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# From the Founders' Desk

The year 2019 - 20 has been remarkable in several senses. We completed 10 glorious years of existence and 6 amazing years of being a tribal focused organization. We rebranded ourselves and changed our logo that represents our spirit of community service and our tribal identity.

The work of our past few years has managed to touch and change lives of over 25,000 tribals; but we still think we have barely scratched the surface and we spent this year on preparing and gearing up for the next decade of scaling up. Our field team while extremely dedicated and passionate needed that extra push to lead from the front and implement arduous tasks and ambitious goals with elan. We all underwent extensive training programs in hydrogeology, spring management and other areas of water shed development, panchayat raj and different govt. schemes, various acts applicable to the tribals, necessary digital skills etc.

Life is however what happens when one is busy making other plans. COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous back to back lockdowns forced us to refocus our attention and support on the returning migrant tribals. It was immensely challenging to raise funds and organize food security parcels for over 5000 tribal families at a short notice. Our learnings were enormous and we have only evolved and emerged stronger from the pandemic induced calamity.

Our theme for FY21 is "Hope" and all our projects will be aimed at giving hope to our scared and disillusioned tribals, giving hope to recover better and stronger from the pandemic and giving hope to create a happier world without going through the pain of migrating. We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading about our past one year's triumph. We look forward to a wider and broader engagement, participation and feedback from you.

To conclude we would like to quote Jonas Silk who said, "Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality."



Sarika Kulkarni



Girish Kulkarni

***Vision:***

Making a better world for less fortunate, under privileged tribal community.

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***Mission:***

To drive holistic change in lives of the tribals by creating local opportunities and enabling them to lead an honorable life in their own villages. To minimize migration and create self sustaining systems for the community to work and live in happiness and peace.

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## The Problem

Some of the poorest people around the world are the indigenous tribals. India is home to over 120 million tribals, of whom about 10% reside in the western state of Maharashtra.

Despite being part of one of the most progressive states and being in vicinity of Mumbai they continue to lead a life of immense struggle. They live along the Sahyadri mountain range which is also one of the highest rainfall areas in Maharashtra, ironically also characterized by severe water shortage for most of the year. Steep terrain and hydrogeological conditions force the water to flow away at great speeds without any percolation.

After growing crops for self consumption during monsoon, tribals migrate to work as wage labor on construction sites, stuck in the vicious cycle of poverty and misery.

# The Solution: Integrated model of tribal development



## FY 2020 in Review



Gram Sanvardhan Program  
Village adoption for multi  
year multi pronged  
intervention



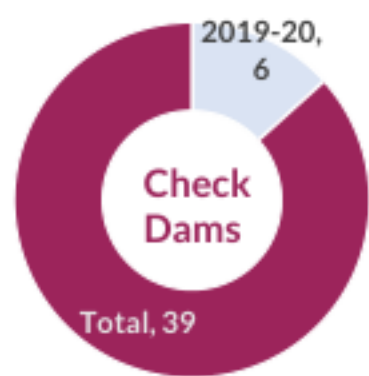
Puri Foundation, a US based philanthropic foundation started by Mr. Sunil Puri, a first generation American of Indian origin (founder of the Midwest group) has adopted Zap, a cluster of 10 villages, home to over 6000 tribals, for a 4- year integrated development program.

Yr	Malhar	Krishi	Urja	Soukhya	Vidya
1	Water security for all hamlets	Facilitate sustainable agriculture	Support & train women to start micro businesses	Improve health indicators in the village	Improve school ambience & infrastructure
2					
3					
4	Local leadership development & exit				

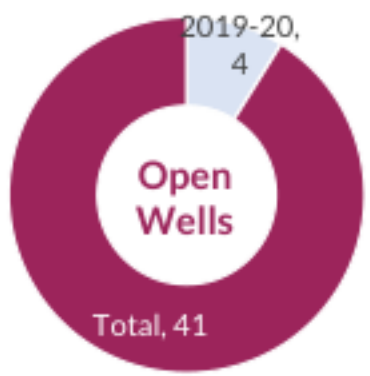
We are in the second year of implementation now. So far, we have built 2 check dams, 1 open well, 6 bore wells, and resurrected 1 anganwadi. We have helped 8 women entrepreneurs and 100 farmers for sustainable agriculture. We have done preliminary work on the health side and worked on a pilot for eco friendly chulhas to eliminate harmful smoke.



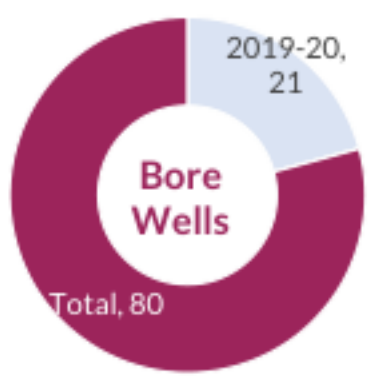
**Project Malhar**      **Creating water secure communities and water positive villages**



- Purpose:**
- ✓ Recharging aquifers
  - ✓ Agriculture
  - ✓ Cattle drinking
  - ✓ Hygiene
  - ✓ Washing



- Purpose:**
- ✓ Drinking Water
  - ✓ Agriculture



- Purpose:**
- ✓ Drinking Water
  - ✓ Agriculture

# The Process

## Form water governance committee

{a local committee with 50% women is formed to frame water usage norms and monitor water levels} its called malhar samiti.{the existing structures - check

## Hydrogeological study of the village

{this is done to understand the ground water table and the recharge potential )

## Map demand side of water with the available supply

{year round overall water requirement is calculated which determines the strategy for making the village water secure}

## Build / repair rain water harvesting structures

{the existing structures – check dams, open wells, ponds etc. are repaired, desilted and expanded to enhance their rain water storage capacity and new structures are constructed where required}

## Handover the structures to the malhar samiti

Malhar samiti takes the onus of the village water and monitors the usage by ensuring that the norms are followed by everyone.



Discussion with water management committee in Balkapra, Jawhar. This committee functions for two years and new members then take over.





Mira Vaijal at her farm which her family is growing for the first time.

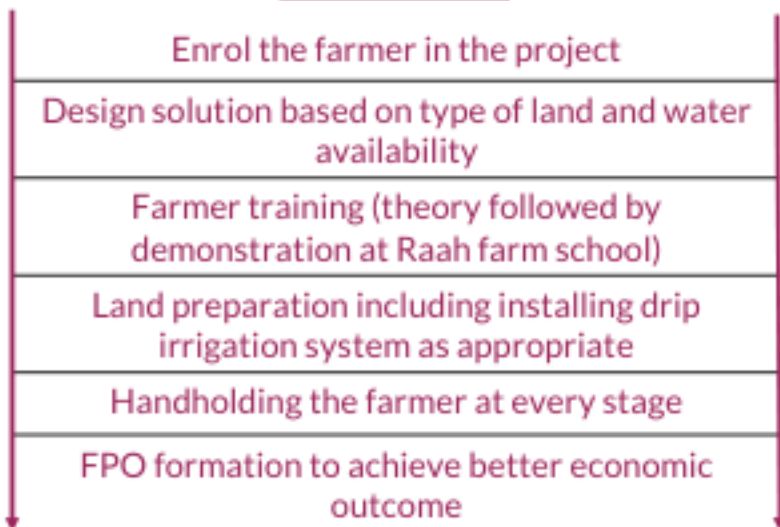
**Project  
Krishi**

To create local year-round opportunities through sustainable, climate resilient agriculture.

Over 100 farmers grew second crop and beyond in 2019-20.

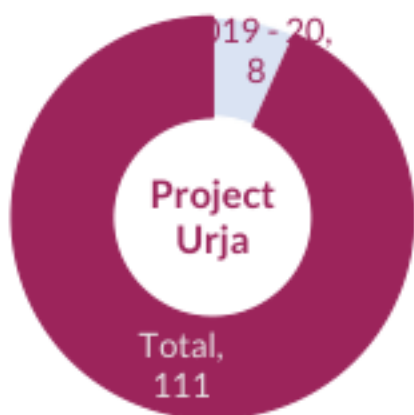
Over past five years since we began project Krishi, over 1200 farmers have started growing multiple crops in a year and stopped migration.

### The Process





Bagubai started her shop on a bench. Since her shop was on a busy road, she could cater to large no of customers. In whatever daily sale she would make, she would diligently save Rs 100 daily (roughly around INR 3000) per month. The daily income was used as a working capital to replenish the stock. With the savings within a year she had her own tapri (A stall) where she could stock the goods in her shop properly and also in larger quantity. Also this stall could protect her goods and her from rains and heat. As the sale started picking up she would save INR 1000 per month in a local credit society. The yearly savings helped her to buy a small refrigerator in her stall in which she stores cold beverages to quench the thirst of her customers. Bagubai has been consistent in her savings. Her average sales per month in last year has been close to ₹ 25000..



## The Process

Select a woman keen to change her circumstances

Do a market scan and identify the opportunity

Train the woman extensively in nuances of entrepreneurship. This includes courses on accounts, sales and customer service

Handhold the woman to support her to scale up her business.

Exit after providing one year of support



# Other Projects

## Project Soukhya

To improve health indicators

A pilot was implemented for installing eco friendly chulhas (traditional rural cooking stove) in 8 homes. These chulhas designed by a group of iit alumni not only reduce the firewood used by a third but importantly throw the smoke out of the hut. This has an enormous positive benefit on the health of women and children as inhalation of smoke is largely eliminated. This will be scaled up significantly in the coming year.

- Extensive screening of women and children was carried out to better understand the health problems prevalent in the area which would be an input for future prioritization
- Asha and Anganwadi workers were trained in nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers.



## Project Adikatha

Facilitate Income generation through tribal tourism.



We hosted student groups from schools, colleges who visited Jawhar for Shram daan as a part of their curriculum. Corporate offsite as well as visits by people interested in a sneak peak in tribal life also visited tribal areas through the year. American visitors from California enjoyed the tarpa dance as well as tribal food eating in the huts.

## Project Adikala

Rejuvenating Warli Art by providing commercially relevant skills and market access.

Our Warli and fabric art artists had a great year as their paintings on greeting cards, bags, trays had an overwhelming response from different quarters. Raah Creative Design (affiliate social business) had a great time participating in the biggest art festival – Kalaghoda Art festival.

A big feather in the cap was painting Christmas greeting cards for a corporate client in London.



Project Manini: Over 80 women were trained in tailoring skills in Mumbai slum. They are either working independently or supplying to Raah creative Designs.



### Experiment 1: Project Krishi

Improving yield from Kharif crop of rice and ragi (finger millets).

We have always been concerned about inability of tribals to earn an income from the first crop (kharif or monsoon crop) as the entire produce is limited and used only for self consumption. In our research, we came across the use of methods of intensification. These involve better soil preparation, seed preparation and sowing techniques (no additional chemicals involved) which promise a significant increase in yield – potentially creating enough surplus produce for farmers for selling in the market and earning an additional income.

A group of 4 farmers led by dynamic Jagannath Patil from Mokhada participated in the first experiment on about 20 gunthas of land (half acre) each. The crops were harvested in October and the results were very good – yield improvements ranging from 40 to 80 per cent. Encouraged and super excited we documented the entire process and learnings and would be scaling this up across Jawhar & Mokhada in the coming year to at least 150 farmers. Our entire field team has been trained in these techniques.

## Our Experiments:



### Experiment 2: Project Malhar

#### Ground water recharge through Bore Well

We are often forced to construct a bore well in some of the villages as no other solution is feasible due to geography and geology of the area. The permanent depletion of stored ground water associated with this has always been a matter of grave concern and discomfort for us. We have been determined to address this.

We researched on multiple techniques in which bore wells can be recharged with rainwater during monsoon season and finalized how we would go about doing this. This would enable complete recharge of the extracted ground water and would also enable recharging underground aquifers to improve the ground water table.

Our methodology is ready and we have also identified pilot locations for implementing our ideas. Due to the lockdown, this could not be executed. However next year this experiment will be conducted on a priority basis.

## Our Supporters

What started as a philanthropic initiative of the Founders' family in 2011 has evolved into a fast growing organization being supported by several Foundations, CSR. grants, philanthropic initiatives and several other passionate individual donors.

### Key Donors:



**TATA TRUSTS**



**ANYBODY  
CAN  
HELP**

## Awards & Recognition in 2019-20



Most promising rural NGO rejuvenating water structures.

Best rural development project



**Grant Thornton** Best project in environment category

As we were ready to end the year gone by on an absolute high, the pandemic hit all of us creating chaos in our lives. The impact on our tribal communities is especially catastrophic and could be detrimental to even basic survival needs. The impact will range from **Increased Poverty, Increased Hunger, Increased Uncertainty about the future and Increased Vulnerability** due to poor health indicators and limited access to quality healthcare. *As per some estimates, COVID - 19 has reversed the achievements by 3 - 6 years pushing the communities deeper in desperation*

Our response was the creation of a four pronged strategy with the following objectives:

1. Provide immediate relief
2. Build long term sustainability of income and health
3. Ensure that our efforts of past several years do not reverse push our tribals back into the vicious cycle of deprivation.

### Our four pronged strategy

Immediate Relief	Distributed 5000 family security parcels (protein rich legumes and pulses, salt and spices, hygiene products like dental powder and bathing & washing soaps, matchboxes etc). This was the largest effort in the area impacting over 30,000 people taking care of 2 months of their needs.
Sustainability	<p>Develop agriculture as a sustainable source of year-round income</p> <p>A) Facilitate income from traditional kharif crop of Rice and millets by introducing and teaching them the method of crop intensification that improves the yield by over 40-50%. This would enable a surplus production which can be sold to earn a decent income.</p> <p>B) Encourage multiple crops throughout the year in a sustainable manner - by minimising water usage through drip irrigation and adopting natural, chemical free farming. This would ensure i) year round income from farming; ii) reduced need to migrate; and iii) ensuring a life of dignity and respect in their own villages.</p> <p>C) Working on introducing other income opportunities like poultry as also expanding our entrepreneurship program for women</p>
Immunity	Step by step process guiding families on accessing high-quality seeds and grow nutritionally rich fruits and vegetables in their backyards to boost their immunity.
Resilience	Preparing the tribal communities to become more robust and be prepared for any such future shocks and exigencies. This will be done by making them financially savvy and ensuring saving <sup>10</sup> and investment of their income.



### Reach out to us:

Our work with the indigenous communities is extremely important for India as it preserves the cultural heritage of the country while giving a new meaning to their lives through different interventions that create opportunities locally. We need your support for everything.

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