



INSTITUTE FOR  
Sustainable  
Communities



Dialogue Series

# Water and Livelihood Security The Foundation to Make India Atmanirbhar

संवाद श्रृंखला

जल एवं आजीविका सुरक्षा  
आत्मनिर्भर भारत की बुनियाद





## Action points

The major highlights and action points that emerged are given below.

## Need for conversations

Dialogue and conversation are key for understanding everyone's perspective on water. It allows for the government, non-government organizations and other stakeholders to discuss and come together to address water issues collaboratively. Rather than looking at water as a challenge, it is imperative to generate a discourse on how different stakeholders can work harmoniously to make water intrinsic to the conversations on development. Discourse should not only focus on the challenges and threats facing water resources but should outline solutions, especially on how communities can be engaged to make our villages water secure.

## Respecting water

Every water user needs to respect water and take measures for its conservation. For a country as diverse as India, there are novel solutions that exist across different parts of the country. It is important that dialogues and interactions like these bring together such examples and initiatives so that we are able to build the discourse, spread awareness and action on sustainable water management.

## Background

India is challenged with the COVID 19 pandemic, against the background of depleting water resources and climate change. This pandemic has yet again reinforced the need for self-dependency, and the role of water security and self-sufficiency.

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) and Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) have initiated a dialogue series titled Water and Livelihood Security: The Foundation to Make India Atmanirbhar.

This series will feature interactive discussions involving practitioners, representatives from government, civil society, academia and communities to ideate, discuss and share experiences on improving and enhancing water and livelihood security. It will highlight unique initiatives and experiences for us to learn, adapt and adopt.

Dialogue #1 of this Series was organized on September 04, 2020 on the theme of the series Water and Livelihood Security: The Foundation to Make India Atmanirbhar. It saw participation from Jal Purush Dr. Rajendra Singh, Chairperson, Tarun Bharat Sangh; U.P. Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India; Subhash Tamboli, Executive Director, AFARM; Dr. Indira Khurana, Vice Chairperson, Tarun Bharat Sangh; and Vivek P Adhia, India Country Director, Institute for Sustainable Communities.

The Session was moderated by Romit Sen, Associate Director, ISC.





## Atmanirbharta starts from India's villages

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Atmanirbharta needs to begin from India's villages - it begins from the soil. Self-sufficiency in villages is possible through land, soil and forest conservation. The gyantantra and traditional wisdom of how this can be done still exists and is visible through various examples, wherein even rivers have been revived due to water conservation, and agriculture possibilities increased. There is a need to align our cropping pattern with the rainfall pattern to better utilize our fresh water resources.

## Harnessing resources of migrants who have returned to their villages

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The return of people from cities to villages as a fallout of COVID 19 is a revolution. But revolution by itself is not enough, it needs to be combined with action for change, to transform it into rejuvenation and eternal or sustainable development. For eternal vikas or development we need to find ways to bring prosperity in villages from what nature offers. We need to start from soil and water conservation management, seed conservation in every house, making our own fertilizers and so on. This will lead to rejuvenation of nature and humankind.

## Nature promotes health, peace and security

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Destruction of nature has implications on health, peace and security. This pandemic is because of a virus that was found in animals that crossed over to human beings because of nature destruction. The key is decentralized people managed nature conservation and livelihood generation. This alone will lead to overall peace and sense of security.

## Water is central to human development

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The pandemic yet again brought out the importance of water in overall human development. Lack of access has added to the existing inequality and made those without access to water even more vulnerable since hygiene will be compromised. Local water sufficiency is critical for atmanirbharta.

This is possible by adopting rainwater conservation methods, reviving rivers and judicious use of water. Local in-village water resources need to be strengthened and used rather than exploring water sources from far away.



## Support requirements of small and marginal farmers

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Small and marginal farmers practicing rainfed agriculture are the most vulnerable. Their productivity and incomes are linked to soil health, access to inputs and information. The inability of these farmers to access technology, inputs and information makes them most vulnerable. A cluster development approach works best for these farmers where one can focus on leveraging human and financial resources. Public investments need to be increased in rainfed irrigation instead to irrigated irrigation.

Decentralized water harvesting, in situ soil moisture conservation, on farm water management will be the approach to enhance water and livelihood security for small holder farmers. Promoting water literacy needs to go hand in hand with village level community cadre development for sustaining these changes in villages.



## Increasing/ supplementing livelihood options for small land holders

Livelihood basket for small holders needs to be widened by integrating farming with secondary occupation relating to animal husbandry. Building agri-allied enterprise will help build farmer collective and enhance income generation opportunities for the small and marginal farmers.

## Supporting women farmers through information and skills

Women farmers lack access to information and skills despite playing an important role in farming operations. Integration of the Mahila Krishi Sashaktikaran Pariyojna of the State Rural Livelihood Mission is a useful engagement option to

build capacities of women farmers and provide income generation opportunities.

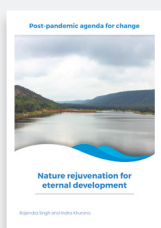
## Local food nutrition security essential for atmanirbharta

Local food and nutrition security in the villages will help address malnutrition, boost immunity so critical to fight diseases including COVID 19. Locally suitable nutritious crops – fruits and vegetables – must be encouraged for cultivation and self-consumption.

## Recognizing true role of water

Access to clean and secure water, is the foundation for all of us to achieve the sustainable development goals and will determine how soon we are able to accelerate towards the global development goals and alleviate major challenges.

Water is thus the fulcrum around which hunger, health, livelihoods and economic growth revolves. For India to truly become Atmanirbhar, competing and complementary uses of water will need to be addressed. It is time to unlock the true role of water, and actualizing its positive impact towards addressing the most basic human needs, rather than being looked at as a commodity for fair consumption across sectors.



The Dialogue Series saw the launch of the e-book Nature Rejuvenation for Eternal Development co-authored by Dr. Rajendra Singh and Dr. Indira Khurana.

ISC and TBS will host several sessions as part of the dialogue series over the next six months, covering a range of topics. A paper will be developed at the end of the series highlighting curated solutions as part of a roadmap to ensure water and livelihood security. We look forward to your suggestions and participation.

For further information, contact:

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