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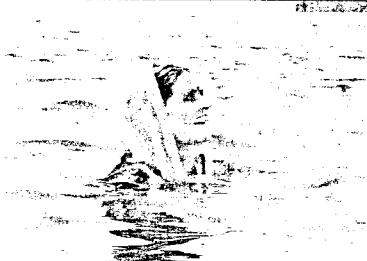
Himanshi.Dhawan@timesgroup.com

Until two years ago, Imarti Pal was one of those swaying, frail figures making the long trek for water, a pitcher on the head and another on the hip. Then one day, tired of walking 12km daily through rocky, inhospitable terrain to draw drinking water for her family, she decided to take matters in her own hands. She set out to dig a well in her village of Motho, a tiny settlement in Lalitpur district of Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh. Her husband saw little promise in the venture and the villagers made fun of her. Only two women supported the outrageous idea. The trio set to



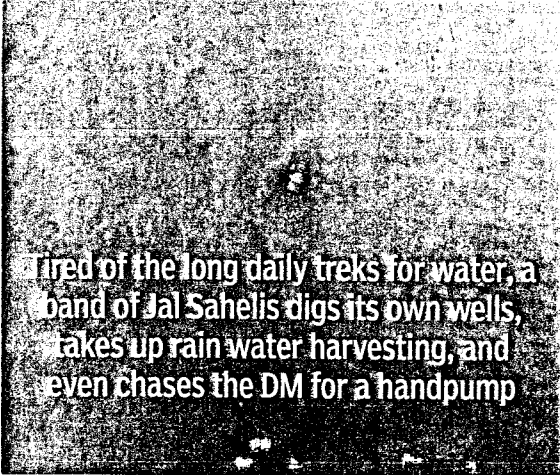
hours a day fetching water first thing in the morning before going to school and then again once I was back," she says. Now, a handpump practically brings water to their doorstep. She has time to study, while her parents have enough water for animals and their fields. In fact, the village now grows wheat, sesame and peanuts, and vegetables, taking a step towards sustainability for the first time in years. At 63 million, India has the largest number of people living in rural areas without access to clean water, according to a 2017 WaterAid report. That's almost

ing behind women and children to battle hunger and thirst. Sometimes, the drought and famine is so acute that villagers are forced to eat rotis made from grass to survive. No wonder then that families refuse to give their daughters in marriage to these villages. Tulsa Prajapati of Chandrapur village, an hour's drive from Jhansi city, remembers days when she could spare just one dry roti for her son. He died at 17, malnourished and ill, like many teenagers in her village. "The children would always have fever and diarrhoea, and sometimes cholera and malaria. It was an unending cycle. We could do nothing to save them," she says. Their mothers were no better off. A 2013 report by Lucknow's King George



THESE WOMEN HELPED A BUNDELKHAND DIST BEAT THE DROUGHT

work, lifting heavy boulders as they hollowed out the heart of the earth looking for water. "It was very hard work to break rocks to lift the earth but we didn't give up," Imarti says. Three months on, they struck water. The gurgle drowned the village din. And evidently, all spoken and unspoken differences, men and women, disgruntled at being ignored, and even rattled upper caste community members in the village, quietly came around to lend a helping hand. Now, three check dams for rain-water harvesting, half a dozen hand-pumps and a well make Motho one of the few oases in drought-prone Bundelkhand. This year, as the summer scorches the earth, neither Imarti nor her sisters-in-arms, Ramkumar Ahirwar and Phoolwati Pal, look anxiously at the sky. These "jal sahelis" (water buddies) have finally succeeded in beating nature. In the last six years, NGO Parmarth Samaj Seva Sansthan has brought together a band of sisters called Jal Sahelis who are actively working in creating and conserving sources of water in the region's drought-prone villages. Today, there are more than 300 women or jal sahelis across 150 villages in the arid Bundelkhand region who have been working with their communities to



Tired of the long daily treks for water, a band of Jal Sahelis digs its own wells, takes up rain water harvesting, and even chases the DM for a handpump

build check dams, dig wells, install handpumps and adopt water conservation practices to tide over the brutal summer. They have petitioned and nagged government officials, stood up to the upper caste members in their community, even their own husbands, for the mere right to water and to end the long trek to the well that has long been defining their lives. Their cussedness is paying off.

For the first time in years, these settlements have enough water through the blazing summer even as villages around them reel with thirst. Eighteen-year-old Anjana Kushwaha remembers how she used to wake up at 4am to trudge to the nearest well, more than 2km from her village Kalhothra, in Talbehat tehsil of Lalitpur. "Since I was a young child, I have been spending 4-5

the population of the UK and enough people to form a line from New York to Sydney and back again. Lack of government planning, competing demands, a rising population and water-intensive agricultural practices are all placing an increasing strain on water resources, says the study. According to India's official Ground Water Resources Assessment, more than one-sixth of the country's groundwater supply is currently overused. So much so that droughts have become a way of life in Bundelkhand. During 2003-2007, the region suffered from a drought every year and last year (in 2016), water scarcity hit epidemic proportions, leading to widespread death and disease. Governments in the state and at the Centre have maintained a studied indifference, while doling out drought packages now and then, leading to no perceptible long-term impact. As summer starts, villagers are usually caught between battling the tanker mafia and migrating to cities for the duration, turning entire villages into "ghost settlements". In some cases, the men migrate to Delhi or Mumbai for lowly paid labour and construction work, leav-

Medical University 2013 found that the long treks to fetch water had led to deformities in the women and even premature abortions. Thankfully, now, many families only have memories of those hellish days. The jal sahelis have heralded not just a revolution in water management but in women empowerment as well. "Women are most affected by lack of access to water and spend the most amount of time fetching it. Our aim was to ensure that they were able to take decisions about these issues including where the handpump should be placed and how channels of irrigation should be created," says Sanjay Singh, founder of Parmarth Samaj Seva Sansthan. A gleeful Ramvati Kushwaha from Kalhothra village recalls the arm-twisting they had to do for their handpump. A group of 30 women had waited for several hours at the district magistrate's office to petition him. But engrossed in his work, he set off in his car without meeting them. "We chased behind him till he stopped the car and promised us our handpump. No one makes us wait now. They realise we don't give up till we get what we want," she says with a smile. Raise a toast to that, with a glassful of water.

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Notice to Ganga after getting human status

Explain why land was given for construction: High Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NAINITAL

After being accorded human status recently, the Ganga river received its first legal notice from the Uttarakhand High Court on Friday asking it to explain why its land was given for construction of a trenching ground.

The notice was issued by a Division Bench comprising Justice V.K. Bisht and Justice Alok Singh on a PIL filed by a Rishikesh resident Swaroop Singh Pundir.

Violation of law

The Public Interest Litigation said a trenching ground is being constructed in village Khadri Khadag close to the banks of the holy river in gross violation of law.

Mr. Pundir claimed that the gram panchayat concerned allotted the land to the local civic body without consulting the villagers several years ago.

Next hearing

Issuing notice to the Ganga, the Union government, Central Pollution Control Board,

State pollution control board and the Rishikesh municipality, the court directed the respondents to file a reply before May 8 when the matter is slated for next hearing.

Officials made custodians of the Ganga when it was granted human status by the high court, including the chief secretary, the advocate-general and the director of the Namami Gange project will respond to the legal notice on behalf of the river.

The Uttarakhand High Court had earlier this year accorded the status of "living human entities" to the Ganga and Yamuna rivers to help in their "preservation and conservation".

Sacred but polluted

Bestowing human status on the sacred but highly polluted rivers would, according to the court's order, amount to harming a human being.

NGT surprised over plea transfer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The NGT on Friday expressed surprise after being informed that a 23-year-old PIL on pollution in the Yamuna has been transferred to it and on which it had passed an order two years ago.

"Has the Supreme Court transferred the Yamuna matter to us?"

But, we have already passed a detailed judgement on the river way back in 2015. This is the problem with you (lawyers) people.

"Why didn't you inform the Lordships about this? You people also like to play ping-pong here and there," a bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar said.

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ANDHRA PRADESH

Rain guns reaching far and wide

V.K. RAKESH REDDY

ANANTAPUR

In Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, farm ponds are being combined with "rain guns," which shoot harvested rainfall through a high-pressure jet into the air, and it lands on precious crops as natural rain would.

The State government opted for this innovation, wiser from the failed implementation of previous programmes under the Desert Development Programme. Those schemes concentrated primarily on creating check-dams to retain water. Today, the focus is on a systematic expansion of farm ponds.

"The idea is that once the farm ponds are filled up by rains, the stored water could be used through rain guns or sprinklers to give protective wettings to the groundnut crop once or twice, during long dry spells, until the next rain spell takes over the task," Joint Director of Agriculture in Anantapur P.V. Sreerama Murthy said.

During the last agricultural

season, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu travelled to Anantapur to personally inspect rain gun operations, after wilting of groundnut crop due to long dry spells was reported.

Sprinkler success

After four days, Mr. Naidu declared victory over drought saying that the crop in over 4 lakh acres under mission-1 of the programme had been saved.

A total of 3.7 lakh acres of estimated crop benefited from the artificial showers created using rain guns and sprinklers, out of a drought-stressed crop area of 5.32 lakh acres. In all 6,239 rain guns and 5,813 sprinklers were used to spray 0.52 TMC of water.

While the programme wasn't completely successful, given the wide scope and insufficient time to implement it, there were notable success stories that reinforce the promise of the programme if planning could be improved.

Micro irrigation movement underway

S.MURALI

ONGOLE

The vast stretches of land in drought-hit Prakasam district are barren, with one exception: the village of Chinnakothapalle, near Addanki, abutting the Hyderabad-Ongole expressway.

This village is an oasis in the rain shadow region as most of the 300 farmers here have adopted drip irrigation, even though their district was reeling under the impact of severe drought in all the 56 mandals.

Their transition from conventional flood irrigation to micro irrigation (MI) was not smooth. Some harboured doubts about its feasibility, said M. Sambasiva Rao, an MI pioneer in the village.

"Many used to ridicule me when I opted for the MI system a couple of years ago. But after seeing the results for themselves, other farmers have followed suit now," explains farm-

twice the area of land that he used to, with the same quantity of water, sometimes adding water-soluble fertilisers through the MI system for better yields.

Cost savings

Another farmer, T. Venkateswarlu, explains the MI system saved them around 40% of production costs and increased productivity by 20%, by allowing water to drip slowly to the root zone through a network of valves, pipes, and tubes.

"As many as 188 farmers were provided with subsidised MI system to grow crops in about 400 acres. Rest of the eligible farmers will be covered before start of Kharif season," says AP Micro Irrigation project director Y. Vidya Shankar.

The department proposes to bring more than 20,000 hectares into the MI system under the flagship NTR Jala Siri pro-

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Fortified by coir geotextiles

R. RAMABHADRAN PILLAI
ALAPPUZHA

The Kerala government has put in place a plan of action to use coir geo-textiles to protect and conserve streams and ponds, particularly in the Kuttanad region of south Kerala, which has large water bodies.

Coir geo-textiles refer to loosely woven coir mats that can be used to strengthen the walls of rainwater harvesting pits and banks of ponds and streams. The government's plan is to use coir geo-textiles on a large scale as part of its green mission, titled 'Haritha Keralam' (Green Kerala).

Ponds have already been rejuvenated at several places by strengthening the banks with concrete walls. Replacing the concrete and rubble with geo-textiles would facilitate growth of grass on the banks, resulting in a natural strengthening process, which would be environment friendly, providing a long-lasting solution to the problem of soil erosion.

Adopt-a-pond initiative

M.P. PRAVEEN
KOCHI

Under former Collector M.G. Ramamankam, the Ernakulam district administration in Kerala has come up with an innovative programme to revive abandoned water bodies to tide over water crises experienced by the port city of Kochi.

As many as 55 ponds have been revived under the project titled 'Ente kulam, Ernakulam', which roughly translates to 'My pond, My district'.

The project, launched in December 2015, is being executed by 200-odd volunteers of 'Anbodu Kochi', a voluntary organisation originally formed to coordinate relief work in Kochi to help victims of the December 2015 floods in Chennai.

"We started off cleaning one pond a day and the high point was when we cleaned up 15 ponds a day," said Bimal Vas, one of nine founding members of 'Anbodu Kochi'.

Ponds revived are handed over to the local community. The condition of each revived pond is reviewed once in two months to ensure their upkeep. Ten best-kept ponds were identified and persons responsible for their upkeep were recently felicitated by the District Collector.

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Battling unrelenting drought, Kerala women dig 180 wells to quench thirst

SPIRITED EFFORT Women of Ottapalam took up the task when signs of a long drought became more visible last Oct

Ramesh Babu
• rbabu@hindustantimes.com

OTTAPPALAM (PALAKKAD): Life is wilting in large swathes of southern India under an unrelenting drought, but a motley crowd of ordinary women are also helping hope to sprout with their doggedness in the face of adversity. Scores of them have come together to dig wells in Kerala's Palakkad district and rewrite their destiny amid the unprecedented dry spell. Successive monsoon failure has left their land parched and robbed them of their livelihood. Though many are going hungry, very few are thirsty, thanks to the unique initiative by the women's collective.

Since last year in October, when the first signs of a prolonged drought became more visible, the women of Ottapalam block have been furiously digging wells with spades and shovels rather than despondency take over. By last count, they have dug 180 deep wells, ensuring adequate source of drinking water for those in the region.

P Ammini is one such beneficiary. Even at the best of times, she had to trek three kilometres to fetch a few pots of water. But now that the situation is dire, things actually have turned for the better for her. A well has been dug nearby and she has access to clean water for drinking and even a quick bath.

The sleepy village of Pookottukavu has many such stories to narrate. Last year, at the peak of summer, housewife Sathyabhama was forced to sell her two cattle calves as she had run out of both fodder and water. This year, she had just bought three of them.

The women well-diggers say desperate times brought in dramatic changes in them. "We never had any experience of digging wells. But our collective spirit helped us learn the trick easily. Now we have warmed up

to it and most of us get into 80-feet deep without any fear," said K Radha, drenched in mud as she came out of a well holding a shovel.

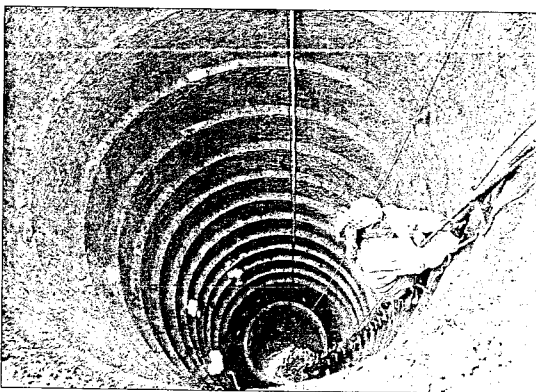
Packing her children off to stay with relatives at distant places was an annual practice with Radha to beat the water scarcity. This year, her sons have stayed back with her.

In tiding over the water crisis, the Ottapalam women have also breached what was perceived to be a male bastion. Digging deep wells was seen a risky job requiring hard labour and special skills that only men possessed. But sporting coloured lungis and shirt, the women

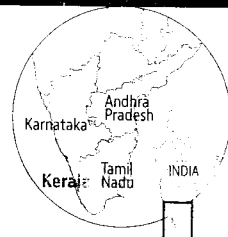
IN TIDING OVER THE WATER CRISIS, WOMEN HAVE ALSO BREACHED WHAT WAS PERCEIVED TO BE A MALE BASTION AS DIGGING WELLS REQUIRED SKILLS THAT ONLY MEN POSSESSED

High and dry

Successive monsoon failure has brought scores of women together in Kerala's Palakkad district to dig wells and rewrite their destiny



At least 300 women are engaged in digging wells and are paid under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. HT PHOTO



- All 14 districts declared drought-hit
- Met says drought worst in 115 years
- Wayanad, Idukki districts worst hit
- Underground water level dips by 3 to 3.5 metres

33.7% deficit in south-west monsoon

60% deficit in north-east monsoon

60% dip in water levels in major dams till March

50% crop loss, state estimates a loss of ₹92 crore

10,000 ponds revived at a cost of ₹380 crore

are venturing deeper in their search for water and pulling down long-held beliefs.

The current drought has been particularly bad. South-west monsoon was deficient by 33.7% and the north-east monsoon less by 60% last year. A majority of the 44 rivers that cut across the state, acclaimed as God's Own Country, are either dry or near-dry, hitting the farming and plantation sectors hard. Locals are left to fret and fume since power supply has also been hit with generation of hydro-electric power severely curbed for want of water. An otherwise booming realty sector is staring at a harsh reality: severe restrictions on the usage of water have halted much of the construction activity.

Locals say they had a sense of the shape of things to come since last year when peacocks and wild animals began raiding villages near the forests last year in search of water.

"We sensed impending danger when flocks of peacocks arrived in our locality. When they strayed earlier, they used to fly back, but now

they made our countryside their permanent habitat," said a villager.

Then followed the elephants and wild boars and by December the villagers were bracing for a debilitating drought.

The womenfolk have, however, given Ottapalam something to cheer about amid widespread despair. "When we started in last October, most of our workers were unskilled. But they turned experts in no time and now at least 300 women are engaged in digging wells," explained panchayat president K Jayadevan.

The women do not dig for free and are paid under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). But the wells work out lot cheaper: against the average cost of 60,000 rupees for a well, the ones dug by the women cost half the amount.

Palakkad MP MB Rajesh is ecstatic with the results.

"It is a classic example of how best to use government funds. When monsoons failed, the women rose up in style," he said.

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DRY DAYS | FARM INNOVATION

Drops of water better than the gush

Investments into drip irrigation systems, while sizeable, appear to pay off quickly as farmers realise a sharp increase in yields, alongside more efficient water use. 'Precision agriculture' seems to be the way out for the future

RISHIKESH BHADUR
MURALIDHAR KHAJANE
B.S. SATISH KUMAR

BIDAR/BENGALURU

In the Northern reaches of Karnataka State, where arid land stretches to the horizon and droughts and floods are frequent, it is little drops of water that have helped Basavraj Patil Bardabad's farm in Bidar district remain green.

The 55-year-old had purchased a farm around eight years ago, and before "drip irrigation" was a buzz word in policy, he ensured that 5.5 acres were irrigated through an intricate series of pipes. The investment of ₹1.5 lakh paid off immediately.

In the first year, he sold ₹5.5 lakh worth of watermelon, and then decided to expand it to 40 acres, where he grew ginger, turmeric, mango, and red gram. "Earlier, I had to run my bore wells for seven hours to irrigate one acre. Now, I can irrigate three acres in the same time with lesser water," said Mr. Patil.

Micro, not major irrigation

In the face of unprecedented water stress - 13 major reservoirs are seeing 16% lesser water storage than the "drought year" last year - government policy seems to have finally caught on to the opportunities of drip irrigation.

Bagalakot district, a network of pipes is being installed that envisages drip irrigation for 24,000 hectares of farmland by diverting 5.84 TMC of water from Narayanapura Reservoir on River Krishna. The Ramthal (Marol) Lift Irrigation Scheme - touted as the largest micro-irrigation project in Asia - is slated to be launched in June. Over 15,000 farmers are expected to benefit.

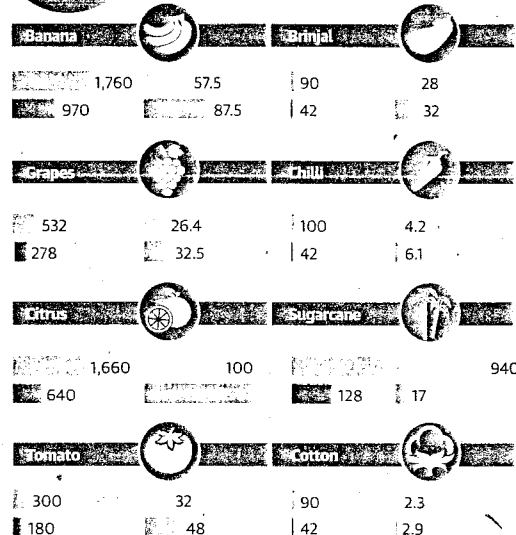
Precision farming

"Precision agriculture" may be the only way to reduce agrarian water dependency, says the Uni-



Drip irrigation helps to not only cut back the usage of water but also increases the yield of crucial crops

SOURCE: AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING DATA BOOK 2008, CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING



Fertile imagination: Progressive farmer N. Mohan Reddy used drip irrigation technology and mulching paper to significantly improve crop yields in the arid Kothagadi village, Vikarabad district, Telangana. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

TELANGANA

Drip irrigation and mulching help enhance yield for Telangana farmer

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

N. Mohan Reddy, farmer of an eight-acre land at Kothagadi village abutting the Vikarabad district headquarters, is hopeful of achieving a 40-tonnes-per-acre tomato crop this season.

Unlike farmers in the neighbourhood, he opted for extensive drip irrigation and mulching sheets across his farm. This enabled him to improve the yield, from the around six tonnes per acre that he could generate using conventional irrigation.

"There was an acute shortage of water and over half a dozen borewells dug at different points across the field failed. I had come across drip irrigation and mulching sheets through Internet/news-papers and tried the method. The yield has improved significantly," says Mr. Mohan Reddy, a graduate.

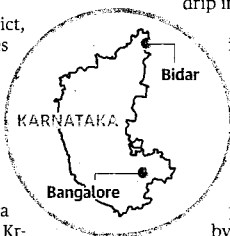
Costs and constraints

Given the constraints relating to water availability, he had to opt for short duration crops such as tomato and chilli whose crop cycle lasts

from about 60 to 120 days, depending on the variety transplanted.

The input cost is close to ₹80,000 per acre and a major portion of this is for the purchase of mulching sheets (close to ₹16,000 an acre), and labour charges.

"Mulching sheets covering the drip system will ensure that there is no run off or evaporation besides bringing down incidence of pests. The drip put in place ensures that water just sufficient to the particular variety sown is given," he said.



versity of Agricultural Sciences-Bengaluru which has demonstrated that water-intensive sugarcane can be cultivated using 40-50% lesser water through drip irrigation.

UAS-B will be testing these technologies, including sub-surface irrigation, on the fields of about 400 farmers for four years. Initial results show that yields have gone up by around 40%.

"Though farmers were not keen on water conservation in the beginning, the series of drought and water shortage has seen their interest increase," says K. V. Keshavaiah, Principal Investigator of Precision Agriculture Project.

This is the fifth of a seven-part series
Tomorrow: Water-Intensive Sectors

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अकाल की गिरफ्त

तमिलनाडु सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट को सौंपे जवाब में कहा है कि राज्य में सूखे से अब तक किसी किसान की मौत नहीं हुई है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट में ही दायर याचिका में जिन 82 किसानों की आत्महत्या का जिक्र किया गया है, उसके पीछे सरकार निजी वजहों को जिम्मेवार ठहरा रही है। हमारे देश में सरकारों की यह पुरानी रीत रही है। असुविधाजनक तथ्यों से मुंह चुराने के लिए वे उन्हें अलग रूप दे दिया करती हैं। भूख से होने वाली



मौतों को कमजोरी या कुपोषण से मौत बता कर वे निश्चित होती रही हैं। तमिलनाडु के किसान देश को अपनी दुर्दशा बताने के लिए दिल्ली के जंतर मंतर पर 40 दिनों तक बैठे रहे। अपनी भयावह स्थिति की ओर मीडिया तथा सरकार का ध्यान खींचने के

लिए उन्हें मृत किसानों की खोपड़ी लटकाने से लेकर अपना पेशाब पीने तक, क्या-क्या नहीं करना पड़ा। उनकी मांग थी कि राज्य को सूखाग्रस्त घोषित किया जाए और किसानों का कर्ज माफ किया जाए। मगर दिल्ली के हनुमान आंख-कान बंद किए बैठे रहे तो बैठे रहे। आखिरकार राज्य सरकार ने ही उन्हें आश्वासन दिया कि उनकी दोनों मांगों को लेकर वह केंद्र सरकार से बात करेगी। इसी आश्वासन पर प्रदेश के उन सौ किसानों ने अपना धरना समाप्त किया। इस बात को हफ्ता भी नहीं गुजरा कि वही राज्य सरकार सुप्रीम कोर्ट में कह रही है कि सूखे के कारण राज्य में किसी किसान ने खुदकुशी नहीं की। राज्य और केंद्र सरकारों की मजबूरियां अपनी जगह हैं, तथ्य यह है कि प्रदेश में सूखे ने बुरा हाल कर रखा है। सूखे के चलते वहां 1876-77 के भीषण अकाल जैसी स्थिति बनती जा रही है। उस अकाल में 55 लाख से एक करोड़ के बीच लोग मारे गए थे। अजीब बात यह है कि हमारे राजनीतिक दल चुनावी फायदों के लिए तो अपनी तरफ से किसानों के पास जाकर उनका कर्जा माफ करने का एलान कर देते हैं, अपनी सरकारों के जरिए कर्जमाफी का फैसला भी करवा देते हैं, लेकिन जब किसान अपनी जरूरत बताने सरकार के पास पहुंचते हैं, उससे कुछ मांगते हैं तो उनकी तरफ ध्यान ही नहीं दिया जाता। इससे पहले कि हालात काबू से बाहर हो जाएं राज्य और केंद्र सरकार को खेती-किसानी बचाने की जरूरी पहल करनी चाहिए। 1 May-1985

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The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

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नैनीताल हाईकोर्ट ने ऋषिकेश के कूड़ा निस्तारण ग्राउंड के मामले में पक्ष रखने को कहा, केंद्र-उत्तराखंड से भी जवाब मांगा

मानव दर्जा मिलने के बाद पहली बार गंगा को नोटिस

जाल | विधि संवाददाता

नैनीताल हाईकोर्ट ने 'मानव' दर्जा के बाद पहली बार शुक्रवार गंगा नदी को नोटिस जारी किया। कोर्ट ने ऋषिकेश में प्रस्तावित निस्तारण ग्राउंड (ट्रेचिंग) के मामले में गंगा का पक्ष रखा है, क्योंकि इससे यह नदी प्रभावित हो रही है।

गंगा का पक्ष रखेगी: गंगा की पक्ष रखने के लिए हाईकोर्ट ने 'लीगल पैरेंट्स' नियुक्त किया है। अदालत ने 20 मार्च के शेष में स्पष्ट किया था कि नमामि

गंगा प्रोजेक्ट के निदेशक, प्रदेश के मुख्य सचिव और महाधिवक्ता गंगा के प्रति जवाबदेह होंगे। गंगा के अलावा, केंद्रीय पर्यावरण मंत्रालय, राज्य पर्यावरण बोर्ड, ऋषिकेश नगर पालिका और प्रदेश सरकार को भी जवाब देना होगा।

यह है मामला: ग्राम पंचायत खदरी खड़के माफ के प्रधान शोभ सिंह पुंडीर ने हाईकोर्ट में जनहित याचिका दायर की है। इसमें बताया गया है कि प्रदेश सरकार ने वर्ष 2015 में ग्रामसभा की दस एकड़ जमीन ऋषिकेश नगर पालिका को सौंप दी। आरोप है कि इसके लिए ग्रामसभा की



कोई सहमति नहीं ली गई। अब इस जमीन पर नगर पालिका ने कूड़ा निस्तारण ग्राउंड बनाने का प्रस्ताव तैयार किया है। नमामि गंगा प्रोजेक्ट के

40% आबादी की जीवनरेखा

- 11 राज्यों में भारत की आबादी के 40% लोगों को पानी मुहैया कराती है
- संख्या की बात करें तो 40 करोड़ भारतीयों के लिए जीवनरेखा है गंगा
- गंगा किनारे बसे 118 शहर रोज नदी में 480 करोड़ लीटर सीवेज डालते हैं
- विश्व बैंक की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, यूपी में 12% बीमारियों की वजह गंगा प्रदूषण

तहत योजना पर करोड़ों रुपये खर्च करने की तैयारी है। पुंडीर का कहना है कि ट्रेचिंग ग्राउंड के लिए प्रस्तावित जमीन के दोनों ओर गंगा नदी बहती

'जीवित' दर्जे का मतलब

नैनीताल हाईकोर्ट ने 20 मार्च को गंगा और यमुना नदियों को जीवित दर्जा दिया था। इसका मतलब यह है कि इन नदियों को क्षति पहुंचाने वाले पर उन्हीं धाराओं में मुकदमा चलेगा जैसा इंसान को नुकसान पहुंचाने पर चलता है। ऐसे ही गंगा नदी पर भी मुकदमा किया जा सकता है।

है। बरसात में जलस्तर बढ़ने पर ग्राउंड में जमा सारा कचरा गंगा में मिलने की आशंका है। प्रधान ने प्रोजेक्ट पर रोक लगाने की मांग की है।

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The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

Deccan Herald

M.P. Chronicle

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Indian Nation

Nai Duniya (Hindi)

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गंगा स्वच्छता संकल्प दिवस का 2 मई को आयोजन

नई दिल्ली, (वार्ता): गंगा नदी की सफाई के लिए सरकार के विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों के प्रति लोगों में जागरूकता पैदा करने तथा उनकी सक्रिय भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए मुख्य रूप से देश के बारह स्थानों पर दो मई को 'गंगा स्वच्छता संकल्प दिवस' का आयोजन किया जायेगा।

राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन (एनएमसीजी) कानपुर, इलाहाबाद, वाराणसी, पटना, भागलपुर, साहिबगंज, कोलकाता, राजघाट (हरदोई) बिदूर, श्रीनगर तथा देवप्रयाग (उत्तराखंड) और विदुर कुटी (बिजनौर) में इसका आयोजन करेगा।

इसके अलावा गंगा विचार मंच, स्थानीय गैर सरकारी संगठनों और स्थानीय लोगों के जरिये 30 से अधिक अन्य स्थानों पर भी उस दिन गंगा स्वच्छता संकल्प दिवस आयोजित किया जाएगा। केन्द्रीय

जल संसाधन, नदी विकास और गंगा पुनरुद्धार मंत्री उमा भारती विदुर कुटी, श्रीनगर और देवप्रयाग में आयोजित कार्यक्रमों में भाग लेंगी जबकि अन्य स्थलों पर आयोजित कार्यक्रमों की अध्यक्षता मंत्रालय और एनएमसीजी के केन्द्रीय और राज्य स्तर के प्रतिनिधि और पदाधिकारी करेंगे। गंगा स्वच्छता संकल्प दिवस पर लोगों को गंगा को स्वच्छ रखने की शपथ दिलायी जाएगी और स्वच्छता संदेश रैलियों, श्रम दान, पौधरोपण आदि कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से उन्हें गंगा को स्वच्छ रखने के प्रति जागरूक किया जाएगा।

उल्लेखनीय है कि एनएमसीजी ने गंगा बेसिन वाले पांच राज्यों में 16 दिवसीय गंगा स्वच्छता पखवाड़े का आयोजन किया था। इसकी शुरुआत 16 मार्च को इलाहाबाद में हुई थी और 31 मार्च को हरिद्वार में समापन हुआ था।

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रोजगार की तलाश में गांव छोड़ रहे किसान

सूने हो रहे गांव, शहरों की ओर पलायन जारी

पत्रिका न्यूज नेटवर्क
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बंगलूरु, राज्य की दो प्रमुख नदियों कृष्णा और तुंगभद्रा का पानी सूखने के साथ ही रायचूर जिले के अधिकांश तालुक से किसानों का पलायन शुरू हो गया है। जिले के देवदुर्ग, मानवी और लिंगसुगूर तालुकों से भारी संख्या में किसानों शहरों की ओर जा रहे हैं क्योंकि यहां खेती तो दूर पीने तक का पानी मुश्किल से मिल रहा है। किसानों के पास अब रोजी-रोटी के लिए कहीं किसी उद्योग में नौकरी हासिल करने के अलावा कोई विकल्प नहीं नजर आ रहा है। जिले के जिन तालुकों तक सिंचाई सुविधाएं पहुंची हैं वहां से भी किसान पलायित हो रहे हैं क्योंकि नारायणपुर और तुंगभद्रा जलाशय भी लगभग सूख चुके हैं।

रायचूर के कई तालुकों से हो रहा पलायन

जिले के लिंगसुगूर तालुक के गांवों की स्थिति काफी दयनीय है। इस

कलबुर्गी-बीदर में मनरेगा से हालात बेहतर

हालांकि, सूखा प्रभावित कलबुर्गी और बीदर जिले में इस वर्ष हालात कुछ बेहतर कहे जा सकते हैं। हैदराबाद-कर्नाटक क्षेत्र में आने वाले इन जिलों से भी गत वर्ष सूखे और पेयजल की गंभीर समस्या के कारण बड़े पैमाने पर किसानों का पलायन हुआ था। लेकिन, महात्मा गांधी राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी कानून (मनरेगा) लागू होने से किसानों को काम मिलने लगा है। चिंचोली तालुक के चिंदनूर तांडा से हर साल 200 से अधिक किसान हैदराबाद तथा तेलंगाना के शहरों में काम की तलाश में निकल जाते थे। इस साल इन गांवों से एक भी किसान बाहर नहीं गया है क्योंकि उन्हें अपने गांव में ही काम मिल रहा है। शादीपुर ग्राम पंचायत के उपाध्यक्ष संजीव पवार कहते हैं कि अभी 100 से अधिक लोग तो तालाबों, जलाशयों के तटों की छांट-छटाई में लगे हैं। दरअसल, इन क्षेत्रों में कई सामाजिक संगठन सक्रिय हैं और गहन जागरूकता अभियान चलाकर योजना के तहत अधिक से अधिक काम उपलब्ध कराने की मांग कर रहे हैं। जनवादी महिला संगठन की नेता के. नीला के मुताबिक वे घर-घर जाकर लोगों को इस योजना से अवगत करा रहे हैं। परिणाम यह हुआ है कि चिंचोली तालुक में ही पिछले एक पखवाड़े के दौरान लगभग 1500 लोगों को रोजगार मिला।

तालुक के कई गांवों को पीने के लिए भी पर्याप्त पानी नहीं मिल रहा है। किसान अपने मवेशियों को बेचकर बंगलूरु और पुणे सहित अन्य शहरों में मजदूरी के लिए

निकल रहे हैं। मानवी तालुक के आधे से अधिक गांव भीषण पेयजल संकट की चपेट में हैं। मडगिरि, हल्लीहोसूर, गाविट्टूर, हारावी, जक्कलदिन्नी और यहां

तक की मानवी शहर में भी हालात चिंताजनक हैं। वहीं लगातार सूखे के कारण देवदुर्ग तालुक गंभीर गंभीर जल संकट का सामना कर रहा है। इन तालुकों से किसानों का

गांव या शहर, रोजी-रोटी के लिए चाहिए काम

उधर, बल्लारी और कोप्पल में भी मनरेगा कार्यक्रमों के लागू होने के बाद लोगों में काफी जागरूकता देखी जा रही है। वर्ष 2016-17 के दौरान मनरेगा के तहत इन जिलों में 34 हजार लोगों को रोजगार मिला जबकि एक साल पहले यह आंकड़ा 15 हजार था। हालांकि, रायचूर जिले में कार्यकर्ताओं का कहना है कि प्रक्रियागत समस्याओं के कारण यहां उतने रोजगार सृजित नहीं हो पा रहे हैं। पहले एक परिवार के लिए एक ही बैंक अकाउंट पर्याप्त था और उसी आधार पर सभी को काम मिल जाता था लेकिन, अब हर व्यक्ति का अकाउंट जरूरी है। बैंक अधिकारी भी सहयोग नहीं कर रहे हैं जिससे जिले में उतने रोजगार सृजित नहीं हो रहे हैं। एक संगठन के नेता ने कहा कि जहां भी ग्रामीण मजदूर संगठन सक्रिय हैं वहां आंदोलनों को देखते हुए अच्छे रोजगार सृजित हो रहे हैं लेकिन रायचूर के देवदुर्ग तालुक में उनका प्रभाव कम है। इसलिए यहां से बड़े पैमाने पर रोजगार की तलाश में पलायन हो रहा है। दरअसल, हैदराबाद-कर्नाटक क्षेत्र के शाहपुर, सुरपुर, यादगिर, मानवी, लिंगसुगूर और देवदुर्ग तालुकों से ही सबसे अधिक पलायन हो रहा है। गांव छोड़ने के बाद यहां के किसान बंगलूरु, हैदराबाद तथा अन्य शहरों में निर्माण कार्यों तथा अन्य क्षेत्रों में मजदूरी करते हैं।

पलायन बड़े पैमाने पर हो रहा है। हालात दक्षिण कर्नाटक के भी अच्छे नहीं हैं। तूमकूरु जिले पावगड तालुक स्थित बीके हल्ली गांव से लगभग 8 00 लोग बंगलूरु शहर के पीनिया औद्योगिक क्षेत्र, जिगनी आदि स्थानों पर काम की तलाश में शरण लिए हुए हैं। बीके हल्ली गांव की जनसंख्या लगभग

2500 है लेकिन वहां अब अधिकांशतः बच्चे और बुजुर्ग ही बचे हैं। गांव के एक धोबी ने कहा कि जहां पीने के लिए पानी नहीं बचा है वहां कपड़े धोने का कारोबार कहां से चलेगा। हनुमंत नामक इस धोबी के बच्चे और संबंधी काम की तलाश में बंगलूरु और तूमकूरु निकल चुके हैं।