



Synchronizing the Dignity...

Bartunga is a village under Bacharai Grampanchayat of Marshagahi block in Kendrapara district of Odisha . Though it is an unknown village in that part of the district but for many reasons it attracts the attention of the rest of the population of the state. Especially in the month of rains it stands venerable in front of others.

The community of Bartunga, which has all total 130 households with 650 populations staying in five hamlets where in one of the hamlets named *Harijan Shai* consisting 11 SC families. Cultivation is the major source of income for the people living out there. Few have established their small businesses related to agriculture. Likewise a small number of people have started small betel shops; they sell fresh vegetables at the nearby weekly market places. Paddy and vegetable cultivation has been the dominating harvest among all.

But in an interesting statistics many people work at others field as daily labor or do share cropping for their daily livelihood. But the geography of that village has been a critical issue for the residents.

The village is situated at the bank of river Luna. Every year the flood has been destroying the dreams of the villagers in many aspects. Where a significant number of people depend upon crop growing or related businesses the whole cultivation is washed away this time which has bend down the financial backbone of that village.



This year heavy flood has also put his brutal hands on Bartunga as on today, it's been almost nine days they are surrounded by muddy flood water and cannot move out of their homes. As everything are kind of floating out there and many facing challenges in sanitation and hygienic practices. Among all, the pure drinking water is one of the major issues at this village but the tube well which was raised at Behera shai of Bartunga village in the year 2011 -12 by PECUC with the help of Save the Children and ECHO programme has became the only source to address the drinking water problem .

As we all know that the disease that has been generated by the muddy water is in hike during these subsequent downpour days. During previous years many affected in diseases like Diarrhea, Skin allergies and many other contagious sickness. A lot has to suffer in this flood as well. But the high raised tube well has played an unbelievable roll to reduce the contaminated diseases at this small population. Rest of the four tube wells is under water and the ponds are

contaminated with unsafe mud-spattered water. Now the whole population is depending upon this high raised tube well. There are several Children, New mothers and expected mothers were in sure danger for not getting pure water for drinking as well as sanitation purpose.

The tube well is near the dam and in the far corner of the village which serves almost 650 number of people out there. As the roads are witnessing a 5ft water log and it is difficult for anybody to walk in so they have formed banana stem boats (**locally called Vela**) to go to that place for drinking water.

It is proved that the practices of drinking water from unsafe sources like pond, well or river has been changed. Though the safe source of water is little far but they have developed the coping mechanisms in form of banana stem boats (Vela) which helps them to carry the water to their homes. No matter which hamlet they are from, all together they take water and goes in that same boat to their homes. In creating an inclusion process they maintain utmost harmony, dignity and humility during taking water from a single water source, though it was never been observed before.

Through drinking water from this tube well the villager are ensuring themselves in not suffering with the flood consequence disease. In previous years they used to drink the muddy water due to unavailability of any other alternatives.

Safala Mallick-Age-38 (Harijan Shai),Bartunga village expressed:

“My family depends upon one of the tube wells near to my home but it is fully drowned under water and there is no other source except the high raised tube well. We saved pure water in some of the pots but it was finished just after two days. My husband and me brought the fresh water from that tube well and now I m sure that my children are safe from accepting severe diseases.”

Satyabhama Behera-Age-65 (Beherashai) described

“I have seen the flood water creating breaches and breaking dams in our village since many years but this year it has broken our hopes indeed. Without water we use to drink contaminated water directly or sometimes we boil it but this year we were not given that force to drink from the flood. The Beherashai high raised tube well worked as life saver for the whole village.”

