

BJS: **Maharashtra Drought-Free Movement 2017**

A Fortnightly Bulletin



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Preface

The preparatory work for the movement to make 1300 villages drought -free after doing *shramadaan* in the months of April and May 2017 was initiated in the months of February and March. State-level and district-level committees were formed, followed by the appointment of Taluka Supervisors. An exclusive handbook listing all the roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder was prepared and trainings were conducted to orient the teams on the same. A software system was developed and various reporting formats were created to expedite the flow of information, communication and decision-making.

This project involves various aspects like managing the visits to 1300 villages, coordinating with all the Sarpanches and the villagers, reporting the information back to the HO, establishing communication channels with all villagers, government officials and the representatives of Paani Foundation at every taluka and the liaisoning by BJS district coordinators with all these stakeholders. The demand for the machines from every Village Sarpanch is on the rise, and BJS alone will not be able to meet this growing demand. However, a policy decision to supply every village with at least 100 hours of Poclairn or 250 hours of JCB machines has been taken by BJS and the project has been planned accordingly. Thus, BJS is putting in all possible efforts to procure at least 1300 machines required for project execution, investing the villagers in this effort and taking their consent to bear the cost of diesel etc. Such and many other hugely challenging tasks have been successfully completed at the grass roots by our field teams merely during the first 15 days of this ambitious two-month long project.

This is a matter of great pride for me. I hereby, take this opportunity to present you this immensely encouraging report of the first fortnight of the "*Movement to Make Maharashtra Drought-Free*"

-Shri Shantilal Muttha

Founder, BJS



9th March 2017-State-level and district-level committee meeting

Background

BJS has worked in disaster response during various disasters over last 32 years. The last five years have seen BJS working on a war footing to address and arrest the devastating effects of successive droughts in Maharashtra. In 2013, BJS worked in Beed district by de-silting 117 lakes, removing 20 lakh cubic meter of silt for use on 5000 acres of farm land to make it fertile. In 2015-16, BJS expanded this drought-relief initiative of de-silting water bodies to Latur and Osmanabad districts along with Beed. Over the last two years, approximately 550 children of farmers who committed suicide in Maharashtra are already being rehabilitated by BJS at its Wagholi Educational Rehabilitation Centre (WERC) in Pune.



Dist. Beed, 2013: Work in progress by BJS during its drought-relief initiative

Looking at the worsening drought situation in Maharashtra, the Paani Foundation has initiated a 'Water Cup' contest in the state since last year. This contest lays special focus on promoting self - sustainability through collective action and *shramadaan*.

As per their concept, the participating villagers need to nominate five villagers from each village for undergoing training on watershed management, and co-creating a watershed management plan for the village, aiming towards achieving self-sustainability through *shramadaan*. BJS considers this work to be the biggest of its kind since Independence that befits Mahatma Gandhi's concept of self-reliance. In its launch year in 2016, 116 villages across 3 talukas participated and did *shramadan*. In 2017, the contest has been expanded to include 2000 villages across 30 talukas from 13 districts.

Out of these, 1300 villages have undergone training and have geared up to make themselves water self-sustainable through *shramadaan*. However, with the experience of last five years in water restoration, BJS anticipates huge topographical challenges for the villagers to accomplish this mighty goal through *shramadaan* alone. Execution of the watershed management plan requires back-breaking efforts in excavation, cutting through hard strata in the rocky terrains.

Mr. Shantilal Muttha, Founder BJS, in a meeting with his team of state volunteers, has ***taken a policy decision to independently support each of the 1300 villages doing shramadaan by complementing / supplementing their efforts through the use of machines to make Maharashtra drought-free.*** The project is being steered by the National President of BJS Shri Prafulla Parakh, with the help of a project management team comprising a state committee, district committees and 50 taluka supervisors who have been specially appointed and trained by BJS for this purpose. The proposed work will be completed with the help of 400 Poclain and/or 1200 JCB machines over a period of one month.

Action Plan

- National President of BJS Shri Prafulla Parakh has been nominated as the Project Head.
- A state-level committee has been constituted to oversee the project.
- District coordinators and district committees have been appointed across the 13 districts.
- 50 Taluka Supervisors have been appointed by the BJS HO, with due compensation for their services, for supervision and conducting regular visits to the villages over a period of two months.
- An exclusive handbook listing all the roles and responsibilities of the Taluka Supervisors and the district coordinators has been brought out. A monitoring and reporting software system has been deployed and the required process flow designed.
- This technology-enabled reporting mechanism to help generate real-time data from the field is supported with a system to address the emerging challenges and mitigate the field-level issues.
- Various protocols like the Whatsapp Usage Policy, Code of Conduct have been drawn up for effective project management.
- A systematic documentation of the entire project has also been planned.

Training Programme

Training of BJS Office-bearers: One-day training for BJS office-bearers held at the BJS Head Office, Pune on 9th March 2017

Training of Taluka Supervisors: Two-day training for BJS Taluka Supervisors held at the BJS Head Office, Pune on 24th & 25th March 2017



BJS decides to provide JCB machines to villagers participating in *shramadaan*

Preliminary Survey of the Villages

- Each of the 50 Taluka Supervisors took charge of their respective talukas from 1st April 2017. They held meetings with each of the Village Sarpanches in every village during the first 15 days.
- The Supervisors reported the information obtained from the Sarpanches in the prescribed format through the software system.
- A letter informing the nature of work that BJS was to undertake in every village was given to every Sarpanch.
- The Supervisors participated in all the government meetings held at the taluka-level and those of Paani Foundation to understand the procedures involved.
- The coordination between all the villagers, government officials and the representatives of Paani Foundation was successfully achieved.
- The coordination between the BJS district coordinators and the Taluka Supervisors was also successfully initiated.
- The total machine requirement of every Sarpanch for every village was recorded in detail.

Report of the District Coordinators

- The training conducted in Pune was undertaken by all the district coordinators.
- District committees were established.
- Efforts were made to secure sponsorships from every district.
- Taluka Supervisors were provided with guidance, as and when needed.
- Coordination was established with all the government officials and the taluka representatives of Paani Foundation.
- The visit of Shri Prafulla Parakh was effectively planned.
- Efforts were made for procurement of the machines.

Efforts for Machine Procurement

- All the district coordinators and the Taluka Supervisors have taken special efforts to procure JCB machines for their talukas.
- The terms and conditions of the contract with the machine vendors, the final quotations and the instructions to award these contracts at the district and taluka levels were communicated to the teams.
- It has come to the notice that the procurement of the machines during the peak summer months of April and May is becoming a hugely challenging task. Various discussions and consultations at multiple levels are underway in order to urgently resolve this grave issue.
- The mechanized work has already started in some villages where *shramadaan* has been initiated in a big way.

Visit by Shri Prafulla Parakh

No.	District	Arrival Date & Time	Time of Meeting	Departure Date & Time
1.	Akola	29 th March 2017, 1pm	8pm	30 th March 2017, 3 pm
2.	Washim (Karanja)	30 th March 2017, 6pm	8pm	31 st March 2017, 3 pm
3.	Amravati	31 st March 2017, 6pm	8pm	1 st April 2017, 3 pm
4.	Yavatmal	1 st April 2017, 6pm	8pm	2 nd April 2017, 3 pm
5.	Wardha	2 nd April 2017, 6 pm	8pm	3 rd April 2017, 11 am
6.	Sangali	5 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	6 th April 2017, 3 pm
7.	Satara	6 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	7 th April 2017, 3 pm
8.	Beed	10 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	11 th April 2017, 3 pm
9.	Latur	11 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	12 th April 2017, 3 pm
10.	Osmanabad (Kalamb)	12 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	13 th April 2017, 3 pm
11.	Solapur	13 th April 2017, 6pm	8pm	14 th April 2017, 2 pm

BJS National President and Project Head Shri Prafulla Parakh recently completed a successful tour from 29th March-14th April 2017, of all the 13 districts participating in the Water Cup. The purpose of the tour was to orient the district volunteers of BJS with their roles and responsibilities for the project. Meetings with several philanthropists, NGOs, businessmen, social workers, press reporters, merchant guilds, banks and cooperative credit societies, *mandals*, and government officials were held to keep them abreast about this social impact project of BJS.

Highlights of the tour

- The potential sponsors, institutions and machine vendors appreciated the project and a few immediately offered help in order to be a part of this noble cause.
- The review by BJS volunteers, of the work done for procuring as many machines as possible, provided great insights for subsequent planning and decision-making.
- The responses and support received from the Village Sarpanches, villagers and machine owners was reviewed by the Taluka Supervisor appointed by BJS.
- The Guardian Ministers of a few districts and the MLAs of their respective talukas expressed their satisfaction with the project and promised to offer every possible support.
- Government officials from various departments including several district-level officers, tehsildars, Block Development Officers, Gramsevaks, Krishi Adhikshaks, officials of PWD and Jalsandharan Vibhag sought information about the project and offered a very positive response.

Mahashramadaan

Maharashtra has been reeling under successive droughts over the last five years. The incidence of farmer suicides is mounting and has reportedly touched an annual average of around 3000 suicides over last five years. The future of the coming generation is at stake. The educational rehabilitation of around 650 children of the farmers who have committed suicide in the last two years across Maharashtra has already been initiated by BJS in Pune. These children who are witness to the tremendous efforts being taken by BJS in the drought-prone regions, were eager to offer their contribution towards this cause. As a result of their keen desire, on 9th April 2017, all the 650 children were brought to Golegaon village in the Khuldabad taluka, dist. Aurangabad and they participated in *shramadaan* along with BJS and the villagers from 6.00- 10.00 am.

On the occasion of *Mahashramadaan*, these children of the farmer-suicide affected families, in their appeal to all the farmers across Maharashtra implored , "*We have faced the anguish and experienced the adverse effects of suicide on our families. However, we have held ourselves together and have now the courage to help others who are battling a similar trauma. We earnestly hope that no farmer -family faces the cruel blow that destiny has dealt upon us. So, let us all villagers come together to win the war against drought by doing shramadaan and make our villages self-sustainable and our lives happy!*"

Several senior BJS office-bearers from the Aurangabad district including Shri Gautam Sancheti, Shri Paras Jain, Shri Praveen Parakh, Shri Paras Chordia, Shri Prakash Kocheta, Shri Prafulla Shrishrimal, Shri Ajay Jain, Shri Khabiya, Shri Rajesh Patni, Shri Kamal Pahade, Shri Anand Mishrikotkar, Shri Sunil Kala, Shri Kantilal Ostwal along with many volunteers worked day and night to make this programme a grand success.

Shri Prashant Bamb (the local MLA), Shri Satyajit Bhatkal, CEO- Paani Foundation, Shri Irfan Khan, Sarpanch Shri Santosh Joshi along with all the villagers took great pains for the success of this event. Impeccable arrangements for the stay, food, accommodation and the material required for *shramadaan* for all the 650 children were done by the villagers. All the ladies of the village gave a traditional welcome to the children. Similarly, great efforts were taken by all other public representatives and the government officials of the district.

Among those present on the occasion were dignitaries like the MLA Shri Prashant Bamb, Divisional Commissioner Shri Purushottam Bhapkar, Upper Divisional Commissioner Dr. Vijay Kumar Fad, District Collector Smt Nidhi Pandye, Mukhya Karyakari Adhikari Shri Madhukarraje Ardad, Upa Mukhya Karyakari Adhikari Shri Suresh Bedmutha, Zilla Adhikshak Krishi Adhikari Shri Sanjeev Padval along with a host of other government officials and villagers. Among those present from BJS were Founder Shri Shantilal Muttha, National President Shri Prafulla Parakh, Shri Hastimal Bamb along with State President Shri Amar Gandhi.

The programme organized on the auspicious day of *Mahaveer Jayanti*, gained huge publicity, thanks to the efforts of media persons from the print and electronic media.

A resounding message has been positively conveyed through this event which saw 2000 people volunteering for doing *shramadaan* together.

Meetings of the Taluka Supervisors

- 13th April 2017: A review meet, headed by Shri Shantilal Muttha was organized in Pune with 27 Taluka Supervisors from across eight districts of Marathwada and Western Maharashtra.
- 14th April 2017: A meeting, headed by Shri Shantilal Muttha was organized in Amravati with 14 Taluka Supervisors from across districts of the Vidarbha region.
- Both the meetings saw the Taluka Supervisors narrating their experiences and detailed discussions were held to address the challenges faced by them around :
 - o machine procurement
 - o starting the mechanized work after completion of the *shramadaan*
 - o villages refusing to provide the diesel cost
 - o increased demand of the villagers for extending the machine days
 - o fulfillment of the terms and conditions of the procurement contract
 - o need for better clarity on the role to be played by BJS in the villages where other NGOs were at work for a similar cause

In both the meetings, efforts were made by Shri Muttha for providing suitable guidance to all the Taluka Supervisors to address all the above challenges.

**List of villages as reported by Taluka Supervisors on 13th & 14th April
in Pune after their visits to the villages**

Taluka	Number of Participating Villages	No. of villages confirmed post visit
Khultabad	37	37
Fulanbri	54	54
Uttar solapur	30	30
Bhoom	48	42
Ausa	50	50
Nilanga	62	62
Kej	63	63
Klamb	49	49
Pranda	27	27
Ambejogai	37	37
Dharur	44	44
Purandar	33	33
Khataav	36	36
Maan	32	32
Koregaon	28	28
Sangola	46	46
Indapur	24	24
Khanapur	21	21
Jat	41	40
Aatpaadi	39	39
Ralegaon	40	40
Kalam-yavtmal	46	46
Umarkhed	48	43
Dharni	84	83
Varud	39	38
Karanja	106	106
Arvi	51	51
Barshi takali	37	37
Akot	33	33
Patur	35	35
Total	1320	1306