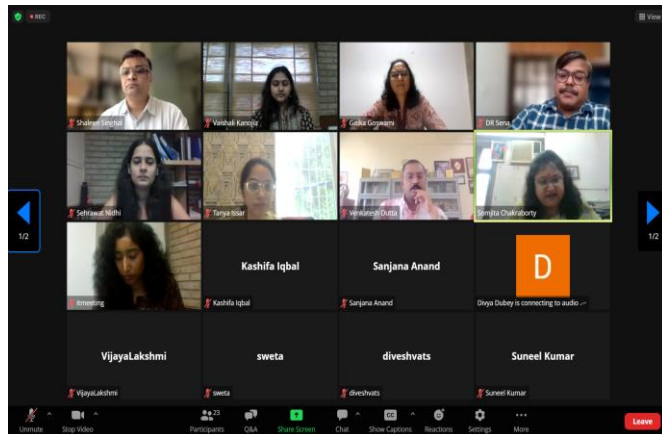


Webinar on Best Practices of Pond (Ecosystem) Rejuvenation and Linkage with Mission Amrit Sarovar

Development Alternatives in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, India organised a webinar on "Analysis of the best practices of pond (ecosystem) rejuvenation and linkage with Mission Amrit Sarovar: key policy learnings and strengthening co-production process towards developing an evidence-based policy" on 27 July, 2023, from 10:30 AM – 01:00 PM.

The Nature Conservancy India, with support from the Tata Trusts, has been leading an initiative called "Indian Collaborative for Applied Sustainability Solutions" (ICASS). The initiative aims to strengthen the science-policy-practice interface and facilitate the much-needed co-production of multi-disciplinary solutions. The webinar aimed to sensitise and strengthen the capacity of policy professionals, practitioners, scientists, scholars, and students, and integrate the learnings from the Working Groups (and Field Pilots) under ICASS to demonstrate the significance of the co-production process towards developing recommendations in thematic areas of regional interest.



The webinar began with an Introductory Session by Ms Surabhi Bhardwaj from The Nature Conservancy, India followed by Dr Shaleen Singhal, The Nature Conservancy, India, discussing the significance of co-production approach for evidence-based policy making, and co-production model in ICASS (Indian Collaborative for Applied Sustainability Solutions). Ms Tanya Issar, Manager, Development Alternatives and Ms Karminder Malhotra, Research Associate, Development Alternatives then made a presentation on - "Assessment of Pond Rejuvenation Models to drive Policy Recommendations for Mission Amrit Sarovar" where they discussed the challenges India faces pertaining to water availability, the historical account of pond rejuvenation in India, the various government initiatives and programmes relating to water - with spotlight on Mission Amrit Sarovar which was launched in April, 2022. The Development Alternatives team discussed and presented an analysis of the data collected from the 15 geographies in the five climatic zones that they visited over the course of two months - June and July.

Parameters	Gujurgam (HRY)	Nisera (MPP)	Karauli (KON)	Purulia (WVS)	Bankura (VSD)
Nature	Man-made	Man-made	Man-made	Man-made	Man-made
Suburb/Urban	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Year of Rejuvenation	2022	2019	2012	2017	2022
Implementing Agency	Gurukul	SRUKA	Taran Bharat Sangh	DRDC	Community
Challenges	Dumping of Sewage & Solid Waste Presence of water hyacinth & algae in the pond	Low productivity of crops	Droughts Water scarcity Inadequate rainfall		
Community Participation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Funding	HIL	UC	Adaptation Fund Network	25th Finance Commission	
Nearby well recharge	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is it an Amrit Sarovar?	No	No	No	No	No
Ownership	PRI	PRI	Village Committee	SHG	SHG
Livelihood support	No	Agriculture, Livestock, Pisciculture	Agriculture, Livestock, Pisciculture	Agriculture, Livestock, Pisciculture, Poultry, Dairies	Agriculture, Livestock, Pisciculture, Poultry, Dairies
Crop Diversification?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

SNAPSHOT
All are man-made and were rejuvenated in the past 5 years. Except for the pond in Gujurgam, the rest are located in rural areas, involved community participation, recharged nearby wells, are non-Amrit Sarovars, helped diversify cropping, and provided livelihood support.

Characteristics of the region:
 • Limited Precipitation- 1000 mm
 • High Temperature- 45 degrees Celsius
 • Water Scarcity
 • Sparse Vegetation

This presentation was then followed by a Panel Discussion on Pond rejuvenation: Learnings and linkage with Mission Amrit Sarovar which was moderated by Ms Gitika Goswami, Associate Vice-President & Lead, Policy Research & Planning, Development Alternatives Group. The panelists for this discussion were - Dr Prakash Tyagi, Executive Director, Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS); Mr PS Vijayshankar, Founder Member, Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS);

Dr Dipaka Ranjan Sena, Researcher, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and Prof. Venkatesh Dutta, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow.

Some of the pertinent points that came out of this panel discussion were - pond rejuvenation must be carried out keeping in lieu with the landscape/watershed management approach; location of ponds in terms of subsurface geology, aquifer system, and recharge and discharge areas must be considered; efforts should be made to move away from departmental role and participatory processes should be encouraged; and integration with agricultural practices and crops grown must be carried out while rejuvenating a pond.