

focus of the main objectives of the network. PRAVAH has maintained a dialogue with the GWSSB and along with a few reputable NGOs, has slowly begun to alter regional drinking water policies. However, it still has to bring rural women into the forefront of the decision-making process. Efforts have been made by the new coordinator and the trustees to increase participation within the network. The high level of self-awareness among trustees has also helped to create a platform to improve PRAVAH's relationship between the state and its people.

Despite these concerns, PRAVAH has legitimised the drinking water crisis in the eyes of the public. One of its most significant strengths thus far has been its efforts to develop a positive, open relationship with the state. Specifically, it has opened up a dialogue with the GWSSB and through this process has influenced government policies.

## CONCLUSION

### Civil society and the state

It is argued here that NGOs, as significant actors within civil society, do make the state more accountable through direct confrontation but can also do so through co-operative means. In other words, alongside this element of opposition, co-operative measures between the state and civil society do exist and these supportive measures can lead to a more vibrant democracy. This is the case with PRAVAH. While PRAVAH cannot be considered to be inherently confrontational to the GWSSB it does oppose the GWSSB in some sense. In other words, although PRAVAH and the GWSSB objectives are similar, PRAVAH still takes issue with some of the GWSSB's top-down, inefficient methodologies. In this case a certain amount of opposition does exist from PRAVAH's perspective. However, PRAVAH realises that without the GWSSB and its resources, adequate solutions will not be found. To do this, PRAVAH is working with the state in a co-operative manner in order to hear the voices of the people most affected by the lack of drinking water. In other words, PRAVAH, by working with the GWSSB, is attempting to deepen the democratisation process by expressing the views that usually go unheard, those of the rural women in Gujarat.

It can also be said that collaborative efforts between state and civil society may provide for more effective levels of democratic governance. For instance, PRAVAH and several other credible NGOs, through working with the GWSSB, convinced government officials to allot a significant amount of financial resources to various alternative technologies – roof water housing structures, step wells and recharging activities which were previously implemented solely through NGOs. In this regard, a government resolution was passed to allocate a significantly larger amount of money to these alternative strategies thereby altering current policies significantly. In the last three years, NGOs have been allotted an increasing amount of monetary resources for alternative water technologies. The amount allocated went from 25 Lakhs to 25 Crores<sup>2</sup> over three year.

---

<sup>2</sup> One lakh equals 1 00 000 Rs-/ which equals 3703.70 CAD; one crore equals to 10 000 000 Rs-/ which equals 370 370.37 CAD.