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Rally For Rivers Surges Unabated: 11 Million Saplings To Be Planted In 2020 Under Cauvery Calling

9 July 2020, Coimbatore: "Cauvery Calling is currently running at a project scale, we need to transform this into a movement," said Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, speaking at the Rally for Rivers (RfR) Board meeting yesterday. The RfR Board held a virtual meeting to review progress of RfR's two ongoing projects: Cauvery Calling in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and Waghadi River Revitalization Project in Yavatmal district, in Maharashtra. Sadhguru said, "I feel the Karnataka government has been exemplary in their support. There has been a phenomenal level of support which is translating into action on the ground."

The Karnataka State Government will supply 70 lakh trees for the 2020 monsoon planting season through its Krushi Aranya Protsaha Yojane (KAPY) scheme. The Cauvery Calling team is currently working in 54 Talukas of 9 Cauvery river basin districts in Karnataka along with the Forest Department to promote the KAPY scheme. The partnership involves 480 Cauvery Calling volunteers and 270 state government officers including District Collectors, IFS officers, Forest Range Officers, Joint Directors (Agriculture & Horticulture), and Taluk (Agriculture & Horticulture) Officers. In Tamil Nadu, Isha Outreach's nurseries have already produced 23 lakh saplings this year through their network of 36 nurseries.

"It's amazing to see that so much has been achieved during the lockdown. It is truly Isha's speciality to do these things when even projects that have better support and financial strength are being shelved," said Board member Mr. Pravesh

Sharma, former Agriculture Secretary of Madhya Pradesh and MD of Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium, Government of India.

Despite the pandemic, the project in its first phase of sapling production, has been on track. Mr. Yuri Jain who heads Rally for Rivers informed the Board that the 2020 Cauvery Calling goal of planting 11 million trees will remain unchanged.

Ms. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson, Biocon Ltd, appreciated "the tremendous assessment and effort" of the RfR team. Mr. B Muthuraman, former Chairperson, Tata Steel, said the teams have done a fantastic job despite all the limitations that we have during COVID times.

Cauvery Calling volunteers are conducting a massive outreach through social, digital and print media in a bid to reach millions of farmers.

The RfR Board also reviewed progress of the Waghadi River Revitalization Project (Waghadi Nadi Punarujeevan Prakalp) launched in partnership with the Government of Maharashtra last year. Isha volunteers have been working in 40 villages along the 54-km stretch of river Waghadi since last year in awareness and community mobilization activities.

The Board comprises Mr. Ravi Singh, CEO and Secretary General, World Wide Fund for Nature-India; Justice Arijit Pasayat, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India; Dr AS Kiran Kumar, former Chairperson, Indian Space Research Organisation; Ms. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson, Biocon Ltd, Mr. Shashi Shekhar, former Secretary, Water Resources, Government of India; Mr. Pravesh Sharma, former Agriculture Secretary of Madhya Pradesh and MD of Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium, Government of India, Mr. B Muthuraman, former Chairperson, Tata Steel; and Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, Confederation of Indian Industries.

Rally for Rivers

Sadhguru launched one of the world's biggest environmental campaigns, Rally for Rivers in 2017 in which he personally drove across 16 Indian states in a month's time. The campaign saw an unprecedented coming together of political leaders, farmers,

industrialists, businessmen, students, professionals, media, culminating in the handing over of the draft policy recommendation to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. The initiative enlarged into a large-scale people's movement with the participation, in various modes, of over 162 million people in 30 days. On 6 June 2018, NITI Aayog issued an advisory to all 29 States and Union Territories recommending implementation of the River Revitalization policy.

Cauvery Calling

The [Cauvery Calling](#) movement which was launched in September 2019 is a 12-year project with an ambition to empower 50 lakh farmers to plant 242 crore trees on their own farmlands in one-third of the Cauvery river basin area. The movement promotes tree-based agriculture that will incentivise farmers to plant high-value trees for economic gain and simultaneously restore green cover in the denuded Cauvery basin. It will positively impact food and water security of 84 million people in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Cauvery Calling is being implemented by Isha Outreach, which is a member of the world's foremost conservation body, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

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