

Report on the Consultative meeting on “Role of Forestry Interventions to rejuvenate River Cauvery” held on 25.06.2019 at IFGTB, Coimbatore

The IFGTB organized one day consultancy meeting on “Role of Forestry interventions to rejuvenate river Cauvery” on 25th June 2019. Subject matter experts on Cauvery river hydrology, human dominated landscapes, riparian forests and NGOs working for river rejuvenation participated in the meeting. Shri. S.Senthil Kumar, IFGTB Nodal Officer of the project “Preparation of DPR for rejuvenation of river Cauvery through Forestry interventions” welcomed the delegates and gave a brief introduction about the objectives of the meeting.

Initiating the Ice-breaking session, Dr.Mohit Gera, Director of IFGTB spoke about the importance of rejuvenation of river Cauvery through forestry interventions. He explained in detail how treating the catchment by way of forestry interventions is going to improve the quality and duration of water flowing to the river. He also spoke about the project on “Preparation of DPR for rejuvenation of 9 major rivers in India through Forestry interventions” funded by MoEF&CC to rejuvenate nine major rivers of India through forestry interventions assigned to ICFRE and specifically on “Preparation of DPR for rejuvenation of river Cauvery through Forestry interventions” assigned to IFGTB.

Dr. B.Nagarajan, Scientist-G, Forest Ecology Climate Change division made a presentation on the history of management of river Cauvery. He spoke about how the river was managed by the rulers in different period of time and how the landuse was shaped by the past management especially on agriculture. This was followed by a detailed technical presentation by Dr.E.J.James Pro Vice chancellor, Karunya University, who spoke about the relevance of forest conservation in the context of integrated river basin management - case study of Cauvery. He shared his experience on how the tree canopy brings down the evaporation of a watershed considerably. He explained how the forests improve net water availability in the watershed and how water loss due to evapo-transpiration is less than evaporation from a non forested land. He also introduced the concept on environmental reserves, contribution from “blue water” that evaporates from the watershed and “green water” that evapo-transpires from the vegetation in the watershed.

Dr. Raja Samy Centre of Ecological Science, IISc, Bengaluru delivered talk on “Biodiversity – role of human towards conservation”. He briefed about the pressures the Western Ghats are facing due to rising human population and the pollution in the river Cauvery. He demonstrated the interactive database “Digital flora of Eastern Ghats” developed by CES and spoke about the biodiversity of the Western Ghats. Thereafter a presentation on riparian forest was delivered by Shri. Gopa Kumar, Executive Director “NITYATA river water conservancy”, Bengaluru. He spoke about the role of riparian buffer on the health of streams and biodiversity. He stressed on the importance of creating such continuous buffer to manage

Human-animal conflict. Later Dr.R.K. Barathi, retired forest officer of Tamilnadu Forest Dept spoke about the outcome of past interventions of the forest department. He listed out various species suitable for riparian zone and spoke about various forestry interventions carried out by the forest department on the tributaries of river Cauvery.

Shri. Anandh Ethirajulu Project Director, Rally for River delivered a talk on “Forests outside Forest – A solution to revitalize rivers of India”. He spoke about the tree based cropping and sustainable agricultural with soil fertility management as a means for revitalization of rivers and sharing experiences from Waghari river rejuvenation project coordinated by the NGO. He also told how the ISHA foundation mobilizes public and farmers to enroll themselves in the river rejuvenation initiative. Dr. V.K.W. Bachpai, retired scientist of IFGTB shared his views and informed that the river health needs to be identified while planning different phases for treatment.

Dr.Mohit Gera Director, IFGTB concluded the session by summing up the discussions. The consultative meeting ended with vote of thanks by Shri. S.Senthil Kumar, Nodal officer of the DPR Project.



Discussions in the Consultative meeting



Dr Mohit Gera, Director IFS emphasising his views



Dr Nagarajan on the Past history of Managemen



Dr E.J.James on Hydrology of the river.



Sh Anandh Ethirajulu, Project Director Rally for rivers