



Raintree Newsletter

Dignity and well-being for planet and people

The official newsletter of Raintree Foundation

Raintree Foundation launches a special awareness campaign on prevention of forest fire involving 9 villages through public participation



Raintree Foundation has been implementing a community-based forest fire management project in nine villages of Velhe taluka for the last two years. This year, the project is placing more emphasis on an awareness program, and the locals have responded positively. People are taking initiative in forest fire control work, and for this purpose, a special session on forest fire management is being organized at the village level in each village. Raintree Foundation's campaign involves conducting workshops, distributing informational materials, and organizing training sessions in collaboration with local authorities, forest department officials, and other stakeholders. The focus of the campaign is on educating villagers on how to prevent forest fires by adopting sustainable agricultural practices, avoiding the use of fire for land clearing, and properly disposing of cigarette butts and other flammable waste. So far, 233 personnel have participated in this, and separate sessions are also being held with different stakeholder groups in the village with the help of Environmental Community Resource Person.

Special sessions have been organized with women and farmers self-help groups. School students are also helping to convey the important message of forest fire management to their families. In order to make them realize the threat of forest fire to the biodiversity of the area, they are being awakened through storytelling. Information has been conveyed to a total of 139 children in 10 schools. Additionally, the Raintree Foundation conducted essay and painting competitions in all the schools in the nine villages so that children could learn how their surroundings had changed after forest fires. This helped to develop the children's mindsets towards the environment.

In collaboration with Raintree Foundation and the Forest Department of Bhor, a one-day workshop on controlling forest fires was conducted for the forest guards of the Bhor and Velhe forest divisions. The workshop was held at the office of the Nasrapur Forest Department and was attended by Smt. S. G. Bhong, Forest Conservator, Velhe, Nasrapur, along with the Bhor forest range officers. A total of 55 forest guards participated in the workshop, and they are performing their duties effectively as volunteers, helping to eliminate myths about wildfires. At the Gram Panchayat level, 29 members have been made aware of this. To maintain healthy and friendly relations between the villages and the Forest Department, routine coordination is conducted.

Forest fires leave the soil exposed and eroded, which decreases its quality and fertility. Wild animals, birds, and other creatures also migrate due to forest fires, and they enter towns and neighborhoods, causing injuries to people, loss of farm animals' lives, and crop destruction.

This has led to an increase in human-wildlife conflict in recent years. Furthermore, development work in forest areas causes damage as well, due to the open land and rainwater coming into direct contact with soil particles and being carried away by the water. As a result, the amount of sand in rivers, dams, and lakes rises, which affects the way they function, and water storage capacity starts to decline. Raintree Foundation aims to combat these issues through its community-based forest fire management project.

Wildfires often spread beyond the borders of two villages due to overgrown grass and bushes, making the fire difficult to control. In such situations, removing the netted area before the possibility of the fire starting is a wise choice. This helps preserve every aspect of biodiversity, including wildlife, insects, animals, birds, trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses in the forest, while also making forest fires easier to extinguish. Raintree Foundation is making special efforts to improve the participation of villagers in forest fire management by spreading public awareness among the people. With the support of the 'Gunjal Maval Durg Rakshak Sangha,' the foundation is undertaking special awareness campaigns and training sessions to educate people on sustainable agricultural practices and forest fire prevention.



Effects of forest fires:

1. The loss of many native tree species poses a severe threat to the environment. In these circumstances, fire-tolerant trees and wildflowers are selected. The ash produced by forest fires has a damaging effect on the natural environment.
2. Fire affects environmental conditions. It increases temperature in the region.
3. Wildlife gets in danger. Birds, ground-nesting birds, and reptiles are affected.

The following actions can significantly reduce the risk of forest fires:

1. Forest waste should be burned regularly.
2. There should be suitable means for transporting fallen trees.
3. Forests should not be used as places of storage for fuel.
4. Forest fires should be reduced using measures.
5. Highly trained workers should take care of fire prone sections of the forest.
6. Forest rules should be strictly followed.
7. Tourists should be made aware of the benefits of disciplined tourism.

Creating a Village Free of Forest Fires: Understanding the Significance of Fire Lines



What is a fire line?

A fire line is a line formed by removing and burning leaves, grass, trees, and bushes in order to control and stop fire from spreading from one side to the other. It is also known as "Jalpatta."

The primary function of fire lines is to safeguard forest areas. There are two main techniques for generating these lines. One is on the inside, and the other is outside. Farmers, however, can draw these fire lines to stop causing damage to their own farms, trees, animals, and property.

Outer Fire Line: A fire line drawn around the outer edges of the place that needs to be protected. If it is to be drawn in a forest area, the entire forest's boundary must be outlined. Similarly, if private property is to be safeguarded, a fire line has to be drawn on the boundaries of that area.

Inner Fire Line: A fire line must first be drawn around the protected area's boundaries before being constructed inside specific locations. The major objective of inside fire lining is to stop the fire from spreading after it begins to grow from inside to other areas. It is feasible to draw a boundary inside a huge private area. In this case, it's important to remember to draw fire lines on the outer boundaries of any hillsides if the surroundings are mountainous. As a result, the fire that started on one side of the mountain is unlikely to spread to the other area.

The fire lines must adhere to the guidelines recommended by the forest department. For the outer perimeter of the protected area, a 12-meter wide fire line should be drawn, while a 6-meter wide fire line is recommended for the natural reconstruction area, and a 4-meter wide fire line for the sapling forest and its interior. Additionally, a 12-meter wide fire line should be drawn on both sides of the road and on the hill sides. The length of the mesh lines is not predetermined and should be determined based on the specific area being protected.

The consideration that should be taken by individuals who participate in extinguishing wildfires -

- Always keep a bottle of drinking water nearby
- When extinguishing wildfires, it is advisable to wear cotton clothing as synthetic fabrics quickly catch fire and stick to the skin
- Community participation is of utmost importance in extinguishing wildfires. Firefighting is not just the responsibility of a single entity, but typically requires the involvement of more than 8 to 10 individuals. Even forest rangers are unable to extinguish wildfires on their own, which is why it is crucial for communities to provide necessary assistance in firefighting efforts

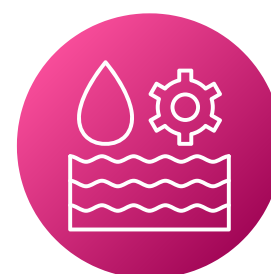
Measures and precautions to be taken while drawing fire lines:

- it is advisable to cut the vegetation along fire lines during cooler months when there is more moisture in the air and on the ground. This can help reduce the risk of wildfires by creating a fire break and reducing the amount of dry fuel available to burn
- it is important to establish guidelines on both sides. Use a tape measure to ensure that the proper distance is maintained as you draw the guideline. This will help ensure that the fire line is wide enough to effectively prevent the spread of a wildfire
- Once the grass, cane litter, and bushes have been neatly cut and cleared to create the fire line, they should be placed in a designated area along the middle of the fire line to dry
- Mechanical grass cutters may be used when necessary to create a fire line
- Grass, bushes, and compost that have been cut and cleared to create a fire line should be burned during the month of January. If the weather is dry, burning should be completed no later than February 15th. When burning, it is important to take extra precautions to prevent the fire from spreading to other areas
- Using a blower to create clear guidelines for a fire line can be an effective method. The blower can be used to quickly clean up any excess compost, grass, and waste that has been collected during the process
- To effectively control a fire, a fire line should be divided lengthwise into several sections, and each section should be burned. This will help prevent the fire from spreading beyond the designated fire line and provide additional containment
- To ensure that the fire is kept under control, it is important to burn each section of the fire line one at a time. The fire should not be started on the next section until the previous one has been completely burned and turned into ash
- When creating a fire line, it can be helpful to have teams stand on either side of wet tree branches. This can assist in burning out any excess fuel and maintaining control of the fire away from the fire line
- The Conservator of Forests should ideally have supervision and direction over the fire lines
- Wood sticks and pieces that are present in the fire line can take a long time to burn and continue to release smoke. It is important to collect all of these pieces and burn them completely to prevent the fire from reigniting and spreading back into the forest
- Even after the fire line has been established and the burning process is complete, leaf litter can still collect on the line over time. It is important to regularly clean the fire line to ensure that it remains clear of debris and fuel that could potentially reignite the fire

Water management through public participation

Expert Column

Uma Aslekar
Executive Director
ACWADAM, Pune



Water is an essential component of the environment, and it is impossible to separate it from the existence of humans, animals, birds, plants, and agriculture. However, changing rainfall patterns, increasing population, urbanization, and industrialization are all contributing factors that affect the availability of water in the environment. Both urban and rural areas are affected, and especially in April-May, water scarcity becomes a pressing issue.

In India, we receive rainfall for about 4 to 5 months, and we depend on it for water supply throughout the year. Rainwater that falls gets absorbed into the ground, fills up wells, rivers, and reservoirs. Some of it also gets stored in pits, ponds, and catchment areas. This water is used for drinking, daily use, for animals, for agriculture, and for industrial purposes. Due to changing rainfall patterns in recent years and the increasing demand for water, there is growing concern about water scarcity and the need for water conservation measures.

Today, we are heavily dependent on groundwater for drinking water and irrigation in agriculture. We utilize groundwater for various purposes through wells, borewells, and canals. However, due to excessive extraction of water from the ground and over-reliance on groundwater for irrigation, the water table is constantly declining, especially during summers. This has resulted in the drying up of wells, borewells, canals, and rivers. Fetching water by walking long distances, sometimes in extreme weather conditions, for drinking water has become a daily reality for many women. Even during the monsoon season, if water is not managed properly, there can be severe waterlogging issues due to improper planning. This affects agriculture, industries, and livestock farming. Therefore, implementing appropriate water management practices can reduce the risk of water scarcity and waterlogging to a great extent.

Water management means managing the usage and expenditure of water. It is important to have information about the availability of water in our village and our water requirement in order to manage the expenditure of water. The same planning and measurement that we do for our financial expenses, we also need to do for the allocation of water. Just as we budget our expenses, we also need to budget our water usage, as water availability and availability of water sources vary for various purposes, such as drinking water, irrigation, wells, and borewells. The primary source of all water is rainfall received during the year.

Therefore, it is necessary to measure all these sources to understand the availability of water. Recording the rainfall received daily is a simple task that can be done even by school students. Through this, we can accurately determine how much rainfall has occurred in our village, and accordingly manage the use of water in our water reservoirs. For example, if your village has an area of 500 hectares and it has received 1000 mm of rainfall, it means that 50,000 cubic meters or 5 crore liters of water have become available in your village that year. Some of this water flows into drains, some percolates into the ground, and some accumulates on the surface. Water that accumulates on the surface flows into the water reservoirs, resulting in an increase in the water level in wells after the rainy season. However, after the monsoon, just as the water level in the wells rises, it also decreases in the water reservoirs due to evaporation.

The rate of water level fluctuation varies across different reservoirs. Thus, assessing the water level in each reservoir can help estimate the amount of water transported underground during the monsoon. Additionally, evaluating the reservoir walls and water level can guide the adoption of water conservation measures. Furthermore, this connection can offer insights into the quality of water and its safety.

In order to ensure sustainable and safe water supply, the involvement of the village community is crucial. Based on the rainfall estimate from the previous year and monitoring of water levels in wells and reservoirs post-monsoon season, it is essential to convene a gram sabha meeting twice a year on October 2nd and January 26th. During this meeting, the community should collectively make decisions regarding water management practices, water conservation methods, and distribution of drinking water. The participation of both women and men in the process of information gathering and decision-making is vital. With the assistance of scientific data collected, effective water management plans, including rainwater harvesting, can be developed to ensure water availability even during dry spells.

Training Program on Poultry Farming for Villagers in Project Area



Raintree Foundation is taking active steps towards providing new employment opportunities to the people in the project area. In a joint effort with Science Ashram, a two-day training program on poultry farming was conducted for individuals from nine villages.

During the training program, participants were informed about the significance of the poultry farming business, different types of chickens, identifying them, and managing the shed. The trainees were also educated about dealing with chicken diseases and their management, vaccination, proper management of chicken feed, reproduction process, and necessary precautions. Moreover, the operation of a machine for egg incubation was demonstrated, and participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clear their doubts. Villagers who aspire to start a poultry farming business in the future actively participated in the training, and they received detailed information on a new subject. Raintree Foundation plans to conduct further training programs on various topics in the upcoming period to provide updated knowledge and information to the community for their benefit.

Raintree Foundation's Watershed Ecology Steering Committee Educates Community Resource Persons on Sustainable Landscape Management



On February 16, the Watershed Ecology Steering Committee of the Raintree Foundation conducted an educational session for Community Resource Persons (CRPs), Field, and Program Team to discuss the interconnections between Groundwater Management, Biodiversity Conservation, and Ecosystem Services in the Velhe landscape. The objective of the session was to educate CRPs on the role they play in protecting, conserving, and restoring the ecosystem.

The session was attended by 40 participants, including Dr. Himanshu Kulkarni, Dr. Aparna Watve, and Dr. Gurudas Nulkar, who are renowned experts in their respective fields. Leena Dandekar, the founder of the Raintree Foundation, opened the session by highlighting the importance of data monitoring in understanding the interlinkages and interconnectedness of our ecosystem. She emphasized the role of humans in protecting and conserving the ecosystem around them. Dr. Kulkarni, who has 40 years of experience studying groundwater, provided a historical overview of water, particularly groundwater in India, and then focused on the Northern Western Ghats. He emphasized the significance of data collection through observation, experience, and measurement to understand climate change in a localized context.

Dr. Watve, a renowned botanist with over three decades of experience, presented the different habitats and ecosystems in Maharashtra and explained the importance of conservation of these species and their alignment with livelihood opportunities for the community.

Dr. Nulkar, who has worked in Environment Education and ecosystem services for about 25 years, painted a picture of circular economy and the value of every resource that is available in the ecosystem, from the air we breathe to the clean water we drink and the nutrient cycle of the soil useful for agriculture.

The educational session aimed to integrate watershed works with biodiversity conservation and was an eye-opener for the CRPs, igniting curiosity among them to know the interlinkages deeply. They took a keen interest in absorbing this knowledge from the experts and left more determined and motivated to achieve the long-term vision of Sustainable Landscape Management that Raintree has with the community.

Biodiversity Management Committee Members Tour Konkan Region for Environmental Conservation Insights



Raintree Foundation conducted a study tour for Biodiversity Management Committee members as a part of the Capacity Building and Development Project. The tour aimed to provide information about the role and work of the committee in environmental and biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihood development, and environmental conservation through public participation. 25 committee members participated in the three-day tour, which took place from March 19 to March 21, 2023, and covered nine villages of five Gram Panchayats in Velhe Taluka.

The study tour included visits to sustainable environment activities in the villages of Anjarle, Velas, and Kalinje in Konkan. During the visit, the Biodiversity Management Committee members learned about the 'Turtle Festival' initiated by the committee in Anjarle village to conserve the endangered 'Olive Ridley' species of sea turtle. They also witnessed the conservation efforts of the local people in Velas village and the enthusiasm of the women in Kalinje village, who have created tourism by protecting the Kandal forest. On the last day of the tour, the Biodiversity Management Committee members visited the ancient Devrai in Tamhini Valley, where they were briefed on the importance of conservation. The study tour has left the Biodiversity Management Committees in the five village panchayats of Velhe taluka excited to implement various activities for environment conservation in the future, and they will soon receive the first phase of training in this regard.

Raintree Foundation Holds Meeting to Review Fish Farming Progress



Raintree Foundation held a meeting with local farmers who have started fish farming in their farms to review their progress. The meeting, held under the technical guidance of Jaljivika Sanstha, addressed the problems faced by the farmers, as well as their solutions. Oxygen machines were also demonstrated and provided to the farmers as needed. During the meeting, the oxygen level in the farm ponds was checked, and the growth and weight of the fish were measured. The farmers were also informed on proper food management and disease prevention measures. Oxygen machines were installed in two ponds. Since the beginning of the fish farming project, farmers have been closely monitoring the growth and quality of the fish. They have taken precautions to increase the oxygen level in the water and keep it clean to prevent the spread of disease. Raintree Foundation has provided continuous support and guidance throughout the project.

The foundation plans to hold regular meetings to ensure the success of the project and support the farmers in their efforts towards sustainable and profitable fish farming.

Raintree Foundation Empowers Women in 9 Villages of Velhe Taluka through Self-Employment Opportunities



Raintree Foundation is dedicated to promoting environmental balance and sustainable landscape management in 9 villages of Velhe taluka. Alongside this, the foundation is working towards uplifting the economic status of families in the area. For the past 3 years, Raintree has been undertaking various activities to provide self-employment opportunities to women in the project area. In this regard, Raintree has been introducing women to different industries and taking them on study tours. To promote women's industry in rural areas, orders of 10 kg of Kurdaya and Papad each were given to women's groups in the villages of Ghavar, Lavhi, and Meravane in February. Each group, consisting of 7 women, prepared 10 kg of food per group in 8 days in a very efficient manner. These women from rural areas had never prepared such items before from a business point of view, so this experience provided them with first-hand knowledge. In the future, Raintree will provide support and guidance to these women to make their products available in the market.

Study Sessions Conducted on Gender Equality and Women's Health

Raintree Foundation has been working diligently to raise awareness on gender equality in nine villages within their project area over the past few years. It is crucial for women to have equal rights as men to foster a healthy, progressive, and equitable society. Raintree has taken the necessary steps to instill this idea at the grassroots level by educating and informing the local communities on the importance of gender equality. Through our primary survey, we have identified two areas that require more focus: patriarchal culture and sexual and reproductive health. Currently, sessions are being conducted in the villages to provide more information on these topics to women and girls. Thus far, 212 women and 154 girls have participated in these sessions, and the number continues to grow.

Before starting the sessions on these topics, we encountered many challenges. The issues of patriarchy, menstruation, and gender roles were never discussed in these villages before, and it was difficult for women and girls to openly address these sensitive topics. However, as the sessions progressed, we observed a positive change in the participants' attitudes and willingness to engage in open discussions on these subjects.

After conducting discussions with women in the villages, we discovered several important issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, there is a lack of awareness about menstruation among girls, and it is considered a taboo topic. Women who are menstruating are forced to live separately and are not allowed to enter the kitchen or eat with their families, which also affects their ability to work and earn wages.

Additionally, women had limited knowledge about menstrual products, such as pads, and there was a lack of awareness regarding menstrual problems and diseases. Another critical issue identified was the gender pay gap, where women are paid less than men for the same work. This issue has been largely ignored, and there is a need to address it.

Through Raintree's "Mukta" program, women were taught about menstrual cups, which changed their perspective on menstrual hygiene. The program has provided women with a platform to raise their questions and concerns freely, leading to more open discussions.

"The sessions conducted by Raintree were highly informative. Abortion, male and female infertility, and IVR were the topics that I comprehended during the sessions. Previously, I had no knowledge about these subjects. As an Anganwadi worker, I used to receive numerous questions from people, but I was unable to answer them due to lack of awareness. However, now I have



gained valuable insights into these significant topics, which has enabled me to answer questions confidently. If we are unaware of our bodies and health, we cannot live a healthy life." - Sindhi Rasal, Dadawdi village



"In schools and colleges, topics like menstruation and reproductive organs were never openly discussed. Even teachers were hesitant to talk about these subjects, so we could not learn about them properly. However, Raintree provided us with a thorough understanding of these topics and explained them in a simple manner. We were able to ask questions freely and clarify our doubts. This helped me in my college studies." - Manasi Bishwas



"Attending these sessions was very beneficial for me, especially when it came to my studies. When I started college, I had questions about topics related to menstruation and reproductive organs, but my teachers were hesitant to discuss them openly due to their taboo nature. This lack of information made it difficult for me to understand women's health. However, the knowledge I gained from Raintree's sessions helped me to better understand these topics and I was able to ask questions freely and clear my doubts." - Alisha Sheikh

Rotary Club of Chinchwad extends support to Raintree Foundation's Bank Sakhi initiative in rural Maharashtra



Last year in December 2022, Swati Kumbhar of Sakhar village was selected as a Bank Sakhi by Raintree Foundation after receiving proper training. The aim was to provide banking and financial inclusion services to the people of 9 villages in the project area. This initiative not only helps rural communities access banking services but also provides employment opportunities for women like Swati.

Swati Kumbhar, an ambitious woman who wanted to set up a small-scale enterprise, had no capital to invest. Raintree Foundation approached the Rotary Club of Chinchwad, Pune to support Swati Kumbhar in this initiative. Mr. Mahaveer Satyanna and Shri. Prasad Ganpule from Rotary Club Chinchwad extended their helping hand by sanctioning a grant of Rs 80,000 to Swati Tai, which she will use to purchase necessary equipment like IPoS machines and other capital for Bank Sakhi work. In addition, the Rotary Club of Chinchwad will also assist Bank Sakhi Swati Tai with the supply of office supplies like printers and computers to diversify her income and provide additional services to her customers. Raintree Foundation will continue to provide a monthly stipend to Swati Kumbhar until she has a sustainable source of income.

This partnership between Raintree Foundation, the Rotary Club of Chinchwad, and Bank Sakhi Swati Kumbhar is a prime example of how financial inclusion and support can help rural entrepreneurs thrive. The Bank Sakhi program not only provides banking services but also empowers rural women to become agents of change in their communities.

Important

Bank Sakhi initiative was explained to the elderly, destitute pensioners, women and disabled persons in several villages of Chirmodi, Ghawar, Gunjwane, Fanshi, Lavhi, Meravane, Avli and Dadwadi. Public expressed satisfaction with Bank of Maharashtra's service being made available to them. The program also interacted with farmers and women self-help groups. The Bank Sakhi banking service has been running for the last 3 months and is getting a positive response from the people.

Raintree Foundation conducts workshop to engage youth in environmental conservation



Raintree Foundation held a one-day workshop on "People's Biodiversity Register and Youth's Participation in Forest Fire Management" in nine villages of their project area. The event saw 26 young individuals taking part in the workshop. The project recognizes that the youth of today are the future of tomorrow and an important part of environmental conservation. The workshop aimed to equip them with the skills to add creativity to their regular work and maintain their village's and locality's environment. The workshop focused on creating the People's Biodiversity Register and increasing youth participation in forest fire management. The foundation plans to continue efforts to increase the participation of the youth in environmental conservation work by providing more training to build their capacity in the next year.

Let's Talk About Mental Health



Bapu Trust, a partner organization of Raintree Foundation, recently hosted a Mental Health Awareness program in Pune. The event brought together nine social organizations from Maharashtra working on mental health, along with Raintree. Discussions at the village level centered around mental health and the rights of persons with disabilities. Participants also discussed how mental health work can be incorporated into village development initiatives. Bapu Trust has been working on mental health for 22 years.

Raintree Foundation has been focusing on mental health at the village level for the past two years through awareness programs and training. During the Mental Health Awareness event, discussions focused on the challenges faced by organizations working on mental health at the village level, such as securing funding and overcoming work-related difficulties. The program also recognized organizations doing exemplary work in the field. Participants from Jharkhand, Bastar, Pune, and Madhya Pradesh presented their work, while folk songs and dances from these areas were also performed. Each organization's team performed songs related to mental health. A team of four people from Raintree, including Community Resource Person (CRP) Nasima, Rupali, Vidya, Sunil, and Field Officer Ankita, participated in the program. Through the event, participants gained knowledge and insight into how to raise awareness about mental health issues through art.

The program boosted the confidence of Raintree's CRPs, allowing them to present their work to others and participate in seminars. For the first time, they had the opportunity to leave their everyday responsibilities behind and engage with strangers on new topics for four days. Participants also experienced the importance of taking time away from their daily work and had the opportunity to learn about art-based therapy, as well as see languages, folk songs, and dances from other states.

Environmental Education Program for Children



As part of its environmental program, Raintree Foundation collaborated with Srishti Sanvardhan Sanstha to conduct an environment education program for children in fifth to seventh grade. From January to March, sessions were held in five schools on topics such as the miracles of nature, biodiversity, and the side effects of plastic. In total, 194 children were provided with environmental education through these sessions. The program aimed to teach children about the importance of biodiversity and changes in nature, in addition to their regular schooling. The sessions helped to gradually change the behavior of children towards the environment and make them responsible citizens. The girls of Zilla Parishad Primary School in Sakhar village presented the information they learned to as many people as possible by performing a play about avoiding the use of plastics in the annual meeting. The success of this program has motivated us to continue placing special emphasis on environmental education in the coming year.

Biodiversity Management Committees reconstituted in 9 villages of Raintree Foundation project area for conservation efforts



Biodiversity Management Committees have been reconstituted at the Gram Panchayat level in 5 major villages of Rajgad area of Velhe taluka and surrounding villages in the Northern Western Ghats. The committees have been established to protect and conserve biodiversity in the area. The Gram Panchayats of Sakhar, Chiramodi, Gunjwane, Merawane, and Lavhi are included in this initiative. The Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board and Rural Development Department have constituted these committees as per the Maharashtra State Biodiversity Rules 2008 and Biodiversity Act 2002. Seven members have been appointed from the Gram Sabha and Gram Sevak as Secretary in the committee at the Gram Panchayat level. These committees will function as Development Committees of the Gram Sabha as per Section 49 of the Maharashtra Gram Panchayat Act 1958.

The reconstitution of these committees will aid in the effective implementation of the Biodiversity Act and focus on capacity building to act as the core committee of the Raintree Foundation Environment Project in the future. This initiative is limited to the state of Maharashtra and these committees have been granted extensive powers. The establishment of these committees will play a crucial role in preserving and conserving the local biodiversity.

Health Tips

Tips to Beat the Heat: Stay Hydrated, Take Care of Yourself and Avoid Cold Drinks



Summer is here, and with the scorching heat, it's important to take care of your health. Whether you're going out for work or leisure, it's important to keep yourself hydrated and avoid getting sick. Here are some health tips to keep in mind during summer:

- 1. Drink plenty of water:** It's important to drink plenty of water during the day to keep yourself hydrated. However, it's important to wait for at least five minutes after coming out of the sun before drinking water. Drinking too much water at once can cause problems, so make sure to take small sips at regular intervals. Also, make sure to drink plain bottled or filtered water instead of water from the fridge or cooler, as it can cause a sore throat.
- 2. Avoid direct cool air:** After coming home or office from the hot sun, avoid getting direct cool air from the air conditioner or fan immediately. This is because when you sweat, the sweat gets reabsorbed in the body and it's not good for your health. Instead, wash your face, hands, and feet with water and let your body adapt to the environment before turning on the fan or air conditioner at a slow speed.
- 3. Take care of your energy levels:** During summer, we often feel tired and exhausted after being out in the sun for a while. If you feel this way, put jaggery or granulated sugar in your mouth, or drink lemon or kokum syrup. This will help replenish your energy levels and prevent you from feeling dizzy or faint.
- 4. Wear comfortable clothing:** Wear loose, light-colored, and breathable clothes during summer to help keep your body cool. Avoid tight clothes or dark colors, as they can trap heat and make you feel uncomfortable.

By following these simple health tips, you can stay healthy and comfortable during summer. So, stay hydrated, protect your skin, and take care of your energy levels to make the most of this season!

Raintree Foundation Celebrates International Women's Day in Velhe

On March 8, the Raintree Foundation celebrated International Women's Day with great enthusiasm in the project area of Velhe. The organization organized a one-day event in Gunjwane village with the intention of giving women time for themselves from their daily routine, enjoying activities like songs, games, chats, dancing, and to felicitate all the women who contribute to the development of the village and help in Raintree work. A total of 100 women participated in the function, including the Raintree Foundation team, Anganwadi workers from 9 villages, Asha workers, secretaries, and women from other self-help groups. The program was started by the Anganwadi sevaks with devotional songs, after which all the Gram Sanghs were felicitated. Women from all the villages performed folk songs of their respective villages. This special program by women for women was held in a playful atmosphere. The program consisted of games, competitions, prize distribution, and refreshments. Putting aside their daily household and farm chores, women took time for themselves and celebrated this day by laughing and playing with each other. Raintree's male CRPs and other male employees enthusiastically participated in the organization of the event. The participation of women in the household and on village level is crucial for progress. Raintree Foundation is committed to promoting gender equality in society.



**Workshops and events during
May - July 2023**

Livelihood -
Poultry Farming
SRI Rice Farming

Environment -
International Biodiversity Day
Awareness Workshop for the Youth

Watershed -
Shramadaan
Training on ground water

Mental Health -
Training for Anganwadi and Asha
Workers

Gender -
Career Guidance for the Youth



Photo of a farm pond from our project area. Raintree Foundation has initiated the project farm pond. These farm ponds are proving to be beneficial for farmers in ensuring water availability for agriculture and farm-based livelihoods during the post-monsoon season.