

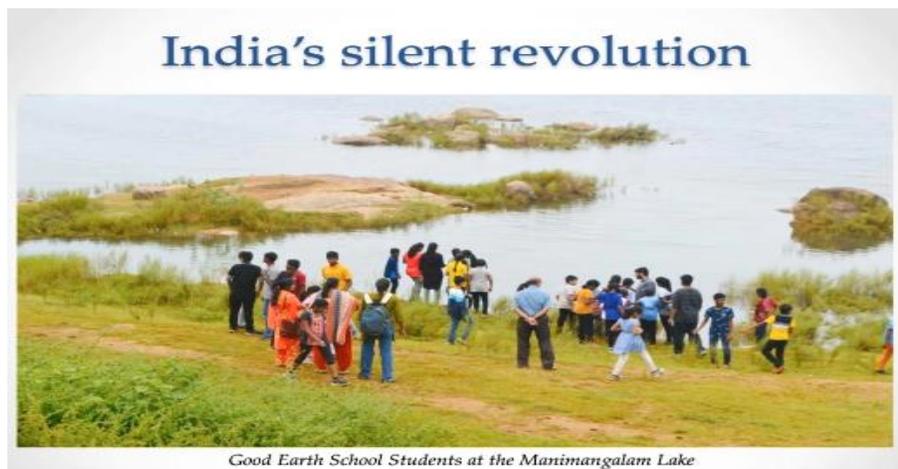
Government of India  
Ministry of Jal Shakti  
Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation  
(National Water Mission)

**Proceedings of the Fourteenth Water Talk held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

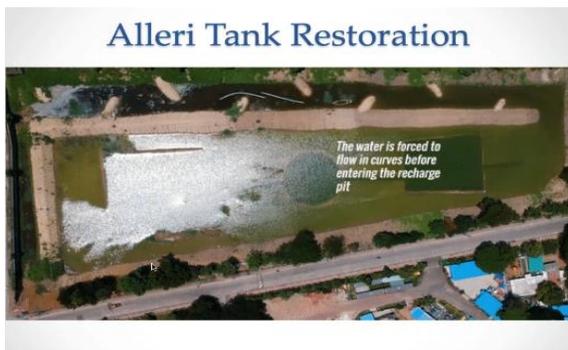
- National Water Mission (NWM) has been organizing a seminar series-‘Water Talk’ -to promote dialogue and information sharing among participants on variety of water related topics. The ‘Water Talk’ is intended to create awareness, build capacities of stakeholders and to encourage people to become active participants in conservation and saving of water. NWM had organized 13 ‘Water-Talks’ on the range of topics dominating the sector concerns. The list of speakers and topics they deliberated upon are annexed.
- **Fourteenth Water Talk** in this series was held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020 on a virtual platform-‘GoToWebinar’ due to Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The talk, delivered by Shri Arun Krishnamurthy, Founder, Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) from Chennai, was organized by NWM in association with Water Digest, the official media partner for this webinar. Shri U.P. Singh, Secretary (D/oWR, RD & GR) M/oJS, Shri G. Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, NWM, officials of NWM attended the webinar along with more than 500 participants. The webinar included participants from across the country from various spheres of life.



- Shri **G. Asok Kumar**, Addl. Secy. & MD, NWM, New Delhi, welcomed Sri U.P.Singh, the Secretary, DoWR, Shri Arun Krishnamurthy, speaker for the day, and participants to NWM's 2<sup>nd</sup> e-Water Talk. Shri Kumar in his speech, gave a brief overview of the Water Talk series and its objectives. He elaborated that many eminent water experts and ground level activists have shared their insights on water management in the 13 water talks held in the past one year.
- Shri **Arun Krishnamurthy**, guest speaker, thanked NWM for the opportunity to speak in the webinar. His topic for the seminar was **“Citizens in Lake Conservation, India sets a global agenda in water conservation”**. He began his talk by stating that though a lot has been discussed about the deterioration of air, water bodies, wildlife, environment etc, positive efforts towards water conservation seldom get acknowledged. There is the need to promote and spread positive news about efforts being made by individuals and stakeholders working towards preservation of environment. In this session, he wanted to share positive water stories of stakeholders and those individuals who have made remarkable efforts in conservation of neighborhood lakes and ponds across the country.
- His organization, EFI, is a 13 year old organization working in 14 states and has so far revived 108 water bodies. It has been working in collaboration with the central, state, district government along with the help of local citizens and with support from donors, international collaborations, research and knowledge partners, media, universities, RWAs.
- India could lead the way by setting up models for sensitizing people towards environment and water bodies. The environment can be conserved only through a collaborative effort from government, common citizens and those who have the resources to support the initiatives. Shri Krishnamurthy stressed on the need for science based collaborative efforts with a futuristic approach. He shared a few case studies on revival of water bodies by collective efforts by people. The first case was that of large group of students around the Manimangalam lake, a historic water body in south west Chennai. The lake was previously a battlefield where wars were fought in the past. The 900 year old lake has been transformed into a reservoir through tremendous efforts put by the Government of Tamil Nadu to restore this lake.



- Another hydro-positive story was the revival of Bomanakatte lake of Shimoga in Central Karnataka, which had become a dumping ground for garbage. Shri Krishnamurthy shared that a collective campaign was undertaken in collaboration with government, donors and participation from public. It was initially believed that the restoration would be over with removal of garbage, debris and strengthening of embankments. However, it was later realised that it was important for the lakes and ponds to become reservoirs of water that can actually hold water and prevent flooding and inundation during rainy season. A restoration plan was redrawn keeping in mind the geographical aspect, human consumption, marine life, animals and birds dependent on the water bodies.
- In his third case study of The Konneri Tank in Mahaballipuram, Shri Krishnamurthy shared



that restoration of this historic tank took place with immense government support. It happened when our Prime Minister hosted the Chinese delegation in Mahaballipuram. The Ministry of Jal Shakti got in touch with his organization to restore the water body in time for the summit. The water body that was in dirty condition for over 3 decades got a makeover with the public participation and now holds water even during the dry season. A similar restoration was undertaken for Alleri Tank Restoration- an industrial lake located in an export processing zone. This industrially contaminated water body was completely revived through citizen partnership over a 9 month long period.

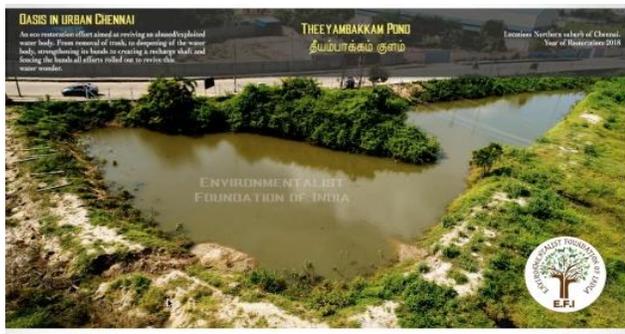
- Shri Arun Krishnamurthy took up the case study of The Karruppan Kulam in North West Chennai, he said that the worst droughts had struck Chennai and an abandoned water body was taken up for restoration. The pond and channels bringing water to the pond were completely clogged. There was also a compound wall built around the pond which didn't allow groundwater movement. Following the de-clogging efforts and channeling efforts to bring water to the ponds, an innovative effort was made through circular recharge pit – CCRP to ensure that recharge aquifers below balance the kind of water output that has been drawn through bore wells in and around. Citizen partnership and participation along with scientific efforts are required to get successful restoration results.

- Another example of innovation is the water body located on the arterial road on the IT corridor in Chennai. A 'G' shaped nesting island was constructed on the water body to ensure the existing nesting life forms don't lose peddling grounds as every pond or a lake is an ecosystem, not just a water storage tank.
- A similar case study is that of a carrot shaped lake in Chennai which by itself is a two level deck pond. There is a higher portion of the pond and a cascade that takes the water to the deepest



portion of the pond. This particular protruding island between these two with a channel cut across on the other side makes this the nesting island with nectar bearing and fruit bearing vegetation. This deck system was made so that recharge efficiency of this topography is optimized which was what was achieved through this project.

- Shri Krishnamurthy narrated many such water positive stories from the past wherein sincere efforts towards water conservation and how water used to be transported to



parched lands using canals in the earlier days. Taking inspiration from our ancestors, he urged people to participate in water conservation activities, telling people that water bodies deserve peoples' care and attention. The organization's YouTube channel called "Hydrostan" shares stories on water from across the country. Similarly, he requested others to motivate people by sharing positive stories of water conservation on social media platforms. He suggested that all citizens should come together and proactively participate in the cause by taking responsibility towards India's water bodies.

- Sri Asok Kumar, AS&MD, NWM narrated his experiences in restoration of lakes in Hyderabad in 2004-2008 period when he worked as VC of HUDA and MD of Metro water board. Though Hyderabad is said to have had over 500 lakes, HUDA had notified 169 lakes having area of over 10 hectares, out of which 87 lakes were restored during the period of 10 years under Green Hyderabad Environment Program funded by Netherlands. The lakes which were encroached and had become cess pool of sewage were revived by ringfencing and trapping all sewage inflows. In many areas parks were developed with the treated sewage water and people use it for their morning walks. With the involvement of people, the lakes are now being protected. Lakes at Safaiguda, Saroornagar, AS Rao nagar, Langar Houz etc are examples. Over 10 STPS with capacities totally to about 700 MLD were set up with funds from JnNURM, Megacity and NRCP during the period. He also mentioned about the restoration of Asok Sagar lake in Nizamabad in 2003, which is even now a good tourist destination of the district.



- Shri **U.P. Singh**, Secretary, D/o WR, RD & GR, M/oJS thanked the speaker for his valuable inputs on pond and lake restoration. Referring to Shri Arun Krishnamurthy’s talk, he said that he was wishing to invite a young speaker who had done immense work on ground and also inspired others to work in the field. Citing the examples of stepwells, Shri Singh stated that the dynamic structures were not only seen as water storing reservoirs but acted as a marker of civilization in the areas with historical significance. He also drew some examples of NGOs and individuals doing great work in reviving traditional water bodies in various parts of the country and urged public participation to combat water crisis.
- The talk was followed by a session of questions and answers wherein members from the audience were invited to discuss their queries with the speaker. The webinar saw some interesting and unique questions from people across the country.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Annexure**

**List of Water Talk Speakers and respective Thematic Focus**

<b>Water Talks</b>	<b>Name of the Speaker</b>	<b>Theme of the Talk</b>	<b>Date</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Water Talk	Shri U.P. Singh  Co Speaker: ShriPushpendra Singh,  ShriAlokSikka, Shri Manu Bhatnagar,  ShriSachinOza	'Outlining the concept of <b>Water-Talk</b> '  'Water conservation in Bundelkhand - AapnaTalaabAbhiyan'  'Agricultural water management'  'Urban water supply and management'  'Ground water management and integrated water resource management in the command area of irrigation systems of northern water stressed areas of Gujarat'	22.03.2019
2 <sup>nd</sup> Water Talk	ShriShashiShekhar	"Ground Water Governance-prospective, challenges and suggested interventions"	1.05.2019
3 <sup>rd</sup> Water Talk	Dr. Nayan Sharma  ShriPradeep Gandhi  Shri S.C.Bardhan	'Upgrading Technology in Irrigation, Hydro Power, Navigation and Flood Control for Optimal Water Conservation'  'Water Conservation at Ground Level'  'Water Conservation and Management'	24.05.2019
4 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Dr. Anil Joshi	'Ecology Inclusive Economy'	21.06.2019
5 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Dr.Tushaar Shah	'Governing India's Energy-Groundwater Nexus: Old Constraints and New Opportunities'	19.07.2019

6 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	ShriPopatraoPawar  ShriUmakantUmrao	'Hiware Bazar – A Water Budgeting model'  The Dewas Initiative: An economically viable & environmentally sustainable Water Conservation Model  'Beyond Rivers'	23.08.2019
7 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Shri SonamWangchuck	Water Conservation and construction of artificial Glacier known as Ice-Stupa in Leh-Laddakh Region.	20.09.2019
8 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	ShriHeeraLal	'Water Conservation in Banda District, UP'	18.10.2019
9 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Dr. HimanshuKulkarni	'Groundwater Management and Governance in India'	15.11.2019
10 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Dr.Mihir Shah	'A New Water Strategy for India'	20.12.2019
11 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	ShriBalbir Singh Seechewal	"Seechewal's Participatory Model of Water Rejuvenation"	17.01.2020
12 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	Shri Ayyappa Masagi	Water Rejuvenation	21.02.2020
13 <sup>th</sup> Water Talk	V. K Madhavan	"Urban Water Management: Challenges and Opportunities"	22.05.2020