



Vocational Training Program in Safe Water Enterprises: Empowering Women and Youth for Sustainable Development

"I recently participated in two training sessions on water quality testing, learning about various water sources, contaminants, and the 13 parameters for testing water, and their corresponding methods and health impacts.

We can improve our whole community's health by understanding what's in our water!".

I am eager to share this knowledge with my fellow villagers, particularly housewives responsible for cooking and drinking water. Educating them about water quality can significantly improve our community's health and well-being," said Gnaneshwari, a 34-year-old Self Help Group (SHG) member from Nakkalagutta Village in Warangal District, Telangana.

Safe Water Network India (SWNI) with support from the India Water Partnership (IWP) under GWP-South Asia three-year program (2023-2025) conducted two phases of training in 2023 on water systems and quality testing in Warangal district, Telangana State. Four master trainers having in-depth knowledge of the water systems trained 26 women and youth on water quality testing, plumbing, fixing leaks, fitting, water conservation, and entrepreneurship in Safe Water Enterprises. Additionally, 5 women from this group were further trained to become technicians for testing water quality in 50 villages of 5 districts of Telangana State in 2024. SWNI will continue two phases of training each in the years 2024 and 2025. The program is designed to empower women and youth by building their skills enabling them to pursue livelihood opportunities in operating and maintaining water supply systems. The education provided extended beyond testing to include essential water safety and water conservation techniques.

India is making strides to improve water access and quality! Initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission-Rural and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation AMRUT 2.0 are a great start. Involving women and youth is the major key step. They play a crucial role in managing household water and can be powerful agents for change. Equipping them with sustainable water management practices, testing skills, and infrastructure operations knowledge can significantly improve water quality and reduce waterborne diseases.

Despite improvements in drinking water access, most water sources are contaminated with bio and chemical pollutants, and over 21% of the country's diseases are water-related. India ranks 120th out of 122 countries on the Global Water Quality Index. In 2021, the cases of **Acute Diarrheal Disease in the state of Telangana** were recorded at 73,306, which is considerably high.

The training program in Warangal district, Telangana State conducted by SWNI & IWP involving women and youth in water management ensures a future generation equipped to address water challenges. Link for a video on training is: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BIQfo-uCcgE7qmSXdh4rdkY3aDHOBXj4/view?usp=drive_link

The program helped to achieve the following:

- 26 women and youth trained to acquire basic skills like water quality testing, plumbing, water conservation, fitting, and entrepreneurship in Safe Water Enterprises.
- 4 master trainers/industry experts engaged in imparting knowledge.
- 5 women further trained as "Trained Technicians" and awarded Technical Trainer certificates.

The program's success is attributed to close monitoring of activities within specified timelines. Dr. Veena Khanduri, Executive Secretary-cum-Country Coordinator, IWP undertaken a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) visit to the training venue in Warangal district, Telangana State on September 26, 2023. She provided valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement, for example providing tool kits to master trainers and periodic water quality training and sharing of results with block & district level officials for remedial actions.

The trained participants in O&M will assist in the upkeep of household water supply systems and improve water quality; thus, improving public health. The project will help build the skill set to create new water entrepreneurs supporting them to earn livelihoods.

In 2024, the achievements are about to intensify. The trained women are testing drinking water quality (Pre & Post monsoon) in 50 underserved villages in 5 districts of Telangana State. This initiative aims to benefit over 1.5 lakh people of target villages by identifying water quality issues for remedial action.

"This is not just about learning, it is about empowering women and youth!" says the organizers behind the program. We are training women and youth to be water technicians, so they can manage their own water supply systems and keep their communities healthy.



Practical training on Water Quality testing using FTK



Training program in safe water enterprises for grassroots youth and women in Telangana

The program's outcomes contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 6.1 (achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

For more information, please see the link: <https://tinyurl.com/knnkfw8x>