

Mission Bhagirath Prayas - An Innovative Initiative for Water Conservation

With the aim of providing abundant water for agriculture to rain dependent farmers, an innovative initiative '**Mission Bhagirath Prayas**' was implemented in Nashik district of the Maharashtra state under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It's an attempt to make villages self-reliant in terms of water availability by groundwater recharging with the help of MGNREGS.

Nashik district receives heavy rainfall every year. But the water in this area covered by hilly valleys flows instead of percolate into the ground. Therefore, the farmers have to get rainwater for agriculture and the residents of the villages have to get water for drinking by tankers or by wandering nearby villages. Hence to overcome these problems an innovative concept launched by Nashik ZP in which it has integrated the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA works with the community development work to ensure that the Gram Panchayats themselves can construct the check dams to save water. This will not only provide the drinking water facility for the villagers but it will also provide some water to the farmers for irrigation purposes that could prevent their migration to other areas for work during the lean period.

In Nashik district, 300 works of check dams were proposed in the FY 2022-23 and 2023-24 under Mission Bhagirath Prayas, 283 works started out of which 261 works have been completed and the rest are on the verge of completion. These works are mainly done in 116 gram panchayats of Nashik District and 29883 people got employment through these works. Total 118063 mandays were created and fund of 10 crore 36 thousand have been allocated for check dams under MGNREGS.

Smt. Ashima Mittal, CEO Nashik ZP and Additional CEO Shri. Arjun Gunde have designed the project that will ensure villagers can take up water conservation works themselves. Due to this initiative, needy people not only got employment in the district and but also abundant water storage has been created in the dams and the farmers have now got enough water for agriculture.

“Happy faces of the villagers are the credit of our work. After launching the project, it is getting good success. Efforts are being made to provide water to the villages which are experiencing permanent water shortage. As the villages with dams are going to be Sujlam-Suflam, the administration is getting the satisfaction of the hard work done. The smile on the face of the villagers, the reduction of the hardships of the women is the credit of our work.”

- Smt. Ashima Mittal, CEO, ZP Nashik

"The scheme has been taken up to increase the importance of water saving measures in the villages, to prevent run off water from flowing outside the villages. And to help in percolation this rise in groundwater recharging process."

- Shri. Arjun Gunde, Additional CEO, ZP Nashik

"Our villages are remotely located in the hilly areas where there is no water storage facility despite very heavy rains. The water runs off and whatever is saved does not help us beyond the month of April after which we require tankers. The newly constructed check dams will definitely help us against requiring any tanker during Summer from next season."

- Shri. Meghraj Raut, Sarpanch of village Ambe in Peth block.

