



The Boat They Pray for Every Monsoon

In one village in Maharashtra, resilience begins long before the floodwaters arrive.

Every year, before the first monsoon clouds gather over Bastwad village in Maharashtra, something remarkable happens.

The entire community comes together, not for a festival or a celebration, but to pray for a boat. To an outsider, it may seem unusual. To the people of Bastwad, that boat represents something far greater than transport. It represents safety. Hope. And the promise that no family will be left behind when the floods return.

Nestled between a river on one side and a lake on the other, Bastwad has lived with annual flooding for generations. Roads disappear beneath rising water. Homes become isolated. Daily life comes to a standstill.

Years ago, the community realised that waiting for outside help was no longer enough. Together, they secured a community rescue boat. Over time, caring for it became everyone's responsibility. Young volunteers, skilled swimmers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and village leaders formed a local emergency response team, ensuring the boat would always be ready before the rains arrived.

What started as preparedness slowly became tradition. Every year, the village gathers to bless the boat before the monsoon begins. A quiet reminder that resilience is built together, long before disaster strikes.

This year, when the boat needed urgent repairs, the community acted immediately. Families pooled nearly one-third of the repair costs themselves. Volunteers repaired, welded and repainted the boat in just thirteen days. Local partners supported the remaining work, ensuring the village's lifeline would be ready before the first heavy rains.

But Bastwad's story does not end with a repaired boat.

The same community has successfully advocated for a new bridge and worked with neighbouring states to improve flood coordination. This year, those efforts made a visible difference. For the first time in years, floodwaters stayed away from most homes.

The boat still rests by the river. But today it stands for much more than emergency response.

It tells the story of a community that chose preparation over fear, collaboration over dependence, and collective action over helplessness.

Why This Story Matters

Resilience isn't built when floodwaters rise.

It is built in the months before, through trust, shared responsibility and communities that refuse to wait for someone else to act.

That is the future Saarathi seeks to strengthen.

Communities Lead. Saarathi Enables.



JOIN THE EFFORTS.
CONTRIBUTE TO SAARATHI