

■ In highly affected villages where most tubewells are found contaminated, it absurd to ask villagers to discontinue using their tubewells without providing any alternative. It is important that the field team leaves a hierarchical message with the villagers beginning with what can be immediately done and progressing to more elaborate measures that can be installed later. The immediate solution may be sharing of safe tubewells. If that is not possible, perhaps homemade pitcher filters may be used to remove arsenic. It is possible to harvest rainwater during the monsoon season. Pond sand filters or dug wells could also be used. More expensive and sophisticated systems are also available. The field teams must explain these options to the villagers. In absence of such discussion, people may simply continue to drink from their tubewells irrespective of the fact that they are contaminated.

5.5 Alternative water sources

■ Before departing from a village, the field team should discuss the findings of their survey with the villagers. They must caution the people not to drink from the red marked tubewells and explain the hazard of doing so. They must also request people to share the green marked (safe) tubewells with their neighbors. The patients identified must not be socially ostracized, but be treated with compassion and understanding.

5.4 Building awareness

■ Collection of nail and hair sample is met with suspicion as village superstition associates black magic with such activity. It is essential that local people are given orientation regarding the purpose of sample collection.

must have female members to have easy access to households and screen women for signs of arsenicosis.