

# Group led by Niti Aayog CEO to look at proposals by Isha

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**New Delhi:** Acting on draft recommendations of Sadhguru's Isha Foundation, the Centre has set up a group under Niti Aayog CEO to examine the suggestions in detail and come out with an action plan to revitalise rivers across the country.

Secretaries of six relevant ministries including water resources, environment, agriculture, urban development, drinking water & sanitation and rural development are members of the group.

Besides, the water resources ministry formed a separate committee under the chairmanship of Sharad Kumar Jain, director of the Roorkee-based National Institute of Hydrology, to study it scientifically and suggest feasible actions.

The Isha Foundation had submitted its draft recommendation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after conclusion of the Rally for Rivers in October. Its thrust has been on augmenting water supply to a river by planting trees to a distance of minimum 1 km on both sides along its entire stretch.

The draft has also examined how to go about this massive exercise without affecting livelihoods of people living along rivers, considering the fact that nearly 75% of the land along all the rivers in the country is agricultural land.

Sadhguru, who himself briefed the NITI Aayog on the draft, told **TOI** that the foundation would bring together all stakeholders, including farmers and industries, on one platform in Bengaluru in March next year to discuss finer points of implementing those recommendations.

"This entire thing cannot succeed without bringing all the pieces together", he said, explaining how the idea has been to implement those recommendations by creating a "successful commercial movement" for farmers.

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## RALLY FOR RIVERS

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Asked how will it be possible without participation of states as both water and agriculture are 'State' subjects under India's Constitution, Sadhguru said, "We have signed MoUs with five states. It's like commitment from the states to plant trees on government land. If you cannot do it on government land, how can you expect the farmers to go for plantation (switching from crop-based agriculture to tree-based agriculture) on their farmland?"

The foundation has signed MoUs with Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Karnataka and Gujarat. The Maharashtra government has already announced a programme to plant 50 crores saplings over next three years across the state.