

JUL - 2017

■ By Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Let's plant saplings together

'NARMADA Seva Yatra' has become successful with the active participation of society. A total of 3350 kilometre distance has been covered in 148 days under the campaign and over 15 lakh persons took resolution to make Maa Narmada clean, incessant and pious. It was amazing to see the campaign transforming gradually into a public movement with enthusiasm, joy and affinity. Participation of over 500 religious heads, environmentalists, social activists, eminent members of political parties, office bearers of United Nations' Organisations, prominent personalities of film and sports arena besides presence of Chief Ministers and Ministers of Union Government has established the image of the campaign at international level.

This campaign has become an inspirational source and medium for creating awareness among the people for conservation of rivers. Moreover, this campaign has become a biggest sym-

bol of social harmony. Several lakh of people took resolve during the Namami Devi Narmada Seva Yatra that they will create history planting 6 crore saplings together on both the banks of Maa Narmada besides Narmada basin on July 2 and will ensure strong stream of Maa Narmada. In the presence of massive gathering at the concluding day of Narmada Seva Yatra at the origin point of Maa Narmada-Amarkantak, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had realised people about the responsibilities towards future generation. On this occasion, he called upon the citizens of Madhya Pradesh to take part with zest for plantation in Narmada basin on July 2, 2017.

We all expressed our consent with enthusiasm raising our hands to fulfill this resolution.

I feel pleasure today that July 2 for which we were waiting impatiently has arrived now. This

day is going to become a history not only in the state and country but also in the world in the field of environment and river conservation. We all feel pride to become witness of this historic day. Collective effort and social participation at such a big level

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to enrich environment and river has not been witnessed in the entire world before. On this day of July 2, name of citizens, Maa Narmada, Madhya Pradesh and our country 'Bharat' will be registered in the history for this noble cause.

Preparations for awareness and success of the tree plantation programme in all 24 districts of Narmada bank and Narmada Basin in Madhya Pradesh have been made on a large scale. No stone has been left unturned in the preparations

for the programme by the people of Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Horticulture Department, Agriculture Development and Farmers Welfare Department, Rural Development Department and Forest Department. 'Ped Lagao Yatras' were organised in all 51 districts of the state for generating awareness from June 5 on the occasion of World Environment Day.

Slogans like 'Dharti par kam na ho van, Dhyan rakhen hum manav jan' became very popular among people in the villages during the Yatra. Even small children in villages and townships were seen singing these slogans with love and beautiful feelings. The slogans had become the talk of the town. People were very sentimental about covering Maa Narmada with the green cover. The enthusiasm of people for participation in the tree plantation programme can be gauged

from the fact that nearly 6 lakh people and social and voluntary organisations have got themselves registered on the campaign website for participation in the programme to be held on July 2. I am very happy that 5 lakh persons have registered 'offline' also to connect with the campaign.

Forest Department and Horticulture Department have arranged the saplings for the programme. Pits for the plantation have also been dug. Proper arrangements for transporting the saplings have also been made. While selecting the saplings we have taken special care to ensure that more number of fruit-bearing and shady trees is planted so that these trees grow up to be of more use to the common man. We have given priority to saplings of Mango, Amla, Neem, Pipal, Bargad, Jamun, Bamboo, Tamarind,

Orange, Lemon, Guava, Drumsticks and Pomegranate.

All work for this historic day has been completed. Now only you all are awaited. Do come, let us all collectively plant 6 crore saplings at Narmada Basin and help increase the quantity of water in Maa Narmada, make Maa Narmada clean and pure, make the environment of the entire state including Narmada basin pure, green and pollution-free, make clean drinking water and water for irrigation available for farmers, make life of the people of the state healthy, make the lives of the coming generations secure and make history by giving the message of conservation of rivers and environment to the whole world. Maa Narmada is giving a clarion call to all of us. Come, be true sons of Maa Narmada and spend some time in her service.

Kal-kal, chal-chal bahe Narmada. With this hope, I greet all of you.

(Blogger is the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh)