

Durga and Vasini, India

↓ Durga with his tools

Durga and Vasini live in Seetanagaram village in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

Durga is from the dalit caste. The caste system is still a big part of life in India. Hindus are born into one of four castes: Brahmin (priests), Kshatriya (warriors), Vaishya (merchants) and Shudra (peasants). Beneath these are the dalits who used to be called the untouchables. They still carry out some of the most poorly paid and menial tasks and make up a large proportion of the country's poor.

When WaterAid works with communities everyone is included and involved. Local villagers such as Durga and Vasini get training to maintain and manage new projects to ensure they last into the future.

Durga talks about his work as the handpump mechanic and Vasini describes her work as a hygiene educator. >>



Q&A

Hello Durga and Vasini. Durga, what is your job in the village?

“After learning mechanical skills I started talking to the upper-caste villagers. When they installed a borewell I offered to help them. Some of them didn't want me to touch the well. But in the end they agreed.”

What was life like before you had the handpump?

“Before we had the pump we used to get frequent diarrhoea. Sometimes we threw up. The water also gave us rheumatic pains in our legs. I used to feel very inferior. I was afraid.”

Vasini, what do you do in the village?

“I use wall paintings, wallcharts, flipcharts and household visits to promote:

- 1. Safe water handling**
Water should be stored off the floor, in a covered vessel and ladles should be used to transfer water from the vessel to cups.
- 2. Good hygiene**
Houses should be kept clean.
- 3. Personal hygiene**
People should wash regularly and cut their nails.
- 4. Latrine usage**
Latrines should always be used and kept clean. People should not go barefoot into the latrine.
- 5. Wastewater management**
Soakpits and kitchen gardens are promoted.
- 6. Solid waste management**
Rubbish bins and compost heaps have been set up.”



↑ Vasini using her wall paintings.



↑ Vasini talking to other locals.

This diagram shows a cross section of a handpump. →

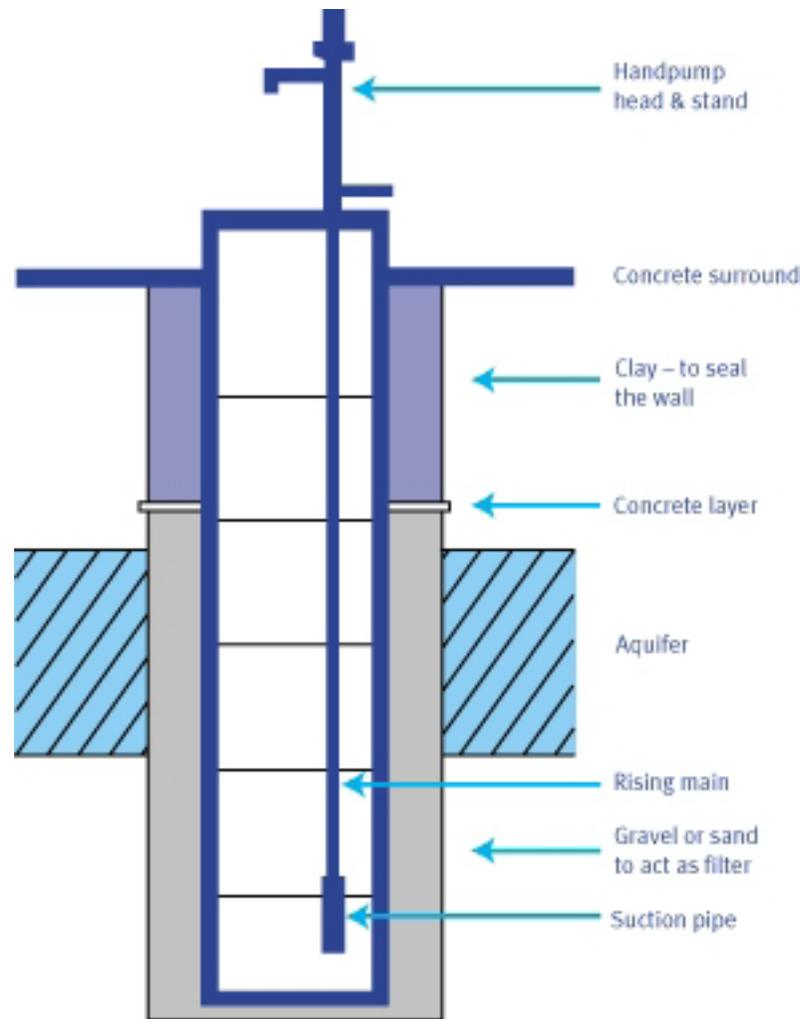
The community helps to dig the well deep enough so that water is always available. This means that they can always collect safe, clean water – even in the dry months of the year.



↑ Durga operating the handpump.



↑ The local community now has clean and safe water.



India

Population: 1.08 billion
Infant mortality: 87/1000*
Life expectancy: 63.6 years
Water supply coverage: 86%
Sanitation coverage: 33%
Below poverty line: 28.6%
Adult literacy: 61%

*For every 1000 children, 87 die before their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable diseases like diarrhoea.