Alexandra Mouche  Jivan Valki Interview  3/22/12

Is there any specific drought that you remember?

During one drought nobody cultivated his or her land that year. Animals died due to shortage of fodder. People were starving and prices were rising. I have seen 2 or 3 droughts.

What kind of tools did you use when you began farming?

At that time there were wooden tools, today we get multi-functional tools.

What was your method of farming in the past?

At that time we did not know much about farming; we learned from our experience. Earlier in monsoon we grew millet and sesame, now we grow wheat, sesame etc. Earlier we grew just enough to eat because we had limited land. Now we have 12 Acers and we cultivate it twice a year.

What religion do you follow?

We are associated with the Aga Khan, our cast is called Ismaili and we are called Khoja.

What are your hobbies?
My hobby is to collect water. If we stop the waters’ flow to the ocean, it could last for 2 or 3 more months. It would be helpful to everyone.

(D) दक्ष : तमारी मेघव नहीं विशे शुं विचार हे?

What do you think about the Meghal River?

(J) श्रीवनभार्द : जयारे ठूँ बसलो हतो त्यारे बारेमास वडेती लती पहिच अभी मुझा पडता ग्या त्यारे वायूतर आंचहा कता केत्रकन जे वात्वारुं पांच विधा, जे विधा अत्यारे तेनी ज्ञानों उन्हीं अनेको रीविशी माखा माऊँ उपचार वे हे अनेके जे तब वात्वारा कता मेघव नहीं श्रीवीत खाई गरी त्यारथी करोडोनी आवक खाई गरी पोताचा छोडराने साईं बसलो विद्रोह रे रोकटरो रसाया. अभी ज ज्ञातिमा परिवर्तन खाई गभु हे वाही जीव्न ज्ञातिमा स्वातु हे अत्यारे बोकोना घरनामा अन.सी. पंचा ठोऱ हे त्यारे अभारी पासे क्षूँ हतुं नहीं.

When I was in school the river had flowing water all around the year. Then later on it began to dry up. There was less cultivation at that time since the land was 5 vighas §, 2 vighas **. Instead of that, today the millions of vighas of land are cultivated now and grow sesame.

Since the Meghal River has been revived, income has gone in to millions. Children are educated to become

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§ 87260Sq Ft
** 34904.Sq Ft
doctors and lawyers. Development has been seen in all casts. Water is a basic necessity of humans. When people had A/C and fans in their houses we had nothing.

(D) नाना हता त्याचे मेघ पण नयी कमी हती?

How was the Meghal River when you were young?

(J) जीवनभार्या: वर्षाचे पाणी जबाबे पाणीचे अंदू त्याचे १० महिन्या आहे तरी वही गाणांची बऱ्या पाणी दरियांमाचा जल राहतू आणि आणि वाणांमें सरासर आणि AKRSP ने प्रथम माने अन्यो पाणी जवळ सर्वश्रेष्ठ रीते जीवनभार्या वाणू गांव सुरु तो वाणू सुरु

Many years ago when there was less cultivation and the river flowed for 10 months. In between times, all the water went on to the ocean. On the advice of the Aga Khan people, I joined AKRSP and became its first member. Later on other people started joining it. If the village is happy, everyone is happy.

(D) तमारा माते पाणी हेटू महत्वगुण?

What is the importance of water to you?

(J) जीवनभार्या: पाणीमां पाणी महत्व होय तो ते पाणी

Water is of first and foremost importance.
What was the effect on your life when Meghal River dried up?

Less land was cultivated. If there was 50 vighas land only 5 or 10 vighas out of 50 were cultivated. Earlier there were no (two) water bores, there was a 25 feet deep well. Now we have 100 feet deep water bore, water comes from everywhere, even from the check dams. If there is no water in the wells, crops cannot be grown and in such times everything depends on the Monsoon. If it rains well then it’s good otherwise the
situation of farmers would become vulnerable. Earlier there were more droughts then nowadays. People committed suicide out of misery.

(D) दशेश : तमारा ठप्पु अने गामडांना खेडी असार चढी

How did it affect your family and village?

(J) जीवनान्वारी : बघी जन्वांना माघोबतत झाव हत्ता जवां सरकार खाम करावत घोष

त्यां मुंडुरीमध्ये जवां रोड बनावता पडे डूना पोडणा पडे अमांची आजीविका असार छती

Everywhere people were in a bad condition. People began doing laborious jobs for the government like making roads and digging wells. That was the source of livelihood.

(D) दशेश : नसी सुणाई गरी त्यांच्या जवळी माटे म्हणजे पाणीच्या व्यवस्था हेडी रोटे

करता?

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

(J) जीवनान्वारी : पाणी धोप ज नसी नसी जवळी त्यांचे अपेक्षेपूर्ण डिब जेवण आंबंके असेकोर

सुरुवात धोप बहार तो नीलवून ज पडे
It would emotionally hurt us to see the river without water. Everywhere it would be dry and barren. Relocation was the only option.

(D) दक्ष : तभि कोई बोकाडारी, शेरिनाटक, पदयात्रामां भाग देयो कैसे?

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

(J) जीवनार्थ : यासू, AKRSP मार्गमांे अभाग लड्डुने पदयात्रामां

50 डिबी. श्रृङ्खला करून एक गावाचे तपास भागरी पाळच करू जाय साखीरांने भागी पाळच भीजी गावाचे जाय त्यां 50% भागरी रोकला जाय अभाग वरून चोरवाच सुधी पदयात्रा करू. शेरिनाटक अने बोकाडारां भाग देयों \( \text{कृ} \) पाळी भवाण बोकाडारां भाग देयों \( \text{कृ} \).

Yes, through AKRSP I participated in Pad Yatya (Foot March). After 60 kilometers, when we reached a village, they would return, meet their colleagues and go to other village, 50 % of the people would stay there, in this way we did a Foot March until Chorwad. I have participated in sherinatak and lokdayro. I have participate in the Save Water lokdayro (public performance)
What was the effect on your life after you took part in these activities?

It had a good effect on my life.

What do you do, to save water daily?

To save water everyday, close the water taps properly, use minimum water to clean utensils. Everyone should understand the importance of water and use water carefully. Conserving water is my motto.

How have your forefathers used water for farming?

To your forefathers used water for farming?
At that time of my grandfather there was not so much cleanliness. He took a bath once a week. Nowadays when people take one glass of water, they drink half and throw the rest away. Due to water people stay healthy.

(D) डलेर : तमे जात्याकडे पाणीनो उपयोग देवी रोळे करो छो?

Nowadays how do you use water?

(J) झीनबाई : वाडीना पाणीनो उपयोग बेटेर्मा ज करवाने घरे पाणीनो

करुळसरावण्यांचे उपयोग करून चीने बोकरे पाणी नवसाव आपणं चीने पाणी बनवावा पाणी तमने बनवावे.

Water from the yard should be used in the field only.

Use water carefully at home. We advise to people to

‘Save Water and Water will Save you’.

(D) डलेर : ज्यव बनवाव समिति निवेश तमें राणो छो?

What do you know about the Water Conservation Committee?

(J) झीनबाई : आमें ज्यव बनवाव समिति न फोर सुपरा होडापेअरा चीने तेमं दर महिनेमधें मोठी दोष छे त्यां स्वयं ज्यवं दोष छे.
We are connected with the Core Group of the Water Conservation Committee; we have meetings every month where all the expenses are looked into.

What are your expectations from the Water Conservation Committee?

Our expectation from the Water Conservation Committee is that if there are two people who can make others understand the importance of water it would be beneficial to both. Those who cultivated once a year are now doing it thrice a year. So now they have understood that conserving water is beneficial to us.
How effective has been the work done by the Water Conservation Committee?

(J) Jivanbhai : वर्तमान 50 वीं 70 % जेटला कामो असे करके आहे हे

They have been 60 to 70 % effective.

(D) Dalsh : तबारी जीवनकृतीची कोठी अनेक वात हे तमें अभ्यंजनवा मागता कैसे तो कठी शकतो हो?

Is there is anything about your life that you want to tell us?

(J) Jivanbhai : जावरे अब भावना त्यासे कपड्यांची एक जोडी झोडी होती,

कपड्यांच्या बाजारी जेव्हा माण्यतेत त्यासे प्रायः उपकरणांच्या साथीत सावधानी अनेक किंवा 75% नेकून मात्र सार्वजनिक प्रावधानांमध्ये त्यांना 1% पण सार्वजनिक नहीं

When we went to school, we had one pair of cloths; we carried notebooks in a cloth bag because we did not have school bags. There were no private schools then, only government schools. Today if there is 75% relief to farmers, in those days it was not even 1% good.