

**Proceedings of the Thirty Third (33<sup>rd</sup>) Water Talk held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 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 32 ‘**Water-Talks**’ on a range of topics dominating the water sector.
- **Thirty Third (33<sup>rd</sup>) Water Talk** in this series was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 on a virtual platform organized by NWM with the support of Water Digest, the official media partner for the webinar.  
The talk was delivered by **Ms. Jayamala Subramaniam, CEO, Arghyam**. She is a certified Executive and Business Coach. She has a management degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.
- Ms. Jayamala Subramaniam comes with over two decades of experience in Strategy and Execution in Banking, Education, Agro-technology, ITES, and Not for Profit sector, across countries. She has proven expertise in identifying and establishing transformational processes for scaling standalone start-ups and start-up environments in established organizations. At Arghyam, she leads the scale imagination journey for large government and NGO programs to achieve water security in a sustainable manner.
- **Shri G. Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, NWM** and officials of NWM attended the webinar along with other participants. The talk was also live-streamed through Facebook and other social media platforms of various organizations under Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS).
- **Shri G. Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NWM** welcomed the participants to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Talk of the ‘Water Talk’ series. He gave a brief overview of the ‘Water Talk’ initiative and mentioned how the switch from the physical to digital platform has amplified the reach of the talks both geographically & numerically with people participating from all across the world.
- He also mentioned that along with Water Talk, National Water Mission also took the initiative of organizing **Water Tech Talk and Water Biz Talk** which are being organized on second & Fourth Friday respectively of every month with people coming from academia and industries and informing us about the various

progress which we have made in water sector. Hon'ble Prime Minister launched the '**Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain**' campaign on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021, on World Water Day, addressing 2.5 lakh Sarpanches, along with District Magistrates/ District Collectors from all the states. He also mentioned the seriousness of Central Govt. in taking steps towards water conservation and numerated that in the last five months approximately 34 lakhs water harvesting structures constructed, 36 Crore tree plantation taken place etc. He also impressed upon making JAL ANDOLAN, A JAN ANDOLAN and expected that the rain water harvesting structures made during the Jal Shakti Abhiyaan will be full and play a vital role in making India TANKER FREE. He has also impressed upon that 'Catch the Rain' Campaign is not over, only a part of it i.e., 'Catch the Rain: where it falls, when it falls' is being over on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

- The topic of the e-talk by **Ms. Jayamala Subramaniam, CEO, Arghyam** was "**Digitally enabled strategy to enhance community resilience towards water security**". **Ms. Jayamala** has started her talk by mentioning that Arghyam has been using Participatory Water Management approaches to achieve water security. The foundation has created a cadre of 1,500+ para-hydrogeologists and has also trained 31,000+ community, NGO and Government personnel.
- Ms. Mala then examined the core anxieties that needs to be addressed in order to achieve water security. First of all, the groundwater presence differs geographically with differing topography. The water below the ground is invisible which hinders localized planning. Secondly, the communities need run time access to expertise. The people at ground level have limited interactions with minimal participation of women leading to limited training of the community level facilitators.
- Thirdly, the problem lies in lack of scalability and limited observability. As the water resources and the content availability is limited, it often leads to difficulty in optimal utilization of the resources. Further, the societal memory related various programmes and policies reduces after a span of time. This leads to lack of any assets or verifiable content that could be utilized again.
- The solution to above problems lies in the participatory approach. The digital technology can be utilized to increase the interactions and virtual learning. This will increase the frequency of interactions with the ground level stakeholder and enhance their expertise in the field of water management. Carefully crafted and curated programs for the village level facilitators, more women participation will further lead to exponential rise in interactions and creation of human capital at the ground level.
- Further Ms Mala briefed about a tool named Participatory Digital Attestation Tool which can create digitally verifiable, shareable attestation that can help in attesting the presence of the participants and can create a pool of trained personnel with complete records to be utilized as and when required. Another such digital tool called as Composite Landscape Assessment and Restoration

Tool which can provide high resolution maps and data along with algorithm updates that can improve planning and vetting of plans with the use of data.

- Lastly, Participatory Digital Infrastructure can help in creating digital assets which will store verifiable, open, interoperable and consent enabled data. Meghalaya Government has used this approach in its Community-led Natural Resource Management program which has reaped multiple benefits. The approach has led to increase in reach, more people trained, more consent engagement, capacity building events increased and enabling local planning and action. Thus participatory approach using digital tools can be a game changer in achieving water security.
- 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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