



SEHGAL
FOUNDATION

**8th Annual Conference on
Good Rural Governance and Citizen Participation
S M Sehgal Foundation, Gurugram, Haryana, India
December 7, 2018**

ABOUT CONFERENCE THEME:

S M Sehgal Foundation in partnership with National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) will organize the *8th Annual Conference on Good Rural Governance and Citizen Participation* on December 7, 2018 at India International Centre, New Delhi. The theme of the conference is 'Village-Level Water Management: Community Participation and Convergence of Village Institutions'.

Community participation in water management projects is not unusual in India though its extent depends largely on social context and degree of devolution in urban and rural local bodies. In most of the states, except a few, lack of devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions make communities depend on government departments for water management, there by restricting the role of the latter to mere consultation only. Participation of women in village-level water management is also affected in this scenario. Often conflicts arise between legally registered water-user associations and gram panchayats with regard to decision making in matters of water management. This also leads to creation of multiple bodies with overlapping responsibilities in the gram panchayat, as a result of which community participation often loses direction and motivation. Despite these challenges, several examples of collaborative water projects by communities, government departments, village institutions and corporate foundations exist which have positively impacted the lives of the villagers in different parts of India. The need is to work toward "water-sustainable villages, keeping in mind that sustainability can only be achieved if community participation is ensured from the inception of the project. The determining question is how to put water policies and projects and engaging community participation into practice at the village level.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES:

- Promote engagement among policymakers, practitioners, community leaders, gram panchayats, and corporates on community participation in village-level water management, funding water projects for conserving and distributing water equitably, and sustaining the structure over time.
- Generate discussion on a water sustainability plan in order to bring behavioral changes in the consumption of water in households and on farms.
- Knowledge and experience-sharing on water management innovations for replication and scaling up in various parts of India.

PARTICIPANTS:

Various stakeholders, namely policymakers and practitioners of village-level water management, community leaders and gram panchayats, community-based organizations, civil society organisations, students and faculty of universities, academic institutions, government officials, and corporate foundations are invited to participate.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Development of a shared understanding of issues related to the poor convergence between water committees and gram panchayats and the identification of ways for better collaboration,
- Identification of obstacles in community participation in village-level water management and suggested pathways for enhancing community participation,
- Promotion of knowledge and experience-sharing and peer learning among the stakeholders on innovations in water management and replication of these in villages, and
- Understanding of different dimensions of water sustainability plans and methods to engage gram panchayats and water committees on the plans.