

Maharashtra Drought – Free Movement 2017

A Fortnightly Bulletin
(1May – 15May)



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Preface

I am indeed happy to present this second last fortnightly bulletin. Up went the graph of number of villages where we were to deploy machines but more surprisingly the demand for machine work and requests to support increased from all corners. From 165 machines in 165 villages on 1st May, we deployed 361 machines in 325 villages by 15th of May.

For machine availability where the problem was exceptionally critical, I had started personally visiting taluka places and meeting government stakeholder, village surpanch and BJS teams in last fortnight itself. I continued my tour for this purpose in Marathwada on 4th May and discussed the problem for 6 talukas.

The major finding this time was more demand for machines for which BJS had to change its policy of providing poklen for 100 hours and JCB for 250 hours. BJS decided to provide multiple machines if required with extended hours till 22nd May midnight.

In this fortnight, very specific requests for diesel support were also received for villages in rural most areas with meagre means. Not supporting them would have left them behind in this quest for water sustainability. BJS took decision to provide machines to these villages with diesel support.

Yet another emotional message was given by BJS tribal students and their families from Melghat area while participating in Mahashramdaan event of this fortnight on 7th May 2017 in Sadrbadi village.

This bulleting presents you the glimpses of all these happenings with details of machine deployment during the fortnight.

My whole hearted thanks to well wishers and patrons who contributed to this noble cause. Now, is the last fortnight and a huge resourceful and innovative project of this scale will be over soon. Look forward to the month end bulletin for the project closure details when we all together will pray for the monsoon to support this cause so that we can see the results of our work.

-Shantilal Muttha

Founder, BJS



Continued Problem Solving for Machine Availability and Catering to Demand for More Machines

Since 29th April Sh. Shantilal Muttha initiated meetings in Vidarbha and Marathwada where the problem of machine availability was relatively far more critical. After completion of review visits and meetings in Vidarbha, he conducted meetings for talukas in Beed and Osmanabad district in Marathwada.

4-05-2017	9:30 AM	Kaij, Dharur, Ambejogai - Beed	Panchayat Samiti, Ambejogai
	12:00 noon	Kalamb – Osmanabad	Panchayat Samiti, Kalamb
	4:00 PM	Bhum, Paranda - Osmanabad	Panchayat Samiti, Bhum

Village Sarpanch were present in big number and they presented their requirements and problems vociferously. Most of the villages needed additional hours of meetings than 100 hours of Poclair and 250 hours of JCB. BJS Taluka Supervisors confirmed after their personal visits to each of the villages that villages need more machine hours and even multiple machines at a time.

Patsangavi village has been working on their mission with continuous Shramadaan. In Ashtavadi, only two women started with Shramadaan later joined by small children of the village and inviting commuters to join the mission. Many such examples and the demands from all side influenced BJS policy change through a decision to provide multiple machines for extended hours in the villages where there is a real need and putting aside initial stringent criteria.

BJS decided to provide more machines to villages where more efforts are being taken through Shramadaan.



Villages from Rural Most Areas Struggling against All Odds

BJS Team visited all villages and communicated machine support details also narrating the condition that BJS will provide machine only if village shares the contribution by paying for diesel. Accepting the condition around 80% of villages contributed for diesel expenses and availed BJS provided Machines. However, our teams reported that around 20% villages are really underdeveloped and fighting with the situation. Villages were not having any other support system. Villagers could not contribute for the diesel as they themselves were living with very meagre means.

After BJS team reporting this and in discussions with Sh. Satyajit Bhatkal and Sh. Aamir Khan, it was confirmed that they also have come across such situation of villages. Both Paani Foundation and BJS after their surveys of all 30 talukas came across around 50-60 villages where providing support even for diesel was essential. Even in this situation, around 20 of these villages took efforts to manage for diesel expenses. Based on discussion with Sh. Aamir Khan, BJS took a decision to provide machine support to around 30-35 villages with diesel. BJS also decided to support villages in Dharani-Melghat, the tribal belt with diesel and machines.



Progress in Machine Deployment

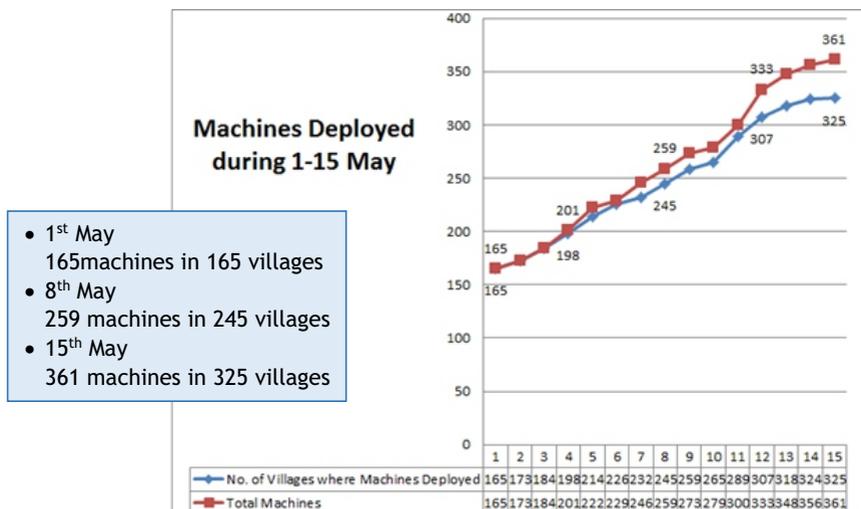
Till 1st of May, half of the competition period got over. First three weeks saw the concentrated strong efforts of Shramadaan. After that planning for machine was the biggest responsibility for BJS. In Western Maharashtra, relatively there were little less difficulties but in Marathwada too there it was a stretched situation.

Making additional machines available aggravated the situation when we were already facing the scarcity of machines. BJS again took fast decisions to make sure that villages get machines as they demand.

In Vidarbha, BJS decided to offer increases rates for both JCB and Poklen by Rs. 50. In spite of this BJS faced difficulties in getting village. In Melghat, BJS couldn't get even a single machine. Under the leadership of Sh. Prafulla Parakh, BJS hired machines from Madhya Pradesh and deployed in Dharani – Melghat. Such were the difficulties that as an NGO, while working for this cause in Maharashtra, BJS had to get machines from other states.

At all the places, BJS District Coordinators, Taluka Supervisors and Villages Sarpanch did extraordinary coordination towards efforts for getting machines and hence the machine management work could take place in good way. The following figures speak for themselves.

In the first, fortnight by 15th April only 9 villages had started machine work as the competition had begun only on 8th April. But by the end of the month, just in 15 days on 30th April, BJS deployed machines in 155 villages. This figure rose to 325 villages by 15th of May. More importantly, in 325 villages, catering to the additional demand, BJS provided around 361 machines.



Yet Another Emotionally Loaded MahaShramadaan

In 1997, Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana brought 350 students from malnutrition affected tribal families of Melghat. Thereafter every year BJS brings students for their education and holistic development from 5th to 12th standard in a specially build state-of-the-art residential facility – Wagholi Educational Rehabilitation Centre (WERC). So far more than 600 tribal students have been alumni of WERC. It was an overwhelming experience when these 600 students, their families and around 5000 people from their neighbourhood villages joined from across hilly, forest and tribal locations for MahaShramadaan in Sadrabadi, Dharani on 7th May 2017.

Paani Foundation's Sh. Satyajit Bhatkal graced the occasion. BJS faced lot of challenges in organizing this mega-event. Under the leadership of our best alumni from this belt Sh. Sunil Mavaskar who been has recently awarded with Ph. D. BJS team faced all challenges to make the event successful. Senior office bearers of BJS Sh. Sudarshan Jain, Sh. Pradeep Jain, Sh. Rishabh Bardiya and others took extraordinary efforts joined by Sh. Ashok Pawar our most experienced disaster response manager who has led the organizing teams from front for all three MahaShramadaan events. In such a hilly and forest belt, organizing event for 5000 people with lunch, water, facility, mandap, loud speakers etc. along with managing transport for villagers and shramadaan participants is a humongous task. BJS office bearers and alumni took extra-ordinary efforts to make it a success giving very exciting moments for the tribal villagers to be part of such a mainstream event.



Way Ahead

The machine work will be wound up on 22nd May midnight. The project focus will be on field work closure formalities. BJS hopes to report villagers' responses and hopeful state of minds in the next and final bulletin for this project.

