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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



One of the most important environmental goals is to provide clean water to all people. Fortunately, water is a renewable resource and is difficult to destroy. Evaporation and precipitation combine to replenish our fresh water supply constantly; however, water availability is complicated by its uneven distribution over the Earth.

The *water crisis* refers to a global situation where people in many areas lack access to sufficient water, clean water, or both. Arid climate and densely populated areas have combined in many parts of the world to create water shortages, which are projected to worsen in the coming years due to population growth, water overuse, water pollution, and climate change. Specifically, climate change shifts precipitation patterns and causes the snow pack that recharges rivers to melt earlier in the year. Furthermore, rising sea levels associated with climate change worsen saltwater intrusion.

Water scarcity refers to water shortages, which can be physical or economic. *Physical water scarcity* is the lack of sufficient water resources in an area; that is, water is depleted more quickly than it is replenished. Unpredictable precipitation patterns associated with climate change, which increase the risk of flooding and drought, exacerbates physical water scarcity. *Economic water scarcity* occurs when people cannot afford access to water. The United Nations estimates that over half of the global population faces water scarcity for one or more months of the year. According to the World Health Organization and UNICEF, 785 million people lack access to even a basic drinking water service and two billion people lack access to improved sanitation as simple as a pit latrine, and three billion people lack a facility to wash their hands. As a result, nearly 829,000 people die every year from diarrheal diseases, and 297,000 of those deaths occur among children under the age of five.

The global water crisis is not just a problem of scarcity, it's a crisis of management, equity, and resilience. As climate change accelerates and populations grow, the need to act becomes more urgent than ever. Understanding what is water crisis is, identifying its causes, and adopting water crisis solutions are the first steps toward a more secure and sustainable future. Access to clean, reliable water should not be a luxury, it's a basic human right. And protecting that right requires a collective, global effort. No single action will solve the crisis, but together they add up to lasting change.

Soil Erosion and Nutrient Loss in Madhya Pradesh: Challenges and Sustainable Solutions

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Soil is the foundation of agricultural production and food security. It regulates water, supplies nutrients, supports roots, and sustains soil biota. However, increasing human pressure, expansion of cultivation onto marginal lands, and unsustainable land-use practices have accelerated soil degradation. Among various forms of degradation, soil erosion has emerged as one of the most serious threats to long-term agricultural sustainability. If not addressed in time, continuing erosion and associated nutrient loss can drastically reduce crop productivity, increase production costs, and undermine rural livelihoods.

Soil Degradation in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh is widely affected by land degradation, predominantly due to water-induced soil erosion. The problem is particularly acute in the Chambal basin, where intense erosion and ravine formation have produced a deeply dissected landscape. Ravines occupy nearly 2.4 lakh hectares in the state and are expanding by about 800 hectares every year, steadily reducing the area available for cultivation. In extreme cases, ravines attain depths of up to 70 metres, severely altering topography and hydrology. These lands are largely unproductive, difficult to manage, and pose a serious challenge to agriculture, infrastructure, and rural development.

Soil Erosion: The Dominant Problem

Soil erosion is the removal of fertile topsoil by water, wind or human activities. In Madhya Pradesh, water erosion is the most dominant form.

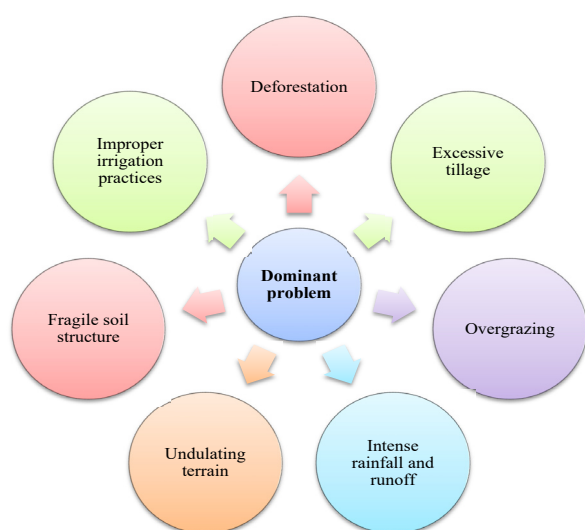


Figure 1: Soil erosion: the dominant problem

Ravine Formation: A Unique Challenge

Ravines represent an advanced and severe stage of water erosion. They are deep, narrow to wide channels formed by the progressive enlargement of small rills and gullies over time. In the Chambal basin, repeated high-energy runoff events, combined with susceptible soils and steep micro-relief, have produced vast networks of ravines.

Typical characteristics of ravine soils include:

- Sandy or coarse-textured surface layers with poor structure
- Deficiency of essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium
- Low organic carbon and poor water-holding capacity

During the rainy season, soil loss in ravinous areas can exceed 30 tonnes per hectare per year, accompanied by substantial losses of plant nutrients. Heavy runoff, undercutting and bank collapse lead to both vertical deepening and lateral expansion of ravines.

Nutrient Loss: The Hidden Crisis

While erosion is visible as loss of soil and formation of gullies, it also silently removes plant nutrients and organic matter. The finer soil fractions (clay, silt) and organic particles, which hold most of the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, are preferentially detached and transported by runoff. As these particles are removed, the remaining soil becomes coarser, poorer in nutrients, and less fertile.

Consequences of nutrient loss include:

- Progressive decline in soil fertility and soil organic carbon
- Reduction in crop yields and deterioration of produce quality
- Greater dependence on chemical fertilizers to maintain yields, increasing production costs and sometimes causing nutrient imbalances

Impact on Agriculture and Livelihoods

Soil erosion and nutrient depletion directly affect farmers and agricultural productivity.

Major impacts:

- Reduced crop yield and quality

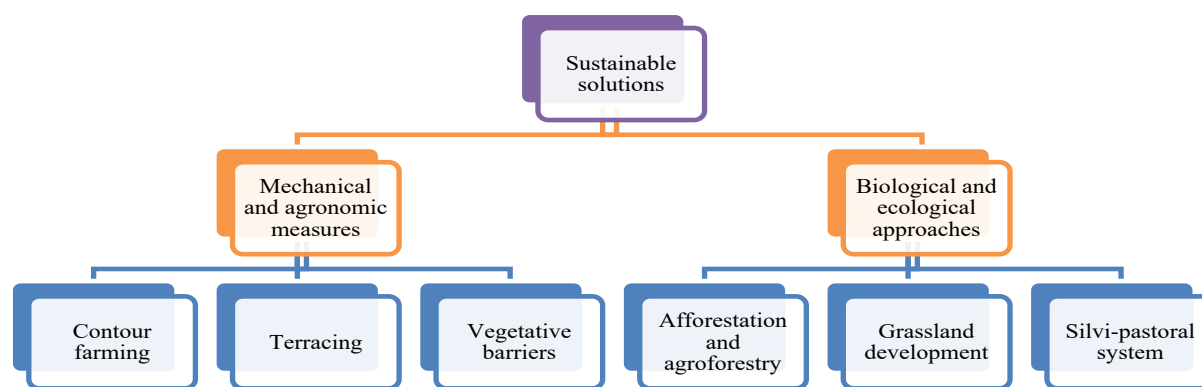


Figure 2: Methods used for soil conservation

- Affected soil quality
- Poor soil health
- Increased cost of cultivation
- Migration and livelihood insecurity

In some areas of the Chambal valley, ravine expansion has even forced communities to relocate due to loss of agricultural land.

Sustainable Solutions

Addressing soil erosion requires an integrated approach combining traditional practices with modern innovations.

Future Prospects

To tackle soil degradation effectively, a multi-level

strategy is required: Awareness among farmers about soil conservation, Government support and policy implementation, Adoption of sustainable land management practices, Use of modern technologies alongside traditional knowledge

Conclusion

Soil erosion and nutrient loss are serious threats to agricultural sustainability in Madhya Pradesh. The rapid expansion of ravines, particularly in the Chambal region, highlights the urgency of the problem. However, with proper management practices, technological interventions and collective efforts it is possible to restore soil health and ensure long-term agricultural productivity.

Drone & 3D Printing Innovation and Experience Hub Inaugurated at College of Agriculture, CAU, Pasighat

Prof. Sanjay-Swami, Dean

College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University, Pasighat – 791102, Arunachal Pradesh

The College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University (Imphal), Pasighat inaugurated the "Drone & 3D Printing Innovation and Experience Hub", marking a significant step towards promoting technology-driven and future-ready agriculture in the North Eastern Himalayan Region of India.

Ms. Sonalika Jiwani, Deputy Commissioner of East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh inaugurated the hub as Chief Guest, in the presence of Sh. Pankaj Lamba, Superintendent of Police, East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh as Guest of Honour.

Prof. Sanjay Swami, Dean, College of Agriculture, Pasighat welcomed the dignitaries and highlighted that the initiative aligns with the vision of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, CAU, Imphal to promote technology-driven, skill-oriented, and next-generation agricultural education. He further emphasized that this initiative is the outcome of sustained efforts in building an Agri 4.0 ecosystem, supported by the North Eastern Council (NEC) and executive partners such as AMTRON, Amantya Technologies, and Philips,

who contributed to establishing 5G-enabled training and innovation infrastructure at the College. The continued support of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and the University has further strengthened the ecosystem, enabling the scaling of advanced digital agriculture interventions and leading to the establishment of this Hub. The hub is equipped with agricultural drones, multispectral sensors, and 3D printing systems, enabling applications such as soil and water conservation by providing high-resolution aerial mapping, multispectral, and thermal imagery to monitor moisture, erosion, and crop health in real time, precision spraying, and data-driven farm management. It is envisioned as a centre for experiential learning, capacity building, and regional outreach.

Sh. Vasant Bhatt, Founder & Director of Trithi Robotics, participated as the technical expert. A pioneer in precision agriculture using drones in India since 2014. The programme included a live drone demonstration, inauguration of the facility, and interaction with students and faculty, with enthusiastic participation from staff and students.

Sh. Pankaj Lamba, Superintendent of Police appreciated the initiative and noted that such technology-driven platforms are crucial for empowering youth with modern skills. He emphasized the importance of safe, responsible, and regulated use of drone technology, ensuring that innovation progresses alongside security and compliance.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest Ms. Sonalika Jiwani, Deputy Commissioner of East Siang highlighted the importance of drone technology in initiatives such as CADA and its role in accelerating development programmes. She encouraged students to effectively utilize the facility for innovation and skill development. In a unique initiative, she also brought district Class 10

toppers to witness live demonstrations, inspiring young minds towards science and future-ready careers.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Premaradhya N, Assistant Professor and Nodal Officer, who acknowledged the collective support and collaboration that led to the successful establishment of this initiative. Such type of initiatives gives a strong message of inclusive technological development from remote regions of the North East, aligning with national priorities such as Digital Agriculture, Skill India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat, and preparing youth and farmers for the next generation of smart and sustainable farming systems.



International Day of Forests – 2026 Celebrated at Navsari Agricultural University

P. K. Shrivastava, Dean

College of Agricultural Engineering & Technology, NAU, Dediapada

The College of Forestry (COF), Navsari Agricultural University (NAU), Navsari, Gujarat celebrated the International Day of Forests, March 21st with the theme of *Forest and Economies* by organizing various competitions from March 20 to 21, 2026. The celebration featured a variety of competitions viz., Drawing and Poster making, Imagination Box (Sense the Forests), Phyto-hunt, "Tarane Phulo Ki Yado Ke," and a Quiz competition. A total of ninety students from College of Forestry, ASPEE College of Horticulture, N. M. College of Agriculture, College of Agriculture (Waghai), College of Agriculture (Bharuch), ASPEE Shakilam Biotechnology Institute (Surat) and College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (Dediapada) of Navsari Agricultural University, had participated enthusiastically. The student

teams of all these constituent colleges of NAU, Navsari participated in the said activities during these two days.

President of valedictory function, Dr. T.R. Ahlawat, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, NAU, Navsari addressed the gathering of two-days celebration of the IDF-2026. Dr. M.B. Tandel, Dean, College of Forestry, NAU, Navsari welcomed Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Dr. T.R. Ahlawat, Chief Guest, Ms. Minal Swant (IFS), Deputy Conservator of Forest, Surat, along with Head of Departments and faculty members of College of Forestry and students. He emphasized the importance of forest linking to forest economy and addressed about the need to improve the GDP of forestry sector. Further, he highlighted the important tree crops and

Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs) for cultivation and commercial production. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor felicitated the winners of the various competitions and appreciated the efforts made by the faculty and students of COF for organization the University level programme, to motivate the students towards nature

and forest conservation. Chief Guest, Ms. Minal Swant (IFS), encouraged the students to participate in the afforestation programme, biodiversity conservation and environmental awareness programmes. The programme ended with vote of thanks by Dr. S.K. Sinha, Cultural Advisor of CoF, NAU, Navsari.



MOU on Watershed Development between Navsari Agricultural University and Navsari District Administration

P. K. Shrivastava

Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering & Technology, Navsari Agricultural University, Dediapada, Gujarat

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signed between Navsari Agricultural University (NAU) and Navsari District Administration to collaborate on "Sustainable Water Management: Conservation and River Rejuvenation in the Watersheds of Navsari District" under the jurisdiction of Collector, Navsari, Gujarat. Dr T.R. Ahlawat, Director of Research & Dean PG Studies, NAU and Dr. P.K. Shrivastava, Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, NAU, Dediapada signed the MOU from the University while Er. Jemish, Aghan, Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department, District Panchayat and Madam Pushpalata, IAS, District Development Officer, were the signatures from District Administration Navsari.

Initially the agreement is signed for two years in which around ten students doing UG/PG research in Agriculture Engineering with specialization in Soil and Water Conservation & Irrigation and Drainage will get the opportunity to work in the watersheds in the jurisdiction of District Collector and District Development Officer. Students and faculty members will get the experience of working on real time field situations, that will help district administration to effectively deal with issues of soil and



water conservation beneficial to society and sustainability of the eco system. The research studies shall provide technical inputs based on primary and secondary data analysis, using RS and GIS, prioritization of watersheds, type of measures needed, site selection, type of structures. The execution of suggestions on field, not bounding, will be with the Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department, Navsari, District. The ultimate aim is rejuvenation of waterbodies and sustainability of soil and vegetative health. The research studies by the students will not only help in completing the essential requirement of degree but also help in gaining practical experience along with certificate and some remuneration after submission of their thesis.

The visionary step is because of Ms. Kshipra S. Agre, IAS Collector Navsari, and Pushpalata, IAS, District Development Officer, who got convinced with the role Agricultural Engineers can play in better planning of engineering measures and assessment of watersheds. If this

modelworks, then Soil and Water Conservation Departments in SAU's, ICAR and other Central Institutes have trained manpower who could help in providing technical inputs for cost effective and sustainable development of watershed in each district (around 800) of the nation.

Reviving India's Soils: Organic Secrets from the North East Hills

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Modern agricultural practices heavily rely on agrochemicals. Decades of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and monocropping have stripped our soils of life, leaving them barren and unproductive. India's farmlands are crying for help. Yields are dropping, groundwater is poisoned, and farmers are trapped in a cycle of debt. But the hope blooms in the misty hills of India's North Eastern Hill region *viz.*, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and beyond—where ancient organic secrets are showing the way to revive our exhausted earth. The region make sense for encouraging organic farming throughout the nation. As the first organic state in India, Sikkim has already set an example for the other states.

The hill communities, guardians of biodiversity hotspots, have farmed in harmony with nature for centuries. No synthetic chemicals are used here; instead, the tribal farmers rely on "jhum" or shifting cultivation refined over generations, rich compost from forest waste, and a treasure trove of native plants that supercharge soil health. As India pushes for sustainable agriculture under initiatives like the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, and National Mission on Natural Farming, these time-tested methods offer a blueprint for the nation.

The Magic of Jhum and Natural Mulching

In Nagaland's terraced hills, farmers practice jhum—a rotational system where fields rest for years, allowing forests to regenerate. During fallow periods, leaf litter and plant debris build humus-rich topsoil, teeming with microbes. When cultivation resumes, they mulch with banana leaves and bamboo shoots, smothering weeds while retaining moisture and releasing nutrients slowly.

This is not guesswork; studies from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) show jhum soils boast 2-3 times more organic carbon than intensively farmed plains. The secret? Biodiversity. Farmers interplant rice with legumes like soybean and pigeon pea, which fix nitrogen naturally—pulling it from the air into the soil via root bacteria. No need for urea bags.

Bio-Fertilizers from the Forest Pharmacy

The North East's real superstars are its wild plants, turned into potent organic inputs. In Meghalaya's Khasi

hills, locals brew "vermicompost" using earthworms fed on jackfruit leaves and cow dung, creating a nutrient-packed "black gold" that boosts yields by 20-30% without chemicals, per local trials.

Then there's the 'green manure' revolution. Sunn hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*), grown abundantly in Manipur's valleys, is ploughed under while green, enriching soil with nitrogen and suppressing pathogens. And don't miss the 'Panchagavya' a fermented mix of cow dung, urine, milk, curd, and ghee—used in Assam's tea gardens to enhance microbial activity. Researchers from the Central Agricultural University confirms that it increases soil enzymes by up to 40%, fostering beneficial fungi and bacteria that ward off diseases. Even pest control is organic: Neem seed extracts from Arunachal's forests, mixed with chili and garlic, create sprays that deter insects without harming ladybugs or bees.

From Hills to Heartland: Scaling the Revival

These practices aren't relics; they're scalable. In Sikkim, India's first fully organic state, adopting North East-inspired methods tripled farmer incomes while restoring soil fertility. Programs like *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana* are training plains farmers in Assam's bio-fertilizers, with early results showing 15-20% yield gains in rice and millets. Challenges remain that climate change disrupts hill rhythms, and youth migration shrinks knowledge keepers. Yet, start-ups like Nagaland's Indigenous Cultivator Union are packaging these secrets into ready kits, shipping vermicompost and seed balls nationwide. India's soil salvation starts here, in the North East's emerald embrace. By blending hill wisdom with modern science, we can heal our lands, feed our people, and secure a greener tomorrow.

The North Eastern Region (NER) of India faces a complex set of environmental and agricultural challenges that threaten its rich biodiversity and the livelihoods of its people. These concerns are rooted in both natural geological factors and increasing anthropogenic pressure on the landscape.

Soil Health Degradation

The region suffers from significant soil degradation, characterized by high soil acidity and aluminium toxicity,

which restricts plant growth. Despite the region's high annual rainfall, farmers often contend with severe water scarcity during parts of the year, coupled with intense soil erosion caused by steep slopes. This erosion results in massive annual

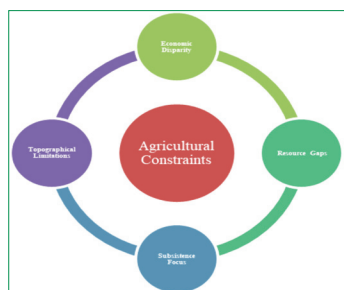


Figure 1: Major agricultural constraints

losses of vital topsoil and essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, leading to the exposure of subsoil that lacks the physical and chemical properties necessary for healthy cultivation.

Broader Environmental Threats

Beyond agriculture, the NER faces critical environmental challenges stemming from industrial and human activities:

- **Deforestation:** Illegal logging and land-use changes continue to strip the region of its forest cover, exacerbating soil erosion and loss of habitat.
- **Industrial Impact:** Activities such as coal mining, oil exploration, and operations in the petroleum, fertilizer, and paper industries often lead to water pollution and landscape degradation.
- **Unpredictable Climate:** Climate change is intensifying the region's existing vulnerabilities, causing erratic weather patterns and rising temperatures that disrupt traditional farming rhythms.

These overlapping issues necessitate a move toward integrated management, where local ecological wisdom is combined with modern, site-specific scientific interventions to restore the region's environmental stability.

World Water Day 2026 Celebrated by Chhattisgarh Chapter

Across the globe, individuals, organizations, and governments come together to observe World Water Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of water resources. World Water Day is observed every year on 22nd March. This year, the programme was organized under the UNO theme "Where Water Flows, Equality Grows," with the message "Mere Hisse ka Jal evam Van Sanrakshan". Though it is often presented as a celebration, in reality it is a day of reflection, responsibility, and renewed commitment towards the conservation of water and forests, and towards restoring ecological balance for a sustainable future.

On this occasion, World Water Day 2026 was organized under the aegis of the Soil Conservation Society of India, New Delhi – Chhattisgarh Chapter at BRSM College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology & Research Station, IGKV, Mungeli in hybrid mode (online and offline). The programme was graced by the esteemed presence of Er. Shailendra Shukla (Chairman SCSi, CG Chapter) as the Chief Guest, Dr. M.P. Tripathi, HoD, Department of Soil and Water Conservation Engineering (SWCE), as the Special Guest and Dr. Jitendra Sinha, Dean, BRSM CAET&RS, Mungeli, as the Chairman of the event. The event was further enriched by the valuable presence and addresses of Dr. Shweta Ramole, Dr. B.L. Sinha, Dr. Narendra Agrawal, Dr. Debashish Padhee, Dr. Usha Yadav, and Dr. Surendra Kumar Chandniha. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Surendra Kumar Chandniha, who also served as the Organizing Secretary of the event.

During the programme, the invited speakers shared their expert views on water conservation, environmental sustainability, groundwater management, and the need for scientific and community-based action. Dr. Shweta Ramole and Dr. Usha Yadav highlighted the growing

threat of the future water crisis and discussed practical remedial measures to address the challenges ahead. Dr. Surendra Kumar Chandniha presented his expert insights on groundwater potential zone identification, emphasizing its scientific framework and its role in sustainable planning and mitigation for future water resource fulfillment. Dr. B.L. Sinha discussed issues related to environmental imbalance and water sector security, while Dr. Narendra Agrawal emphasized the sustainable and judicious water use and water quality management. Dr. Debashish Padhee elaborated on the importance of conservation measures



and their practical relevance in ensuring efficient and sustainable use of water resources.

In his remarks, Dr. Jitendra Sinha emphasized the urgent need to plant more trees, maintain ecological balance, and promote responsible use of natural resources. He also summarized the deliberations of the eminent speakers and called upon students and stakeholders to actively contribute to the cause of water and forest conservation. In the concluding session, Er. Shailendra Shukla, Chief Guest, and Dr. M.P. Tripathi, Special Guest, inspired the participants with their practical and visionary thoughts on water conservation, efficient agricultural practices

with minimum water requirement, and the crucial role of agricultural engineers in natural resource management, policy making, and government services.

The programme concluded with a strong collective message that water conservation and forest protection are not optional, but essential responsibilities for sustaining life, agriculture, and the environment. The event served as a meaningful platform to reaffirm the pledge of all participants towards the protection of our natural resources and to strengthen the spirit of sustainable development for future generations.

SCSI Hq. Celebrated World Water Day Theme: Water and Gender "Where Water Flows, Equality Grows"

The Soil Conservation Society of India (SCSI) celebrated World Water Day 2026 (22 March 2026) on 21st March 2026 at NASC Complex, New Delhi, bringing together participants in hybrid mode. The programme, aligned with the global theme "Water and Gender", highlighted the critical role of water in advancing gender equality and sustainable development.

The event began with a welcome address by Dr. T.B.S. Rajput, President, SCSI, who emphasized the importance of water as a key resource for agriculture, livelihoods, and social equity. He also discussed the previous year's themes addressing the water resource challenges. Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Secretary General, SCSI, briefly introduced the invited speaker and highlight the significance role of World Water Day.

The highlight of the programme was an insightful invited lecture by Dr. Ranu Rani Sethi, Principal Scientist, ICAR-Indian Institute of Water Management (IIWM), Bhubaneswar, on "*Recharging Wells, Rebalancing Gender: Evidence from a Groundwater-Led Agricultural Transformation.*"

Dr. Sethi's talk shed light on the deep connection between water access and gender roles, noting that women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of water collection in many parts of the world. She emphasized that ensuring equitable access to water is not only a development priority but also a fundamental human right and a key driver for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Through a compelling case study from Nayagarh district, Odisha, she demonstrated how a simple groundwater recharge intervention transformed fallow land into productive fields and significantly improved livelihoods. The initiative, led by women farmers, not only enhanced

water availability and agricultural productivity but also empowered women by reducing drudgery and strengthening their role in decision-making. The presentation highlighted that sustainable water management can serve as a powerful tool for social transformation, reinforcing the message that "where water flows, equality grows."

The session concluded with an engaging discussion, followed by remarks of appreciation from Dr. Sanjay Arora, Vice President, SCSI and other participants. A formal vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Rajesh Kumar Meena, expressed gratitude to the President, SCSI, speaker, Executive

Council members and online and physically present participants. Dr. Meena also highlighted the importance of integrating gender perspectives in water resource management to build resilient and inclusive communities.



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