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Green Fields, Bright Futures: SMA Advances Rural Communities with Solar Irrigation

by  Shailza Mittal, 29. Feb. 2024, [2 Comments](#)



SMA India collaborated with Gram Oorja and NGO Shashwat Trust Junnar to build a solar-powered water pump in Gadewadi village located in Sahyadri hills in Maharashtra. The project helped local farmers overcome the perennial challenge of lack of irrigation.

Gadewadi village is located in a region renowned for heavy monsoon rains, and local farmers are accustomed to cultivating paddy crops during the monsoon season. However, there was no irrigation system available, and apart from the 2-3 months of monsoons when there was rainwater to support irrigation needs, farming wasn't possible for the rest of the year due to logistical issues of pulling water from water bodies from in and around the area. As a result, farmers had to seek random jobs for a significant part of the year, and many of them worked as seasonal laborers in towns and cities, living a life of uncertainty in towns and cities, living a life of uncertainty and hardships.

Collaboration with SMA India to face this challenge

Gram Oorja Solutions Private Limited, a well-known provider of community-driven solutions for solar-powered water supply solutions to villages in off-grid or remote locations, and a local NGO, Shashwat Trust Junnar, collaborated with SMA India, to address this challenge for Gadewadi's farmers. A solar-based water pump for group irrigation was installed after extensive consultations between the local farmers, Gram Oorja and Shashwat Trust Junnar.

"After consulting the stakeholders and studying the need, we decided that a 5 HP pump would be installed, and we also embarked on constructing a pipeline distribution system that could reach ten farmers and irrigate 10 acres of land. These farmers had never cultivated a second or a third crop beyond the monsoon season, and the prospect of year-long farming was music to their ears." Nikhil Keskar, Gram Oorja, said.

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With the help of a solar pump, 1.5 hectares of land were farmed

The farmers were all on board and resolved to contribute whichever way possible to make this happen. Subsequently, the farmers not only contributed labor to digging and refilling the trenches for the pipelines but also made monetary contributions to create a fund that would be utilized towards the maintenance of the system.

"At SMA, we believe in transforming lives through sustainable solutions. The solar-powered irrigation project in Gadewadi is a testament to our commitment to rural development, breaking the cycle of hardship and inspiring positive change," said Anita Virnave, Head of Human Resources, SMA India and South East Asia.

Once the project was ready, 1.5 acres of land were initially farmed with the help of the newly installed solar pump, and 6 out of 10 farmers cultivated crops like potato, onion, fenugreek, coriander, garlic, and radishes.

The solar-powered pump is not only environmentally friendly compared to a diesel-powered pump, but the impact it has made is now playing a key role in helping the farmers and their families lead better lives. Their kids can now go to school regularly as there is no need for these farmers to move to cities for work for the better part of the year. They are now empowered to irrigate their farms even during the spells of irregular rain. In fact, the system has improved their irrigation prowess even during monsoon-fed paddy cultivation. The first year was a learning experience for the farmers, who steadily increased the area under cultivation.

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The Ripple Effects

"The success of the Gadewadi model has prompted farmers from other villages to follow suit. More than ten farmer groups have already visited Gadewadi to learn in detail about their irrigation model, and the project is serving as an inspiration for farmers throughout the region," said Budhaji Damse, Co-founder of Shashwat Trust Junnar.



Gram Dorja and Shashwar Trust Junnar, is a testimony to the power of collective effort. These farmers are living better lives now, serving as a beacon of inspiration for others to follow.

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Ake Landin

11. Apr. 2024 at 22:03

I get no data from my station at Kolmårdsgatan 20 in Norrköping only by email next dat.

Reply



Christiane Keim

16. Apr. 2024 at 11:47

Hello Ake,

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Sunny regards
Christiane

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