

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

### Proceedings of the Twenty-First (21<sup>st</sup>) Water Talk held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

- National Water Mission (NWM) has been organizing a seminar series-‘Water Talk’ -to promote dialogue and information sharing among participants on a variety of water-related topics. The ‘Water Talk’ is intended to create awareness, build capacities of stakeholders, and encourage people to become active participants in the conservation and saving of water. NWM has so far organized 20 ‘Water-Talks’ on a range of topics dominating the sector concerns.
- **Twenty-First (21<sup>st</sup>) Water Talk** in this series was held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 on a virtual platform- ‘CISCO WEBEX’. The talk was delivered by **Shri Anil Singh, Founding Member, Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan**. The webinar included participants from across the country from various spheres of life and was also live-streamed through Facebook on the social media platforms of various organizations under DoWR. It was noted that there were over 20,000 total viewers in this e-water talk.
- Shri G. Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NWM welcomed the participants and introduced NWM along with its 5 goals, 39 strategies, and successful campaigns like ‘Sahi Fasal’ and ‘Catch the Rain’. NWM, in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), recently launched the “JSA II - Catch the Rain” awareness generation campaign which will be implemented across all the 729 districts- in both rural and urban areas- of the country. A weekly dialogue series has also been initiated by NWM, wherein District Collectors and NGOs from different parts of the country share success stories and best water practices being undertaken in their districts/ regions. Alongside, a new talk-series named ‘Water Tech Talk’ has also been initiated wherein qualified researchers and members of academia are invited to showcase new technological advancement in areas related to water sector. He apprised that Shri Anil Singh, the speaker belongs to **Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan**, an organisation that has done exceptional work in capacity building of communities for water conservation and efficient water use efficiency. The organisation was also a recipient of the “**National Water Mission**” award in 2019.
- The topic of the e-Water Talk by Shri Anil Singh was “**Efficient Use of Water in Agriculture for Water Security**”. He began his presentation by stating that his NGO, ‘**Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan**’ with active participation and support from the local community undertook many water positive steps to bring about change in the social structure of the regions. The organization has been primarily working in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and has a reach in 476 villages of 18 blocks in 9 districts in

the region. He emphasized the need for community engagement in the work of water conservation and devising efficient mechanisms to reverse the water crisis.

- The NGO mainly works for the upliftment of the vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. The organization's goal is to motivate & engage diversified community groups and stakeholders including women & adolescents groups, youth, social activists, academicians, media functionaries, lawyers, researchers, change makers, students, political forces, panchayat members in the developmental initiatives undertaken by them. Some of their focus areas include Integrated Water Resource Management, Agriculture & Livelihood Promotion, Water & Sanitation Rights, Gender & women's rights, Education, Health & Nutrition.
- With respect to water conservation, the focus was on motivating people to use crops that use less water, mechanisms to improve drinking water quality, and adopt rainwater harvesting to bridge the demand & supply gap of the local water requirements. Shri Singh indicated that their approach was to empower people and enable them to become self-reliant through knowledge building and strengthening capabilities, public engagement and campaigning, mobilizing & organizing community groups with a special focus on marginalized Dalit / Adivasi Women.
- Many community-driven groups like "Pani Panchayats", "Jal Sahelis", "Jaldoots" and "Jal Yodhas" were formed and capacitated to work towards water conservation in their local groups. With the help of local support, the organisation actively worked towards reviving water bodies, building rainwater harvesting structures and recharging water resources, and increasing the groundwater table by the organization.
- An elaborate **Water User Master Plan** was created and implemented in the villages of the Bundelkhand region. The plan focused on mapping of water bodies, availability of groundwater in the region, mapping the water requirements of the villages to further decide on efficient methods to promote the judicious use of water by reducing water wastage and cutting down on needs. Many workshops, 'baithaks', 'Raatri-chaupals' were conducted to engage the community and educate them about demand-side water management.
- As a result, 351 water harvesting structures including check dams, ponds have been constructed benefitting more than 5900 farmers in irrigation. Under the "Jan-Jan Jodo Abhiyan", many local rivers were revived, and traditional seeds were protected through the creation of seed banks'. More than 100 villages have successfully demonstrated the model of Seed Bank with the active engagement of Pani Panchayats. 1625 farmers have started adopting the techniques of Intensification (SRI/SWI/SVI)
- Further, drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation techniques were introduced and promoted as a means to conserve water and improve the water use efficiency of farming. The technique of crop rotation and crop varieties that use less water was promoted amongst farmers.
- More than 800 families have been able to meet their food grain needs of 3 months distress period through 63 grain banks, which helped them in securing their food security from 6-9 months. More than 260 poor farmers received timely & quality seeds through 30 seed banks formed by the organization. The organization has been working towards strengthening community leadership,

empowering them, and enhancing their awareness of available government schemes, particularly on MGNREGA.

- Key interventions made by the organisation has led to improvement in employment opportunities, decrease in migration, improvement in crop production, increase in the availability of pure drinking water, increase in soil moisture & reduction in soil erosion, rise in groundwater levels, improved seed quality, change in crop rotation, expansion in irrigation facility, livestock and pasture development, alongside overall development of the community. He concluded that the significance of public participation and community efforts are the foundation of making India a water-secure country.
- 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.

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