



## Community Participation: A means to Economic Prosperity

“Even a pebble cast in the middle of a lake creates ripples that eventually reach the shore.” - *Jeffrey G. Duarte*

Matguni , Bheemareddy Kere - YES Foundation



Bheemareddy Kere, located in Matguni village, Gudnapura Grama Panchayat, Sirsi Taluk, Uttara Kannada District. Matguni has 35 households.

Since the past three years, MANUVIKASA and YES Foundation have been jointly working towards rejuvenating lakes in Uttara Kannada, Haveri, Shivamogga Districts, through community participation.

Recollecting the days prior to lake rejuvenation, Mr. Shivananda S Madivala says, “Due to neglect and disuse, the lake was in a sorry state. People dumped garbage into the lake, making the situation worse.”

At this juncture, MANUVIKASA decided to step in. With the help of the Grama Panchayat, MANUVIKASA participated in Grama Sabha meetings, wherein they convinced the villagers about the importance of water resources, and hence, the need to rejuvenate the local lake. “In order to incorporate community participation and build a sense of ownership, we insisted that this could be done only with shared responsibilities. One of the main conditions was that while MANUVIKASA would take care of lake rejuvenation, the silt and waste soil would be cleared by the farmers,” says Mr. Manikhanta field coordinator of MANUVIKASA. Accordingly, systematic documentation and obtaining approval by the local authority was also completed. After discussing the terms and conditions by the farmers in the village, lake development work began.

“Prior to lake rejuvenation, we were not getting good crop yields. Animal husbandry could not be carried out properly, due to water problems. With lake rejuvenation, we have started mixed cropping in our lands as sufficient water is available. We are even thinking of beginning horticulture as an additional source of income,” shares Munibasappa, a farmer of the village.

Lake rejuvenation has increased



groundwater level water significantly. As a result, sufficient water is now available for irrigation. “We are extremely happy that we need not struggle for getting water for household needs, ,” says Lakshmi, of the village. Adds Kamala , “Since it is difficult to wash clothes near the lake, we would like a washing platform to be built”.

Now in Mataguni village, 23 farmers have benefitted after lake rejuvenation. With implementation of traditional rainwater harvesting methodology, agriculture has become a sustainable activity. This has helped in improving and strengthening the economic conditions of the village, and treading on the path to prosperity and progress.

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