

ADDRESSING THE LIVELIHOOD CRISIS DURING COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN

COVID-19, high unemployment, and a crumbling public health system are combining to devastate Bihar. Nalanda district, where FORRAD works, is facing a dire shortage of basic medicines, equipment, trained healthcare workers, food and work opportunities.

FORRAD has begun the distribution of food rations, basic medicines and equipment in Nalanda district, Bihar. In the weeks of working in this area, FORRAD has come to realise that what is most urgently required is the need for paid employment.

In order to do this and simultaneously restore water resources in this drought prone area, FORRAD, in collaboration with local community based organisations envisages the restoration of pynes (river flood diversion canals) in two blocks, Hilsa and Silao of Nalanda district, Bihar. Apart from generating employment, this work will have the impact of improving water availability for agriculture, livestock and households. This in turn will result in improved household income, food security and health.

Under normal circumstances, this work would have been undertaken using excavators. However, given the dire unemployment and lockdown conditions, and in response to appeals for work from the village it has been decided to undertake this restoration manually. Creating opportunities for employment within the village will not only improve the communities' financial health but also provide emotional and psychological relief during this pandemic.

The specifics of earthwork for each location/pyne will be

- Length: 1 km, Width: 4.6 m, Depth: 1 m
- Person days of work generated: 2525 @INR 200 per day (The number of days will vary depending on the soil)
- 4180 m³ of earth will be excavated, creating a standing storage capacity of 4 million litres of water.

Impact

2 km of restored pynes will improve access to irrigation for 400 acres of land, reaching approximately 200 small-holder farming and sharecropping households.

FORRAD is seeking to raise INR 1,030,000 for the restoration of 2 km of pynes.

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June, 2021