

Case Study 2017-18

Women of Hebatpur Mahila Mandal Drive Organic Farming through Amrut Paani Production

The Bhal region in Gujarat is a drought-prone area characterized by acute water scarcity. Agriculture here has always been a challenge, and over time, farmers have adapted by using low-water farming methods. While many practiced forms of natural or traditional farming, there was a lack of awareness about scientifically validated organic farming practices.



Recognizing this gap, Mahiti Trust initiated a grassroots intervention in 2014 by reaching out to interested farmers in Hebatpur village, Dholera Taluka. The Trust organized a comprehensive training workshop to introduce the principles and techniques of organic farming. The workshop focused on sustainable agricultural inputs, especially the preparation and use of Amrut Paani, a traditional bio-fertilizer known for enhancing soil health and crop yield. The demonstration drew wide participation from both men and women farmers.

From Demonstration to Collective Action

During one of Mahiti Trust's community engagement visits, the organization's facilitator interacted with a group of five women from the Hebatpur Mahila Mandal. These women expressed their willingness to support organic input production and agreed to collectively prepare Amrut Paani. With encouragement from the facilitator, they mapped out responsibilities based on each one's capacity:

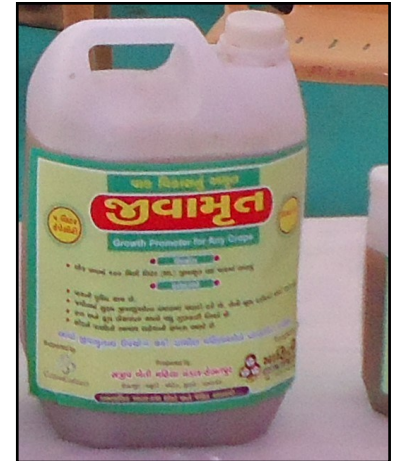


- One woman offered the space in her wada (courtyard) for production.
- Another arranged to collect cow urine, while one brought cow dung.
- Others contributed jaggery, chickpea flour, and helped construct a makeshift shed.
- Mahiti Trust supported them by providing essential tools and materials like clay pots, plastic drums, and a canopy (mandap) for shade.

On the designated day, the women assembled the ingredients and followed the organic recipe meticulously:

- 5 kg cow dung
- 10 Liters cow urine
- 1 kg ghee
- 1 kg jaggery
- 500 grams chickpea flour

They stirred the mixture and produced 200 litres of Amrut Paani, initially distributing it free of cost to nearby farmers. The results were highly encouraging—cotton crops treated with Amrut Paani showed better growth, deeper green foliage, and improved yields.



From Philanthropy to Enterprise

Encouraged by the positive impact, the women realized the growing demand for Amrut Paani and decided to transition from free distribution to a micro-enterprise model. In 2015, they began selling it at a modest price. Initially, pricing and record-keeping posed challenges, but with the guidance of Mahiti Trust, they adopted a structured approach:

- One litter of Amrut Paani was priced at ₹50, based on production costs.
- A register was introduced for sales and inventory tracking.
- Roles were clearly divided, and one-litter measures were used for consistency.

Despite initial hurdles, these five women persevered and gradually established a sustainable enterprise. Today, they collectively produce and sell up to 600 litres of Amrut Paani each farming season. They manage the entire cycle—from procurement and production to packaging and distribution.



Empowerment Beyond Economics

This initiative has not only generated income for the women but also elevated their status in the household and community. Tasks once considered beyond their capability are now part of their daily routine. They no longer need to seek daily wage labor in nearby towns, and instead, work from within their village while balancing domestic responsibilities. Their families, once sceptical, now extend full support and appreciation. The women report a renewed sense of dignity, pride, and purpose, and their story stands as a powerful example of women-led climate-resilient agriculture and rural entrepreneurship.