

# Water is life and either needs to be valued and preserved

Water is necessary for all the actions of our life. Paul *et al.* describe in their editorial that to maintain hygiene, we need an adequate and uninterrupted supply of water.<sup>[1]</sup> All the civilizations developed and evolved in and around river-basins in different parts of the world and this point is enough to emphasize importance of water for human beings.<sup>[2]</sup> Our Harappan civilization flourished on the banks of Saraswati river at 3300 to 1300 bce, when it received tributaries from Ghaggar-Hakra stream.<sup>[3]</sup> Only now we are unearthing its evidences in deserts of Rajasthan and Rann of Kutch.<sup>[4]</sup> What we know now is that due to tectonic shifts, the river got detached from its glaciers and it became seasonal one: got water only during monsoon season and its scarcity led to decline of that era. This history should come to us as a warning signal that if we don't manage our water resources well, we may face a similar future.

United Nations World Water Report 2020 states that pressure of urbanization puts stress on available resources—including on groundwater.<sup>[5]</sup> Hence, while it's necessary to plan for supplying water to households and healthcare institutions—including toilets; it's also necessary to recharge our wells and aquifers underground. Healthcare Institutions can have water only if there is water around. Therefore becoming vocal for local and installing Rainwater-Harvesting System on our rooftops is as much important as to ensure its supply to point-of-care.

In June month's issue of his regular radio address—Mann Ki Baat—our Prime Minister told us a beautiful story of Kame Gowda of Dasanadoddi village in Karnataka's Mandya district. This 84-year-old shepherd dug 16 ponds in 42 years to overcome water scarcity and quench the thirst of animals and birds in the forest. Telling gusto of people like him may inspire our next generation to think not for themselves alone but also for the larger world around them. When we don't hold water with such contraptions, encroach land of ponds and lakes, occupy natural water bodies for legitimate or illegitimate purposes; we interrupt water-cycle of nature and invite both droughts and flood at different time periods. Hence our

smart-city planners should get wisdom and experiences of such persons who may not have a formal university-degree but understand nature well.

As regarding Clean-India-Campaign, while focus and efforts are rightly placed on constructing new toilets; we'd also pay attention to connect them to sewer-lines and proper drainage facilities. Holistic planning for management of waste is as much or perhaps more important than incentivizing households to use these latrines. Attention should also be paid to make arrangements so as not to contaminate ground water by effluents of such toilets. We need to realize that ongoing Swachh Bharat Mission is just a beginning point to highlight and underscore this neglected issue of cleanliness. Now all the stakeholders should join hands together, come to a common platform, cooperate, collaborate and march towards a goal of clean and green India.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

**Harish Gupta<sup>1</sup>, Nitu Nigam<sup>2</sup>,  
Satish Kumar<sup>1</sup>, Sudhir K. Verma<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medicine, <sup>2</sup>CFAR (Cytogenetics Unit), KG's Medical University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Address for correspondence:** Dr. Harish Gupta, Medicine, Associate Professor, KG's Medical University, Lucknow - 226 003, Uttar Pradesh, India.  
E-mail: mdkgmc@gmail.com

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Letter to Editor

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- UN Water –Water and Climate Change: Executive Summary. Available from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372882/PDF/372882eng.pdf.multi>.

We accessed all the webpages at the time of submission of this Letter to the Editor.

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