

Exposure Visit of Farmers and Jal Samiti Members

As part of the HRIDAY (Holistic Rural Initiative for Development Action & Yield) project a two-day training and exposure visit for Wadi farmers, farmers groups, and members of Jal Samiti from Sonbhadra was conducted in December 2022. The project aims to empower communities by forming and strengthening independent groups, developing infrastructure, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities in the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. The visit was organised to provide the groups with exposure to the Drinking Water, Multi-Cropping, Wadi, and Watershed Management models that are developed by Development Alternatives and now being managed by communities in Madhya Pradesh.



Pictures of departure from kone block, Sonbhadra (L) and Orientation sessions at TARAgam Orchha Campus in Madhya Pradhes (R)

During this activity, 38 participants traveled from Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh to TARAgam Orchha, Madhya Pradesh. The agenda included training sessions by technical experts and field visits to see different community models developed by Development Alternatives with the support of community members and how the community takes care of them.

On the first day, a half-day training was organised at TARAgam Campus in Orchha. This included an overview of DA Group in Bundelkhand, orientation on HRIDAY project, and discussion on project themes, role of community members, concept of farmers interest group, and Jal Samiti. Then, participants along with the project team members visited water harvesting models (check dams), where rainwater is harvested and percolates into the ground. There farmers restrain, or check, the flow of rainwater from catchment basins. Furthermore, Jal Samiti members from Sonbhadra visited a locally owned and community operated (LOCO) model established for clean drinking water supply and interacted with the members of Jal Samiti in Niwari. The participants asked questions

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It was the first time I have travelled for any exposure trip; it was a good decision; I observed women confidently taking ownership in managing models such as LOCO models. I will share this with my group members (SHG).

Ms Radhika Devi, Dumar Village, Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh

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I am a member of Jal Samiti but was not fully aware of how a Jal Samiti should be functioning. This visit provided me with a lot of information. I was amazed to see how women are managing the whole process in the Jal Samiti in Orchha. Such models should be replicated in our villages, so that people visit our villages to see successful models, like we did during this activity.

Mr Damodar Rao, Doomar Village.

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to understand the functioning of the model and the role of community in making the model sustainable after its installation.



Group of farmers visited WADI models and interacted with farmers groups in Niwari District in Madhya Pradesh

On the second day, participants visited successful Wadis in Madore village. This allowed the farmers understand the successful models of multi-cropping. During interactions with Wadi farmers of Orchha, participants learned about plant care using various agricultural activities and challenges in nearby markets. Later, the participants were exposed to land conversion models, drainage water systems, a few other WADI models including farm bunding and cattle protection trench. Interaction with village institutions such as farmers' interest groups that manage community resource centers in villages was also done. Through discussions, farmers understood about book-keeping for agri-equipment. They also visited TARAGram Campus, where they were shown livelihood models such as a handmade paper unit, which is operated and managed by a community group, TARA Nirman Kendra, and a watershed model. In the evening, participants were taken to the Orchha Fort.

“ The whole trip from Sonbhadra to Orchha taught me the importance and power of being in groups. I was hesitant before coming here. Now, I want to participate in more such exposure visits if Development Alternatives is planning to organise in future. I learned that community models are successful when a group comes together to make it sustainable. Similarly, it is difficult for an organisation or individuals to build such models without the support of community groups. ”

Ms Rita, Kota village, Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh