

For Immediate Release

S M Sehgal Foundation awarded the “3rd National Ground Water Augmentation Award-2009” by Ministry of Water Resources

March 22, 2011

S.M. Sehgal Foundation has been recognized as a winner of the **3rd National Ground Water Augmentation Award-2009** on the occasion of World Water Day 2011. The award, instituted by the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India, is given for “innovative practices of groundwater augmentation through rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge.” The award to S.M. Sehgal Foundation comes under the category of Best NGO, Northern zone (covering Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Chandigarh). **Shri Salman Khurshid, Minister of Water Resources** presented the award today at a banquet held at NASC Complex, Pusa, New Delhi.



Mr. Jay Sehgal of NGO S.M. Sehgal Foundation receiving the award from Honourable Minister of Water Resources Mr. Salman Khurshid

The 3rd National Groundwater Congress is organised with a view to bring together administrators, groundwater professionals, representatives from industry and NGOs, and water users to share their knowledge and experiences and to discuss various issues concerning water management.

S.M. Sehgal Foundation has worked a great deal in Mewat District of Haryana, where the diminishing supply of freshwater is of grave concern, hampering agriculture and animal

husbandry, increasing the drudgery of women, and causing health and hygiene problems. At the center of the Foundation's integrated approach to effective water resource management is rainwater harvesting within the Aravali foothills, allowing the runoff to recharge the area's remaining pockets of fresh groundwater before it reaches low-lying areas and becomes contaminated. The Foundation has also built rainwater harvesting systems in Gurgaon in collaboration with RWAs to recharge the declining water table and has provided technical inputs to various corporate and civil society organisations in integrated water management practices. Upon receiving the award, Jay Sehgal, Executive Director, remarked, “Our growing population and the increasing effects of climate change are putting tremendous pressure on India's water resources. Groundwater levels are dropping, and we have seen in recent years that the monsoons are becoming very erratic. We need to preserve this precious resource one way or another so that the billion-plus people of India have access to safe and sufficient water. No one person or organization can accomplish this daunting task alone. It has to be done by establishing partnerships and sharing information and knowledge selflessly. With a committed, coordinated effort, we can solve this problem one drop at a time.”

The Natural Resource Management Center at S.M. Sehgal Foundation oversees the flagship program of water management, which focuses on improving water availability and quality, promoting safe drinking water and its judicious use, proper wastewater disposal, salinity regression, and research and innovation. The interventions begin with need assessment and study of topography, water flow and soil characteristics, after which they are blended with traditional knowledge for high impact. Lalit Sharma, Group Leader, Natural Resource Management, said, “To overcome the water scarcity we all need to adopt efficient rainwater harvesting and recharging mechanisms.”

S.M. Sehgal Foundation through the Institute of Rural Research and Development (IRRAD), continues to work towards conservation of this precious resource and take its knowledge and experience forward to other parts of the country with collaborations at various levels.

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