

## Water for Life... A VDMC's Story



Access to drinking water in barren land in District Tharparkar has never been trouble-free. People here depend on natural water ponds, made of rainwater, and water wells for consuming water for themselves, their ruminants and other animals. Unfortunately most of water wells contain salty water that potentially poses threats to health. Women particularly suffer from water scarcity as they have to travel miles to fetch water for their families.

Soomri is one such woman who lives in Revenue Village Nohto, a village suffering from water paucity since ages. Soomri is however a member of Village Disaster Management Committee. She was committed change the situation. People in her community are poor and depend on cattle shepherding, odd jobs and arid agriculture for living. Soomri recalled that the villagers had once dug a well on their own. The water was bitter in taste but saved villagers from daily traveling to fetch water from remotely located water well. Unfortunately recent rains destroyed the well, their only source of water. The villagers tried to rebuild it, but it demanded repeated maintenance. "This satiation worsens our miseries as we live in the worst drought affected area," Soomri laments.

Just when we were feeling dejected, owing to many a reason including lack of resources, skills and government's patronage, Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) team members visited our village and shared the details of RSPN-Tahafuz project, shares Soomri. We decided to utilise our own potentials and joined Village Disaster Management Committee. Later, a training was conducted on Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment which enabled us to do risk management planning using various tools including Hazard Map, Seasonal & Historical Calendar and Resource Map at revenue village. During risk assessment, the TRDP team motivated us all VDMC members agreed to repair the dilapidated water well. The rehabilitation work also provided employment opportunity to the villagers particularly women. Therefore the well was repaired using quality bricks and cement to fortify the walls and enhance resilience against rains and floods.

Soomri praised the support of USAID/OFDA and RSPN for rehabilitation of the water well. Rehabilitation of water well is a great relief for villagers particularly women who had to cover a long distance to get water from other villages. Idrees, another resident of Nohto, said they previously had to take their animals to other here and there for water. But after repairing of water well, they were now able to obtain water for their livestock in their own village.