

Water Deficit Banda Shows the Way Through Kuan Talab Jiao Abhiyan

The coordinated efforts of the local community and district administration have transformed the water-scarce village Jakhni of Banda district in Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh into a water-abundant village.

Not only is water available round-the-year in the village, the groundwater levels have increased so much that hardly any deep excavation is required to get water. It is the resolve of the village residents to not let the water levels drop that makes the case study of Banda district a success story of sustainable water management. About three ago, village Jakhni was declared as a *Jal Gram* given abundant water availability, recharged wells and ponds etc.

The role of the district administration has been particularly inspiring in Banda district. At the helm of this success is District Magistrate Hira Lal, who left no stone unturned to make villages in his jurisdiction self-reliant. “There was acute water shortage in this village, in view of which we started Kuan Talab Jiao Abhiyan in the *Janpad*. We aimed at focusing the attention to revival of traditional water bodies. I think with the advent of tap water, we have disconnected ourselves from the traditional water bodies and techniques to recharge them. With this Abhiyan, we tried to develop that connect again and the results are positive.”

The locals also take pride in identifying with the village which is water abundant in the region that faces acute water crises every year. Uma Shankar Pandey, a member of the Sarvodaya Adarsh Gram Samiti, an organization formed to deal with the water crises in the village said: “We started as a group of about 20-25 adults and we made water harvesting structures in the village and carried out an Afforestation drive in the village. The results are in front of all of us. Today, I have 6 ponds in my village which are interconnected and there is water available at all times of the year. We also ensure that not a drop of water is wasted.”

Ashok Kumar Awasthi, another local resident said: “We support each other in this endeavor and have vowed that we will not let water levels go down at any cost.” Indeed, Banda district embodies all the principles of effective water management through community participation, which is the need-of-the-hour. #janshakti4jalshakti