

“An imitative for water harvesting-Raja Ka Talab”

Prime minister of India Sh. Narendra Modi has often mentioned in his speeches that the water in hills runs mostly as waste “पहाड़ का पानी यूँ ही बह जाता है “. The state of Himachal Pradesh experiences good rainfall throughout the year except cold desert. Dharamshala receives maximum rainfall after Mawsynram in Meghalaya. Despite such a huge natural resource, it was found that in the lower parts of district Kangra people face acute water shortage and large number of ponds has withered away due to non attention to these old resources of water harvesting, most of them have turned into dumping ground for the waste and are polluting the soil, water and air.

During my posting as Sub Divisional Collector, in Fatehpur, Distt. Kangra, these lost ponds were identified. One such a large pond named “Raja ka Talab” due to its huge size (spread in approx 6 bighas of land) in comparison to other nearby ponds was undertaken for restoration. The pond has got converted into muck and garbage dumping ground and whole area has been covered with weeds. Initiative was undertaken to aware the masses about the rich resources and its optimum wage. The people at the gram panchayat level were motivated to form local level committee for restoration of these withered water bodies. Steps were taken to restore them to their historical and scientific glory.

Local people including representatives of Panchyati Raj Institutions, market committee and youth volunteers were engaged to form local level committee under my chairmanship and people were educated through meetings at the village level. The local committee met regularly and awareness was spread in the community about waste disposal. The encroachment on this govt. land was also removed. The local contribution was collected in addition to the financial assistance received from DC Kangra.

The pond is spread in an area of 90 mtr * 70 mtr. and the process of removal of muck from the pond was started in the last week of march, 2017 and approx 5733 square meters of muck was removed by deploying machinery. The removal of muck and raising retaining walls on the sides resulted in increase of water harvesting capacity of the pond to the tune of 15509 m³ which not only increased ground water recharge, but also prevented surface run off and provided space for aquatic life.

The restoration of this water body resulted in water harvesting, creation of clean environment and development of recreational place for the villagers where they can enjoy boating and appropriate place for sitting as well as walking was created. This initiative also motivated other gram panchayats to undertake such restoration works on war footing.

