

*Madhya Pradesh*  
September 11–18, 2003

# PAANI YATRA

## The yatris

Sheikh Moharram  
Jai Bhavsar

NS Murlidhar  
M Govindan  
KP Krishnamurthy

Rajan Sharma  
Samapta Sen  
Manish Kumar  
Basudev Mahto  
Rewalal Mahto  
Manoj Thakur  
Paran Maho  
Bharat Mahto  
Raju Bhuinya  
Chatthar  
Basudev

Ms Bobby SM  
A Arulnathan  
Jijimohan PM  
Dilip Kumar PT



## Pages from a journal

**September 12:** A group of 20 people from various backgrounds and from all over India collect at the Gujarat –Madhya Pradesh (MP) border at 6 AM. The one thing that binds them together is their interest in water management by local communities.

The Paani Yatra starts in Kalakoonth village of Jhabua district, MP, as villagers escort yatris to the banks of their *talaab* to show a chalk-marked map depicting the village's growth after the community started water management with the help of an NGO, Action for Social Advancement (ASA).

**September 13:** At the end of the yatra in Jhabua, a *jal pujan* (water ritual) was organised in honour of the yatris by ASA in Ratmaliya village. Later in the day, the yatris head off to Dhar.

**September 14:** Dhar District Collector Sanjay Dubey recounts the various watershed management activities in his district. A visit to the splendid Mandu Fort, with its sophisticated rainwater harvesting system, proves to be the highlight of the trip.

**September 15:** Yatris reach Ujjain district. Perched precariously on a tractor, they visit percolation ponds in Baloda Lakkha village. The village has a woman sarpanch, who seemed to be just a figure-head in a socially and politically divided community.

**September 16:** In Dewas district, yatris meet members of the Samaj Pragati Sahayog, an NGO assisting in watershed development by village communities.

**September 17:** In Khandwa, some visit an all women-led watershed area in a Korku tribal village, while others visit Torni village, which has seen a dramatic transformation since it started watershed management.

**September 18:** Return to Delhi, fascinated by the experience and humbled by the innovations.

