

A decade of impact in a diverse tribal landscape



Frank Water has been working alongside communities in the state of Chhattisgarh in India for the last decade, helping people living in the most vulnerable conditions to secure brighter futures.

**17,000 people
with safe water**

By working closely with local organisations, committees, and government bodies, Frank Water and our local delivery partner succeeded in improving health, hygiene, sanitation, access to clean water, and livelihood opportunities for over 17,000 tribal men and women, as well as for their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

This couldn't have happened without our incredible supporters. This report sets out some incredible achievements that we've made together.

To find out more about our work, visit www.frankwater.com or find us on social media.

You can get in touch with us at hello@frankwater.com

The difference safe water makes

In 2015, the United Nations stated that "achieving sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene is vital to achieving human health and well-being as well as contributing to livelihoods and education and thus, economic growth and productivity".

We measure Frank Water's impact in terms of improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene, in line with SDG6, but the communities we worked with in Chhattisgarh have told us that they are experiencing:

- less waterborne disease;
- better nutrition;
- increased agricultural productivity; and
- more dignity

as a result of working together. We are so pleased with the difference we've made.

This project was about helping people living in some of the most vulnerable circumstances in the world to fight for their rights. We're delighted to have made a positive impact in so many ways, for so many people.

Jon Shepherd, Head of Programmes

Unseen challenges in remote villages



Our work has taken place in the rural surroundings of Kawardha town, where 65% of the inhabitants are Baiga, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group and one of the most deprived communities in India.

Living in remote areas, Baiga people are excluded from access to natural resources, infrastructural entitlement and government services. Support from international NGOs is also often absent. Their villages are commonly located on hilltops, where women and girls are often forced to spend hours per day collecting water from sources that quickly dry up or don't hold sufficient quantities.



Common challenges encountered in the work included:

- **Water scarcity:** The region's geographical and geo-hydrological conditions result in high water runoff and poor land percolation capacity. This scarcity impacts drinking water availability, and the communities lacked the resources and knowledge to create safe and clean water sources.
- **Water contamination:** The use of chemicals in daily life and the erosion of natural resources contaminated vital water sources, posing significant health risks.
- **Climate change impact:** Frequent climatic shifts and deforestation forced migration, disrupting traditional livelihoods.
- **Agricultural challenges:** Farms had low productivity due to basic farming techniques and tools.
- **Low literacy rates:** Census 2011 reported 41% male and 36% female literacy rates.
- **Lack of awareness:** Tribal communities lacked citizenship awareness and missed out on essential rights and schemes.
- **Marginalisation and poverty:** Limited employment opportunities and gender discrimination perpetuated poverty, impacting health and mortality rates.

How we made an impact



Project activities were conducted in these areas:

- Safe drinking water through training on water quality testing, spring management, formalising groups of water volunteers and helping to create and implementing water security plans.
- Health, hygiene, and sanitation awareness activities, ranging from posters and murals to street performance.
- Helping communities to understand and access the government support and funding they are entitled to.
- Helping women to speak up for their rights, encouraging home-based micro enterprises and linking women's self-help groups to financial institutions.
- Preparing integrated water resource management plans that detail how to sustainably manage water, land and forests, and working alongside village representatives to get implementation approved by local government.
- Mobilising infrastructure development schemes so that villagers can access safe water close to their homes.
- Strengthening Gram Panchayat level statutory bodies for effective governance and development of future water plans.

Here are some of the key highlights of our activities:



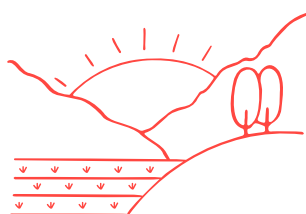
1,152 women, girls, men and boys participated in menstrual hygiene management workshops

1,323 new toilets were constructed



311 village water ambassadors were trained

3,116 people were helped to access their government entitlements, including funding to build toilets and install taps



63 villages now have water security, for the long term

21 Gram Panchayats were strengthened for effective water governance



Thanks to these incredible efforts, 17,000 people who were once deprived of a sip of water now have access to a consistent stream.

Stories from Chhattisgarh



A village revived

Amledi is a tiny village of only 17 households. The village came into existence in 2005, when deforestation and climate change forced families to move downhill.

People in Amledi mainly rely on farming for their living, raising cows and bullocks and growing crops like rice, maize, mustard and red gram. The land and soil here are not ideal for farming, and with water being scarce, crop productivity was low. Some villagers needed to migrate seasonally to find work in sugarcane fields.

We started working alongside the community in 2014. With help, the villagers now have several water sources: ponds for farming, wells for drinking water, and check dams to conserve water. Now, they have enough water in the village, so they don't have to leave anymore. This has made a drastic improvement to their lives. The women in the village are using the time they saved to work on their farms, take care of their animals, and look after their children.



Project participant Jaleshwari Yadav told our team:

"We used to spend almost half of every day walking more than one kilometre to to fetch drinking water and three kilometres to the river to bathe and wash clothes. Now we have no worries, all the water we need is right here".

Two remarkable Mitanins

Meaning "female friend" in local dialect, female health volunteers working at village level are the key component of the primary health care system for communities we work with.

In the course of this project, we worked alongside two amazing Mitanins, Ms. Jayan Madavi and Ms. Rakhi Tekam. Following our training, these women (and the other 169 Mitanins trained) have been able to educate their communities on the importance of good hygiene to prevent the spread of disease. They have led menstrual hygiene management workshops that dispel superstitions and myths about periods, and help girls and women learn to make reusable period products. They have also helped change behaviours around open defecation, keeping drinking water sources safe from waterborne disease.



Changing traditional sanitation behaviours to protect against disease

Ramabai lives in a small village and is part of the indigenous Baiga community in central India. She lives a traditional life, but was keen to change the traditional custom of open defecation, which has roots in poverty, culture and exclusion.

When we met Ramabai, she told us she wanted a toilet in the house as she was tired of walking long distances and was scared of snake bites. We helped her family (and many others) build a toilet to reduce the risks of diseases and maintain dignity.



Learning how to engage with government to access support

Devan Patpar is a village of 550 people, mainly from the Baiga tribal community. Families tried to generate income with farming, collecting forest produce, and manual labour, but land rights issues and lack of water made life tough.

With clean water, sanitation, hygiene and clearer understanding of where they could farm, the villagers have seen a drastic improvement in their lives and their livelihoods. Our delivery partner also built a childcare centre and a primary school for the village. With land rights secured and an understanding of their entitlements, some families have been able to build houses under a government housing scheme.

Our delivery partner in this work has been Samerth Charitable Trust, a registered non-governmental organisation that has been unwavering in its commitment to address critical developmental issues faced by marginalised communities. We owe them enormous thanks for the dedication they have shown in this work.