

People in Lakhalgaoon village to get safe drinking water now

NASHIK : Lakhalgaoon and surrounding villages in Nashik will now have access to safer drinking water, as Monsanto Fund and NGO - Action for Food Production (AFPRO) have partnered to install a Reverse Osmosis (RO) water plant in the village. The RO plant was yesterday inaugurated in principal presence of Ramesh Misal, the Deputy District Collector, Nashik; Shefali Bhujbal, the Founder of Bhujbal Foundation, Lakhalgaoon Sarpanch Atmaram Nana Date and Kishore V K from India Vegetables R&D Lead, Monsanto.

Ramesh Misal, while inaugurating the RO water plant, said, "I applaud Monsanto Fund and AFPRO for taking this initiative to improve the drinking water conditions in Lakhalgaoon. This RO plant will help provide healthy and safe drinking water to the local communities which will contribute to better health conditions."

Atmaram Date added, "While this is a commendable initiative, it is our responsibility to ensure that we use the plant in a sustainable manner, such that we can also secure a better place to live for the future generations."

Talking about Monsanto's role in this initiative, Kishore V K said, "We realised that water in the region is not safe to drink. Safe drinking water is



the basic right of every human being. We being a company dedicated to agriculture, it is our mission to work towards improving lives of the communities associated with agriculture. Installing RO plants is an extension of this mission. We will continue to partner with rural farming communities in Maharashtra and across India, to improve their lives."

S G Salunke, the Regional Manager - Maharashtra, AFPRO, said, "This installation in Lakhalgaoon is our commitment to improve water resource management and enable access to clean drinking water in other villages in the region. It is part of our continued efforts in the state of Maharashtra to provide facilities to communities for healthier and hygienic living conditions."

The RO water filtration equipment is supplied and installed by Monsanto Fund, the philanthropic arm of Monsanto Company, a leading agriculture company providing tech-

nology - based solutions and products that improve farm productivity, as part of a 2 year partnership with AFPRO.

AFPRO, an NGO working for rural poor through effective natural resource management solutions, will focus on utilizing the benefits of this RO plant, to provide safe drinking water in the area.

This initiative is a part of the two year project which covers 25 villages in 5 clusters across Maharashtra and aims to improve water and sanitation facilities, by constructing 500 toilets (20 per village in 25 villages) and conducting awareness camps on health and sanitation. Apart from this, the overall project aims to empower women with livelihood skills, by strengthening self-help groups at 10 per village in 25 villages and providing them skill based training. Started in July 2013, this partnership will be a two year project till July 2015.

The water treatment facili-

ty of capacity 2000 liters per hour will help reach potable quality drinking water in 3-4 villages. Currently Lakhalgaoon has a bore well that provides drinking water without treatment to whole village. The RO plant is therefore a positive step towards providing access to cleaner water conditions which will benefit the communities in Lakhalgaoon and other neighbouring villages in Nashik district.

Water treatment and distribution will be handled by a local water committee formed for this purpose. Thus the community will be made responsible to work cohesively on water issue. As a result of this initiative, treated water will be available at a cheaper price and in immediate vicinity of villagers, thus minimizing the need to commute to nearby towns to purchase water. Additionally, the initiative will help in improving health of the villagers as they will be immune from water borne diseases.