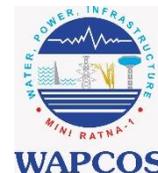


**INDIA  
WATER  
WEEK 2017**



Global Water  
Partnership  
South Asia  
India Water Partnership



**Panel Discussion on  
Role of Women and Youth in Water Security and  
Inclusive Growth**



**Organized by:**

**India Water Partnership with WAPCOS Limited during  
India Water Week-2017**

**Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi**

**| 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2017**

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## Background

Ideally, the providers, managers and users of water and women and youth have to be uniquely positioned considering their original contributions in designing and maintenance of water systems, water distribution and policymaking, for generating productive changes in water security. Therefore, in the current context, it is vital to rethink what can be done to increase the involvement of women and youth in managing water and how can stakeholders better leverage the expertise and market intelligence of women and youth to restructure water management and influence household, agricultural and industrial water consumption patterns.



From Left to Right: Ms. Poonam Sewak, Dr. M S Rathore, Mr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Veena Khanduri, Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Dr. S K Sharma, Mr. Lalit Mohan Sharma and Ms. Alka Tomar

In India, the continued declining in water security or availability of safe and reliable water as both a commodity and a natural resource is evident causing an immense risk to poverty reduction and sustainable development in coming decades. Hence, without mainstreaming women and youth in managing water, it may not be possible for India to overcome the absolute water scarcity in coming future.

With the above background, India Water Partnership (IWP) with the support of WAPCOS Limited organized a Panel Discussion on “**Role of Women and Youth in Water Security and Inclusive Growth**” during India Water Week-2017 on 14 October 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. The panel discussed strategies to offer specific roles to women and youth, to involve them in water management with full control over water systems and to formulate policies. Over 150 participants representing different segments of water management and social issues including network partners of IWP attended the Panel Discussion.

The Panel Discussion was chaired by Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Principal Scientist, Water Technology Centre, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI and Former acting Director, IARI), Government of India, Co-Chaired by Dr. Veena Khanduri, Executive Secretary-cum-Country Coordinator, IWP and Dr. S K

Sharma, (Retd.) Member, Central Ground Water Board, Government of India and Consultant, WAPCOS Limited.

## Opening of the Panel Discussion by the Chair

### Welcome remarks by Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Principal Scientist, Water Technology Centre and Former acting Director, IARI

Welcoming co-chairs, panelists and all the participants, the Chair highlighted that Women and youth have wider role to play in all national securities, be it energy, food, education, or water. Thus, it is important to focus on inclusive growth of the country with involvement of women and youth in water management.

### Remarks Co-chair-1: Dr. Veena Khanduri Executive Secretary-cum Country Coordinator, India Water Partnership (GWP-India)

Expressing her thanks to the Chair and the audience for being part of the panel discussion, Dr. Veena Khanduri informed the audience that she and Dr. Ravinder Kaur are both part of India Water Week (IWW) Organizing Committee and this itself indicates the importance and central role of women in today’s national policy scenario. She expressed her gratitude to IWW organizers for defining the Panel Discussion theme around women and youth in view of the central role played by them in water management in India. Dr Khanduri further said, Principal of equity and social justice are well documented in the National Water Policy 2012, which reflects the Indian Government’s openness to enhance the involvement of both women and youth for sustainable development of the country.

### Remarks by Dr. S. K Sharma, Co-Chair-2: Ex- Member, Central Ground Water Board, Government of India and Advisor (Ground Water) WAPCOS Limited

Dr. S K Sharma in his remarks emphasized that women and water is an ethical issue. He said that the mainstreaming women and youth role in water management would surely improve our approach towards water management. Therefore, women representation should be made compulsory in several committees to include their opinions.

## Presentation by the Panelists:

### **Role of Women and Youth in Water Security by Ms. Alka Tomar, Director, Centre for Youth (C4Y), New Delhi (a network partner of IWP)**

Ms. Alka Tomar discussed critically the issues related to water such as spread of waterborne diseases and inequitable access to water.

She mentioned that in Bundelkhand, an initiative called *Jal Saheli*, a skill development project for women on hand pump repairing who called as barefoot technicians. She stressed on the fact that women have taken water management in different ways, at different scales in various parts of the country. Owing to the social fabric of our society, women understand the basic demand and issues around water better than many of us. Thus, they need take part in discussions on water management policies.

While sharing the C4Y's involvement to enhance youth participation she said, C4Y along with IWP is working in villages along Hindon River to build capacities of youth on water security and climate resilience through series of awareness generation campaigns. In concluding her presentation she highlighted as a country having higher percentage of youth, the youth have climbed up in the ladder in involving water management.

### **Role of Women and Youth in Water Security and Inclusive Growth by Ms. Poonam Sewak, Vice President-Programmes, Safe Water Network, New Delhi (a network partner of IWP)**

Ms. Poonam Sewak shared her experience of working with 30 SHGs and challenges she faced on ground and how constant dialogue and interventions have brought transformation over time. She said that for SDG 2030 goals, India has to provide decentralized drinking water solutions. Women can play pivotal role as local entrepreneurs in water management schemes.

She expounded on the Entrepreneurship model for safe drinking water being carried out by 'Safe Water Network' in several villages across the country. The model strengthens position of women in the household, as they are preferred to be trained as entrepreneurs. She stressed on the fact that it is important to link economic gains with water management to ensure increased women and youth participation in the entire process.

### **Marching Youth for Water Secure World by Shri Amit Gupta, Chief Engineer, River Development, WAPCOS Ltd. (a network partner of India Water Partnership)**

Mr. Amit Gupta stressed on the pivotal role played by women in water resources management in India including water management in households. He emphasized the importance of involving young, productive and dynamic population in sustainable development as they represent a major part of the population. Further, it is needed to create end-to-end skill development framework for channelizing this knowledge and their potential.

He also shared few examples from both India and the globe, where women actively participating in watershed management, fecal sludge management and other aspects of sustainable development.



Presentation by Mr. Amit Gupta Chief Engineer, River Development, WAPCOS Ltd., Gurugram, Haryana

### **Role of Women and Youth in Water Security: Legal perspective by Mr. Avdhesh Pratap, Water Law, Management and Constitutional Law Expert**

**Mr. Avdhesh Pratap** stressed on the fact that our constitution gives a high pedestal to women which also reflects women’s pivotal role at all levels of sustainable development most importantly in decision-making and strategy formulation.

He mentioned that sadly, youth are unaware of water problems. This can be rectify by empowering them with indigenous and latest technology on water management.

He said that there is no Act in India, which defines role of women in water management as of now. However, the country has the potential to adapt international conventions that discuss about women’s engagement in water management.

### **Role of Youth in water Resources Management by Dr. M S Rathore Adviser, IWP and Director, Centre for Environment and Development Studies, Jaipur (Rajasthan) (A network partner of IWP)**

Dr. M. S. Rathore shared about the practical action research activity being undertaken by Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, Jaipur (CEDSJ) with the support of IWP in Mashri river basin in Rajasthan under Water and Climate Resilience Programme (WACREP) of Global Water Partnership South Asia (GWP SAS). He told that the water regulatory authority defines water management through River Basin Management approach. However, as there are no guidelines to address the issue, CEDSJ is trying to develop the River Basin Parliament concept comprising of multiple stakeholders by emphasizing increased women participation in watershed management.

He further mentioned that, as women represent 45 percent of the total population in Mashri river basin, have a major role to play in water governance. In addition, in 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Constitutional

Amendment, the Government of Rajasthan made reservation for women in electoral process a. Therefore, this is the prime time to strengthen women and correctly position them in decision-making process in water management. It has become the major reason for giving priority of women’s participation river parliament.

In terms of youth involvement, he said that there is a need to utilize the talents, explore the potential of youth, and develop plans to build on their capacities. The campaigns can be designed to attract youth and to utilize their energy. He also emphasized on need to have youth representation in politics who are aware of the sustainable development debate and can voice their opinions and support the cause of sustainable development

Dr. Rathore said under GWP SAS WACREP programme CEDSJ was able to link more than 600 students, both male and female across Mashi river basin to support water resources management in Rajasthan State and to dovetail in other parts of India. These youth are vocal and ready to contribute in water resources management in their own capacity.

### **Women and Water - A Reality by Mr. Lalit Mohan Sharma, Director, Adaptive Technologies, SM Sehgal Foundation, Gurugram, Haryana (a network partner IWP)**

Mr. Lalit Mohan Sharma focused on the role of women in water governance. He said that in some areas women Panchs have been doing outstanding work but in most of the structures the change occurred at the surface but not inclusive in nature. i.e. women are being nominated at the Panchs but the responsibilities are taken care by their husbands and this is the high time to change this attitude. Therefore, it is important to consider the socio economic context of the society in designing campaigns, so that it addresses all those issues with maximum gender equality.

### **A women-Centric Water Sector by Ms. Gargi Banerji, Director, PRAGYA, Gurgugram, Haryana (a network partner IWP)**

Ms. Gargi Banerji stressed on the women’s burden on collecting water - said 70 percent of the burden is being taken care of women and girls. Especially in developing countries. Combined effect of economic, food crisis and water crisis have worsened the effects and affect women as women play are key role in food and water security. Although women’s involvement increase resource efficiency in water resource sector they are largely not part of the decision making process.

She suggested that women centric water sector is required which can be achieved through gender



Presentation by Ms. Gargi Banerji, Director, PRAGYA, Gurgugram, Haryana

policies and programmes, gender sensitive financing, specific targets for gender empowerment, remove structural and social barriers for women in playing their part in water sector. She said that we should target women agencies that build technical capacities in water management of women in rural areas. Secondly, it is needed to ensure institutional arrangement, which have women active participation and prioritize women group active participation in national water policy committees.

### Sharing of Success Story by Mr. Suresh Patil, Colonel (Retd.) (A participant from Green Thumb, Pune, Maharashtra)

Mr. Suresh Patil shared a success story, which created job opportunity for women and involved them in watershed management. To resolve water crisis in Pune, Green Thumb decided to desilt the reservoirs in Pune. As silt is regarded as brown manure, they engaged women and youth for removing silt and used the manure for plantation. Due to this initiative, the farm productivity increased to almost double. Mr. Suresh Patil said, “It was an additional source of income for women and youth which also increased their social value by several notch”. With this attempt of desilting reservoirs, Green Thumb cleaned several dams and enhanced use of soil manure decreased the usage of chemicals fertilizers to the plantations.

## Key Recommendations

- Strengthening institutional mechanism in the rural water sector to increase and incentivise women’s participation and leadership in rural water management and governance.
- Developing and supporting women's groups for undertaking water sector programmes at the Gram Panchayat level, and incorporating specific targets and budgets for the same in rural development plans.
- Enhancing technical capacity of rural woman and youth thereby creating a cadre of “**Women and youth tech-preneurs**” at Gram Panchayat level in the water sector.
- Creating a network of technically-able women at the national level to advocate and facilitate gender sensitive policies and technology adoption in the water sector.
- Developing and delivering water literacy programmes with emphasis on behavioural change communication.

### **About India Water Partnership**

India Water Partnership (IWP) is a Non-Profit Organization, accredited with the Global Water Partnership (GWP), Stockholm. IWP works towards water security in India by utilizing the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). IWP carry out dispassionate analysis of various water related issues and steer the policy discourse on social, economic, ecological and scientific basis. IWP serve as an independent voice on water management issues, outside the government, forecasting and identifying the potential challenges.

IWP works towards these goals through research, advocacy and implementation on the ground with the help of its network partners.

IWP is hosted by WAPCOS Limited, a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.