



Sona River Comes To Life

Reliance Foundation revives Sona River in Aurangabad

As a long-term measure for drought relief, Reliance Foundation (RF) revives over 5 km of Sona River, creating water harvesting capacity of 15 lakh cubic metres of water which provides water security to over 14,000 people and over 2,500 acres of farm land

Reliance Foundation has revived Sona River in Soygaon block of Aurangabad district in Maharashtra. The initiative has created a water harvesting capacity of 15 lakh cubic meters. This will provide drinking water to more than 14,000 people in five villages – Amkheda, Galwada, Wetalwadi, Sonawadi and the Soygaon block headquarter – and provides irrigation to over 2,500 acres of land.

Soygaon, one of the most interior blocks of Aurangabad, was reeling under severe water scarcity. Due to scanty rainfall, wells, bore wells and ponds had dried up forcing residents to travel to the Wetalwadi earthen dam, 4 km from Soygaon, for drinking water. Farmers from the area, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood, witnessed a major crop failure. More than 85% of total cultivable land in this area, is rain-fed.

Due to siltation of the river, and the damaged water harvesting structures, farming in the area had been badly hit as water could not be harvested during monsoon. It led to increased dependency on other water sources like bore wells. The excessive use of bore wells pushed the ground water table below 500 feet, making it inaccessible to poor farmers for further use. The community needed a permanent solution to their woes. RF provided that solution by reviving the Sona River. Sona River is the lifeline of the people of five villages. Reliance Foundation has carried out desiltation of over 5 km of the river bed. This helped in recharging the wells and other sources of drinking water in the area.

The Foundation brought together a team of experts, surveyed the area and started work with support of local administration and the farming





Sona River, Before



Sona River, After



5.2 km of river desilted

Over **2.5** lakh cubic meter of soil excavated

Water harvesting capacity of **15** lakh cubic meter

Assured irrigation for **2,500** acre of crop land

Drinking water secured for over **14,000** people

community. Within a period of 7 weeks, the team de-silted 2.5 lakh cubic meters of soil, repaired 3 old gated structures and built a new structure. Water harvesting capacity of 15 lakh cubic meters was created through these structures.

“We have got our Sona River back. It has rained just twice, and there is already water in our wells. We are expecting that the wells will have water till next monsoon. Our livestock too will get drinking water during dry months,” Shantaram Pandurang Desai, farmer, Soygaon.

The sharp difference in the situation before and after the RF revival work can be gauged from the words of local farmer from Soygaon, Vinod Prahlad Teli, “Earlier, we could hardly get a bucket of water from a bore well in a day. Now, we get 2000 litres of water from the same well every day”. The initiative has benefitted the local community in multiple ways.

Having witnessed the difference that a revived Sona has brought to the lives of the people, the local administration has decided to undertake de-siltation of the other existing water structures in the area. Says Kailash Kale, Chairperson, Nagar Panchayat, Soygaon, “We will undertake de-siltation activity of the Wetalwadi earthen dam next year, with state funds and public participation. The rates of excavation and transportation of silt soil have been made affordable through this river rejuvenation work by Reliance Foundation. We are really happy to see the speed with which the work has been done. Thank You Reliance Foundation, you brought back Sona to our villages.”

With the revival of Sona River, the marginal farmers of the area are seeing a ray of hope that can end their woes and transform their lives.

