The Water Man of India receives Stockholm Water Prize

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Rajendra
Singh of India received Stockholm Water Prize for his innovative water restoration efforts, improving water security in rural India, and for showing extraordinary courage and determination in his quest to improve the living conditions for those most in need. H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden presented the prize to Rajendra Singh at a Royal Award Ceremony during World Water Week in Stockholm.

In its citation, the Stockholm Water Prize Committee said that "today's water problems cannot be solved by science or technology alone. Rajendra Singh's life work has been in building social capacity to solve local water problems through participatory action, empowerment of women, linking indigenous know-how with modern scientific and technical approaches." On receiving the Prize, Rajendra Singh said "I want to thank all in this world who work for water. Today I make a promise to dedicate the rest of my life to water conservation."

Mr Singh
lives and works in the Indian state of Rajasthan. The results of his work are without equal: in close cooperation with local residents, he and his organization have revived several rivers, brought water and life back to a thousand villages, and given hope to countless people. "Rajendra Singh has - through water - given people capacity and courage and thereby control over their lives and hope for the future. He has shown that sustainable development - environmental, economic and social - is based on wise water management," said Torgny Holmgren, Executive Director of SIWI. The methods used by Mr Singh are modernizations of ancient Indian ways of collecting and storing rainwater. The methods fell out of use during British colonial rule, but have now brought water back to India's driest state. On the significance of the prize, Rajendra Singh said: "I spent the last 31 years with a spade in my hand, down in the earth, but now, this prize give authority to my work."

Rajendra
Singh (born 1959) is a well-known water conservationist from Alwar district, Rajasthan in India. He is often referred to as the "Waterman of India". In 2001, he won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for community leadership for his pioneering work in community-based efforts in water harvesting and water management. He runs an NGO called Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS), which has helped villagers take charge of water management in their semi-arid area, through the use of johads, rainwater storage tanks, check dams and other time-tested techniques. Starting from a single village in 1985, TBS has helped build over 11,000 johads and other water conservation structures to collect rainwater, which has brought water back to over 1,000 villages and revived five rivers in Rajasthan. In 2008, The Guardian named him one of "50 people who could save the planet".

His interview - Stockholm Water Prize

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