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Point for discussion this month Restoration of dumping sites

(For private circulation only)

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Eternal Words

Integrity

People with integrity tell the truth, and they keep their word. They take responsibility for past actions, admit mistakes, and fix them. They play to win the right way by the rules.

Intelligence

It means, the candidate has a strong dose of intellectual curiosity, with a breadth of knowledge to work with or lead other smart people in today's complex world. Sometimes people confuse education with intelligence.

Maturity

You can, by the way, be mature at any age, and immature too. Regardless, there are certain traits that seem to indicate a person has grown up; the individual can withstand the heat, handle stress and setbacks, and alternatively, when those wonderful moments arise enjoy success with equal parts of joy and humility.

- Jack Welch, Chairman & CEO, General Electric in "Winning"

Dear Readers,

India's National Environment Policy 2006 says livelihood of the people should come through conservation and not through exploitation. Yes, it's a contemplation of traditional wisdom of Indian social fabric which is based on the optimum use of natural resources sharing it with all including biotic and abiotic factors. Sharing is the word being used by today's market for reaping the benefits for few. Market economy creates imbalance in the patterns of energy and material utilization leading to maximization of consumption of resources in shortest possible and wasting enormously.

Pond in the cover photo is developed by Maharashtra Nature Park, Mumbai in the world famous Dharavi's abandoned solid waste dumping site. It's a dedicated effort of the staff to convert dirty, filthy, stinking site into lush green full of biodiversity site amidst highly modern urbanised area. SERI is working with Sunita Enviro to evaluate the eco-kinetics of the restoration of "wasted site" into "Living Site". SERI's expertise in ecological restoration of water and land will be definitely useful in other sites as well.

Economists need to understand inevitable processes of environment and pollution which affect health, and livelihood of the people, region, nation and universe. Many leaders are now talking of eco-friendliness. In this issue, some excerpts are given from the visionary speech of Indian Primer Minister – an economist – Dr. Manmohan Singh which may bring desirable changes in polity and administration in near future.

Some observations are quoted here from the email of noted "Water Laureate" Dr. Madhav Chitale regarding the urgency of restoration of polluted water bodies using ecological restoration techniques as most of the water bodies downstream of waste generating urban areas.

We are very happy that a novel experiment of publishing e-magazine SERInews dedicated to environmental issues not only related to technicalities but to the lifestyle and economics as well is appreciated by many learned readers and we vow again to keep the same spirit to discuss and present environment related issues with tangible solutions while presenting this first issue of fourth year.

Thank you,
Chief Editor

Excerpts

Prime Minister's Address at the National Conference of Ministers of Environment and Forests



Prime Minister says "The multiple environmental crises that confront our country have created in many ways an alarming situation. Climate change is threatening our fragile ecosystems. Water scarcity is becoming a way of life. Pollution is a growing threat to our health and to our habitats.

The challenges we face are not insurmountable. We are blessed with nature's bounty but as a people, we also have a deep cultural sensitivity to our environment.

Our country is blessed with mighty rivers that are inextricably linked with our history, our religious beliefs, our culture and our customs of our people. It is a matter of great concern therefore we have not been able to reverse the degradation of this very important natural inheritance.

We have decided to adopt a different and more holistic approach taking the river and not the city as the unit of planning as we have done until now. The essence of this approach is not just to focus on river pollution but more comprehensively on catchment area treatment, protection of flood plains, ensuring ecological flows and restoration of river ecosystem. We must also make our own investments in new environment-friendly technologies, I would also request State Governments to effectively enforce legal provisions through State Pollution Control Boards to curtail the discharge of untreated industrial effluents that account for nearly 25% of the total pollution load on our river systems."

He then talked about the discrepancies in Environmental Impact Assessment reports. He emphasised the need to set up a National Environment Protection Authority supported by regional Environment Protection Authorities. He further says, "We are still at early stages of industrialization and urbanization.

Our energy needs will increase sharply in the decades to come. We can and we must walk a different road, an environment friendly road.”

He emphasizes, “We must also make our own investments in new environment friendly technologies. We need to strengthen the scientific foundations of our environment policies and strengthen our capacity to deal with the challenges that lie ahead.”

This was the speech given by Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on 18th Aug. 2009 in the National Conference of Ministers of Environment and Forests in New Delhi. In that conference the Prime Minister asked the state governments to create state level action plans on climate change consistent with strategies in the National Plan.

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Observations by noted Water Laureate Dr. Madhav Chitale on the Souvenir of International Conference was to be held on ILBM for Ujjani Reservoir in Pune in Aug. 2009



The excellent paper on "Eco technology for Lake Management" need not wait for a wider dialogue. It will be useful if this paper could be picked up by the Indian Water Works Association for some serious discussions. You may like to explore the possibility in that direction.

The paper has such a great relevance for the critical situation in the Paithan reservoir (Upper Godavari basin), in the Pus River Basin (Dist. Yeotamal) and near the cities like Dhulia, Aurangabad and Nagpur, that the discussions around the topic of ecotechnology can best be pursued separately also.

While from the national point of view it is good to have contributors from Husain Sagar lake (Hyderabad), Bhoj Wetland (Bhopal) and Upper Beraj basin (Udaipur), for a continued concerted Governmental action in Maharashtra, it will be necessary to involve atleast five more critical lake basins when we meet for discussions on Ujjani. Ujjani lake and Paithan lake (on Godavari) are going to be quite difficult for comprehensive management. The situations elsewhere in Maharashtra are not that complex. Hence the point of learning experience in lake basin management, it will be helpful to begin action in some other smaller basin in Maharashtra alongwith the work that is being piloted for the Ujjani reservoir.

Indian Association of Aquatic Biology (IAAB) may like to have a quick review of the situation in other lake basins of Maharashtra through its large membership spread out in Maharashtra and encourage at least half a dozen of its members to initiate some thinking on those smaller basins.

Moreover from the point of regional considerations, it will be necessary to initiate simultaneous action on the Paithan reservoir while we are working on Ujjani. For whole hearted Governmental support, a project on lake quality will have to include Paithan as well as Pus. Now that we have some more time at hand IAAB may utilize it for developing a more extensive reach of the proposed project.

With good wishes,

This conference is postponed due to eruption of swine flue in Pune. New dates will be announced shortly.

From SERI's Desk

SERI's expert team, after studying the scenario of different rivers and lakes in India, has worked out some issues and problems which are responsible for the increased pollution of urban lakes and rivers of India.

Some of These recommendations are as follows:

- A. Nationwide, state wise and region wise compilation, verification, documentation of information about quality and quantity of India's surface waters – streams, rivers and lakes
- B. Restructuring of Development Plans incorporating concepts of reservation of lands for "Protected Green River Zones" and "Waste Management" in every sector like rural, urban, industrial, agricultural, etc considering environmental pollution impacts of development on stream or river or lake
- C. Efficient administrative and techno-professional institutional mechanism to control and treat the discharges from the industries, agriculture and urban areas to achieve zero pollution discharge target
- D. Review and modify existing standards considering the ecological quality of streams, rivers and lakes and its impacts on human health and livelihood
- E. Massive support by the central, state and local governments in developing indigenous decentralized, community driven, water & wastewater technologies
- F. Initiatives by state and local self governments in maintaining the quality of rivers and lakes
- G. Strengthening of auditing system in water use & wastewater treatment sectors with societal wisdom and people's participation
- H. People's active and effective participation especially the women in decision making for allocation of water for use and controlling of waste discharges
- I. Sustainable Management Plan of lakes and rivers for next 50 years
- J. Remediation and Restoration River Authority should be equipped with monitoring laboratory sufficiently manned with scientific and technically competent personnel empowered with to take any action to restore purity and sanctity of streams, rivers and lakes.
- K. Every stream, river and lake shall have an institution with people's participation to monitor the functioning of treatment systems focusing quality watch, ecological health, pollution treatment and human health.

- L. Sewage treatment should be based on indigenously developed ecological restoration principles to reduce the ineffective functioning due to frequent electricity failures and machinery breakdowns.
- M. Appropriate budgetary allocations for water and wastewater management to achieve zero pollution discharge into streams, rivers and lakes.
- N. Decentralized application of ecotechnologies, ecological engineering to treat the pollution at the source only.

Chocked drains due to solid waste and deteriorated quality of water is common sight at every fresh water body.

