

2.4.2 Phase II

The field staff was divided into four groups with each group having one medical officer, one mapper, one monitoring officer and one field coordinator. Each group was divided into four teams. Each team had two water testers, three health workers and one supervisor. The field staff also included one dermatologist and one field coordinator. There was one coordinator in charge of overall supervision.

2.4 Training

To ensure quality data, a manual was developed for the field work. Data collectors received clear explanation of the purpose and procedure of the study. Instruction sheets were given to field workers for ready reference. Field workers were extensively trained on how to collect required information. Actual arsenic patients were shown to field workers to familiarize them in identifying patients.

2.5 Data Collection

A pre-tested checklist consisting of various epidemiological and nutritional status indicators and water usage pattern questions was used to collect data. E. Merck (Germany) field test kits were used for water testing. Ten percent (10%) of the samples were cross-checked by DPHE Zonal Laboratories.

Three groups of field staff worked in each village. The groups were :

- Initial screening group: They updated existing health maps, carried out door-to-door survey, identified arsenicosis patients, and conducted community meetings to discuss possible alternative options for arsenic-free water.
- Water quality testing group: They tested all tubewells in each village for arsenic by field test kits, marked tubewells red (concentration of arsenic >0.05 mg/L) or green, updated maps, collected water sample for cross-checking by laboratories.
- Health group: They conducted mobile health camps, confirmed cases of arsenicosis suspected by the Screening Group and provided advice to the affected people.

2.5 Time

The first phase of the survey (200 villages) began in December 1997 and continued till the end of April 1998. The second phase (300 villages) was conducted in two parts. The first part began in May 1999 and ended in early July 1999. The survey was restarted after the rainy season in October 1999 and ended in December 1999.