



IMPACT STORY

CHANGING LIVES: COMMUNITY WATERCOURSE FOR FARMERS' PROSPERITY

It is an established fact that colossal loss (more than 40 %) of irrigation water takes place in century old watercourses due to poor maintenance and aging which results in severe shortage of irrigation water at the farm level particularly in tail reaches that is compelling the farmers to use groundwater for irrigation



purpose. As a matter of fact, the groundwater is not fit for irrigating crops in most areas of the province including Faisalabad district and causing degradation of productive/ fertile soils.

Such a century old watercourse was providing water for irrigation to the farmers of Chak No. 19/JB, tehsil Jhumra, district Faisalabad having command area of about 400 acres. The shareholders of the watercourse were facing the problem of huge water loss due to seepage, side leakage and spillage since long and experiencing acute water shortage at their farms as they were unable to use groundwater due to unfit for irrigation. The problem was aggravated due to elevated position of the watercourse requiring intensive monitoring of water flow with higher labor cost for irrigation. The farmers learnt about government facility for watercourse improvement and approached OFWM staff for rescue. The OFWM staff suggested the farmers to construct an elevated (8-12 feet high) watercourse for smooth flow of water to



all the fields in entire command. All the shareholders agreed to contribute all the expenses in the form of skilled/unskilled labor other than the cost of construction materials being provided by the Punjab government.

The shareholder of the watercourse and lumberdar of the village, Mr. Niaz Ahmed shared the benefits of improved watercourse as **“before the improvement of watercourse, only two (2) acres out of twenty five (25) acres used to irrigate but now eight (8) to twelve (12) acres can be irrigated easily with same quantity of water”**. He added that **“conflicts/disputes have also been reduced significantly. Major conflicts among the farmers were due to overtopping and side leakage of the water which used to damage the crops of other farmers having lands along the watercourse”**.

Mr. Niaz Ahmed shared excitedly that **“majority of the farmers of this village used to supplement the canal supply with groundwater and they had to spend a lot of money to pump the inferior quality groundwater with tubewells which was also deteriorating the health of their soils. Now more than 70 % of tubewell expenses have almost been finished/reduced”**.

Chak No. 19/JB, Tehsil Jhumra, District Faisalabad



He also shared that about 30 shareholders of the watercourse contributed for skilled and unskilled labor for improvement works as well as collected Rs. 2,20,0000 for back earth filling of structures and lined sections to maintain 8-12 feet high sides for total length of 7,392 meters of the watercourse.

Another beneficiary, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa, Farm Manager at Sandhu Zarai Model Farm told that **“elevated improved watercourse enabled us to irrigate about 50 % more land with same quantity of water. It also helped us to save labor expenses as 10-15 workers were required for irrigation before improvement of watercourse. Now one worker is enough for the purpose”**. He further shared that **“another major benefit is to have better crops with canal water as groundwater is not fit for the crop cultivation resulting in lower yields”**.