

Reliance Foundation and Brahmanipali VFA built a bridge to prosperity



About the village:

Brahmanipali village is one of the most back ward villages in Balangir district. It is located 18 km from Balangir District HQs. Most of the villagers are marginal farmers having less than 1 acre of land.

About the river Banjhinala:

There is a small river called Banjhinala which is the life line of villagers as they have to cross it each day to reach Balangir District HQs. Not only the people of Banjhinala village but also the people from the adjoining 12 villages depend on it. Due to the lack of a bridge, the villages were cut off the rainy season. The worst affected are the women and children. During medical emergencies the villagers are unable to reach the hospital in time.

Construction of the wooden bridge:

Reliance Foundation team working with the Brahmanipali VFA analysed the situation and collectively decided to construct a wooden bridge across river Banjhinala using their own limited resources. This decision would go a long way in alleviating the difficulties faced by over 5,000 people of all 12 villages in that area. Earlier during the rainy season, only those villagers who knew how to swim were able to cross the river. Prior to the bridge construction, there were instances when villagers tried crossing the river to reach the hospital and lost their lives in the process.

Design and specification of the bridge:

The bridge is 180 ft long, 10 ft wide and at a height of 15 ft. The bridge is constructed with 48 wooden pillars 551 posts and planks. Sal tree wood has been used to construct the pillars and roofing was constructed using palm trees. On both sides is a concrete guard wall.

Impact:

The wooden bridge has not only ensured connectivity for Brahmanipali village after 200 years of its establishment but also the 12 villages of Udhar GP in Deogaon block. Apart from addressing connectivity issues, the bridge strengthened solidarity and reinforced collective participation leading to confidence in the VFA members that with collective action catalysed by Reliance Foundation they can make their village as an ideal village.

Shortly after the bridge's inauguration, the Collector of Balangir, Dr. M. Muthukumar came to know of this and visited the site along Block Development Officer and Chairman of Deogaon Mr. Meher and other officials. Very impressed with the efforts of the VFA and Reliance Foundation he promised to construct a permanent bridge at this site very shortly. This has boosted the morale of the whole community.

Voice of People:

"It was a dream for last three generations which turned to reality today"
Pancha Ghibela (50 years), Brahmanipali village

"The bridge would be more helpful to women and patients access better medical health care from Balangir"
Sukanti Ghibela (45 years), Brahmanipali village

"It is an inspiration for many VFAs. While contributing labour we thought why not start a similar work in our village Sialabhali "
Nirakar Meher (62 years)

"It is a symbol of bridging relationship between two neighbouring i.e. Banjhipali and Brahmanipali"
Santosh Chatria (32 years)



The problem in absence of bridge



The proposed site to construct a bridge



The decision taken in the VFA GBM



The survey began



The bhoomi puja conducted



The layout being laid



Digging of the site for base construction



Construction of the cemented base



Transport of pillar to the pillar hole



Fitting the pillars into the hole



Putting the desired number of pillars in the hole



Bringing the pillars into shape



Fully completed pillars in position



Inter connecting the pillars for extra support



The completed bridge



Ready for inauguration



VFA sharing their happiness with RF BIJ staff



Public use of the bridge