Meghal River Basin Oral History Project
Interview Transcript

Interviewers: Alexandra Mouche and Dakshesh Gajjar
Narrator: Sonik Dhundhiya
Interview Dates: March 24th, 2012
Place: Nani Danej Village, Maliya Block, Junagadh, Saurashtra, Gujarat, India
Program: Fulbright-Nehru Grant 2011-2012
Date completed: June 20th, 2012
March 24th, 2012

Persons Present: Alexandra Mouche’ (interviewer)

Dakshesh Gajjar (research assistant/interviewer)

Sonik Dhundhiya (Narrator)

(Dakshesh) देश : तमामे नाम झूंठे हे?
What is your name?

(Sonik) सोनीकमाड : मारूँ नाम सोनीकमाड बूंडीवाये छे
My name is SonikBhai Dhundhiya.

(D) देश : तमारो जन्म कया अन्य कयारे थयो?
When and where were you born?

(S) सोनीकमाड : बारो जन्म वहाला गामे १९६८मा थयो
My birthplace was in Vadala village in 1968.

(D) देश : तमारी केटियी पीडीवी अडिरे रहे हे?
How many generations of your family have lived here?

(S) सोनीकमाड : अमारा बापदादाभी अडियां रहीने छीने
Our ancestors lived here.

(D) देश : तमारी नानप्रधानी कोई वस्तु तमने पाद छोपे?
What do you remember from your childhood?

(S) सोनीकमाड : नानप्रधानमा मारा दादा जामा करवा गयोला जानामाळी
When I was a child my grandfather went on a pilgrimage. When he returned I asked him, what have
आयामा त्याआँ मे अंदु करेबुँ दे मारा माते शुं बाबाया? मारा माते बाबा बन्दा रमछडी बाबाया हतो साङीलो समय लतो पूर्णमा दिवस हतो चांद बराबर
उपर चतो मारा दादा पार्वी तरेबुँ वाणी बाबाया अने पार्वीतमा चांदु नु प्रतिनिध जसली करुँ दे, आ चांद तारा माते बाबाया छु।
was evening time on a full moon night, the moon was right on top, and my grandfather brought a vessel full of water, showed me the reflection of the moon in the water and said I’ve got this moon for you.

(D) दोस्त : तमारा वान कमारे खाप? डेटवा भागी?
When were you married? How many children do you have?

(S) सोनिकथारी : मारा वानने २४ वरस थ्या भे डिकरा छे
I have been married for 24 years and I have two children.

(D) दोस्त : तमे अल्पस केटलो भाँदा?
How many years of study have you completed?

(S) सोनिकथारी : गो. ३ शुद्धी अल्पस भाँदा
Up until 7th standard.

(D) दोस्त : तमे नेती नेती रीते शीघ्र?
How did you learn how to farm?

(S) सोनिकथारी : बाखाकाना वनकधी नेती करिए छिए बाखाका साथी नेती जाना तेमनी साथी रहिने नेती शीघ्र
We have been farming since the time of our ancestors; we went to the farm with them and learned farming from them.

(D) दोस्त : तमे नेती डेटला वरस्थी करो छो?
How many years have you been farming?

(S) सोनिकथारी : नेती वजन २८ वरस्थी करु छु
For about 28 years.

(D) दोस्त : पडेला नेतीमा डेटो पाक रहो छतो?
When you first farmed, what crops did you grow?

(S) सोनिकथारी : अे समयमा नेतीमा पाक रहो ते यात्रिक
व्यक्तिगत बाटो न छलो पाकनु जोहींमा नेतीमा उत्पादन न बाटी रक्ता
At that time mechanical methods were not used in farming and the quantity of output was not per expectation.

(D) द्वारा:  
तबे बेती शासकी त्यार डेवा औजारों उपयोग नये होते?

Which tools did you use when you began farming?

(S) सोनीकाली:  
मोटे बागे बंदकी बेती करता खाद्यात लायी होता त्यारबाई लोंबाणा औजारे आयुष्य त्यारबाई बेतीमध्ये हिवसे हिवसे बदलाय आपल्यांची गयो.

Mostly bullocks were used for farming and tools with wooden handles, and then iron tools were used. After that farming has been changing with time.

(D) द्वारा:  
आत्मां बेतीमध्ये किंवा राख लो छो?

What crops do you grow now?

(S) सोनीकाली:  
आत्मां नवी अनेक मुख्यी बाजींमध्ये लायला अनेक खाद्यांमध्ये तरींकडे छोट्या पावार पर्यंती लायला पाव लायले छीं.

Today we grow wheat and groundnut and as an extra crop we have also grown sesame for the past 5 years.

(D) द्वारा:  
बेती करवानी रीत त्यारे किंवा शेवी होती?

How did you farm back then?

(S) सोनीकाली:  
आत्मां बेती उपर आणि वेवाचे हे तेटवी त्यारे बेती उपर आणि वेवाच्या न लायला पाव होय त्यारे निदंस्तन होय तो पाव अनेक निदंस्तन न होयते जोडींमध्ये यांनिक युग आयुष्य पहली खा बंधांचा पाव बदलाय आपले.

Earlier people did not take care of farming as much as they do today. When they have crop they have निदंस्तन nindaman but they should not have so much निदंस्तन nindaman. After the mechanical age has begun, there has been a change in this also.

(D) द्वारा:  
तमी खासी संस्था साबे जोडायेला छो?

Do you belong to any organizations?

(S) सोनीकाली:  
आजीवन संस्था साबे २००२ व्या जोडायेला छीं.
Alexandra Mouche  Sonik Dhundhiya Interview  3/24/12

I joined the Aga Khan Organization in 2002 and I am also with the Atma Project. Aga Khan has a health organization. I was a part of that also. Now this organization has stopped working.

(D) दक्षेश  :  तमे क्या धर्म साथे संकायेख्या छो?

Which religion do you belong to?

(S) सोनीकाबाई  :  अमे हिन्दू धर्म साथे संकायेख्या छीने  

We belong to the Hindu religion.

(D) दक्षेश  :  तमने कोई शोष छ भरो?

Do you have any hobbies?

(S) सोनीकाबाई  :  मारा पिता गाडी गया पहाडमा बढ्या लोको दिइँने  

After my father died I did. Everyone should live together in peace and harmony and be helpful to the needy and poor people.

(D) दक्षेश  :  तमे मेखल नही विशेष शुं विघारो छो?

What is your perception of the Meghal River?

(S) सोनीकाबाई  :  मेखल नही मारु व्यवन हो २०१२ सुधीमा अमे तेने  

It is my dream that by 2012, we will make the Meghal River a river that has flowing water all around the year. The Aga Khan organization started a movement in 2012, a group of people was formed, and the responsibility of important work was given to me.

(D) दक्षेश  :  तमे नन्ता छला त्यारे मेखल नही देखी छली?

What was the Meghal River like when you were little?
When we were young Meghal River had flowing water all the time, even in the summers. Then it dried. As the rainfall decreased, the water level in the wells went low and slowly the river dried.

How is water important to you?

For us, water is the development of the people and the area. If there is no water, people will have employment problems. Farmers provide employment to a large amount of labors. In my opinion, after a drought when the government provides relief works, it does not provide employment for the entire year. Even the government cannot provide employment without water. Employment can only be provided to the laborers by the farmers.

When the Meghal River dried up, what happened?

When the river dried up everyone had to go through great difficulties. In our region farmers spent a lot of money to get water. Lacs of rupees were spent for water. Some built deep wells; some did Gar आदि by
drilling. In spite of doing all this they didn’t succeed and all the money was also spent. People were in great difficulty and development stopped due to water shortages.

(D) दलेख : में ठी सुकृत तेनी तमारा शीवन पर केवी असर पड़ी?
When the Meghal River dried up, how did it affect your life?

(S) सोनिकमार : में ठी सुकृत जर बोटामाजना बोकरने मश्तुरी माटे ज्रुङु पडतु समाज साथे रेकेम ऑम तो गमे त्यांदी आवक तो रंजी ज पडे ज़े—ते समये सरकारे राजदाम पंल्या तेंमों बांके मश्तुरी माटे जर तारी पेटी अंदेली जर्णेली न लती तेंदी मारे ज्रुङु पडतु न लतु
When the Meghal River dried up most people had to start doing labor work. If you have to live within the society, you have to arrange a source of income from somewhere. At that time the government started relief work and people got labor jobs there. My farming was not so kathadeli जर्णेली so I did not have to go there.

(D) दलेख : में ठी सुकृत गरी त्यारे तमारा ज्रुङु अने गमडा पर केवी असर थई?
When the Meghal River dried up how did it affect your family and village?

(S) सोनिकमार : ज्रुङु अने गम पर गुण माठी असर थई बोकरोली जुरिमाता बांके ज्रङ गरी नवो विकास न गम बांकोलो अन्वास माटे जे करुङु पडतु ते न करी शकता पेटी माटे करी न थई शकतु ज्रुङु माटे जुरिमाता पडा संतोषती न लती या बधा प्रभु दरेक शीवनमा लता.
The affect on the family and the village was horrific and people needs were not fulfilled. There was no development; children could not do what they had to do for education. Nothing could be done for farming. People could not fulfill the needs of their families and this was the case with everyone.

(D) दलेख : नडी सुकृत गरी त्यारे पेटी माटे भाढीली अब्झरा कई रैले करता?
When the river dried up how did you obtain water for farming?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : नदी सुखी गई तब घर से पानी लाने का आदेश में उठाया और अन्य कारोबारी पदार्थों के संसाधन नहीं थे।

When the river dried up, we deepened the wells and made horizontal and vertical Daro करे but there was no success.

(D) Daksha : तबे पदयात्रा, शेरिनाटक के लोकडायरमा भाग लीयो छे?

Did you participate in pad yatra (foot march), sherinatak (street show, play) or Lokdayro?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : अगाखान संस्थान ने 2002 में एक प्रोजेक्ट के जरिए मेहरू नहीं ठहरने की चीज़ के रूप में शामिल किया जिसे जोड़कर बनाने के लिए वास्तव में अक्सर सफलता प्राप्त करना आया। थम जाने के बाद हमारे पास अपने पानी के पानी के बाद हमारे पास वापसी करने के लिए मेहरू नहीं किया जा सकता था। अगाखान संस्थान ने 2002 में एक प्रोजेक्ट के जरिए मेहरू नहीं ठहरने की चीज़ के रूप में शामिल किया जिसे जोड़कर बनाने के लिए वास्तव में अक्सर सफलता प्राप्त करने के लिए मेहरू नहीं किया जा सकता था।

The Aga Khan Organization started the project in 2002 to revive the Meghal River. I joined then and traveled many places. After seeing all this we felt that all this should be done in our village too. Then a great Dhara was formed, the Meghal Core Group was formed. After this, awareness started spreading amongst the people and they succeeded in their works. With the Aga Khan Organization we did a footmarch.

(D) Daksha : कई प्रवृतियाँ तबे बाबा लीयो छले?

In which activities did you participate?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : बाहर प्रवास में गयो त्वचनी प्रवृतियाँ नौहाल अने अपने पानी अने पशु के आपसी पशु अं ग्राम सुंदर कार्यक्रमों सहित अनावश्यके जोड़कर

When I traveled I saw the activities and I felt that I should also participate in the activities and make this program a success.

(D) Daksha : तेनी असर तमारा जीवन पर केवी छले?
What was the effect of these activities on your life?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : ज्ञे ते समये पेटीमा ज्ञे उत्पादन बेदा तेमां व्यारे बसो 

( ) अने घाटेना अभ्यास पार्ण वर्य ध्या छ आर्थिक रीते सुप्नी ध्या 

( ) आगाउ पाषाण भाद्रे ते देराई ध्या पल्लु ते करे पल्लु नयी आर्थिक रीते 

( ) क्षया ध्या सामाजिक क्षया ध्या.

At that time the output of the crop increased in farming and we could spend money on the education of our children, so financially we are more secure. We do not have trouble with water now as we did earlier. With financial gains we have also had social benefits.

(D) द्वे : रोज पाषण ब्यावहार मात्रूं करो छो ?

What do you do to conserve water daily?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : रोज पाषण ब्यावहार मात्रा पाषणीमा करकसर पूर्णकालो 

( ) उपयोग करो छ्रीहो ओळी पाषणीमा क्षमा पाक व्यारे लेबाम ते भान्ते 

( ) विवरी छ्रीहो

To save water daily we use it with a tight hand, avoiding the wastage of it. We discuss as to which crops can be grown in less water.

(D) द्वे : तमारा धारा बेली करता त्यारे पाषणीमा उपयोग केवली 

रीते करता?

How did your grandfather use water for farming?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya : आगाउ अमारा धारा कोसी पाषण काहीता त्यारे तो 

( ) पाषणीमा तथा त्रीहोरे त्यारे 20 डुंगरा दुवा त्यारे अमारे कोस काहीता त्यारे 

( ) बात आर्थिक अन् जीवन आपात. अमृत समय सुधी ओळी ओळीन नो 

( ) उपयोग क्षमा त्यारे आर्थिक अन् जीवन आपात. अमृत समय सुधी ओळी ओळी 

( ) नो उपयोग क्षमा त्यारे आर्थिक अन् जीवन आपात. अमृत समय सुधी ओळी 

( ) काहीता धारा तोहो डुंगा कुरा पन्ना, त्रीहा पन्नातीहो रोहो भवगती कोसी पाषण 

( ) आपात.

Earlier my grandfather used leather bags to get water out of the well. At that time water levels were shallow, so the wells were 20 feet deep. Earlier, leather bags were pulled up from the wells by bullocks and then oil engines were introduced. For sometime oil engines were used and then electric motors were used. A pump was fixed with it and water was pulled out. Many
people used fountain systems and drip irrigation to water groundnut crops.

(D) द्विश : तबे अन्यांने अंततीमा देवी रीते पाणीची उपयोग करो वाट?  

How do you use water now for farming?

(S) सोनीकबाई : अमे अन्यांने धवळकूटी पंपवी ज पाणीच्या उपयोग  

करून ती अंतती शृंगारात प्रस्तुत पाणी वाट अपनावे चे. शृंगारात प्रस्तुत पाणी  

उपयोग करते होय.  

Now we used electric pumps for water. People adopt different methods per their needs. They use the fountain system.

(D) द्विश : तबे जवं भांव प्रस्तुत विश्वे झुं झालो वाट?  

What do you know about water conservation methods?

(S) सोनीकबाई : जवं भांव प्रस्तुती विश्वे तो ठिपा प्रस्तुत, शृंगार प्रस्तुतीची पाणी पाना. बाळी जॅ रेट वापरता शेरडीलं वाहेंतत करता त्याचे  

आणी रात धवळकूट पंप नों उपयोग करता. शेरडीलं वाहेंतत बंधु क्षेत्री  

माखाच्यांनी मोठा टंका बनवण्या पाणीद्वारे सप्तक मारत घोडे टंकांच्यांच्या कार्यक्रमांत ती तेंतीची ठिपा प्रस्तुत द्वारे पाणी अंतरंता पाणने आपणा घोड मोड नेण्यानेच पाणीच्याचे  

विधाने पाण वाहेंतत शीतल.

For water conservation we used drip irrigation and fountain methods to water the fields. For watering the sugarcane plantation, electric pumps were used all night. Sugarcane farming was stopped and farmers built huge water tanks and collected water. From those tanks the fields were watered using drip irrigation. Using less water more crops are grown.

(D) द्विश : तबे जवं भांव समतत पाणि झुं आशा रावरो छो?  

What is your expectation from the Water Conservation Committee?

(S) सोनीकबाई : जवं भांव समतत आमां शक्तिवृत रीते कम करती घर  

त्याचे घरची शृंगारात वृत्त मारत अधे भांवच्या समतत सते  

संधारणांसोबत झुं तो रोहण भांवत अधे विधाया करता झुं तो करून ते आमांनी अंतती  

पाणी मारे काळ धरण्यात पाणी ना. भृम्म टंका बनवण्या ठिकाणेचे  

कोई वाचते अन्यो धरण के जेणे ज्ञानानं आमां धरण तो जे भृम्म टंका भांवती
Since the time the Water Conservation Committee has been active in the village, we have been meeting. I have been associated with the Water Conservation Committee and we met everyday and discussed what could be done to get water in the village. In each house underground tanks should be made, and for those who did not have enough space to built an underground tank or did not have the money to build it, we should built check dams and repair the damaged check dams. They continued the work as per the expectations of the people.

Do you think the Water Conservation Committee has made an impact?

People have received great benefits due to the efforts of the Water Conservation Committee. In 2002 when the Water Conservation Committee was created in our village, the situation of our village was that we had only 1 well and it also had no water after 5 months. Now we have wells with water all around the year and we can grow 3 rounds of crops instead of 2. Now there is no shortage of water, and after the 3rd round of crops a round of groundnut can be grown which can be cultivated with the monsoon rain.

What would you do if you were in my position?
Is there anything else you would like to say?

(S) Sonik Dhundhiya: About my life, there was no water and people were in great trouble. Now we are very happy as far as water is concerned. We are associated with the Meghal Core Group and we have been given a responsibility to take the work ahead and we also should also try to solve problems in different areas, and develop the area to bring prosperity to the area. That is our intention.