पत्रिका

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EMPOWERMENT AT GRASSROOTS FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION: A CASE STUDY OF NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

Renu Srivastava

The present research article highlights the fact that, anything to do with environment, does not differentiate between rich poor, east west, first world and third world etc. Environmental catastrophes befall entire human mass together, which has been so strongly proven by COVID 19 Pandemic (unfortunately). In view of the pan global nature of natural disasters, it is being advocated that it should be the duty of every individual to be a stakeholder in the preparations for environment preservation. This requires grass root realization and mobilization of masses with clear understanding of natural phenomena without distinguishing on economic, social and other classifications. The Namami Gange program is based on these very understandings as it tries to educate people in the Ganga basin, home for 40% Indians, to value natural phenomenon like ground water level, aquifers, afforestation, biodiversity conservation, river city connect, improving ecological flow and protection of wetlands, springs etc. The article discusses the four pillars on which the grassroot movement is being built under Namami Gange program, some of them by design and some as positive spinoffs. These are: A. Revitalizing and financing the local Governments in both urban & rural areas: B. Convergence model C. People movement D. Decentralisation - Involving statutory authorities at grass root level in the program The above four positive developments under the aegis of Namami Gange program in most populous yet weakest economic belt of the country, appear to be the best chance for working as growth poles and agents of change in approaching intricate human problems which defy simplistic scientific and mathematical solutions.

A unique feature of environmental phenomenon is that its effects, both positive and negative, befall a huge mass of people with high degree of surprise without much forewarning as witnessed in case of Pandemic Covid19. This attribute makes environmental changes something to be feared because its negative manifestation usually comes as catastrophe. Recent worldwide COVID attacks have recorded some of the most violent changes in the environment both in our country and globally and need for its protection and conservation has become the most imperative.

The unique attribute of environmental phenomenon of not differentiating on the basis of class, race, religion, nation and other divisive factors in its strike, makes the involvement of every person obligatory so that she can plan for her own safety in case of any harmful effect of environment.

Mankind has been wreaking havoc on the environment leading to calamities like drought, followed by floods, forest fires, melting glaciers, pollution of rivers, drying up of traditional sources of water bodies, degradation of land and forests, etc. These misfortunes uniformly affect all the people

without distinguishing the rich from poor, albeit the poor are more severely hit because of weaker defense mechanism. The recent floods of Mumbai, poisonous air quality in Delhi post Diwali, predictions of Mumbai and other coastal areas being submerged in rising sea levels, flooding in Venice, forest fires in Brazil, Australia and California are eye-openers which indicate that nature's wrath is not a distant threat but very much upon us already!

Thus it is in everyone's own interest to be aware and knowledgeable about environment and contribute in its protection, or in other words environmental protection requires empowerment at the grass root level. Only active participation of every common person would ensure a safe environment and fastest recovery in case of mishaps. Spreading the message of environmental conservation is therefore need of the hour.

How it can be done in a country like ours with scare resources, large number of illiterate people, high population density and resultant load on natural resources and a general disregard for following law is of concern in this present article. This has been looked at through the implementation of the flagship

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