

## Special Central Assistance: Transforming Lives and Livelihoods in Hazaribagh District, Jharkhand<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Special Central Assistance (SCA) scheme was conceptualized keeping in mind the need to bridge gaps in public infrastructure and services in districts highly affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Many of these regions lack basic infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, electricity, fair price shops and banks, the scarcity of which fosters resentment towards the government which may take the form of violent extremism. The main objective of the programme in Hazaribagh is to give a thrust to the development programmes for scheduled castes with reference to their occupational pattern and the need for increasing the productivity of and income from their limited resources.

### Intervention

Two of the most successful projects initiated in Hazaribagh under the scheme to ensure the continuity of rural livelihood were creation of a check dam in Chouparan and renovation of a stream in Batuka village.

1. Check dam on Sahlatwa River, Chouparan: Scarcity of rainfall severely affects agricultural practice and, hence, the lives of farmers in Chouparan. To address these challenges and to prevent the depletion of groundwater, a check dam was created on the Sahlatwa river in Nawadih village. This village lies in a non-perennial topography with large seasonal variations in groundwater discharge.
2. Renovation of Batuka Stream Aahar<sup>2</sup>, Batuka Village: The farmers in the LWE and mining affected village rely on Batuka stream and surface water resources for irrigation purposes. There exists scarcity of ground water in the region which makes the alternative water sources even more important. Hence, the renovation of the pond was considered an important measure for the development of the farmers within the block. This initiative also led to the usage of the aahar as a reservoir for the water stream descending from the hills.

### Impact

The check dam in Chouparan has enabled farmers in the region to continue the cultivation of paddy and wheat. The command area achieved through the dam is 30 hectares in the Kharif season and 10 hectares in the Rabi season. The dam has a capacity of 2,50,00,000 litres and the water is used for irrigation and domestic purposes. The dam is also expected to have a positive effect on the recharge of groundwater.

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<sup>1</sup> MHA, LWE Division, (2020)

<sup>2</sup> *Ahar* system is made of various channels and retention ponds used to manage water resources. These channels are traditionally established by individual farmers, who often own different parts of the channel. These are long enough to supply water multiple number of villages.

Renovation of the Batuka stream helped in restoring the optimal water storage capacity of the aahar and made provisions for irrigation. The design features a check dam cum escape structure, along with a 300 feet long irrigation channel which follows it. The dam and the aahar have also been desilted to increase the water storage capacity.

***Figure 4: Creation of check dam and revamp of stream in Hazaribagh district***



Source: LWE Division, MHA