

# “A PEOPLE MOVEMENT FOR DROUGHT FREE MAHARASHTRA” PAANI FOUNDATION

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## Abstract

Paani Foundation is a not-for-profit company set up in 2016 by the team of the TV series Satyamev Jayate to fight drought in rural Maharashtra. Water scarcity is largely a man-made condition, and we believe that only people's efforts can solve the crisis. Paani Foundation aims to harness the power of communication to mobilise, motivate and train people in this mission to eradicate drought. Offering training in scientific watershed management, leadership and community-building, Paani Foundation is now working in roughly 90% of drought-hit Maharashtra. Our flagship project, the Satyamev Jayate Water Cup was instituted in 2016 as a way to encourage villages to apply their training in watershed management. Water Cup 2018 will be held from 8th April to 22nd May 2018.

**Index Terms:** Paani Foundation, Satyamev Jayate, Water Cup 2018

## Introduction

Maharashtra State is located in western part of India. It has a geographical area of 3,07,713 sq. km. Administratively, the State has six divisions with Headquarters at Konkan (New Mumbai), Pune, Nasik, Aurangabad, Amravati and Nagpur. The State has further been divided into four socio-economic regions namely Konkan comprising of Konkan sub-division, Madhya Maharashtra comprising of Nasik and Pune sub-divisions, Marathwada comprising of Aurangabad sub-division and Vidarbha comprising of Amravati and Nagpur sub-divisions.



Map of Maharashtra

The State has 36 districts and 358 talukas. The State has two urban districts i.e. Mumbai and Mumbai Sub-Urban whereas the remaining 33 districts are rural. There are 336 cities and towns in the State, out of which 40 have population more than one lakh. There are 40,785 villages and 45,528 hamlets.

The population of the State is 112.3 million as per 2011 Census out of which 41 million is urban and 55.7 million rural. Out of total area of the State, 73 %, i.e., 2.25 lakh, sq. km of area is cultivable and 17.6 % is under forest.

## The Problem

### Drought prone areas in Maharashtra:

The Deccan plateau constitutes 50 percent of the drought-prone area of the state. 12 percent of the population lives in drought prone areas. Once in 5 years, deficient rainfall is reported. Severe drought conditions occur once every 8-9 years.

Year	No. of district affected
1996	7 districts
1997	17 districts
2001	23 districts
2002-03	33
2003-04	11
2009	11
2013	14

Maharashtra frequently experiences drought conditions like other parts of the country, which affects agricultural

production and economy. Long-term rainfall data between 1901 and 1990 from 90 rain gauge stations of the State were used to compute normal rainfall and the negative departures of the yearly rainfall from the normal to study the recurrence of drought and to demarcate drought-prone area of the State. A drought year is defined as a year in which the total rainfall received is less than 75 % of the normal.



Water scarcity due to frequent droughts

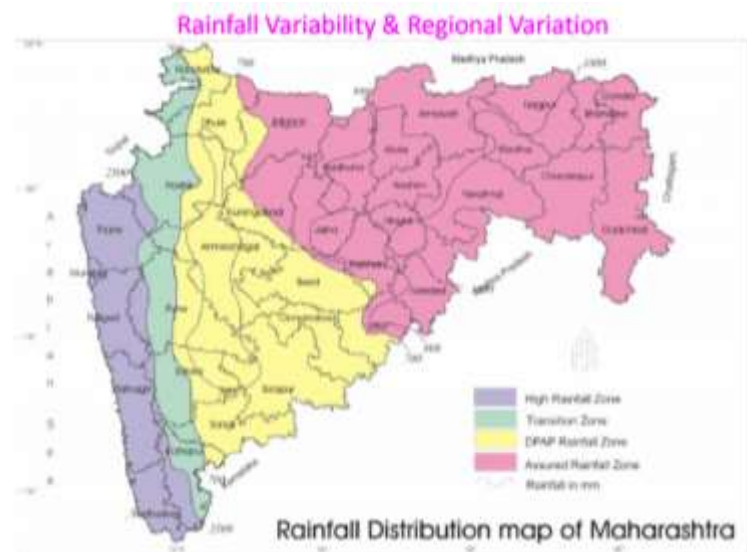
If in an area, drought conditions are experienced for 20 % or more years, then the area is classified as “*drought area*” and if the frequency is 40% or above, the area is termed *chronically “drought-prone”*.

#### Rainfall in Maharashtra:

Poor rainfall has affected all the irrigation projects in the drought affected regions of the State. The situation has become extremely difficult for the people who are dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. The live storage in all the dams has been going down since 2000 in three divisions viz. Nashik, Pune and Aurangabad.

About 70 per cent of Maharashtra land area is hot semi-arid to arid, supporting agriculture that is largely dependent upon monsoon rainfall. The annual rainfall in Maharashtra state varies from 400 mm to 6000 mm. The average annual rainfall is around 1300 mm. About 85% rainfall is received during southwest monsoon confined to only 3 to 4 months (June to September) of the year. The number of rainy days generally varies from 40 in the scarcity zone to 100 in the heavy rainfall zone. The Deccan plateau of Maharashtra constitutes 50% of the drought-prone area of the state. 12% of the population lives in drought-prone areas.

Once in 5 years, deficient rainfall is reported.



Severe drought conditions occur once every 8-9 years. In terms of severity, Western Maharashtra has been the worst affected region, with almost all the districts except Kolhapur reeling under the impact of drought Marathwada, Osmanabad and Beed Districts are more seriously affected, whereas in Khandesh, Ahmednagar Districts are prone to frequent spells of drought.

#### Ground Water Resources in Maharashtra:

The estimation of dynamic ground water resources of Maharashtra has been done for the year 2007-2008 by Ground Water Surveys and Development Agency (GSDA) in collaboration with CGWB as per the recommendations of GEC 1997 Methodology. As per the norms, watershed has been considered as the unit for the assessment of ground water resources. Each watershed has again been sub-divided into three sub-units viz; command, non-command and poor quality sub units. The total number of watersheds in the State is 1531, which have been sub-divided into 2405 assessment sub units (command-855, non-command - 1497 and poor quality



### The Paani Foundation:

After receiving enormous success, love and appreciation for the three seasons of 'Satyamev Jayate,' the team of 'Satyamev Jayate' has launched the Paani Foundation. The project is being helmed by Satyajit Bhatkal (CEO, Paani Foundation) and Reena Dutta (COO, Paani Foundation).

Paani Foundation is a not-for-profit company set up by Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao in early 2016 in order to work towards creating a drought-free Maharashtra. The Foundation's team comprises of the core team members of the Satyamev Jayate show.

### **Objective**

- To communicate, impart knowledge and bring about a change in outlook among people at the grass root level about water conservation and watershed management.
- To create a movement of people to solve their own crises through their involvement.
- To work for solving the water crisis in association with the Government of Maharashtra.

### **Aim**

- Satyamev Jayate Water Cup is to create a people's movement for a better future. It is the first step in a longer journey of trying to solve the water problem of Maharashtra. It will also act as an opportunity for the Paani Foundation team to learn along with the villagers.



### **What does the foundation do?**

The Foundation focuses on, to eliminate water crises in the state of Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra has launched the ambitious “Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyaan” to work on watershed management at the village level. Several NGOs and corporates have adopted villages and are constructing local water conservation works for this purpose.

Paani Foundation believes that it is the people themselves who have the greatest power and capacity to solve the problem of water. If people are convinced and motivated, they will find the land, the money, the know-how, the labour and whatever else is required to harvest and manage their water. This approach offers the real possibility of a mammoth and rapid scale-up of the effort to solve the water crisis.

Concretely, the Foundation is working on three major faces:

1. Motivation: People must be convinced that localized rainwater harvesting and watershed management is the way to ensure water security. Farmers, industrialists, citizens of every walk of life – adults and children – everyone will have to be part of the movement. Every person must be convinced that he or she has a role to play in this and that this role can be played easily and joyfully.



- Access funds through crowdsourcing.
- Access help from the government.
- Access mentors and volunteers

### About 'SatyamevJayate Water Cup'



The Foundation aims to use every form of mass media and digital media to motivate people by entertaining them, educating them and emotionally drawing them into this movement.

2. Training: The Foundation is working towards training five persons per village in 30,000 drought-prone villages in Maharashtra to work on watershed management. This will entail training nearly 1.5 lakh people totally.



### Teaming for fight against drought

This training will have two key components. The first is the technical aspects of watershed management and the second is the leadership challenge which, at heart, is the challenge of getting people together and united for this task.

3. A Platform for Resources: The Foundation aims to create a digital platform that will enable people to:

- Access technical information from peers and from experts.

### Process

The emphasis is on self-selection rather than selection by the Paani Foundation or the Government. It was a pilot which were enabled the foundation to scale up and conduct the 'cup' on a larger scale in the future.

The Advisory Board of Paani Foundation consists of Ratan Tata, Mukesh Ambani, Nita Ambani, Sachin Tendulkar, Deepak Parekh, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Baba Kalyani, Amit Kalyani, Anu Aga, Rajiv Bajaj, Avinash Pol, Shri Popatrao Pawar, Svati Chakravarty, Atul Kulkarni, Rajkumar Hirani, Paani Foundation has been started by Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao. The Directors of the company are Rajiv Luthra, Anand Desai, and B. Shrinivas. The partner of Paani Foundation is WOTR.

### Process Flow and Schedule'

Letters had written by Paani Foundation to every gram panchayat in the selected talukas inviting them to participate in the contest. The contest was also being publicized using local cable networks, local newspapers, social media, digital media and posters. Gram panchayats could confirm their participation in the contest by Post or send an email. The endorsed by the Gram Sabha, the Resolution of the panchayat were asked to provide

An additional condition for participation was that every participating village must, through the Panchayat, nominate 5 members who supposed to be sent for training for the contest. Villages were encouraged to send at least two youth and two women. The training was free of cost.

Paani Foundation provided a four day residential

training for groups of 30 villagers at a time. The training was in field schools located in villages that have successfully carried out watershed management.

The contest was for a specific time period of 45 days between April 15 and May 31. All participating villages had access to a project co-ordinator from the Paani Foundation and a technical expert from WOTR (knowledge partners).

#### First Year (2016):

The first edition of the Water Cup was restricted to three districts and within those three districts, in one taluka each. The talukas were Koregaon Taluka, in Satara District (Western Maharashtra) Warud Taluka, in Amravati District (Vidarbha) Ambajogai Taluka, in Beed District (Marathwada). Within these three talukas, all gram panchayats were invited to take part.

After June 1, the contesting villages evaluated by experts to see the quantity and quality of watershed management work done as also efforts to conserve water. The first prize was Rs 50 lac, second was Rs 30 lac and the third prize was Rs 20 lac.



Kakadda  
Arvi taluka

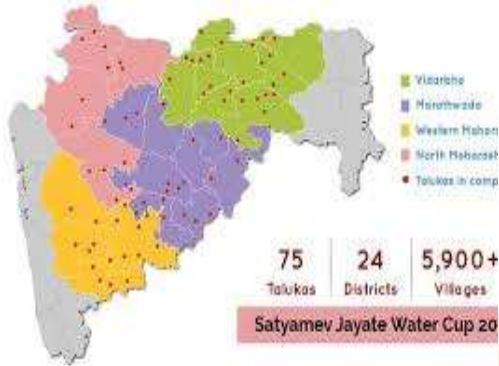


Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and Aamir Khan at Satyamev Jayate Water Cup award ceremony. Velu village won the first prize 2016.

#### Second Year (2017):

#### Third Year (2018):

This year the competition tenure for Satyamev Jayate Water Cup is from 8th April to 22nd May 2018. The top three villages will get a cash prize of Rs. 75 lakhs, Rs. 50 lakhs and Rs. 40 lakhs respectively. In addition, the top village from each taluka will get a cash prize of Rs. 10 lakhs. The total prize money which the villages stand to win in the competition is nearly Rs. Ten crores.



Satyamev Jayate Water Cup is a competition between different villages to see who can do the best work for watershed management and water conservation in the period of the competition. As part of the competition, Paani Foundation will train the villagers in the science of watershed development. These villagers will then participate in the Satyamev Jayate Water Cup. The 45-day long competition involves ‘Shramdan,’ (voluntary labour) in building important structures and thus, water storage capacities. Every revenue village in the selected talukas is eligible to participate. Participation is based on self-selection and the application form needs to be sent by the Gram Panchayat.



### Facts and Figures

#### Findings:

- “This is the biggest people’s movement after independence,”
- “In most villages, this is turning out to be a people’s movement. The rest won’t be difficult. If all villagers work hard for two to three years, we will not suffer water shortages for 50 years,”
- “We want to improve the lives of those who live here,
- The percentage of work that is completed depends on their unity and tempo,”repared by



During the course of the competition, physical structures worth Rs. 13 crore were constructed through donations in just Ambajogai taluka; these have helped in creating a water storage capacity of crores of litres.

### Conclusion:

Paani Foundation's work is amazingly unique. First, it believes staunchly in community-based development and has designed programs accordingly. Right knowledge and right action is motivating people. This knowledge, explained in simple terms, is understood and disseminated from village to village.

Second, the foundation's strategy of empowering stakeholders with knowledge and motivation is more result-oriented than the subsidy and sops approach to development. It is likely to raise a non-political rural leadership that is badly needed. Such opportunities don't exist in the subsidy-sops system.



### Future Strategy:

- Paani Foundation believes that if we motivate and give knowledge to the people and they decide to change themselves then no one can hold them back
- Once the rains shower the earth, the hope in the hearts of communities will turn into conviction. That itself will be motivation to carry out the rest of the work.”

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