

Revived Lakhandei River to nurture communities on its banks



Alarming levels of pollution and silt caused the deterioration of Lakhandei River over the past few decades; causing depletion of ground water table and failing to provide for the irrigational needs of farmers. However, work carried out by the district administration of Sitamarhi, under the leadership of its District Magistrate, Ms. Abhilasha Kumari Sharma, the river has been revived and would soon be brimming with clean water come March 2020.

The project was a part of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to promote water conservation and rejuvenation of traditional water bodies.

Originating in Nepal, the Lakhandei River enters India in Sitamarhi district of Bihar and flows for an 18 kms stretch before flowing into Muzaffarpur and meeting the Bagmati River at Katra. During the monsoon, the river causes severe flooding in the villages of Pipra Kalyan, Khap Khoraha and Bharsand.

According to district officials, encroachment and unplanned waste disposal led to silt accumulation within the thriving river over the last decade, the existing stagnant water in shallow trenches bearing pale resemblance to its former abundance.

When the new DM of Sitamarhi took charge in August 2019, she set about meeting with the village communities and realised that 23 acres of farmland owned by small scale farmers were needed to restore the river. Meetings were held to bring awareness about the importance and benefits of the project they intended to undertake and also to obtain the

cooperation of the farmers. Having got the consent of the farmers after assuring them of adequate compensation, she got the engineers of the Water Resources Department to formulate a plan to restore the old river.



Work began soon after when wider and deeper trenches were dug and these are expected to fill with water during the forthcoming monsoon.

With the river restoration work completed from Pitambarpur to Dularpur Ghat, only the Link Channel excavation work remains, spanning barely 3 km.