

Proceedings of the Thirty Fourth (34th) Water Talk held on 21st January, 2022

- 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 33 ‘**Water-Talks**’ on a range of topics dominating the water sector.
- **Thirty Fourth (34th) Water Talk** in this series was held on 21st January 2022 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 **Mr. Shantilal Muttha, Founder, Bhartiya Jain Sanghatana**. The topic of the e-talk by **Mr. Shantilal Muttha** was “**New Vision for a community-led, demand-driven, scalable water conservation program**”.
- Sh. Shantilal Muttha is a distinguished social entrepreneur and strategic philanthropist. Rising from humble origins, he established a flourishing enterprise with the noble intent of becoming self-sufficient for pursuing his dream of contributing to social welfare. To realize this dream, he withdrew from commercial ventures and embarked upon his mission for social change at the young age of 31. Surmounting tremendous challenges with high optimism, his 35-year journey primarily in the areas of social development, water conservation, disaster response and value-based education has established him as a change agent par excellence.
- **Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, 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).
- **Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NWM** welcomed the participants to the 34th Talk of the ‘Water Talk’ series. She started the talk by wishing all the participants a very happy new water year. She further emphasized on the lack of water consciousness in the cities in current times. She enumerated the benefits that one can attain by listening to “Water Talks’ and incorporating those learning in our daily lives.
- Sh. Muttha started the talk by explaining current situation of water in our country and its impact on the society from his experiences at the ground level. He appreciated the relentless efforts by Central and State Governments. Further he

also elaborated the immense contribution by the private sector, civil society, CSR initiatives, NGOs etc. in this field. He further explained the priority of water as can be seen in the Sustainable Development Goals. Further government reports and available literature indicate the need for a highly impactful, scalable and sustainable model for the country.

- This indicates the need for a demand-driven program; a people's movement to create national level impact in the water sector. He explained the benefits of this movement through a program known as Sujalam Suphalam. This program was launched from Buldhana district of Maharashtra on 03rd March, 2018 with the objective to make water stress districts water sufficient. The program garnered support from all sections of the society from people, NGOs, administration at the district levels, central and state governments as well as media. As a result, it caught the limelight and it achieved great success.
- Subsequently, the program was scaled up in September, 2018 by moving this to 4 other districts of the state of Maharashtra. The program offered many learning that can be utilized in the future to launch nationwide campaigns in the water sector. Firstly, there is a need to create a comprehensive district water resources plan. Further, a situational study of existing water structures needs to be conducted to gauge the availability and demand of water in the prospective area.
- There is further need to create an effective mechanism to support the District Administration and empowering the Gram Panchayats. A Centre of Excellence may be developed in alignment with the government policies to cater to the need of the various resources that may be utilized in the preparation of water plan for the individual districts. The District Ecosystem Support can be created with the help of Program Support Cell. Further Water Fellowships may be offered to bring in talent and support the administration. Further demand driven participation by the Gram Panchayats will lead to people's movement that can achieve the desired objective of water management and conservation.
- 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.
