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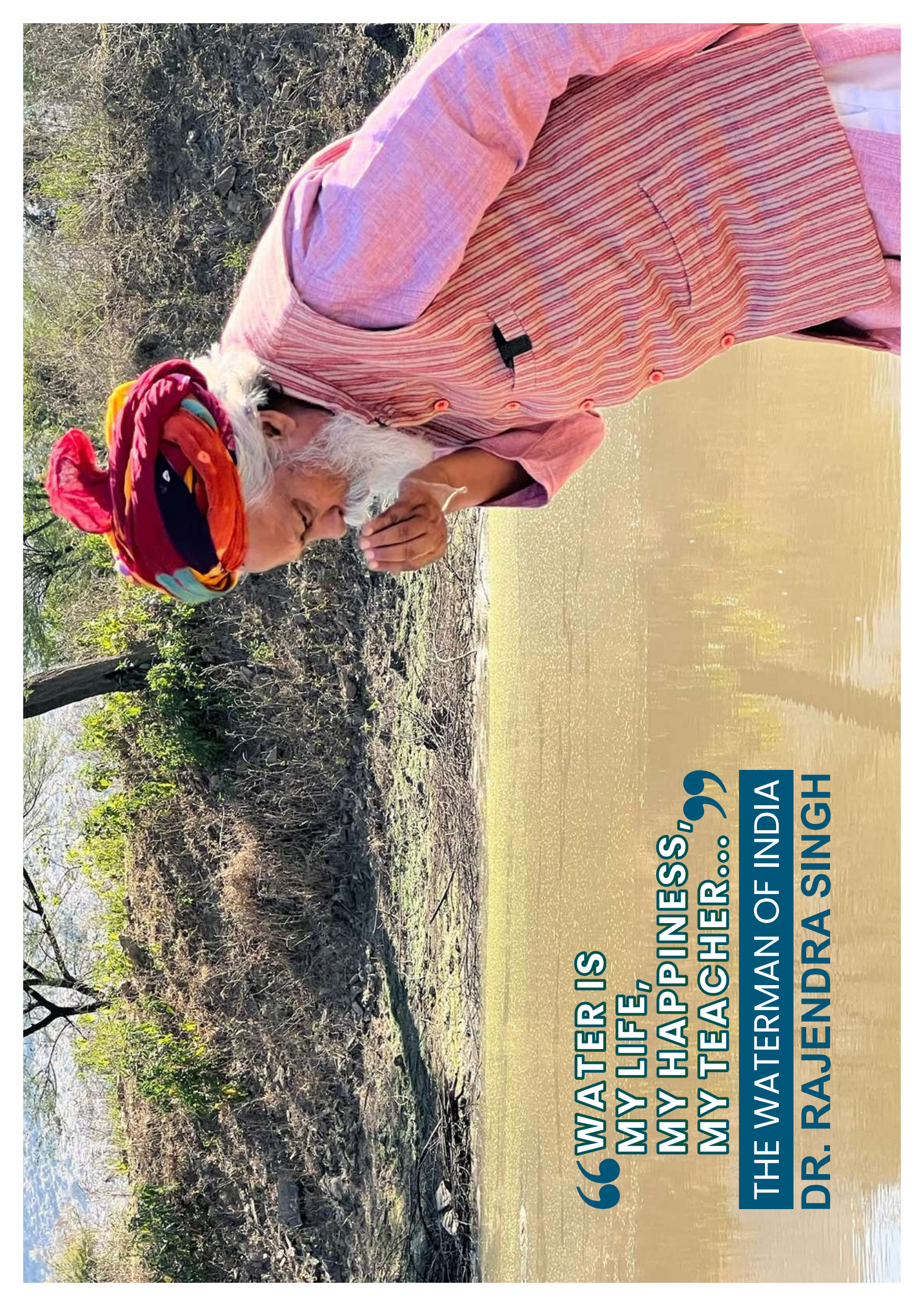
WE CONNECT



THE OUTLANDER
PAVEL BOLOYANGOV



RNI - CHHENG0493

A photograph of Dr. Rajendra Singh, an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a pink striped kurta and a colorful turban. He is standing on a grassy bank next to a river, with his hands clasped in a prayer-like gesture. The river reflects the surrounding greenery and sky.

**“WATER IS
MY LIFE,
MY HAPPINESS,”
MY TEACHER...”**

**THE WATERMAN OF INDIA
DR. RAJENDRA SINGH**

From the desk of Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

Greetings from We Connect!

Water, the life-sustaining natural resource which covers about 70% of the planet's surface, is facing a global crisis and there is enough evidence to prove it. From being a seemingly abundant resource to being taken for granted, water draws our attention to various human activities that can exhaust water sources, disrupt the ecosystem, and contribute to water scarcity. **Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**, with the aim to draw our attention to pollution and overconsumption, once said, "Water is the driving force of all nature, use it judiciously."

"We are articles of water." – says **Parag Mate**, Founder of WE Foundation. He beautifully captures the inseparable bond we share with the life-giving resource. Water is miraculously woven into our fabric; it flows through our veins and is an elixir for our existence.

In this editorial, WE point towards the significance of both World Environment Day (WED) and World Ocean Day (WOD) which are annually observed on 5th June and 8th June respectively. WE resonate with the themes of WED such as 'Ecosystem Restoration', 'Living Sustainably in Harmony with Nature' and 'Beat Plastic Pollution' as they explore and address the pressing need to protect and restore Earth's natural environment. Yes, the line between now and too late is getting thinner. We either act now or we -if not us, our future generation is certainly going to flow as rubble. The time to act is Now! This issue takes the spotlight on the champions who upon realising the intensity of the crisis have taken charge as custodians of the environment. They have realised that it is the slog over and they must hit a six to win the battle against atrocities of mankind.

In these pages, we showcase crusaders, who are making a profound impact in various fields, by highlighting their contributions towards sustainability. You will meet **Rajendra Singh**, who the world knows as the **Waterman** has dedicated his life to water conservation and restoration. Read and know why he is the ray of hope for all of us.

In our cover story, we welcome **Pavel Boloyangov, a Russian superstar, and an environmental voyager**, who not only tells us what needs to be done to create a sustainable future but also demonstrates it to us while leading us in the foreground. Want to know why he is called the Outlander? Read him in the cover story!

Next, WE shine a spotlight on **Kalpna Ramesh, Hyderabad's crusader** who has turned the fate of several water bodies by reviving them, successfully implementing rainwater harvesting and reinvigorating numerous stepwells. Know



her and know how satisfying it can be to infuse life into the dead water bodies. WE certainly want you to get inspired by **Satish Khade, Aqua Man of Pune**. Read about him and his tremendous achievements as a water activist, a core member of Jalbiradari, Maharashtra, and the president of the Rotary Club. **Mittal Maulik Patel, an activist from Gujarat** shares in her success story how community involvement led to the success of her initiative 'The Participatory Water Management Program' and how the 'Jal Jeevan Mission' of Prime Minister Modi has provided a major boost to it.

Find **Chetana Bhattacharya** introducing her venture '**Sarrthy**' as a '**Startup with a Difference**'. 'Blue is the new green' says **Navya Singh, a climate action and sustainability enthusiast** while talking on World Ocean Day. There are scores of interesting features in this issue such as **Vinita Raghav** advocating for Environmental laws and regulations in India, **Rajbir Singh, an ace policeman of national recognition** writes about nature slaughter being the biggest threat against civilization. While these champions are moving ahead in their orbits, the overall scenario continues to be dreadful. To you, our readers, WE extend a heartfelt call to action. As you read through the inspiring stories and remarkable achievements of these champions, we hope you feel empowered and inspired to make a difference. Each one of us has the power to contribute to a sustainable future. Let us pledge to ensure that water continues to flow as the elixir for generations to come.

Love & Light,
Shalini Kashyap

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June 2023

From Stardom to **Seashores**

*Environmental Voyager Leads
the Way to a Greener Future*



WE CONNECT

The inspiring journey of **Pavel Boloyangov**, from being a superstar in Russia to becoming an environmental voyager, exemplifies his unwavering commitment to creating a sustainable future. Transitioning from being an MMA World Champion to a dedicated beach clean-up volunteer, from an actor to an educator, and from a singer to an active eco-champion, Pavel's story is truly remarkable. His relentless fight for Mother Earth has earned him the well-deserved title of "The Outlander," establishing him as an influential figure in the quest for a more sustainable world.



You have a diverse range of accomplishments and experiences, how did you get involved in cleaning beaches?

Ah, yes. In 2017, when I arrived in Goa, I loved how beautiful it was with its exquisite mix of sun, surf, and beaches making it a perfect holiday destination. However, I was also shocked by the widespread garbage and burning waste. This motivated me to take action, initially by reporting the problems to the authorities. However, when no action was taken, I decided to tackle the problem myself. This is how in 2019, I met Jade Minjung Kim, who was part of the Clean Arambol Initiative and together we fought against pollution.

At first, I organized photo campaigns to raise awareness, but then I realized that a more systematic approach was needed to garner the right kind of attention. That's when I started creating educational galleries. Currently, my focus is on removing garbage from the cliffside and Sweet Lake areas, which are heavily polluted. During the monsoon, some pollutants get washed into the oceans, affecting sea animals and potentially humans who consume seafood or swim in the sea.

“

My athletic skills have enabled me to remove large amounts of garbage using my own hands. And with a mindset of never giving up, I engage in a challenging and tireless battle against pollution.

How has your ex-MMA Champion background influenced your environmental conservation approach?

Well, my background as an ex-MMA World Champion has certainly played a role in my approach to beach cleaning and environmental conservation. My athletic skills have enabled me to remove large amounts of garbage using my own hands. And with a mindset of never giving up, I engage in a challenging and tireless battle against pollution. With the incredible support of others, we've been able to implement a protective system that is spreading across Goa and India through the efforts of dedicated social activists. Growing up in the Soviet Union, I was instilled with the values of building a clean and better world, and I am prepared to fight for it.

That's inspiring to hear. What specific activities do you engage in as part of your beach cleaning initiatives?

As part of our beach cleaning initiatives, we have organized large-scale cleaning events with volunteers from various countries, removing tonnes of garbage including glass bottles. In 2020, we held a 10-day beach cleaning event with Reena Lanzoni and participants

from various countries. I'm also advocating for the transfer of jurisdiction to the Goa Tourism Department to ensure specialized cleaning teams and equipment are employed. Additionally, I have petitioned the government to inform the population about the harmful effects of burning garbage through loudspeakers and special vehicles. To combat pollution, I implemented feeding points for cows to collect organic waste, and I encouraged the placement of cow buckets in guest houses for proper garbage segregation. Moreover, public dustbins for wet and dry garbage have been established in the areas under my influence.

Goa is known for its natural beauty, but it also faces environmental challenges. How do you address them?

Well, Goa is certainly known for its scenic beauty and tourism potential. But there are several key environmental challenges in the region. Some key points that I have identified include the need for environmental education, addressing littering through media campaigns, increasing the number of public dustbins, promoting civic responsibility, educating business owners on waste management, fostering respect for nature, improving the efficiency of the Pollution Control Board, and ensuring accountability of local authorities. Collaborative efforts between the government, media, civil society organizations, and individuals can help create a cleaner and more sustainable Goa.

Do you receive support from like-minded individuals in your efforts to protect the environment?

Well, I do get a lot of assistance from people and organizations that want to do something about the climate crisis. One such person I know is Mr. Parag Mate and through him, I got to know about Worship Earth Foundation. They have been an incredible source of support and inspiration in my fight for environmental change. They have truly changed my life with their tangible assistance and guidance. My work towards the environment may be seen as an obsession, but I cannot help it. It's the Champion mindset and I consider myself a green globetrotter who wants to ensure that wherever I go I help in creating a sustainable future for generations to come.

What's your ultimate goal in your fight for creating a sustainable future?

My goal is to eliminate pollution in India and create a clean and green environment for





all. Ultimately, I aspire to expand my efforts globally and combat pollution worldwide.

Share any memorable experiences while cleaning beaches. How they've impacted your perspective?

Oh, there have been quite a few! One incident that stands out is when I was confronted by a group of individuals who threatened me and even physically attacked me because they had to pay a fine for burning garbage. Despite the aggression, I managed to stay unharmed due to my background as a former professional fighter. I received timely support from local authorities and the situation was resolved. However, this incident reinforced the importance of addressing environmental crimes and it serves as a reminder of the ongoing need to combat them.

Does your background as an actor and educator help in raising awareness and educating local communities?

Surprisingly, my background as a fighter and World Champion has been more effective in raising environmental awareness and educating local communities. For example, when I approached a businessman to install a box for used batteries near their business, the owner of a big supermarket refused. However, his son, recognizing my background, agreed to it. I feel having a dustbin near a well-known supermarket is significant for education as people begin to think and follow the example.

That's an interesting perspective. As an active ecologist, what are some of the key environmental concerns you have observed?

As an ecologist, I have observed significant environmental concerns, such as garbage burning, widespread littering, excessive garbage dumps, untreated discharge of sewage into rivers and seas, and oil pollution from washing tankers on beaches.

Are there any innovative approaches or technologies you have implemented or encountered that have enhanced your cleaning efforts?

Yes, noticing my efforts and results in protecting the planet, I have been approached by a group of people with a proposal to create an Indian-Russian joint venture aimed at cleaning the planet. They have innovative technologies that can transform mixed garbage into fuel and electricity, as well as purify polluted waters.



I have reached out to thousands of individuals, urging them to research “burning plastic cancer.”

This will provide affordable drinking water and support agricultural processes. Their technologies also enable the recycling of islands made up of garbage.

That's fascinating! How do you collaborate with local communities, government agencies, and other organizations to bring about positive change?

We collaborate with them through various initiatives. These include organizing clean-up events in partnership with the church, involving locals in our efforts, and cooperating with the Panchayat and Pollution Control Board. Also, the aim is to persuade businessmen that promoting cleanliness and clean air will attract more affluent tourists, leading to increased revenue for them.

Tell us, what is your vision for the future of Goa?

My vision for the future of Goa entails prioritizing environmental sustainability and waste management. By implementing effective proposals for environmental protection, the government of Goa has the potential to transform the future.

How do you inspire and motivate others to join you in the fight for Mother Earth?

I inspire and motivate others to join me in the fight for Mother Earth through my example and by explaining the importance of stopping pollution. I feel many people are unaware of the harmful effects of burning garbage, the presence of microplastics and nano-plastics in the environment, and the dangers of improper disposal of batteries. I educate people about these concerns and emphasize the risks they pose to both current and future generations. I have reached out

to thousands of individuals, urging them to research “burning plastic cancer.” It is crucial to bring awareness through television and involve the government, including local authorities, in addressing these concerns.

How do you measure the impact and progress of environmental initiatives that you undertake?

With the support of passionate people like me, I plan to measure the impact and progress of our environmental initiatives by monitoring the reduction in garbage burning and increase in waste management through the installation of garbage bins and addressing complaints to the government.

We should also focus on educating people and providing them with practical solutions to mitigate environmental challenges.

Finally, what message would you give to others who want to make a difference but feel overwhelmed by environmental challenges?

Don't lose hope. I'm here to support and assist all of you in your efforts. You can read all about me and my initiatives on my Facebook page, where I share my journey towards making a positive impact on the environment. Remember, it's up to us to protect our planet.



'Jal Purush' underway to build a sustainable world through 'Water'



'Waterman' Dr. Rajendra Singh's special interview with Journalist Anubha Jain

The year 2024 has been declared a 'Water Peace Year' at the United Nations 2023 water conference. During the conference, the thinkers came to a common agreement that the world can get peace through water. I met a great personality, Dr. Rajendra Singh who is working on such thought and devoting his life to creating a sustainable ecosystem. Magsaysay Award winner, renowned environmentalist, and river rejuvenator, 64-year-old Singh is known as the 'Waterman' or 'Jal Purush' of India.

Reviving rivers and rejuvenating natural water bodies, water conservation, and overcoming water crises are the key aspects Singh is focusing on.

Endeavouring a vision to maintain peace globally through water and develop a Non-Violent Economy, Singh feels, "With the support of

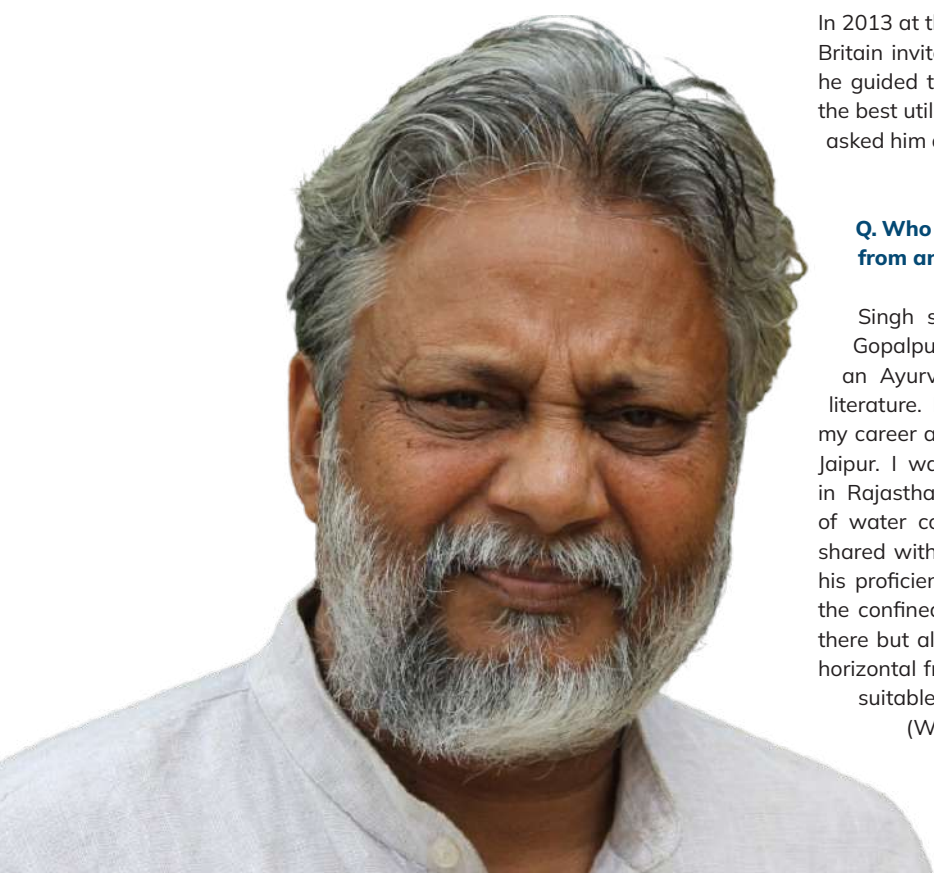
communities, we are trying to maintain a balance between humans and nature. My experience has shown that lack of water, drought, and flood cause conflict and lead to violence. With water, there is peace, security, and non-violence. People return to their roots and economies nurture nature too. As an initial step, my journey of water and peace has been completed."

Winner of the Stockholm Water Prize, Singh joined Alwar's Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) which was initially formed to support victims of a campus fire. In 1984 TBS was left to him and this was the major juncture of his life that led him into the direction of environment and water conservation. Under the leadership of Singh, TBS's main ideology is to work for water conservation with the support of the community and hence, it promotes the community-driven-decentralized management of natural resources.

In 2013 at the time of the massive flood in London, Prince Charles of Britain invited him thrice to use his knowledge. With his expertise, he guided the engineers there to resolve the issue and assisted in the best utilization of floodwater. In a candid conversation with me, I asked him a couple of questions -

Q. Who remained your guiding force and transformed your life from an Ayurvedic doctor to a river rejuvenator?

Singh said, "At the young age of 26, in Thanagazi tehsil's Gopalpura village of the Alwar district, my career started. I was an Ayurvedic medicine graduate and did a Master's in Hindi literature. I joined the government service in 1980 and initiated my career as a National Service Volunteer for Education in pink city Jaipur. I was later appointed to oversee adult education schools in Rajasthan's Dausa district. I initiated working in the direction of water conservation through the indigenous wisdom that was shared with me by Mangu Meena, an illiterate farmer. Mangu with his proficiency in soil and water made me understand that where the confined vertical fractures exist in a well, not only water finds there but also long leaves plants grow there. Whereas, unconfined horizontal fractures result in barren lands. This helped us to design suitable rainwater conservation structures to recharge aquifers (Water bearing rock transmits water to wells and springs)."





Q. As the messiah of the poor you have transformed the lives of Chambal dacoits and led them toward the path of 'Non-Violence' and 'Peace' through the availability of water. What was the focal point of the Parvati- Sairni River Rejuvenation Conference 2023?

Singh said, "Yes, under my supervision TBS has reformed the lives of over 2k dacoits of the Chambal region. We provided water into the barren lands of these dacoits and channelized them towards agriculture and farming. As a big revolution, these people dropped their guns, left the profession of looting, and have become farmers. They are leading a transformed life of 'Non-Violence' and 'Peace' just because of water. With the support of TBS and the effort of some 300 village communities, a non-violent economic system has been developed along the banks of the Sairni and Parvati rivers of the Chambal region through decentralized water harvesting structures. This has altered the dry land to water-secure land and brought peace and livelihood to the villagers residing there.

Recently, in collaboration with TBS, Rashtriya Jalbiradari, and People's World Commission on Drought and Flood, a three-day conference was conducted with farmer dacoits where 92 people from 12 different states of India gathered with the intent to motivate those who still need to take to agriculture instead of crime for leading a respectable life. The participants got to understand how decentralized community-driven rainwater conservation methods led to the revival of the Sairni and Parvati rivers, which are now flowing even in the peak summer of May.

Q. What is the project you are working on with the Government of Maharashtra?

Singh stated, "I am also heading a national organization Rashtriya Jal Biradari which is working nationwide for the restoration of small and mighty rivers and other water-related issues. We have worked for the revival of rivers in Karnataka's Gadag district, UP, and MP. Now with the collaboration of the Government of Maharashtra, Rashtriya Jal Biradari, is working for the revival of the rivers of Maharashtra. The program name is "Aao Nadi Ko Jaane." Here we have formed river sentinels for over 117 rivers in Maharashtra and we give them training. We have revived two rivers of Maharashtra namely Agrani and Mahakali so far."

Q. What are the major projects Tarun Bharat Singh (TBS) is working on?

Singh informed in detail and said, "TBS is a pioneer in the sphere of rainwater harvesting. So far, around 14,000 rainwater harvesting structures that have restored barren lands and improved agricultural economies have been created with this approach. The other vital project of TBS is the skill development and the efficient use of water in irrigation in the Rivulet Arvari and Sarsa Basin region so that once water becomes available, it is used efficiently and effectively. River Arvari had remained dry for over 60 years and was restored by us. It was awarded the 'International River Prize' in 2004. Prince Charles during his visit to India applauded the work done by TBS. On 28th March 2000, the then President, K.R.

Narayanan, himself visited the Bhanota-Kolyala village community (where the river Arvari flows) to present the "Down to Earth — Joseph. C. John Award" to the villagers.

Q. As the chairman of the People's World Commission on Drought and Flood what are your preferences?

Singh said, "The purpose of this Commission is to mitigate drought and flood and develop community resilience. Today Europe and the USA are facing severe cycles of drought and flood. The Commission is working on flood and drought management through water resource development in the Cone Valley of the USA and one of Kenya's counties."



TBS is a pioneer in the sphere of rainwater harvesting. So far, around 14,000 rainwater harvesting structures that have restored



The Hidden Toll of Emotional Distress in the Corporate World

What You Need to Know



Pragati Sureka (Ph.D)

She is the founder of EaR (Emotional Ability Resources) and a seasoned Harvard-accredited Clinical Psychologist. She is a speaker, trainer, columnist, and author who advocates preventive mental healthcare.

Her works include *Musings: An Insight into Me* by Authors Upfront, *Hope* by Scholastic and *Emotional Ability Resources* by Hayhouse.

Corporate worlds can be highly competitive and demanding with constant pressure to meet deadlines, achieve targets, and maintain high levels of productivity. While some stress is a natural and even necessary part of the job, prolonged periods of emotional distress can have serious consequences for employees' mental and physical health, as well as their job performance.

Emotional distress can take many forms, including anxiety, depression, burnout, and chronic stress. These conditions can be caused by a variety of factors, such as excessive workloads, long hours, interpersonal conflicts, and a lack of support from colleagues and supervisors. There is no doubt that these issues are not unique to corporate environments, but given their high stakes, and fast-paced nature, many corporate environments can exasperate them, resulting in a hidden toll of emotional distress that remains unnoticed for the most part.

One of the most significant consequences of emotional distress in the corporate world is reduced productivity. When employees are struggling with anxiety, depression, or

burnout, they may find it difficult to focus on their work, complete tasks efficiently, or meet deadlines. This can further lead to increased absenteeism and a greater strain on the company's resources. This can lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased absenteeism and turnover rates. Additionally, employees who are experiencing emotional distress may be more likely to make mistakes or take shortcuts, which can have serious consequences for the company's bottom line.

Emotional distress can also have a negative impact on employee health. Prolonged periods of stress and anxiety can lead to a weakened immune system, an increased risk of heart disease and stroke, and other physical health problems. Additionally, employees who are experiencing emotional distress may be more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking or excessive drinking, which can further exacerbate their health problems.

Perhaps most concerning of all is the toll that emotional distress can take on employees' mental health. Anxiety, depression, and burnout can all have serious long-term consequences, including an increased risk of

suicide. Unfortunately, many employees may be reluctant to seek help for their emotional distress. This may be due to the stigma surrounding mental health or fears of being seen as weak or unproductive. For instance, a study found that workers who reported poor or fair mental health were four times more likely to take unplanned absences from work due to poor mental health than those who reported better mental health.

So, what can companies do to address the hidden toll of emotional distress in the corporate world? One critical step is to create a supportive and inclusive work culture. This is where employees feel comfortable speaking openly about their mental health concerns and have access to resources and support when they need it. This can include providing employees with access to mental health counselling and resources, offering flexible work arrangements, and encouraging a healthy work-life balance.

Companies can also reduce the sources of stress and emotional distress at the workplace. This may include re-evaluating workloads and deadlines, providing training and support for supervisors and managers on how to identify and address signs of emotional distress in their employees, and fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration.

Emotional distress in the workplace is a serious issue that affects both employees and companies. By creating a supportive and inclusive work culture and taking steps to reduce sources of stress and emotional distress, companies can help ensure that their employees are healthy, happy, and productive, ultimately leading to a more successful and sustainable business.

EaR provides experienced and highly qualified counsellors, and offers solutions that support employees' well-being by aiding them in stress management as well as nurturing their mental health. If needed, help is always available.



Environmental Laws in India

Recent Amendments and Their Impact



Advocate Vinita Raghav

Practicing Advocate in Delhi High Court and District Courts since 2009. Empaneled by Banks (PNB, IOB, BOM etc.) and DDA

Introduction:

Environmental protection is of paramount importance in a rapidly developing country like India, where industrialization and population growth pose significant challenges to the natural environment. India, with its rich biodiversity and environmental challenges, has implemented several laws and regulations to protect and preserve its natural resources. To safeguard the nation's ecological balance and promote sustainable development, India has enacted multiple environmental laws and amendments to strengthen their effectiveness and address emerging environmental concerns.

However, pollution, overpopulation, waste disposal, climate change, global warming, the greenhouse effect, etc., pose problems in protecting the environment. The main environmental laws in India include The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, The Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, The Indian Forest Act, 1927 (Amendment in 2017), The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and

Climate Change is the nodal ministry for enforcing the regulatory framework related to the environment, biodiversity, forests, wildlife, and climate change in India. It lays down the general policy framework on environmental issues. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is the central authority that frames the standards and implements the regulations relating to industrial pollution, waste management, emissions, or effluent standards, etc. across the country with the assistance of the relevant State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and the Union Territory Pollution Control Committee (UTPCCs).

The CPCB can issue directions, restrict operations, and impose environmental compensation against non-compliant industries. For the better enactment and enforcement of environmental laws, the following Acts were passed and NGT (National Green Tribunal) was formed:

1. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986: Considered the cornerstone of environmental legislation in India, this act provides a comprehensive framework for addressing various environmental issues, including pollution control, environmental impact assessment, and conservation of biodiversity.

2. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020: This amendment introduced key changes to the EIA process,

which evaluates the potential environmental impacts of development projects. It seeks to enhance public participation, increase scrutiny of projects, and strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

3. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010: The NGT Act establishes the National Green Tribunal, which serves as a specialized forum for the effective and expeditious resolution of environmental disputes. Recent amendments have strengthened the NGT's powers and jurisdiction, enabling it to address a wider range of environmental issues and enforce its decisions more effectively.

However, despite the existence of laws and agencies, there are certain problems such as poor coordination across government agencies, weak institutional capacity, lack of access to information, corruption and stifled civic engagement, which are key factors behind the poor effectiveness and implementation of environmental regulations.

We can contribute to protecting our environment through simple steps and care, such as reusing, recycling, and reducing wastage, volunteering for clean-ups in our community, educating and spreading awareness regarding the environment and pollution, conserving water, choosing sustainable products, shopping wisely, using long-lasting light bulbs, and finally planting more and more trees.

Conclusion:

India's environmental laws play a vital role in safeguarding the nation's natural resources and ecological balance. However, we all hold a responsible role in protecting our environment to keep the Earth habitable for future generations. By strengthening regulations, enhancing public participation, and promoting sustainable practices, India strives to achieve a harmonious balance between economic development and environmental protection to ensure their effectiveness in preserving India's rich natural heritage for future generations.

OP Jindal University

*India's Only University dedicated to
Steel Technology and Management*



OP Jindal University has been established under the aegis of the Jindal Education and Welfare Society with the defined objective of putting Chhattisgarh on the Global Education Map. Other education initiatives of the society include OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana, Jindal Institute of Power Technology, Tamnar, Raigarh, and many schools and community colleges spread across the country.

As one of the major steel producers in India with a turnover of more than \$5.5 billion, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd. (JSPL) has revolutionized the process of steel-making in India. The continual thriving for excellence, supreme quality, and innovative approach have enabled the company to become a trailblazer in the steel industry. JSPL used its profits and resources for the betterment of society through the CSR initiatives of the JSPL Foundation. Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of JSPL have touched over 10 lakh lives and continue to work on building a visionary India.

The JSPL Foundation addresses some of India's most pressing development challenges in various fields such as Healthcare and Nutrition, Skill Development and Education, Sanitation and Hygiene,

Women Empowerment, promoting Art and Culture, and Sports.

In tandem with the 'FICCI Vision 2030 for Higher Education in India', OPJU believes to impart higher education having global relevance and competitiveness, which aims not only to be the best in the world but also the best for the world. Our university is surrounded by approximately 100 industries because we feel that sustainable excellent higher education in engineering sectors cannot be possible without industry connection from the very early stage of B. Tech. All students undergo 02 months of full-time industrial training at JSPL, JPL, and other companies in OPJU. The university promotes long-term (6-12 months) industry internships. More than 70 % of long-term internships come with a pre-placement offer. Overall, 82% of the students have been placed, even during the Covid-19 upsurge.

Another pivotal aspect of OP Jindal University is providing higher education in an affordable capacity, mostly in the tribal belt of India (Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar). The university offers multi-layered scholarships to meritorious students so that financial matters should not be a hindrance to higher education.

In OPJU, we aim to ignite and educate young minds so that they contribute to the nation's development. OP Jindal University, known as the University of Steel Technology and Management, is the only university in India catering to the need of the steel and power industries. Within a very short span of our journey, we received national and international recognition. OPJU has received the Best University of CG award from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh along with Best Industry Connect (Featured in AICTE CII 2020), to name a few.



OPJU is a multidisciplinary university of choice to develop future leaders beyond boundaries. We create and support the next generation of ambitious innovators and entrepreneurs and encourage them to translate ideas into start-ups.

The OPJU is spread across a residential campus of 34 acres and with over 300,000 square feet of academic space, student residences to house more than 1000 students, and extensive facilities for students, staff, and faculty; University offers UG, PG, and Ph. D programs across all its schools, like **School of Engineering (SOE)** offers Diploma, B.Tech, M.Tech, PhD in Mining Engineering, Metallurgical & Materials Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering. **School of Management (SOM)** offers MBA, Executive MBA, BBA, BA Economics (H), Bcom (H), and PhD in Marketing, Finance, HR and Operations, and Business. We also have a "Student Exchange Program" with Jindal Global University (JGU). **School of Science (SOS)** offers BSc. (Hons.), MSc., and PhD in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biotechnology, Data Science and Analytics & Humanities.



One of our unique initiatives is the **Centre of Sustainable Technology and Product Development (CSTPD)** which conducts **research on reducing carbon footprint and thereby promoting green steel-making.**

We are crafting the vision of our Hon'ble Chairman Mr. Naveen Jindal with respect and vigour by developing state-of-art laboratories with modern equipment and the latest software. We are in the process of recruiting competent faculty with international exposure, establishing multiple centres of excellence, adopting 'doing by doing' teaching pedagogy, designing industry and research-linked curricula, harnessing national-international collaborations and tie-ups, promoting research, and focusing on career development of the students through training & compulsory industry internships.

Additionally, we encourage our students to participate in sports and games with the aim of lopping the students holistically. We want to channel young minds towards constructive direction through sports. Sports are known to boost alertness, disciple, team spirit, mental ability, confidence, and concentration in the students for a better tomorrow.

Higher education institutions can offer a strong potential for contributing to development. Throughout the history of humankind, institutions of higher learning have played an important role in society by educating the people and serving the communities. The work done by OPJU and the achievements demonstrates the sincerity and strength of OP Jindal University. However, the university is aware that it must do a lot more. The university is committed to delivering the best to society and it will be able to achieve the highest level of teaching and research in technology, management, science, and community services.





Satish Khade
Aqua Man of Pune

He is a civil engineer, has been a water activist and has been working in the field of water conservation for more than a decade. He is the editor of the monthly 'Jalsanvad' publication running for the last 17 years & dedicated to Water issues only. A true Punekar at heart, he's been guiding several govt and non-government organizations to create awareness and actionable steps in this domain. His contribution as a member and president of the Rotary Club has been exemplary. He is a core Team member of Jalbiradari, Maharashtra and is the district director for water and sanitation for 2021-22. He is also the author of the book 'Abhinav Jalnayak'.

The Far Reaching Impact of Water Scarcity

A Closer Look at Life, Migration, Health, Education, Economy, Society, and Culture



This year, once again, the arrival of rains has been delayed, confirming the forecasts of the Meteorological Department regarding a decrease in rainfall. This situation has raised concerns among people about the upcoming monsoon season and the potential difficulties in terms of water availability for the next year. We can only hope that this year brings adequate rainfall.

The worries of the people are not unfounded, as rain and water have a significant impact on everyone's lives in various ways. Rain is not solely crucial for farmers; it profoundly affects life, health, education, economy, society, culture, and peace.

Rain and Life

Life, essentially, originated and has been sustained for millions of years due to water. However, without rain or sufficient water in the soil or on the ground, the roots of large trees and crops lack the necessary water, leading to their death. Animals also suffer greatly, with those in forests dying of thirst. Domesticated animals receive some support from humans due to their economic value, but non-productive domestic animals often perish.

The scarcity of water brings about significant changes in people's lives, such as water scarcity, infertility of the land, food and water shortages, poor health, malnutrition,



Photo credit: Satish Khade

and more. Financial stability becomes distant, often leading to large-scale migration.

Migration

Migration is a global issue affecting countries worldwide. It represents one of the most significant and consequential events in human affairs. According to a report by the United Nations, one-third of the world's population has been forced to migrate due to water scarcity in the last fifty years. By 2030, it is projected that 66% of the world's population will have to leave their homes, villages, states, or even countries in search of water. The severity and extent of migration due to water-related issues are expected to increase significantly, causing various social and economic problems.

Health

Even today, only a small percentage of the global population, around fifteen to sixteen per cent, has access to safe drinking water. Contaminated and polluted water is responsible for 70% of human diseases. While epidemics have been brought under control to some extent in recent decades, many diseases are still linked to water pollution. Serious health conditions, including cancer, can be attributed to the problem of polluted water.

Education

Migration due to water scarcity leads to a universal picture of educational loss. Additionally, the lack of water and resulting infertility and poverty restrict educational opportunities, with education often limited to the tenth grade. Only 13% of students who reach the tenth grade continue their education at higher levels. The government's claim of a 90% literacy rate fails to account for out-of-school children and school dropouts. Girls, in particular, are significantly affected by school dropout rates due to the absence of water-fetching facilities at home and inadequate sanitation in schools.

Economy

In India, agriculture remains the primary source of income for 62% of the population, and agriculture relies heavily on water availability. Without rainfall, crops cannot grow, leading to zero purchasing power



for farmers and agricultural labourers. Consequently, goods cannot be sold within villages, negatively impacting manufacturing and all other types of businesses. The economic consequences extend from the individual and village level to the state and national levels. Given India's size, droughts occur in some four to seven states every year, severely affecting GDP, banking, and all aspects of the economy. In short, the absence of rain and water significantly hampers the economy.

Public Health and Peace

Barrenness-induced migration disrupts families, communities, and villages, leaving societies dejected and depressed. Lack of employment opportunities and the loss of aspirations often lead to dissatisfaction, marches, riots, theft, and increased crime rates. Both rural and urban societies experience the strain caused by migration. Even after migrating to cities, these individuals struggle to build a better life. Moreover, migration places an overwhelming burden on urban areas, straining infrastructure and facilities and adversely impacting overall societal health.

Culture

Cultural development and prosperity do not occur in isolation; rather, they thrive in a favourable environment. However, migration separates communities, hindering the celebration of traditional festivals and customs that mark moments of joy, sadness, and significance. Consequently, subsequent generations lose awareness of these cultural practices, leading to the disappearance of folk art and literature. Innovation in art, literature, and traditional sciences comes to a halt at both the individual and collective levels. Rain and water are interconnected with every aspect of creation and society.

In summary, the scarcity and contamination of water have far-reaching consequences on various aspects of life, including health, education, economy, society, and culture. Urgent measures are needed to address the water crisis and mitigate its severe impact on humanity.



Col. Sultan Singh Malik

He is a retired army officer, is recognized for his remarkable contributions across various interdisciplinary fields. His pioneering research focuses on the eco-compliant disposal of explosives waste, transforming it into plant fertilizer. He has also played a vital role in facilitating collaboration among innovative researchers in the INDO-EU water cooperation project SPRING while establishing the INDO-EU Water Forum (INWF.IN). Additionally, he has been instrumental in providing education to underprivileged children. Most notably, for over five decades, he has tirelessly promoted Indian art, culture, and patriotism through his own performances of patriotic, light, folk songs, and Indian music, inspiring countless youths, and society at large.

Colonel (Dr.) Sultan Singh Malik

Confluence of Service, Music, and Environmentalism

Q. Could you please provide information about your educational background and how it has contributed to your expertise in interdisciplinary fields such as environmental sciences, management, mechanical engineering, and academia?

My educational journey began in a remote village near Gurdaspur, Punjab where I was raised in challenging circumstances without access to electricity. Despite the hardships, I remained determined to succeed. My upbringing in a troubled border region instilled in me a strong drive to excel. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Punjab University and a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from SPPU. Right in my childhood, my passion for music led me to pursue a Master's degree in Indian classical music from Allahabad.

Additionally, I conducted research in Environmental Sciences during my doctoral studies at SPPU (Pune University). These diverse educational experiences have shaped my expertise in interdisciplinary fields. Also, during my tenure in the army and DRDO, I actively participated in Research and Development projects, specifically focused on eco-compliant disposal of war/military explosives waste. This experience provided me with a unique perspective on the environmental challenges posed by military activities and the need for sustainable solutions.

Q. What motivated you to pursue research in the disposal of hazardous waste and resource planning? Can you share any notable achievements or projects in these areas?

Very little is known in the open literature about the environmental damage caused by these high-energy materials. These are highly toxic and harmful to living beings and the environment. My motivation stems from first-hand experiences as a frontline army officer handling and using these high-end explosives. Witnessing the environmental damage caused by these hazardous materials and their waste during training and war

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I joined DRDO which provided me with an opportunity to address the eco-compliant disposal of millions of tons of military explosives waste, which is a global environmental concern.

deeply impacted me. After my post-Kargil service, I joined DRDO which provided me with an opportunity to address the eco-compliant disposal of millions of tons of military explosives waste, which is a global environmental concern.

Under the guidance of senior DRDO scientists, my team conducted extensive research. Our notable achievement was finding an effective method to convert bomb waste into plant fertilizer, benefiting sustainable crop growth, particularly in wheat cultivation.

This breakthrough research earned recognition, including the publication of my research paper in the esteemed American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in 2012. I was honoured with an ASCE honorary fellow membership, and today, my PhD thesis and paper serve as references for scholars worldwide. Our work emphasizes the importance of eco-friendly disposal practices and resource planning in managing hazardous explosive waste.

Q. As the Chief of the INDO NORDIC EU WATER FORUM, what role do you play, and how does the forum contribute to addressing the challenges faced by the Indian water sector?

After studying under Govt. of India-sponsored INDO-EU Water Cooperation Project SPRING for about three years, The INDO-EU NORDIC WATER FORUM (<https://inwf.in/>) aims to primarily address water-related challenges in India by providing a platform for collaboration and sustainable solutions among all stakeholders, including industrial partners.

As the Chief Trustee, my role involves overseeing the forum's operations and working towards expanding its membership network. Currently, the forum serves as a one-stop solution for addressing all water-related issues and queries, fostering dialogue and cooperation among

Indian and Nordic nations. Our goal is to actively engage present and future generations in water conservation and management. We have initiated community programs in Pune, Maharashtra and have undertaken the task of mapping pollution sources in the Ganga and Godavari Rivers. Additionally, we have signed MOUs with MIT Pune for the Mula-Mutha River and Gujarat Jal Board for Narmada water.

Q. You have received honours and awards at both national and international levels. Could you highlight some of the most significant recognition you have received for your research and contributions?

I am humbled to have received the Chief of Indian Army Staff Medal for outstanding service. I also take pride in serving as the First Trustee of the IN-EU Water Forum. My research has been acknowledged by esteemed organizations such as DRDO, and MOD-the Government of India. I received the prestigious Bajaj Auto Ltd.'s Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) Award, and I have been recognized as the Best Gunwant Kamgar (most skilled industrial worker in Satara District, 2014). Additionally, I have received letters of appreciation from DGEME and COAS. Being a Fellow of ASCE and a member of ISDG further highlights my contributions.

Furthermore, in the field of music, art, and culture, where I have served my country for over 50 years, my musical talents have earned me much recognition. I won the title of All-India Folk Singer Best Artist in 1977, and I have been recognised as the Singing Eagle of the Indian Army. I may be the only serving frontline officer to write, compose, and sing for the army, navy, air force, universities, schools, and colleges. My songs in serials/albums have even had Bollywood stars singing and dancing on my playback, thereby motivating millions of young people with patriotism and belief in the Unity of India. JAI HIND!

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Our notable achievement was finding an effective method to convert bomb waste into plant fertilizer, benefiting sustainable crop growth, particularly in wheat cultivation.



Harvesting Water for Posterity



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There is nothing as satisfying as bringing back water to the wells.

Kalpana Ramesh

Kalpana Ramesh's words mirror her abiding passion for the cause of water conservation. A Hyderabad-based Interior Designer and Architect, Kalpana transformed into a water conservation champion when the realisation struck about the extensive ill effects of resource mismanagement and apathy towards groundwater depletion and left a deep impact on her. T.S. Eliot, the famous American poet said, "Home is where one starts from." True to these words, instead of succumbing to water tanker reliance like most urban residents, she built a sustainable home with a 25000-litre rainwater harvesting tank and greywater recycling capability. Starting the reforms at home, she steadily advanced changes to her residential colony, and the local community and then on to various projects at the district and state levels. Today Kalpana Ramesh and the social enterprise founded by her, The Rainwater Project, have more than 20 stepwell restorations, lake revivals, rainwater harvesting projects, hundreds of borewell rejuvenations and lakhs of litres of water saved to their credit. Collaborating with SAHE NGO (Society for Advancement of Human Endeavour) for various projects, Kalpana has pinned water conservation as an agenda on the sustainability measures roadmap of urban and rural Telangana.

Kalpana's singular objective is to ensure that every drop of water, be it rainwater, water from lakes, ponds, shallow and deep aquifers feeding stepwells and borewells respectively or even recycled grey water, is saved, collected and added back to groundwater reserve. Her

aim is to achieve water security by effecting a conscious shift or growth in the patterns of behaviour bringing about transformative change. Her sights are set firmly upon establishing a water-resilient future for the coming generations through astute actions and thought leadership.

As part of the Blue Hyderabad initiative in collaboration with SAHE Hyderabad is mapped into 98 watersheds and the Hitec city watershed is the first to be focused upon to prevent urban floods and conserve groundwater. The grassroots approach adopted by her and mapping of water bodies and channels that are the lifeline of a city's groundwater story creates awareness among communities regarding water scarcity, lake pollution with plastics and sewerage. These measures also stress the importance of water conservation, rainwater harvesting (RWH) and groundwater recharge through the restoration of water structures, lake revivals and simple RWH DIY techniques. These efforts towards groundwater improvement and water conservation can be replicated in other cities to create sustainable water-positive cities. Other initiatives led by Kalpana include 'Save 10K bores' and 'Live the Lakes', aimed at creating awareness and increasing civic & moral responsibility towards protecting water, and its sources and restoring them to their former glory.

Kalpana's professional strategy to execute rainwater harvesting projects with the mission to increase groundwater levels progressed into large-scale stepwell restoration projects. Kalpana's association with Hyderabad Design Forum (HDF), a guild of architects documenting the forgotten stepwells of Telangana, put her on the path to rediscovering the historical water structures that were once built to combat water scarcity in the arid region of the Deccan. Stepwells and wells act as vital collection points for rainwater and runoff discharge, working to replenish the underground aquifers after every rainfall. These traditional water structures were unfortunately neglected over the years and fell prey to rampant urbanisation and so-called modernisation. The socio-cultural relationship between the community and stepwells was destroyed due to the provision of water supply to homes. People stopped going to the wells to collect water and the stepwells lost their significance. Kalpana strongly believes that the stepwell's critical role in aiding groundwater levels and their status as historical monuments that once acted as community centres should not be overlooked. The restoration of stepwells and their revival as social activity spaces where

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Just as the unfocused rays of light are blocked leaving bringing the core image into clear focus in the pinhole view, telescopic transformations at different locations can work wonders.



Bansilalpet stepwell has restored not just the local water security of the Bansilalpet area, but also the faith that Samootham (Community), Sarkar (Government) and Sansthaan (Social enterprise) can revive the much-needed restoration of such historical water structures bequeathed to us by our progressive ancestors.

the local population celebrates festivals and conducts art and cultural events is Kalpana Ramesh's brainchild. Her belief is that when these spaces are developed with the intention to propagate actions of cyclical quality, upkeep and sustainability will follow.

The recently restored Bansilalpet stepwell is a fitting example of a holistic restoration project. Dumped with garbage and debris for over 4 decades, the beautiful 6-level stepwell adorned with carvings and stone mandapams was on the verge of being filled up and levelled into obscurity to accommodate a parking lot. Timely intervention and 11 months of hard work by The Rainwater Project ensured that the stepwell was restored to its past glory. Today the precinct is redeveloped with new roads and revamped utilities for the residents, befitting the tourist spot it has become. The tourist plaza and amphitheatre, adjoining the stepwell, house an interpretation centre that also doubles up as a performing arts arena. Baaram Baavi in Narayanpet is yet another success story for The Rainwater Project where the Bathukamma festival was organised at the stepwell grounds.

Kalpana's vision of stepwell restorations integrating the traditional water structure into the community's fabric sets sustainability into motion. These projects are carried to completion by adopting a three-pronged sustainable execution plan involving Government, Community and Social enterprise. The stepwell restoration scene has gained momentum and the Rainwater Project has been approached by district collectors, individuals, institutions and organisations with appeals to restore various stepwells. The prestigious Rashtrapati Nilayam stepwells, Bhiknoor temple stepwell, Lingampet stepwell, SBI staff training centre stepwells and the Osmania University stepwells are ongoing projects, while a few more like the Khammam stepwell, Gadwal stepwell and Falaknuma Bagh ki Baoli are ones in the pipeline.

Kalpana is recognised as a Water Hero by the Jal Shakti Ministry of India owing to her work in the water sustainability sector. Kalpana was also chosen as one of the seven women achievers who took over PM Modi's social media accounts on Women's Day in March 2020. Her commitment to the cause is accentuated by her unique ability

to connect her profession and passion for water and environmental conservation. Kalpana's resolve to create awareness among people and reconnect them to their water source, be it lakes, borewells, stepwells or rainwater harvesting measures is crucially timed. Today one out of ten persons do not have access to clean drinking water. By 2050 this number will climb to one in four. Grave predictions of falling water tables, polluted groundwater, drying up lakes and changing rainfall patterns all point to the need for imminent remedial action. Having witnessed the apathy that drives unsustainable water usage today and having executed effective solutions to overcome the existing issues, Kalpana asserts,



Mindful use of the finite resource, rainwater harvesting, reviving traditional water systems, rejuvenating dried-up borewells and revitalising lakes and catchment areas and spreading awareness is the way forward to establish water security in future.



Photo credit: Kalpana Ramesh



Mittal Maulik Patel

She is an Indian activist from Gujarat. She holds an MPhil degree in Journalism from Gujarat Vidyapith. After her studies, she began to help people from indigenous tribes to integrate into society.

In recognition of her work, she was awarded the Nari Shakti Puraskar in 2018.

- She founded Vicharta Samuday Samarthan Manch (VSSM) for the welfare of the most downtrodden Nomadic and De-Notified tribes in 2010.
- She works on several social, economic, education, livelihood, human rights, and housing etc. related issues
- She is an honorary member of the Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic and Communities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New Delhi
- She is a member of the Cheetah Project Steering Committee constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

Combating Water Scarcity

A Tale of Success from Gujarat

The significance of water management in the face of climate change cannot be emphasised enough. The delicate balance between evaporation and precipitation, as well as the intricate relationship between water and weather, play a crucial role in the global climate change phenomenon. This realization has prompted the world to act, and India is no exception. According to the Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) report released by the Niti Aayog in 2018, the situation regarding water scarcity in India is dire. The report predicted that by 2020, 21 major cities in India would run out of groundwater, affecting the access to water for approximately 100 million people. Furthermore, the report projected that by 2030, nearly 40% of the population would have no access to drinking water whatsoever. India must transition from a 'supply-and-supply-more water' provision to a more sustainable and holistic approach that emphasizes better water resource management.

One key aspect of this approach involves revisiting traditional practices such as recharging and restoring local water bodies, as well as implementing rainwater harvesting techniques. The survey conducted by the Water Level Board revealed that 34 out of 47 blocks in North Gujarat face alarming underground water levels. This region was declared a 'Dark Zone' looking at the condition of the water level in the region.

Recognizing the need to address this issue, Vicharta Samuday Samarthan Manch (VSSM) has undertaken a comprehensive water management program since 2015. The program aims to create awareness among communities and engage in activities such as desilting lakes. To date, we have successfully de-silted 250 lakes. So far, the amount of silt excavated during the desilting process is 21,12,500 cubic meters (CMT). As a result of desilting, the total enhanced water retention capacity across all lakes amounted to 2,11,245,00,000 litres.





While the improvement of groundwater levels in these regions is a long-term endeavour that may take several years to yield measurable results, the intervention has already had positive outcomes. Many farmers are already experiencing higher crop yields, and there have been instances of water levels rising in existing bore wells.

The Participatory Water Management program distinguishes itself through its emphasis on community involvement. The program begins with raising awareness among residents about the depleting groundwater table and its future consequences. Only when the community agrees to share responsibilities and actively participate in the project does the execution phase begin. Villages are selected based on criteria such as the severity of the problem and the willingness of the villagers to cooperate. This program truly lives up to its name and purpose when the village actively contributes, whether by providing tractors for soil excavation or making monetary contributions. Alongside desilting lakes, the program also focuses on developing inflow and outflow channels for effective water management.

To further enhance the efforts, VSSM

envisions connecting these lakes to canals in the region, creating a network of interconnected water bodies to improve the groundwater table. The announcement of the "Jal Jeevan Mission" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided a major boost, recognizing the importance of these types of initiatives like the Participatory Water Management program.

In parallel with water management initiatives, tree plantation drives play a crucial role in addressing climate change. VSSM initiated a massive Tree Plantation campaign in some of the most arid regions it works. VSSM's approach involves selecting villages for the plantation drive based on the readiness of village leadership to participate actively in the entire process, from planting to maintaining the trees. Recognizing the need for ongoing care, VSSM appoints a dedicated individual – Vriksh Mitra (Tree Caretaker) for three years at each site to look after the planted trees. These tree caretakers water the trees, create small trenches to collect water, and provide necessary remedies to combat diseases. The remuneration for these caretakers is funded through contributions from well-wishers of VSSM, ensuring their commitment to the task at hand.

A total of 90 blocks were involved in the initiative, resulting in the planting of 5,00,347 trees across 121 sites. Out of the total trees planted, 4,65,516 have survived, achieving an overall survival rate of 93.04%. These numbers indicate the successful implementation of tree plantation initiatives across multiple blocks, contributing to environmental conservation and biodiversity. VSSM aims to ensure that every tree planted receives the care it deserves until it becomes self-sustaining. This approach not only contributes to greening the landscape but also fosters a sense of responsibility and environmental stewardship in the community.

Participatory Water management and tree plantation are two integral components of a holistic approach to climate change resilience. The efforts in Gujarat and other regions in India highlight the importance of community involvement, traditional practices, and sustainable strategies for mitigating the impact of climate change. By prioritizing water resource management, supporting marginalized communities, and nurturing planted trees, these initiatives pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future.



Navya Singh

She is an independent journalist and founder of 'News with Navya' (Fact Forth LLP). As a climate action and sustainability enthusiast, she focuses on efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Singh believes that there is fragmented awareness about climate change and the only way to enable action is by empowering people with the right information. She also believes that there are brilliant minds that are producing innovative solutions to tackle climate change and their efforts can inspire action.

Blue Is The New Green

This World Ocean Day, Be The Waves Of Change

We have all seen them. Images of plastic waste on beaches, thousands of turtles, whales, dolphins and sharks found dead and entangled in fishnets. Humans have not explored several parts of the world's oceans; however, our actions have managed to pollute even the deepest waters.

The average temperature at the ocean's surface has been at 21.1 degrees Celsius since the beginning of April 2023, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). World's oceans are polluted by a "plastic smog" made up of nearly 170 trillion plastic particles that have been discarded by humans. If present trends continue, by 2050, plastic is expected to outweigh fish in the sea.

Scientists from across the world have found damning evidence to prove that humans are not just interfering with marine ecosystem but also destroying it mercilessly. There has been a "rapid and unprecedented" increase in ocean plastic pollution since 2005. A recent report by the 5 Gyres Institute, a US-based organization, has predicted that marine plastic pollution could rise 2.6-fold by 2040.

Plastic pollution is not just an environmental problem, it is also a huge climate disaster. Once plastic gets into the oceans, it takes

between 500-1000 years to degrade. The most common ingredients for plastics are fossil fuels that produce planet-heating gasses throughout their lifetime – from production to disposal.

The United Nations (UN) has agreed to create a legally binding global plastics treaty by 2024, which would address the whole life of plastic from production to disposal. But how effective can such lofty promises be, at a time when plastic manufacturing is expected to quadruple by 2050?

Numerous reports have become headlines and escaped our memories, but every time, we wait for a new report to remind ourselves of the disaster.

Plastic pollution is not the only villain here. Human actions leading to noise and chemical pollution are also affecting marine mammals' ability to navigate, communicate and detect danger in oceans. There is oil and gas exploration, military drills, shipping traffic, deep sea mining and so much more that is making the marine environment noisier and more polluted.

World's oceans have become a crime scene. As we try to assess the damage in numbers, the violence and suffering remain unaccounted for.



While we, humans, are the real culprits, we are also the only species that can change the world for the better. As governments, institutions, and communities all over the world begin to understand the gravity of the problem, they also begin to see the opportunities in this industry.

Oceans cover 70% of our earth's surface. They play a major role in the global climate — from providing oxygen and driving weather systems to storing about a quarter of the planet-heating carbon dioxide. It makes this planet habitable.

There is a whole economic ecosystem around the oceans, known as the “blue economy” which thrives on tourism, water sports, seafood, and other related activities. This market is expected to reach \$3 trillion by 2030. Over the past decade, millions of dollars have been invested in ocean cleanup initiatives. After all, blue is the new green.

Several startups and communities are gearing up to clean up oceans and help local communities. Some are collecting abandoned fishing nets and turning them into beautiful products, while others are collecting discarded plastic items and turning them into beautiful objects and artwork. Brilliant new technologies are also finding innovative ways to clean up oceans using animal-like robots that can detect and swallow up toxic plastic waste.

The United Nations believes that a global “Blue Deal” could fetch more investment into sustainable sectors. For example, the global market for seaweed has tripled in two decades, increasing from \$4.5 billion in 2000 to \$16.5 billion in 2020. The market for plastic substitutes is also likely to grow tremendously.

The only way to protect and preserve Earth's elements is awareness. As you learn about the crisis that the planet is facing, you certainly want to help ensure its safety. You educate and inspire others also to join you. This World Ocean Day, take a pledge to know your oceans better and protect them. For decades, humans have been accused of destroying the oceans, but we also have a chance to change the course — and we must.



While startups, big corporations and countries are deciding their goals, here is what common people can do to save the ocean:

- 01 Educate yourself about the ocean and marine life.
- 02 Influence change in your community.
- 03 Choose your seafood sustainably.
- 04 Do not purchase products that harm marine life.
- 05 Travel and explore the ocean responsibly.
- 06 Do not use plastic. It will end up in our waters even if you did not plan it that way.
- 07 Support organizations that are on a mission to clean up and protect oceans. Volunteer and do your bit too.

Personalization in an Impersonal World

A Startup with a Difference



Chetana Bhattacharya

She is a go-getter and self-motivated entrepreneur, who started off as a Software Professional after completing her Masters in Computer Applications from Bangalore. An IIM-Kolkata alum and a mum of two, always ready to take on new challenges, currently trying to make a difference in the way the world perceives convenience in daily life.

Many of us, shop online these days. Mostly, because it's convenient. But, don't we spend a lot of time worrying about the freshness and quality of fruits and vegetables we get? We also keep thinking about ways to add more items to our cart, to meet the minimum billing amount, so that we can get "FREE delivery". And oh! Did I miss the "Captain not available", "High demand surcharge", "Distance fee" and "Platform charge" and... the quintessential MARKUP on the store bill!!?

Did anyone say they needed a ready-to-eat banana but got a green bunch? And did you have a sudden desire to have a chilled buttermilk on that sunny afternoon, but got

a warm buttermilk, that took ages to cool down, even when shoved into the freezer? The palak looked so nice when I saw it on the app! But, hey... did I really pay so much for that blackening bunch of palak? Ugh! One app has the butter but doesn't have the organic steel-cut oats that I'm looking for. Need to check on the other apps. So many "app"-tions, but, such a waste of time!

We just love the lush greens and bright and fresh fruits and vegetables lined up on the aisles at our local supermarkets and favourite thela-wallahs. We love to pick and choose the items on our own. We're particular about the way we shop and have our local favourites as well, which are not available "online", simply because they're

produced locally. But, alas! May God help us combat the serpentine queues at the billing counters, and the not-so-nice traffic jams, the parking woes, and the blaring sun!

Just the other day, a friend of mine was exhausted. She had to do the grocery store, pick up her blazer from the laundry store, drop a cheque at the bank, meet a high-profile client, and after all this, come back home with a broken sandal. To add to her assignments, the child had a report submission the next day, the printer was out of ink, and her mother-in-law wanted to have some tender coconut water, with malai. And then, the cook reported that the paneer pack went bad! Another had to be procured asap so that he would not be delayed in his work schedule. How worse than this could it get!?

What if there was a service, that assisted with all of this and more?

Ta-da... introducing Sarrthy – Your Personal Runner Team!

"Personal Runner Team?" Time to unveil the mystery :)

Sarrthy is a service that provides a Runner Team for every household, concierge in the truest sense.

A team that –

- provides personalized and dedicated service.
- services your needs from the local neighbourhood.
- gets the freshest items, every single time.
- ensures availability of items and services, without you having to worry about app hopping or shop hopping.
- provides a bouquet of over 40+ services to assist you daily.

Sarrthy Associates are trained to pick the best fruits and vegetables every time. If quality items are not available at one store, we check at multiple stores, to get the





Sarrthy mein kaam karke achcha lagta hai. Building ke andar safe hai, aur kaam bhi achcha hai. Walk karke delivery ho jata hai. Aur Vijetha se pickup ka kaam bhi achcha hai.

freshest and best quality goods. We check for the expiry date on items and look for alternates if the desired product is not available, all of this is personalized, just the way one would do it themselves. Odd jobs are hassle-free. Whether it's picking a plant from the nursery, dropping a cheque to the bank, or buying medicines from the local pharmacy, Sarrthy does it for you, without having to bother. Now, isn't that such a big relief?

It is a win-win for all. Our customers love us as an extension of their family and we promote the local ecosystem, like family. Regular stores can reach out to a huge customer base through us. Local people are employed and trained to work as Associates. And rather than promoting the gig economy, where attritions and burnouts are very high, we promote long-term employment. The Associates employed with us have a defined career progression, and they stick to the system.

At Sarrthy, we advocate Gender parity. The Founder, Chetana was invited to speak on Gender Parity at **Future.Female.Forward – A Women's Collective**, Launch of Hyderabad Chapter, by **HSBC** and **CNBC TV18**. We have women Associates on the ground. Primarily based out of gated communities, we always have "safe and hygienic" work conditions, conducive for women to work. Deliveries inside the community are done on cycles or walks, again not exposing the Associates, especially women, to harsh road conditions during deliveries. One of our female Associates, Srivani says, "Sarrthy mein kaam karke achcha lagta hai. Building ke andar safe hai, aur kaam bhi achcha hai. Walk karke delivery ho jata hai. Aur Vijetha se pickup ka kaam bhi achcha hai."

Building a scalable, environment-friendly, and sustainable model is as important as the service itself! At Sarrthy, we have designed the model in such a way, that orders are batched, hence reducing the use of bikes. And orders are delivered to the doorstep by Associates on foot or cycle. We also reuse and recycle the bags for delivery, thereby saving a lot of plastic/paper waste generation. Tiny steps like these, go a long way to help control our carbon footprint.

Recently, Sarrthy was awarded the first prize in a competition '**Ground Reality**' at the **Launchpad Entrepreneurial Summit '23** organized by **BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus**.

Proudly incubated at **WE Hub, Government of Telangana**, Sarrthy is India's first true concierge. Made in India. Made for India. Soon, we'll be at your door, in your city, to serve you. And you can happily say... **"Sarrthy On... Tension Gone!"**





Rajbir Deswal

Neither a mystic nor alone a romantic dreamer, the well-read and village-fed Rajbir Deswal, 66, is a blend of numerous traits of a prolific author, columnist, artist, administrator, policeman of national recognition and a man given to finer pursuits in life. He is credited with 21 books and over 4000 articles published in leading English dailies. He is recognised as National Police Trainer by the Bureau of Police Research & Development, M.H.A., New Delhi and is a widely travelled police officer who has been Superintendent of Police, D.I.G. & I.G. in State Intelligence and Telecommunications, Police Commissioner, I.G. of Karnal Range, Joint Director of Haryana Police Academy, Madhuban, and Addl. DGP Human Rights & Litigation, Haryana. He has also been the Managing Editor of the prestigious Indian Police Journal. Having been an accomplished police officer, presently Rajbir Deswal practises law at the Punjab & Haryana High Court.

Nature Slaughter

The Biggest Threat Against Civilization

There goes a story about the hill people in Himachal Pradesh, that they brought their cattle back home before the evening fell, in apprehension of the imminent rains. This was possible for them to ascertain, after watching the ants return to their colonies before time since they instinctively knew that it was about to rain. The hill people trusted what their forefathers had told them and were proven right every time. But this does not happen anymore. Reason? Neither the hill people now remember all that folk wisdom, in the onslaught of the so-called modernity robbing them of the cultural practices they carried out for centuries, nor are the fauna and flora the same, as they might have been years ago. The entire bio-diversity has gone lopsided, thanks to the modern-day man's turning a blind eye to the concerns of the environment. Undoubtedly man wants to eat up the earth and leave nothing for their progeny to subsist with. Not only this, we are blissfully unaware of the climatic holocaust that has put our own lives exposed to catastrophes of the most disastrous magnitude, surely affecting not only mankind but all organisms in animals and vegetation.

This writer saw in a village called Salt Springs, an island in Canada that all residents lived in an environment where there

was almost no aberration or violation of the rules of nature whether it was agriculture, business or even having painting studios. They do not use chemical fertilizers rather all orchards proudly proclaim 'Organic' and grow accordingly. Wood is recycled and energy preserved. They opposed laying an oil pipeline being laid through their land. The residents had the courage to tell the tourists to avoid eating 'those genetically modified potatoes' called crisp or chips. There were small farms with dairy, poultry, looms, and pottery—all in their eco-friendly avatar. Elsewhere in the US, enthusiasts in fact adopt highways for their upkeep and keeping clean and dirt free.

Contrast this with our own country. Do we despite a ban abstain from burning the stubble after the crops have been cut? Do we recycle carry bags? Do we care about water depletion? Do we say no to non-biodegradable stuff in polyethene, etc? Do we stop mining? Do we adopt rotational cropping? Do we use compost manure in place of chemical fertilisers? Do we plant enough trees and stop their feeling? Do we save electricity produced by hydroelectric projects? Do we manage our floods? Do we indulge in conventional ways of saving and storing water? Do we have appropriate solid waste management plans





executed properly? Do we have covered excreta latrines and toilets? Do we reclaim land rendered infertile due to alkali using appropriate techniques? Do we not litter garbage? Do our industries have enough effluent-treating plants? The scenario is not only lacking in proper environmental concerns but is horribly shocking.

We need to address these concerns. Pollution of air, water and soil by chemical compounds takes many years to break down. Most of these chemicals are the bi-products of our modern lifestyle and are created by industry and motor vehicle exhaust. The resultant depletion of the ozone layer is the mother of all concerns. Since 1990, half the world's rainforests have been destroyed. The world's population has tripled during the past sixty years. The number of consumers of natural and manmade resources is increasing. Climate Scientists believe that human activity is affecting climate change. Add to this the loss of biodiversity. This 'Sixth Extinction' is going to affect the world for millions of years. Every year, humans convert an estimated 120 million tons of nitrogen from the atmosphere into reactive forms such as nitrates, mainly in the production of nitrogen-based fertilizer for crops and in the use of food additives. This amounts to both, use and abuse. Nearly one-third of the human population has inadequate access to clean water. Over the last 250 years, the average surface acidity of the ocean has increased by an estimated 30 per cent.

Conventional energy sources like fossil fuels, gas, crude oil, coal, etc are being ruthlessly

consumed caring two hoots for sustainable development. We do not exploit the non-conventional energy sources in water, sun, geothermal and biogas. Our transportation system and industries are again the biggest sources of creating an environmental imbalance. We do not cater to the concept of 'Green Buildings'. There is a need to address the use of solar energy and adopt what the National Solar Mission must prescribe in this regard.

In a village in Africa, they had a problem with insects. The flitting insects made the lives of the people hell and there seemed to be no alternative than to either stay indoors or have enough covering around one. The mayor harped on a novel plan. He had poles erected all over on which there hung bird houses and enough feed. There were many birdhouses on each pole placed vertically over one another. The birds started visiting these houses and began to stay there. The mayor ensured that none killed the birds. In less than a few months, the birds finished the insects and saved the environment.

I conclude on a promising note, I can say that we humans are the wisest species on earth. But the irony is that mankind is causing the threat and greed often takes over sensibilities. The green growth is the need of the hour and it focuses to ensure that the blessings of nature dispense their full potential on a sustainable basis. That includes the provision of clean air, water, and resilient biodiversity. Mother nature is the utmost indulgence, let us pledge to save it!



A Passionate Affair with Trees



Lily Swarn

Internationally acclaimed, Multilingual Poet, Author of many books, Columnist, Gold Medallist, University Colour

Let me acquaint you with these words from Guru Nanak Ji -

**ਐਸੀ ਭਵਰਾ ਬਾਸੁ ਲੇ ॥
ਤਰਵਰ ਫੂਲੇ ਬਨ ਹਰੇ ॥**

Bumblebee, suck in that fragrance, which causes the trees to flower, and the woods to grow lush foliage

It is high time each one of us does our bit to protect the environment like a crusader.

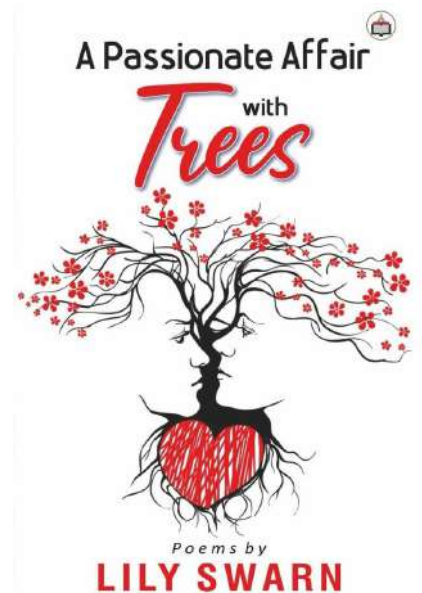
My romance with trees began as I walked out of school to see red silk cotton flowers falling plop-plop on the ground. They dropped with a seductive thud and I was smitten by the satiny texture lurking inside their sepals. I was enthralled with the sweet-smelling Devil Tree.

How can one be impervious to the splendour of yellow laburnums, pink kachnars, Persian lilacs, violet jacarandas, scarlet gulmohars, or flame of the forest?

**"I sauntered below your sprawling banyan tree
A toddler playing house-house
Amidst violet petunias and sunny nasturtium
Mother Nature, your basket nurtured me
with luscious tastes and scents
While I guzzle fossil fuel as petrol and kerosene
To race my automobiles on your ample chest
I will lie on a bamboo pyre tied with jute rope
Logs will burn to make me ash
I am taking this moment to thank you for your mercies
For I had neglected a selfless mother like all ungrateful wretches do"**

"To me a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug"

- Helen Keller



**ਕੁਝ ਰੁੱਖ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਤ ਲਗਦੇ
ਨੇਕੁਝ ਰੁੱਖ ਲਗਦੇ ਮਾਵਾ**

Some trees seem like sons to me
Some are like mothers

I sign off by requesting my readers to do their tiny bit to preserve our wondrous nature for the coming generations.

Darakht haathh hilaate thhe rahnumai ko
Musafiron ne toh Kuchh bhi nahin kaha
Mujh se (IA Quraishi)

“

In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous
- Aristotle



Tata Capital Screened Over Two Lakh Individuals Under Project Aarogyatara: A Primary Eye Care Initiative



Mumbai:

Tata Capital, the financial services arm of the Tata Group, has launched Project Aarogyatara – an initiative to eradicate curable blindness through inclusive primary eye care facilities. The purpose is to improve the eye health of low-income group families, help diagnose eye disorders, provide timely treatment and increase awareness about regular eye check-ups. The project has been successfully implemented in Maharashtra, Bihar, UP, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Tata Capital, under Project Aarogyatara, has partnered with six NGOs in five years and has facilitated more than 23,000 cataract surgeries. The project provides support to diagnose and treat refractive errors through community mobilisers and healthcare workers.

Impact:

- Over 2 lakh individuals were screened for eye-related ailments.
- Over 1600 camps were conducted
- Of the people screened, more than 9900 people were provided with spectacles.
- Conducted over 23,000 cataract surgeries

About Project Aarogyatara: It has been launched to ensure quality preventive healthcare to fight against curable blindness. The initiative was met with an overwhelming response from the community and people benefiting from the camps. Tata Capital plans to continue its CSR initiatives and contribute towards creating a better and healthier society.

Nestlé inaugurates a new research institute aimed at supporting sustainable food systems

Lausanne, Switzerland

Nestlé has officially inaugurated the Institute of Agricultural Sciences to help advance sustainable food systems by delivering science-based solutions in agriculture.

Speaking at the inauguration, Paul Bulcke, Nestlé Chairman, said: “We have nurtured direct relationships with generations of farmers around the world. To continue providing people with tasty, nutritious and affordable foods, we need to transition together to a more sustainable food system. The new institute will strengthen our expertise and use our global network to support farming communities and protect our planet.”

With global food systems under pressure, there is an urgent need to accelerate new approaches that ensure a sustainable food supply for a growing world population while contributing to farmers' livelihoods. At the new institute, Nestlé experts screen and develop solutions in key focus areas such as plant science, agricultural systems and dairy livestock.

It builds on the company's existing plant science expertise in coffee and cocoa. Over many years, Nestlé plant scientists have been contributing to Nestlé's sustainable cocoa and coffee sourcing plans - the Nestlé Cocoa Plan and Nescafé Plan (pdf, 9Mb) - including the recent discovery of more disease and drought-resistant coffee varieties.

Nestlé is now strengthening this expertise and expanding it to further crops, including pulses and grains. The institute is also working with farmers to trial regenerative agriculture practices to improve soil health and encourage biodiversity. In addition, experts explore novel approaches in dairy farming that have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the areas of cow feed and manure management.

Plans: the Nestlé Cocoa Plan and Nescafé Plan (pdf, 9Mb) - including the recent discovery of more disease and drought-resistant coffee varieties.

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Raigarh introduces blockchain-backed CSR tree plantation applications

Raigarh District Administration has launched a blockchain-based monitoring device for monitoring Industrial Company Social Accountability (CSR) plantation initiatives to do in the city. Utilizing NEAR Protocol's platform and technological choices of Airchains, the administration ambitions to construct the tree plantation mechanism to allow transparency, traceability, and accountability inside the sector.

According to a legit release, Airchains' blockchain-based monitoring device is centered on offering facts to the stakeholders of the project, alongside making sure the listed industries are compliant with the rules associated with the plantation sector. Reportedly, the machine presents one-of-a-kind functionalities which include a Tree Aadhaar for monitoring and storing data, dashboard login for district administration and listed industries, and today's plantation records protecting factors such as type, location, time, date, a wide variety of bushes planted. Additionally, the platform has a person interface designed for listed industries to feed statistics into the gadget and tracks real-time Air Quality Index (AQI).

"We look forward to partnering with Raigarh District Administration to empower development through blockchain technology. As a public sector player, they aim to lead the way in India and we intend to be a catalyst to their initiative with our solution," Arpit Sharma, Managing Director of India, SE Asia, and the Middle East, said.

Moreover, the assignment is believed to have two phases of implementation with the first segment together with the onboarding of industries, verifying records pertaining to their tree plantation activities, producing a Tree Aadhaar for every tree, and monitoring their maintenance. The 2nd section ambitions to display the effectiveness of this device for future planning and geographical assessment.

Maha being preferred by industries due to availability of good infrastructure, other facilities: CM Shinde

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday said that the state is being preferred by many industries, including foreign ones, due to the availability of good infrastructure, skilled manpower and other facilities.

Without taking any names, he said, "They had been speaking of Mohalla Clinics on the traces of the ones in New Delhi, however, we have long passed in advance with the aid of coming up with the Vandaniya Balasaheb Thackeray Aapla Dawakhana, which is right here to serve the needy residents of Maharashtra."

"Maharashtra was once being favoured via many industries, along with foreign, on account of the availability of appropriate infrastructure

Nippon Express (India) donates school building to Karnataka State

Nippon Express India Private Limited P. Krishna Murthy, President; hereinafter, "NX India", a group company of NIPPON EXPRESS HOLDINGS, INC. Mitsuru Saito, President, has constructed a school building and toilets for government high school in Thoranagatte Village, Davanagere District, Karnataka State. The donation to the school and a handover ceremony took place on March 17.

NX India has been actively involved in CSR efforts to promote education in various regions of India. The donation of the school building to the government high school in Thoranagatte Village is also intended to support the development of human resources that will lead India in the future and to contribute to social development by providing children in rural areas with better educational opportunities and environments.

This government high school corresponds to a junior high school and high school in Japan, and 276 children attend this school. The donated school building is a one-story structure with three classrooms, offering these children a hygienic and clean learning environment.

The Nippon Express Group will continue fulfilling its social development responsibilities by connecting people, companies, and communities, and will actively engage in further social contribution activities to help bring about sustainable societies.



and different services which include knowledgeable manpower," PTI quoted him as saying.

The CM stated when the Mumbai-Pune Expressway was being constructed, many detractors wondered the want for it however, these days one sees its utility and giant advantage of it to the people. The improvement of any metropolis does no longer imply solely building of excessive upward jostle buildings, however, they need to additionally have parks and libraries for citizens, he said, including the desirable work performed with the aid of the NMMC needs to be replicated throughout the state.

Shinde similarly stated many predominant tasks have been undertaken in the state, consisting of improvement of Metro community in Mumbai, Thane, Mira Bhayander, Navi Mumbai, etc. Once this is completed, the hassle of visitor jams will be solved. It will assist limit the journey time and pollution, he added "Our intentions are very clear, we are transparent and whatever decisions we take are in the interest of citizens. Rules and laws are not to be just preserved on paper, but should be for the benefit of citizens, which we are implementing".

Bicycle Rally, Tree Counting and Tree hugging Activities mark sustainable Lifestyle programs

World Environment Day is an occasion which brings together millions of people across the country for awareness and action for the environment. This year, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India envisages to celebrate World Environment Day 2023 with a thrust on the Mission LiFE. The concept of LiFE, i.e., Lifestyle for Environment was introduced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, at the World Leaders' Summit in Glasgow at the 2021



UNFCCC COP26, when he gave a clarion call to rekindle a global pursuit to adopt sustainable lifestyle and practices. Mass mobilization across the country on LiFE is being organized in the run-up to the celebrations.

National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)

NMNH in collaboration with NZP organized a bicycle rally and an interactive session for students of the school and veterinary college; the students pledged to adopt the LiFE movement in their day-to-day life. The second day of the campaign began with the zoo visit of 155 school students from Convent of Jesus and Mary, Ashok Place, Bangla Sahib Marg, New Delhi and 55 students of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Pashu Chikitsa Vigyan Vishwavidyalaya Evam Go-Anusandhan Sansthan, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. After the visit, the participants were introduced to the objectives of Mission LiFE and a pledge on Mission-LiFE also took place which was then followed by the participant's individual pledge towards following the action to promote the Mission LiFE. In addition to these activities, a film on Mission LiFE was screened for the participants.

The day wrapped up with a bicycle rally which aims to promote the theme of saving energy under Mission LiFE. The purpose of organizing this program in the National Zoological Park was to create awareness and connect people in order to promote the notion of a sustainable lifestyle by staying connected to nature. The program concluded with Vote for LiFE slogans.

Investments in Local Risk Resilience: UNICEF and G20 Disaster Risk Resilience (DRR) Working Group call for new Social Protection Systems

Social protection system consists of mechanisms to provide assistance for employment and livelihoods security, social housing, cash transfers, micro-insurance, financial inclusion, food security, various kinds of social services, and special assistance.

India Representative, said, "This G20 forum highlighting shock responsive social protection in disaster risk reduction is important and timely, at the midpoint of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such systems protect the most vulnerable. Children and women in shock-prone settings are most at risk of being left behind because of the increasing frequency, magnitude and overlaying of shocks, especially those resulting from climate change.



Protecting and empowering them is most effective through comprehensive 'systems' that are risk-informed, and flexible and enable local governments to support the poor and most vulnerable during difficult times. We look forward to the South-South collaboration to accelerate learning and evidence-based actions in disaster-prone countries to strengthen the shock responsiveness of social protection systems, to reach the most vulnerable, especially children, youth and women."

The social protection system consists of mechanisms to provide assistance for employment and livelihood security, social housing, cash transfers, micro-insurance, financial inclusion, food security, various kinds of social services, and special assistance for vulnerable groups.

National governments and international and local institutions have a critical role to mobilize financial, technical and human capital to strengthen disaster risk management systems and other development systems to deliver resources where they are needed the most to build risk resilience.

Social protection has emerged as an important policy instrument to utilize Disaster Risk Finances, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and improve their uninterrupted access to intermediate technologies and innovative financing mechanisms for safe housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, power supply and other social sector services and facilities.

Speakers highlighted the need for strong collaboration between Disaster Risk Management and Social Protection Systems, especially at the local level, with the active support of civil society, the private sector and community-based structures.

While civil society can actively facilitate the link between the demand and supply of support and services, the private sector can

contribute to building resilient business ecosystems and enhance the effectiveness of social protection systems.

The speakers also urged governments to support community-based structures through the necessary capacity, information, and resources to empower them to serve as first front-line responders during disasters.

A compendium of case studies entitled 'Shock Responsive Social Protection' highlighting good practices and lessons from G20 member countries including Indonesia, India, Brazil and South Africa was released on this occasion. Knowledge Partners of the Compendium include UNICEF, WFP, IIED, FCDO, CARE India, Sphere India, CARITAS, GIZ, and KfW.

Coal India CSR spend higher than the statutory requirement

NEW DELHI - Coal India Ltd.'s spend of Rs. 513 Crores in FY 23 on corporate social responsibility (CSR) was 15.3% more than the statutory requirement of Rs. 445 Crores. For the fourth year on the trot, the company has achieved this feat.

More than half of the CSR spend at Rs. 1,209 Crores or 54% was on health, sanitation, and nutrition because it is a national theme and mandated by the Department of Public Enterprises. This was followed by education and livelihood which accounted for 21% at Rs. 463 Crores.

The rest was spread on rural development, environmental stability, promotion of sports, and other themes.

During a four-year span till the closure of the financial year 2023, CIL as a whole spent a total of Rs. 2,238 Crores under its CSR umbrella. This is 29% higher than Rs.1,735 Crores mandated as per Company (CSR) rules 2014. The increase in absolute terms was Rs. 503 Crores.

Some of the major CSR projects undertaken during FY 23 include the construction of a 5,000-seater library at Ranchi University, the reconstruction of a rain shelter cum common facility centre in Badrinath, the establishment of a centralized kitchen for providing mid-day meals to 50,000 students in Ramgarh (Jharkhand) among others.

Treatment of thalassemia children, belonging to financially weaker sections of society, for a cure through bone marrow transplantation is another CSR initiative of CIL.

Annual CSR fund allocation of CIL's subsidiaries under the policy is 2% of the net profit of the previous three years or Rs. 2 per tonne of the total coal produced in a preceding financial year. Higher of the two is fixed as a subsidiary's CSR budget for a financial year.

In the case of CIL, the only difference is that Rs. 2 per tonne of the total coal produced by only profit-making subsidiaries in a preceding financial year is taken into consideration.

Girl Empowerment Mission 2023 starts at NTPC Talcher Kaniha

NEW DELHI- Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), the residential training workshop for girl students started at NTPC Talcher Kaniha. The workshop, a flagship CSR initiative of NTPC Limited was inaugurated at NTPC Kaniha by Executive Director, NTPC Kaniha, Shri K S Sundaram in the presence of Shri A. K. Sehgal, General Manager (O&M), Heads of Departments, Members of Ladies Club, Representatives of Unions & Associations, and parents of participants of the workshop.

Girl students, numbering 103, and in the age group of 10-12 years of Class V studying in 20 nearby Government schools are participating in the workshop.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sundaram said that GEM was a special initiative of NTPC to focus on the empowerment of girls by imparting education through multiple activities designed to change the mindset of the girl students and encourage them to achieve their goals and ambitions in life.

The CSR workshop will focus on the empowerment of Girl children through creating awareness in various areas like hygiene, safety, security, yoga, and fitness for both physical and mental through imparting academics sessions and self-defence methods for holistic personality development.

The Girl Empowerment Mission is a flagship initiative of NTPC Limited, which aims to empower girls and young women through education, mentorship, and leadership development. The program focuses on providing quality education and career guidance to young girls, especially those from underprivileged communities, and supporting them in their journey towards achieving their dreams

NTPC believes that empowering girls is key to building a better society and creating a more sustainable future. Through the Girl Empowerment Mission program, we aim to provide young girls with the tools and resources they need to succeed in life and achieve their goals.

The Girl Empowerment Mission 2023 program will offer a range of activities, including academic support, skill development workshops, mentorship, and leadership training, to help young girls and women realize their full potential. The program is being conducted across NTPC stations throughout the country.

NTPC is committed to sustainable development and is actively involved in various social and environmental initiatives across the country.





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