

RALLY FOR RIVERS

INDIA'S LIFELINES

Progress
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Namaskaram,

We would like to introduce you to the Rally for Rivers Progress Journal!

The response that Rally for Rivers received from the people of the nation and the world has been a humbling experience. The rally emerged as the biggest ecological movement in the world. And we are glad to inform you that significant work has commenced to revitalize our rivers, which the following pages will throw light on.

Not only has this movement brought together the various state governments of India, it has also received attention from governments of other major nations, as well as backing from global forums including the United Nations.

It is now, more than ever, that we must rally for our rivers. With news reports claiming that India is facing its worst-ever water crisis and that major cities in India will run out of groundwater by 2020, it has become crucial to rescue and reinstate India's lifelines. The United Nations has predicted a global water crisis by 2040, so if we do not plan our steps now, we face a bleak future.

Our endeavors have just begun and much work remains to be fully realized in this initial kaleidoscopic phase of the project. We wish to keep you posted as we move forward and invite you to be part of this historic movement.

Visit us at RallyforRivers.org or email contact@rallyforrivers.org for more information.

Enjoy this first edition of the progress journal!

With Warm Regards,
Team Rally for Rivers

Rally for Rivers Since the Campaign

Having garnered the support of 162 million people, the initiative grew into an unprecedented people's movement. The rally culminated in New Delhi, on October 2nd, 2017 with Sadhguru meeting the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and handing over the River Revitalization Draft Policy Recommendation.





This breakthrough campaign

The Rally brought together 13 Chief Ministers of various political parties, with varying ideologies, who converged for a common purpose – to salvage the dying rivers of our nation. In addition to political leaders, top level bureaucrats, film stars, farmer leaders, sports icons, artists, environmentalists, scientists, corporate CEOs, industrialists, and agriculture specialists, many more came together in support of the campaign, which made it a phenomenal success.





Isha Foundation was part of the first meeting where the full range of recommendations was presented. Following this, the economic policy think tank of the Government of India, NITI Aayog, had consultations with leading technical and policy experts, and submitted the recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office in February 2018. Following consultations with various experts in the field, on June 6th NITI Aayog made a nationwide policy pronouncement and sent an advisory for revitalization of rivers in India.

The Chief Secretaries of all the 28 states and Union Territories, including the Secretaries of the Union Ministries for Rural Development, Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Water Resources, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Agriculture, Housing & Urban Affairs, Panchayati Raj, Land Resources and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister have all been notified of the policy.

On the whole, the recommendations made by Rally for Rivers have been considered significant by NITI Aayog. Outstanding progress has been made in one year at the national policy level and on the ground, action is starting at the state level.

MoUs have been signed between Isha Foundation and the Governments of 6 states - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Gujarat, Assam and Chhattisgarh.

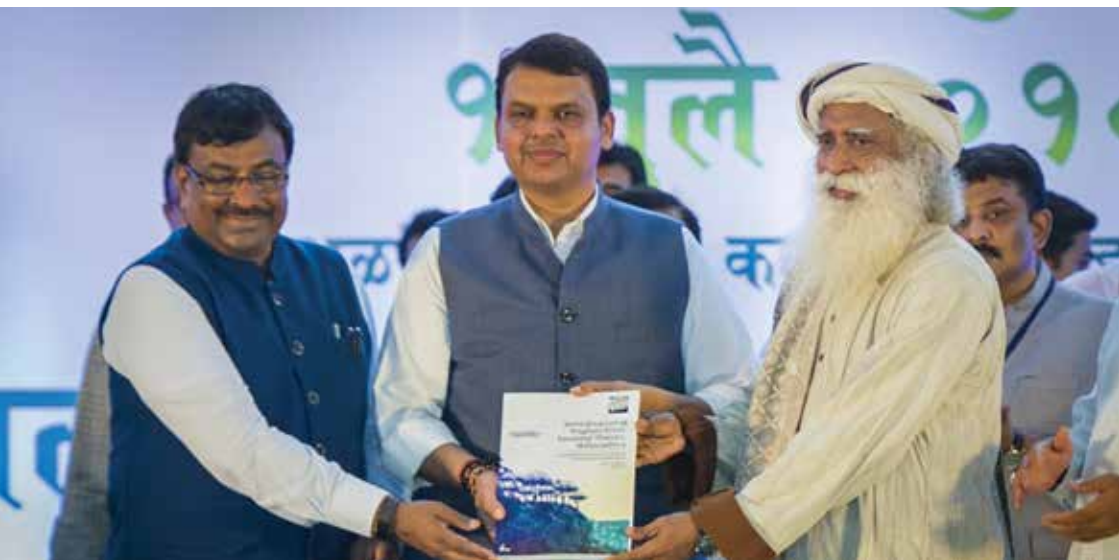


A Few Points from the States' and the Center's Participatory Action Plan

- The Maharashtra government has plans of reforesting the state by planting a total of 50 crore trees
- Karnataka has committed to planting 25 crore trees
- The Ministry of Water Resources and the Ganga Rejuvenation Program has committed to planting 10 crore trees
- The Ministry of Rural Development has designed a plan of action, related to the aspects of Rally for Rivers that involve community participation on the ground level to be carried out through its MGNREG Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme).

The main objectives of the River Rejuvenation under MGNREGS are:

- Water management in a river basin through a community-driven framework
- Augmentation of farmer's income through improved agro-economic practices



Work in Progress

Maharashtra:

Since the first MoU was signed with the Government of Maharashtra on 1st July 2017, Yavatmal was identified for implementation of the first pilot project with inputs from government officials and experts in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, watershed, geology and river hydrology. Accordingly, a stretch of 80 km along the Waghari River, a sub-tributary of Godavari in Yavatmal district, was identified as a project target area. An initial phase of survey and collection of data on various aspects related to the project implementation was completed. Rally for Rivers presented a broad outline of the Detailed Project Report on March 7, 2018 to the Government of Maharashtra. The finalized DPR for the Waghari River pilot was officially submitted on June 26, 2018. Following this, the CM of Maharashtra gave an in-principle approval for the project with a budget allocation of Rs. 985 crores and the formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle for implementation.



Sadhguru handing over the DPR for Waghari River to CM Devendra Fadnis on July 1st, 2018 in Mumbai during Van Mahotsav.

Karnataka:

Subsequent to the meetings with the Government of Karnataka regarding implementation strategy, a pilot project is being planned in the Kaveri River basin. For the first phase of action in Karnataka, Rally for Rivers has been recognized as the knowledge partner in implementing the government initiative of planting 25 crore trees across 9 districts. A DPR for the same is being prepared for submission to the government. Following this, further steps will be undertaken for a pilot project similar to the one in Maharashtra.

The Rally for Rivers solution includes two models for reforesting river basins

For government lands and for private (farm) lands:

1. The government / public lands will be afforested for comprehensive restoration of green cover by planting native forest tree species, shrubs, herbs and grasses with local community involvement. A DPR is in progress to plant 25 crore trees in government lands within the Kaveri River basin, which covers the following 10 districts: Kodagu, Hassan, Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Tumkur, Chikmagalur and Ramanagara.

2. In private farmlands, we plan to convert 33% of the land to tree based agriculture with a special focus on agro-horti-forestry models of plantation. This method is expected to increase the income of the farmer 3 to 5 times in 7 years and also serve as a model project for the state government to consider for state-wide expansion in the years to come.



Global Impact

In December 2017, Sadhguru was invited as the chief guest for Global Landscapes Forum (Bonn, Germany) to share the astonishing success of the Rally for Rivers movement with Eric Solheim, Head of UN Environment.

The United Nations has also been examining the Rally for Rivers model, as it is applicable for implementation in tropical countries across the world. On March 22, 2018 Sadhguru was invited by the president of the General Assembly to launch the United Nations' Decade of Action for Water.

In addition to the river revitalization movement, Isha Foundation was an official partner with UN Environment for World Environment Day 2018, hosted in India. Again, Eric Solheim joined Sadhguru for a public conversation in Delhi on June 5, 2018, to create awareness and policy change to *Beat Plastic Pollution*.

Appreciative of the global recognition, the Rally for Rivers movement remains focused on the first pilot projects that will be examples not only for India but the world.



Eric Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment, and Sadhguru in Delhi on June 5, 2018 for World Environment Day 2018



Global Landscapes Forum (Bonn, Germany) December 19, 2017

A Strong Vision - Exciting Next Steps Emerged from the Third Rally for Rivers Board Meeting

On July 22nd, the national board meeting of Rally for Rivers took place in Bangalore. This was the third board meeting of Rally for Rivers where the distinguished members – Justice Arijit Pasayat, retired Supreme Court Judge; Ms. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson & Managing Director of Biocon; Mr. Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO of World Wildlife Fund; Mr. Shashi Shekhar, IAS who retired December 2016 as Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India; Mr. Pravesh Sharma, IAS, who last served as MD of Small Farmer's Agribusiness Consortium in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; Mr. B Muthuraman, former Vice Chairman, Tata Steel; and Dr AS Kiran Kumar, former chairperson of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) – gathered to review the progress of the river revitalization program.

The Board decided on the main agenda for Rally for Rivers in the next 3 to 6 months and agreed to work on the following key areas:

- Developing a model of large scale assisted forest regeneration. The first pilot project will be done in the Kaveri River basin and consecutively in the river basins of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Punjab and Gujarat and will involve aerial reforestation and seed ball technology.

- Demonstrating the success of large-scale Farmer Producer Organizations with 25,000 farmer producers, which can make profits in agriculture towards the Prime Minister's objective of doubling farmers' income by 2020.
- Creating a model village: Isha Foundation's outreach division has developed a framework of creating model villages, which focuses on making village life into an appealing prospect, thus stemming migration of village populations to the cities and also enabling reverse migration. A DPR is being prepared and the first project will be showcased in Tamil Nadu.

The next board meeting is planned for December 2018.



The Youth Rose to Sadhguru's Clarion Call

During the Rally, Sadhguru made a clarion call to the youth of India, urging them to support the movement. Over 6,500 people from all over India signed up to join Rally for Rivers as full-time volunteers. Youth from other parts of the globe also realized the importance of this movement and registered to be a part of it.

The Rally for Rivers team (a.k.a. Nadi Veeras or "River Champions") is a diverse and inspired group of 100+ young people so far (and growing) who have chosen to leave their families and high-paying jobs behind to work together as full-time volunteers for the next 3 years and change the status quo of the rivers for the sake of the present and future generations.



River Warriors, Ready to March

The first batch of 100 Nadi Veeras were introduced to national level experts from across the country. Experts from the fields of soil science, agriculture, horticulture, community micro-irrigation, watershed development, GIS-based monitoring, integrated rural development, policy-making, agro-produce marketing, community forest rights, organic farming, tree-based agriculture, climate resilient agriculture, livestock, hydrology and other areas were invited as resource leaders to share their experiences and in turn train and prepare the Nadi Veeras in respective areas.

Tamil Nadu Agriculture University and the Forest College and Research Institute have also joined as training partners for a few of these aspects. The first phase of these technical training programs ended on 30th April and following this, the Nadi Veeras have been scheduled to work in all the 6 states where MoUs have been signed.

Given the complexity, scope and the all-encompassing nature of the project, it demands persistent effort, and at the same time, the support of all stakeholders involved for our rivers to be brought back to life in the years to come. In this regard, we, Team Rally for Rivers, are geared up and look forward to the participation of the nation and its citizens to see the movement to its success.



Hear From Your Nadi Veera!

Namaskaram,

Being a part of this movement, I see my life divided as before and after Rally for Rivers. Prior to becoming a Nadi Veera, I was working in a multinational company in Bangalore. I was flowing with the pace of life and it wasn't bad. I was earning well, living well, but every once in a while I would feel isolated, as I was only benefiting myself. I followed and supported the Rally in September and when Sadhguru made the "Call to the Youth", I saw it as an opportunity to contribute to something much bigger. Although I knew nothing about agriculture or the grim state of our rivers, I made the decision to jump in.

The last four months of my time at the Isha Yoga Center saw comprehensive training sessions on Rally for Rivers with Ethiappa (who is our beloved training guide and project advisor). Through his support and the guidance from other technical and non-technical specialists from various fields, a new world has opened up for me. A world that I was so oblivious of: of soil, of animals, of insects, of trees and so much more. These training sessions have got me to see the interconnection between the various aspects of river revitalization holistically.

We are now ready to be deployed on the ground and start our work. I was part of the team of twenty Nadi Veeras who went to Maharashtra for the initial survey to get an idea about the place and

the people. Our work and stay with the villagers and other NGOs for almost a month helped me learn about the current conditions and life in the village. We found that village folk are inherently close to nature and are much more conscious about their surroundings. Knowing them and their conditions closely, we realized how our lives are going to be transformed totally as a part of this endeavor.

Today I must say that, indeed, it is an honor to be a part of a movement like this which envisions the wellbeing of not only our generation but also those to come. I bow down to everyone who made this campaign a success and paved the way for the revitalization of our rivers and the upliftment of our farmers.

Pranam,
Siddhant Sharma



Nadi Veeras in Flood-Ravaged Kerala

Amid the developments taking place in reviving our rivers, Rally for Rivers volunteers did not miss the opportunity to offer themselves in rehabilitating Kerala, where torrential rains ravaged the state with its worst floods in a century during August this year. "God's Own Country" being in such a decimated condition, it desperately needed aid from individuals and private entities. Seeing the cry for help, 50 Nadi Veeras (out of a total of 175 Isha volunteers) went to the flood affected localities. They were on the ground, involved in providing basic amenities and medical aid, cleaning houses and temples, and reaching out with help and support to 68,000 people. The volunteers were able to help 120 stranded people by forwarding their requests in time to qualified rescue teams.

Maintaining hygiene and sanitation was the toughest challenge in the flood receded region, so 21 young Nadi Veeras moved to infection-prone areas to provide cleaning support for homes. They cleaned about 100 houses, the Adishankara temple in Kalady, and the Anjaneya temple in Deshom. It took 30 volunteers two days to clean each of these temples.

A few volunteers even took the initiative to make food packets and personally drove to 8 camps to replenish the food supply.

The Nadi Veeras are committed to saving our rivers but when there is an urgent need, these passionate youth of Bharat have shown that they are ready for action and support.





"For millennia, these rivers have embraced and nurtured us like our mothers. It is time we embrace and nurture them now."

– Sadhguru

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