



# Water Conservation & **RIVER REJUVENATION**



# Rivers

are the source of life. Most civilisations in history were born and thrived by riversides. However, due to large scale deforestation and disturbance of the cycles of Nature, weather and rainfall patterns have become inconsistent all over the world. Many rivers have gone dry over the years.

**In 2016, a third of all districts in the country were declared drought-affected. Maharashtra was so severely hit that lakhs of litres of water had to be transported there through special trains.**





The Art of Living Rural Programs, through their unique methodology drive an intense inner transformation in people. Powerful yoga and meditation techniques pump energy and enthusiasm in villagers, who get inspired to take up development challenges in their areas. Reviving rivers that have been dry for decades is one such challenge that many teams have taken up successfully in several states of India.



Unpredictable rainfall



Deforestation, climate change, environmental exploitation



Agriculture adversely affected



Poverty, migration from villages, social stigma

Lack of water, soil erosion

Tree plantation  
River bed widening  
Ground water retention  
Digging wells, soak pits

ART OF LIVING  
INTERVENTION



YLTP

Stealing, drugs, hopelessness, lack of direction

Scientific expertise  
Satellite imaging etc.


WATER CONSERVATION  
AND RIVER REJUVENATION



Agriculture revived  
Self-reliant community  
Prosperity







Reviving river Benitura in Osmanabad

"Water Conservation and River Rejuvenation Project is an example of true service."

Abhay Chavan, Tahsildar





"Our village has been facing a water problem for the last 15 years. We didn't even have drinking water on our side of the village. We were forced to grow crops like tomatoes and millets which do not fetch much money. Now we have started growing rice. Next year we plan to cultivate wheat and sugarcane. This is a huge step forward."

Balaraman, Farmer,  
Salamanthanam village, Vellore  
district, Tamil Nadu.



# Revive rivers, revive communities

Acute water shortage forced residents in Jalane village, Jalgaon district in Maharashtra to migrate en-masse. Pregnant women went back to stay at their parents' houses. Other parents refused to marry daughters to men in villages like Jalane. Agriculture was hit hard, affecting every other aspect of life.

In 2011, Somnath Ramachandra Sonawane started reaching out to few villages, including Jalane, to invite people to participate in Jal Jagruti Abhiyan. He would organize Happiness Programs, meditations, chanting, Pad Yatras and motivational seminars to raise awareness about the need for water conservation.

“For 3 years, we just channeled our energies to build teams.” Sonawane started solo initially. “One or two of them would want to travel with me to cover particular tehsils. One person donated his vehicle to us because he believed we were doing good work. I got the locals involved through Shramdaan, in building check dams and widening canals. I wanted a sustainable model so that the villagers can take care of the project even after we left.”

“The canals earlier were small and insufficient to store rain water. We increased the width of some of the canals

and dug pits for collecting rainwater. The dug out soil was reused for cultivation and road building.

In 5 years, with the help of locals, volunteers rejuvenated 12 canals in 6 tehsils. “Now farmers have started growing bananas (water intensive crop) in over 200 acres.” Sonawane is affectionately called Aba in the village.

“Earlier there were about 10 bikes in our village. Now there are more than 100 and some four wheelers too. More than 80% of the houses are pukka. I used to sell about 500 bags of seeds and fertilizers. Now my sale is almost thrice as much. People bring currencies and notes of Rs. 500 these days. Earlier the most people would have is Rs.100 notes.” Bondu Sheth, shopkeeper.

Economic well being in Jalane has increased people's ability to repay loans too.

“Default on loans in Jalane is less than other villages.” Robin Kumar, State Bank of India Branch Manager, Jalane.

Makarand Jadhav, Mahadev Gomare and their teams worked to coordinate these projects and drive community participation across Maharashtra.





# The team



Dr Lingaraju Yale, a retired exploration geologist, met Gurudev and became interested in the Art of Living's Rural Development projects. He got inspired to write a book on the dead Kumudavati river, which used to cater to 60% of Bangalore's water needs.

Gurudev released the book during Shivratri at the Bangalore Ashram in 2013. Sitting in the crowd were Dr. Lingaraju's future team members – all feeling an acute desire to see the river roaring.

Hundreds of volunteers worked on the Kumudavati project every week for a year. The team reached out to Bosch and HAL, who took up the project as CSR, funding material, and appointing people to take care of the structures and the trees. The team takes care of overall planning, finance and accounting, CSR, ecology, civil engineering and construction of the project.

Dr. Lingaraju is former Director Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre and uses Satellite Imaging to study the drainage network and topology in the region and identify sites for water harvesting and soil conservation. This technology being used for reviving Kumudavati, Vedavati and Palar rivers. In the very first year, drinking water borewells and open wells that were dry for years have begun to have water in summers also. Borewells near the Palar river area have also been revived.

Vedavati River rejuvenation, under Sh. Nagaraj Gangolli's supervision, is being carried out by using MNREGA. Local people will plant trees and execute the project while being paid by the State Government.

Vedavati - 22,000 works estimated across 1252 villages

Kumudavati - 2,584 works proposed across 278 villages.





# 17 RIVERS IN 3 STATES

## Maharashtra (13 rivers)

Latur: Gharni, Tavarja, Rena, Jana, Mudgul, Manjara  
Osmanabad: Terna, Rajegavi, Benitura  
Jalna: Narola  
Nagpur: Vena  
Jalgaon: Waghur  
Sangali- Satara: Mann

## Karnataka (3 rivers)

Bengaluru: Kumudavati  
Chikamangalur: Vedavati  
Kolar: Palar


## Tamil Nadu (1 river)

Vellore: Naganadi



# Jal Jagruti Abhiyaan Maharashtra



**Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**   
@SriSri

The Art of Living will spend 105 crores on river rejuvenation in drought-hit Maharashtra.

5:35 AM - 30 Apr 2016





**JAL JAGRUTI ABHIYAAN MAHARASHTRA**  
WATER CONSERVATION & RIVER REJUVENATION PROJECT  
2013 - 2016



**JAL JAGRUTI ABHIYAAN MAHARASHTRA**  
WATER CONSERVATION & RIVER REJUVENATION PROJECT  
2013 - 2016

**Beneficiaries**  
**Over 2 Lakhs**

**Silt Removed (in Latur)**  
**28.5 Lakh cubic meter**

**Land irrigated (in Latur)**  
**Over 10,150 acres**

**Rivers & Canals (in Latur)**  
**44,095 meters covered**

**Total Project Cost - 28 Crores**







**Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**   
@SriSri

I inspected the Manjara River site in Latur, Maharashtra today. Excellent work being done by our volunteers!

5:35 AM - 30 Apr 2016

