

# 25 years with the Marginalised 1989-2014



## SCRIPTING HISTORY AT 3600 FEET above MSL

### Village profile

*Village Name* Tijmali  
*Households* 18  
*Gram Panchayat* Nakrundi  
*Block* Thuamul Rampur  
Dist: Kalahandi (Odisha)  
*Project completed in* August 2009



### Background

Suka Bewa, an 85 year-old lady, brightens up and she has plenty of reasons for this. At such a ripe old age she will no longer have to tread on an arduous path, moving down and climbing up 4 kilometers of hilly terrain to fetch water ... drinking water. She also rejoices in the fact that she can have a regular bath.



Situated at around 3600 feet (1142 metre) high from the sea level, on the top and plains of Tijmali Hills, the village Tijmali is a world apart. The shortest route to reach the village is by climbing up 3 kilometers from Amjhola Village. The very fact that neither an anganwadi worker nor indeed any health worker has visited the village demonstrates the apathy and neglect suffered by the 87 people of 18 families residing in the village.

It's all barren land on the top, as far as eye can see - there is no greenery on it - only challenges to offer. The villagers have to take up a Herculean task every time they want to buy basic things like oil, salt and rice. But the greatest of challenges was to arrange a 3/4 bucket full of drinking water a day to each family -the bare minimum requirement.

Family members used to head for the stream near Amjhola village before the crack of the dawn as they had to finish the daily chores before the heat of the day. They then had to climb back up hill with buckets of drinking water under the beating sun as it would be nearing noon. Old-aged people,

*They would offer you food whatever they have, but not water*  
ITDA Official

### Contact Address:

ANTODAYA, At: Bahadur Bagicha Pada, PO: Bhawanipatna – 766001 Kalahandi (Odisha)  
Phone No: +91-6670-232038 / 234012, e-mail: [chairman@antodaya.org.in](mailto:chairman@antodaya.org.in), [antodaya.thrampur@otelp.org](mailto:antodaya.thrampur@otelp.org)

women and children used to have a bath once in three days.



Collecting water before the OTELP/ANTODAYA intervention



Collecting water after

Be it timely or untimely, rain was a harbinger of happiness for the villagers as it creates temporary streams. The villagers banked on those for few months until they dried up and disappeared completely before summer every year.

In the year 1994 ANTODAYA, an NGO (presently a facilitating NGO of OTELP) started its intervention in the village. It mobilised the youth of the village and exploited a small stream by digging on its bank. It was named "*Phul Chuan*". However, it could only provide 30-40 buckets water a day. The families who could collect the limited water were happy but the rest continued to suffer. It was drop in the ocean - the problem was lessened but remained unsolved.

## The project

### *The survey*



ANTODAYA had approached several departments but in vain. In 2006, when ANTODAYA became an FNGO of OTELP, Tijmali village was included in the watershed of Amjhola. During the micro-level planning of the village it was decided that streams in the nearby hills would be surveyed and the most suitable one would be tapped. The plan was to bring drinking water to the village itself and for the villagers it was a light at the end of the tunnel. It was enough to excite them but they were still anxious.

In 2009, disregarding all the discomforts and disquiet, Sri Akhaya Kumar Sahoo, an OTELP engineer, accompanied by an engineer from ANTODAYA conducted a survey together with other members from ANTODAYA. After surveying various resources they focused on "*Sindhikhal Jharan Stream*" which was on the border of the Tijmali and the Upar Ampadar villages. An estimate of Rs445000 was made.

However, another problem arose. The villagers of Upar Ampadar were opposed to the plan and said they would never allow "their" stream to be tapped for the benefit of the Tijmali villagers. After three rounds of discussion the issue was amicably settled by the two villages.

### *The construction work*

Finally the construction work begun. Tractors proved ineffective - unable to move even half the materials required - so the villagers took on the burden themselves and carried the raw materials uphill. The task was exhausting but the enthusiasts continued and the villagers became engaged in the construction work under different components of the OTELP scheme.



Huge cement tanks (*called SPRING BOXES or Intake wells*) were made near the mouth of the stream which was designed to filter the water with sand, coal and chips used for the filtration. A second tank was also built a few meters away and was connected with the first tank - for the second time filtration. In the village itself, two Sintex tanks with a 1000 litre capacity were installed and a 2800 metre pipeline connected the Sintex tanks with the ones built further up the hill.

### **The outcomes**

Finally, after toiling hard for twenty two days, the water began to pour from the common stand posts connected to Sintex tanks and everyone rejoiced.

This project has not only provided drinking water to the villagers but also helped with the cultivation of a few patches of fertile land. It is envisaged that the project will meet the drinking water requirements of the villagers for the next 20 years. In addition, the villagers have taken initiatives to ensure sustainability of the “*Sindhikhal Jharan Stream*” by planting trees upstream of mouth.

We never thought of taps with drinking water in our village.  
Sani Majhi & Saru Majhi  
*Village youth*

The villagers are now feeling honoured particularly as they are not longer accused of being “water thieves”....

Following the success of this project, another 28 villages in the nearby area who suffer from similar water problems have also developed their water sources in a similar way. In these villages the incidence of water borne diseases reduced by 86% in these 6 years of intervention.

Now the departments of Government of Odisha have adopted such models in other parts of the district with many more positive results.

## Gravity fed Water supply system in some other villages of Thuamul Rampur Block

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|   |    |
| <b>Sorishbundel village</b>  | <b>Surplus water for Kitchen garden</b>  |
|    |  <p style="text-align: right;">19/01/2012</p>   |
| <b>Semikhali village stand post</b>  | <b>Turi-bhejiguda stand post</b>   |
|  <p style="text-align: right;">19/01/2012</p> |  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Drudgery of women reduced through Shramdan</i></p> |
| <b>Khandla village stand post</b>  | <b>Taragaon village where the system innovated</b>   |

