

## Water supply assured, village folk send their girls to school



**WAT-ER RELIEF!**

By Radha Sharma/TNN

**Ahmedabad:** Sharda, 12, is going to school after a long time. What's more, she is one of the **girls who** is part of the sudden jump in the number of students going to primary school in the drought-prone Surendranagar district.

In fact, after many years, the primary school in Moti Morsal in Sayla taluka of Surendranagar has shown an attendance jump from a dismal 30-40 students to a 100 children — 50% of whom are girls.

The turning point for the students and school is not an aggressive education drive, but the fact that there is drinking water in the homes of almost each of the 130-odd families residing in Moti Morsal. This is a luxury, considering that acute water scarcity stares in the face of around 300 villages in Surendranagar currently.

Villagers say earlier girls were forced to stay home to either help collect water from distant sources. But with over 90% residents opting to adopt the rain-water harvesting programme over the past few years, underground water tanks have filled up reassuringly with potable water, prompting parents to pack schoolbags and send their girls back to classrooms.

"I and my daughter used to trek 2-3 km everyday to fetch water to drink and cook. Water is the most pressing problem in our district and almost all parents wouldn't send girls to schools and take their help in stocking water instead. Now, my heart swells with pride when Sharda goes to school," said the 12-year-old's mother Lakhuben Vasrambhal.