

**First “WATER TALK”  
on the occasion of  
World Water Day  
22-March-2019**



**Organized by  
National Water Mission**

**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019**

**Venue  
Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi**

National Water Mission (NWM) has initiated a seminar series ‘**Water Talk**’ to promote dialogue and information sharing among participants on variety of water related topics. The aim of ‘WATER TALK’ is to stimulate awareness, build capacities of stakeholders and to encourage people to become active participants in conserving and saving water on earth. The programme is intended to serve as a gateway of knowledge sharing, open dialogue of information resulting into cross learning on new developments in water sector. NWM had organized first edition of ‘Water Talk’ on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2019 as a part of its **World Water Day** celebrations.

The first ‘Water–Talk’ program was graced by Shri U P Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation; Shri G Asok Kumar, Mission



L to R - Shri Pushpendra Singh, Shri Alok Sikka, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Shri U P Singh, Shri G Asok Kumar, Shri Manu Bhatnagar, Shri Sachin Oza

Director – National Water Mission (NWM); Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General – National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG); Shri Alok Sikka, India Representative – International Water Management Institute (IWMI); Shri Manu Bhatnagar, Principal Director (National Heritage Divison) – Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH); Shri Sachin Oza, Executive Director – Development Support Centre (DSC); and Shri Pushpendra Singh, Coordinator – Aapna Taalab Abhiyan.

Shri G. Asok Kumar, Mission Director, NWM welcomed the dignitaries and participants and addressed the gathering. He emphasized on the value of water and its need in our day to day lives. He explained current problems of water sector and also explained the purpose of starting water talk series in order to have a common platform to discuss various issues and solutions.



Water is one of the five elements of nature and it has a relationship with humankind through physical, social, economical, ecological and spiritual values. Thus, to invoke those value systems “*Water Kalash Pujan*” ceremony was carried out after welcome address.



Water Kalash Pujan ceremony on the occasion of World Water Day

**Pledge** to conserve water was taken by all participants under the guidance of Shri U P Singh, Secretary, MoWR, RD & GR. Following were the lines of the pledge taken:

“Today on the occasion of World Water Day,

I take an Oath to conserve water and to use water wisely.

I pledge to consume water judiciously and not waste even a drop of water.

I’ll treat water as a most precious treasure that I possess and consume it accordingly.

I pledge to motivate my family, friends, and neighbours to use water wisely and not waste it.

It is our planet and only we can save it and thus save our future!!”



**Shri U P Singh, Secretary, MoWR, RD & GR**, inaugurated and delivered First Water Talk. Outlining the concept of “Water-Talk”, he said that there are different Ministries in Government of India working on different aspects of water. Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR, RD & GR) handles surface water, ground water, river water related issues, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) handles the drinking water related issues, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) deals with waste water, Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) related issues in cities. Though Water is the common theme, these Ministries work in silos without much interaction. Even in water ministry, departments seem to work in silos and there is little interaction between Central Groundwater Board (CGWB), Central Water Commission (CWC), National Mission on Clean Ganga (NMCG), National Water Mission (NWM) etc. The idea of Water-Talk series is to exchange ideas and to gain knowledge of different aspects of water.



He explained how there is a need to shift the paradigm from supply side management to demand side management including environmental concerns related to water. He emphasized on working hard on replenishing the groundwater in order to safeguard surface water, as both the sources are interlinked and interconnected. He suggested promoting ground water storage, increasing water storage capacity, using irrigation water in effective way and taking initiative at individual levels. He said that awareness among citizens should be promoted and also there is need of revision of policy framework citing the example of Punjab where despite of canal water availability in the whole State farmers utilize ground water for irrigation purposes. He emphasized that agriculture system should adopt scientific basis rather than perception, citing the example of paddy cultivation, he said that rice is not water guzzler crop, it is a water tolerant crop and water can be saved by adopting suitable methods.

He also highlighted topic on Water footprint and explained that water footprint measures the amount of water used to produce each of the goods and services. So when we export particular good, we not only export the good but we export the water as well. Thus, Secretary gave a Water-Talk which covered almost all aspects of water, which was very much necessary for the participants to understand the whole subject of water and its complexity.

**Shri Pushendra Bhai, Coordinator, Aapna Talaab Abhiyan**, gave presentation on how they are doing water conservation in Bundelkhand through pond building in each farm and how they are motivating the villagers to take this activity in their own farm. He explained how difficult it was for women and children of our village to get water and hence it was very much necessary to work on water sector.



He said that, *Aapna Talaab Abhiyan*, is a unique oligarchy of its kind. In this yajna, everyone has the freedom of time, as well as possible sacrifices. The maximum discussion in villages lasts around the benefits of ponds. This shared initiative of the water and the water revival of the society through ponds have shown that with the help of community and Government they can convert dry area into green fields. He also added that, a major shift from this campaign was that during this time people started showing interest in building a private pond. It is worth mentioning that in some areas of Dewas today about 80 percent of people have their own private ponds. These ponds are made according to the needs of the farmers and they have got positive impact on farmers' income.

He added that, this experiment of ponds is an inspiration for the rest of the country's drought-hit areas.

**Shri Sachin Oza, Executive Director, Development Support Centre (DSC)**, said that they have recently awarded with Water Digest Awards in the category of Water Education. He threw light on ground water management and integrated water resource management in the command area of irrigation systems of northern water stressed areas of Gujarat. He said that, DSC is involved in implementation of various programs covering more than 653 villages in 17 districts having rain-fed and irrigated areas of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. He added that, the organization has facilitated Water User Associations (WUAs), branch and project level federations in about 300 villages.



He shared that how northern Gujarat area got affected by drought, despite of having assured water through canal system and got dependent on tanker system. He thus explained 8 steps taken by the organization on demand side management and simultaneously replenishing the water sources in order to have assured irrigation. He added that, DSC is also involved in implementing the "Integrated Watershed Management Program" (IWMP) in collaboration with Government of MP, Climate proofing of watershed project with NABARD and "Integrated Water Resource Management" (IWRM) program with HUF in Gujarat and Bajaj Water Conservation project in Auranagabad, Maharashtra. He explained how Water Users

Groups have initiated participatory ground water monitoring and preparing water balance and water security plans and thus moving from water stressed areas to water secured areas

**Shri Manu Bhatnagar, Principal Director, NH Division, INTACH,** addressed issues related to urban water supply and management through various examples from the cities of Shimla, Delhi and Meghalaya.

He shared that, the NCT Delhi is a territorially small and largely urbanized city state with a huge and growing concentration of population which requires to be serviced with water supply and sewage treatment. He also emphasized on how demographic expansion is resulting increasing pressure on water sources in various river basins in north India as well as on its internal groundwater resources.

With restricted sources of supply, no addition to its supply is expected for at least the next decade or perhaps in future. He concluded saying that, supply, collection of sewerage, river water, groundwater, water bodies, water harvesting and local bodies jurisdictions are all fragmented making it difficult to take a fully coordinated approach on water issues. Comprehensive coordination of the entire gamut of issues should come under a single agency.



**Shri Alok Sikka, India Representative, IWMI,** shared about agricultural water management and explained how water use efficiency can be increased in agriculture sector through various activities and plans.



A **Cartoon Exhibition**, coordinated by **Shri Sudheer**, a cartoonist, made the occasion more interesting. He displayed the cartoons made by different renowned cartoonist national and international on theme of “Water”. The cartoon exhibition was inaugurated by Shri U P Singh, Secretary, MoWR, RD & GR.





Few cartoons from the exhibition

The event drew a huge response from the various departments of water ministry, schools, colleges, and different organizations working in water sector.

More than 700 people participated in the water talk. The water talk was followed by lunch.



“आपो जनयथा च नः” - O Water, you are the source of our lives.