



Safe Drinking Water

An alarming situation. #Actnow

A study on the status of safe drinking water in tribal areas of Odisha, conducted by Atmashakti Trust, Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM) and Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha, Odisha (MSMO)

Atmashakti
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NARRATIVES
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I. Background

Safe drinking water and sanitation access are internationally recognized human rights under Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. India has 18 percent of the world's population but only 4 percent of its water resources, making it among the most water-stressed in the world. According to a World Bank report, 163 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water, and 21% of communicable diseases are linked to unsafe water (1). Multiple factors could cause malnutrition among children, but access to safe drinking water is one of the key factors contributing to symptoms such as stunting and low-weight to age factors (2).

In this context, Atmashakti Trust in collaboration with Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM) and Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha, Odisha (MSMO), two state-level people's collectives of Odisha, conducted a study to assess the ground reality of coverage, availability, and quality of drinking water in the state with a view to highlight the issue and draw the government's attention on it for immediate redressal.

II. About Us

Founded in 1995, Atmashakti is a right-based catalyst organization that coalesces marginalized communities for socio-economic and political empowerment. Its work is spread across Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, covering over 12000 villages from underprivileged communities. Atmashakti currently serves over one million families and plans to reach eight million by expanding its work in these states to cover 10% of poor rural families in India.

OSM and MSMO are state-level people's collectives, working in 92 blocks of 16 districts in Odisha since 2009, with the broad objectives of creating awareness about constitutional rights and entitlements amongst the most marginalized rural communities with an emphasis on Tribals and Dalits.

III. Methodology

The study covered over 9856 villages under 866 GPs of 89 blocks in 15 districts (Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Gajapati, Boudh, Nabarangpur, and Deogarh) of Odisha.

The study was conducted between Jan 2023 to mid-February 2023 by more than 350 team members of the collectives. They collected primary data from these villages, which were subsequently harvested into google forms for collation, interpretation, and analysis. The sampling was done randomly among the villagers available for interviews through our self-administered questionnaire. To access the questionnaire, please use this link: <https://bit.ly/3mJVUQs>

IV. Key facts (Survey findings)

- Of 32960 nos of Tube wells/hand pumps, 12481 (40.93%) are not working.
- Of 12478 total stand posts, 6066 (48.6%) are not working.
- The study findings reveal that nearly 6675 (56.12%) villagers use contaminated water in their consumption.
- While 28.51% of villagers use muddy water, 29.55 % find iron in their drinking water.
- Of 937152 households, over 14947 (65845 people) are deprived of regular drinking water and fully dependent on streams, ponds, and chuans (excavated subterranean water).
- Overall, 368694 households lack safe drinking water, which is an alarmingly high 40.55% of the total population.

V. Action initiated

Before the report is published, the study findings have been submitted as a memorandum at the Gram Panchayat level, concerned authorities at the Block levels in the 3rd week of February, and with the District Collectors in the first week of March to accelerate efforts at the appropriate level.

1. The Water Crisis In India: Everything You Need To Know –A report published in the website of Stockholm International Water Institute (<https://siwi.org/latest/water-crisis-india-everything-need-know/>)
2. Lack of safe sanitation increases Stunting and Malnutrition among children– a report published in the News18 media (<https://www.news18.com/news/mission-paani/lack-of-safe-sanitation-increases-stunting-and-malnutrition-among-children-4853363.html>)