All is well if you have water wealth

OLD IS GOLD Ancient bawris and kuan of Bundelkhand reveal fascinating ingenuity

Pankaj Jaiswal

Banda: The entire Bundelkhand region is dotted with walls, both for drinking and irrigation purposes. These too are a legacy of the past and seem to suggest that all is well if you have water wealth.

While the rulers built dams and ponds in parched Bundelkhand in the summer, the local folk used dug wells.

There were two kinds of walls across the region — bawris and kuan. As for the kuan, there were two categories — pumps and kuan.

"The kuan are conventional walls. The pumps were those that had a solid inner wall to the well shaft. The kauddha wall is just a dug-up well without any plaster and inner walls. Praveen Kaul, the water has to be pulled out with a rope bucket. But bawris are step-wells. One can just walk down the steps and lift water," said Mansi Praveen.

Sawla is a village that has engaged itself in identifying the Chandelas' wells in Mahoba. Supa village has a jacket, which is famous as Supa Ki Bawri. It is the biggest of all step-wells in the region and has been recently renovated. Its size and concentric steps are reminiscent of Supa. However, the unique spell binds everyone who visits the first time. It has 178 steps in three concentric circles.

A traditional Chandelas Jain.

Supa Ki Bawri is said to be the largest in the district. It has 178 steps and has a natural concentration of water. The community has identified the water bodies that used to be there in the past. "The water bodies were all natural," said Supa Ki Bawri.

This ancient step-well was built by Supa Ki Bawri. It has 178 steps in three concentric circles leading up to the water. While most of the similar bawris are dilapidated and retain their original form, this one has been renovated with cement plaster.

The step-well quickly dries out. In tough depressions, ground water gets recharged from the higher places or skys. This is the reason that even now most of them have water," said Prof Ram Chandras, a geologist.

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"This is the reason that even now most of them have water," said Prof Ram Chandras. He said government agencies or people should apply this site selection logic even today. A majority of bawris and kuan pump or tubewells go dry within a year or two because they are not installed in places where ground water recharge is regular.

But Supa Ki Bawri..."