



Virtual Conference on Water Security and Climate Change

Sandeep Khanwalkar, Senior Programme Director, Development Alternative highlighted the importance of the tank ecosystem in our lives and also focused on the current scenario of climate change at the virtual conference - “Water Security and Management under Climate Change” organised by Everything About Water - on 25 February 2021.

While presenting on ‘Rejuvenating tank ecosystem and its impact on the rural and peri-urban lifestyle’, he emphasised the need for rejuvenating traditional water conservation systems and reorienting the next generation to conserve this system, he also linked this crucial issue with our day-to-day water requirements.

Sharing Development Alternatives work on tank rejuvenation in Bundelkhand and NCR region, he emphasised issues related to water in rural ecosystems such as – Water scarcity and regular droughts, mismanagement of traditional water conservation structures, and the need for co-creation of community-managed water conservation and management systems. He also highlighted issues in the peri-urban regions, which were different from rural areas. Some of which are – tanks have fallen into disuse due to lack of care, poor governance system and illegal encroachment, storage area of many tanks have been converted into agriculture fields, while some are transferred into residential areas, and physically these tanks have disappeared but on paper, they still exist.

For preparing a realistic rejuvenation plan certain components are of high importance, such as an understanding of the selection process, use pattern, and dependence of stakeholders on these tanks. Sandeep Khanwalkar shared that the process of tank rejuvenation starts with trend analysis and a well-structured theory of change. Additionally, the use of technology in the planning and rejuvenation of tanks helps in maintaining the quality of work and also reduces time. He expressed that GIS technology

is valuable for accuracy in planning at each tank level and detailing every activity. He also explained the importance of associated activities in rural areas such as crop planning, groundwater monitoring, and water use planning. Whereas in the peri-urban area, he highlighted that more focus is required to reduce waste disposal in the tank impounding area. For both these regions to achieve sustainability, it is important to engage the community from the very beginning.