

Dharti Jatan Yatra



Photo: The annual Yatra flowing through a village.

Banners proclaim "plant trees for more greenery" and "cutting trees leads to drought and starvation".

Historical Background

GVNML spread over 30 villages till 1987 after working over 10 years, idea of Padyatra was generated for communicating people at large for caring nature and restoration of environment. That time GVNML works with dedicated volunteer specially youths and works through Sharmdaan for repairing of Water Bodies, Plantation on common land, cleaning village path ways etc. and villagers' shouldering with us in Sharmadaan. Idea of Padyatra came out to initiate such kind of work in other adjoining villages. The Padyatra was 1st time organized in 1987 and some Gandhian Philosopher have extended their support by getting participate in this 1st Padyatra mainly Hon'ble Sidharaj Dadhada, Shri Chouth Maljee etc. After see its impact it was continued till today, during this more than three decade time there was many improvements added and applied, one major change is it is named as "Dharti Jatan Yatra", now it is not necessary to walk on

foot, now it is optional that either anyone can walk or reach village to village through vehicle but rally in the village and to water bodies or to worship site all participants have to walk.

Thematic Importance:

Padyatra is a means of reaching out and making contact on foot with like-minded individuals, communities – public at large including institutions, organizations and agencies within the realm or domain of our areas of interest and concerns. It can be, among others, a first step, to enter in a dialogue with different actors and players in the field of development and cooperation.

For us at GVNML, the Padyatra is also a means of mass communication, information collection, creating awareness – thereby educating people/ communities and, alongside, undertaking joint exercise for situation analysis of issues and problems faced by the rural community on one hand and jointly trying to find viable and feasible alternative approaches and development strategies for improving the quality of life on the other.



Simultaneously, through such an event (like the padyatra), we are trying to develop a “cadre” of local guardians of these natural resources. We are in the process of developing a local system whereby the person who encroaches upon the common properties that encompass natural resources; fells trees; and engages in illegal mining activities etc., can be questioned and tried by adopting/

adhering to or following democratic process and procedures as laid down under the constitution and law of the State.

Different activities are taken up, for example, worship of our natural resources base such as Talab, Ped (Trees), Panghat Pujan, offering of holy water from “Pushkar” in Ajmer district in to key village tanks of our area, and then local community is invited and persuaded to take oath by holding holy threads in both hands with a message of judicious and disciplined use of village natural resources. Subsequently, the holy threads or “moli” is tied to nearby trees by declaring brotherhood relation with the trees in the village. Later, village meetings are conducted that have agenda pertaining to management of village resources, problems in secure livelihoods etc. During the course of such public meetings, GVNML also anchors, facilitates and motivates the local community to declare their role for environment and greenery. Village community are mobilised to plan developmental activities that ought to be taken up on the village commons, plantation of trees – both on common lands and private lands. People are encouraged to declare and commit to undertaking “shramdaan (voluntary labour contribution)” for the maintenance and management of the “Naadi” or “Talab”. Besides, they will also follow the rules made under Khulla Chidiya Ghar (eco-park) that are being developed in the area.

The Padyatra closing ceremony, organized at the end of Yatra Program in all tolls and on such day some distinguish



guest participate in last some years minister of rural development from the state govt., eminent environmentalist like Ms. Sunita Narayanan', Water Man of India Mr. Rajendra Singh, Mr. Basrav Patil, Member of Parliament – Rajya Sabha with

some young as well as experience professional from development field attends. Subsequently, different GVNML annual awards were presented to selected personalities.

The Padyatra (Pilgrimage) is covers around 80-100 villages every year with focus to establish volunteerism for conservation of local environment. Around 5000-7500 people connected every year and they were messaged to make positive change in their livelihood, in their health, in their capacity by enhancing their environment.

Raksha Sutras, or holy friendship bands are tied between villagers, and also around the trees, symbolising their promise not to harm these precious



To enhance greenery you can heard the word of plantation everywhere, how it be ensured that all (up to 50%) planted trees are safe and not being fallen. Cutting of green trees, exploitation of common resources are in practices at everywhere. The Raksha Sutra is a concept of making people “tree friendly” and they won’t take it further. Every year around 3500-5500 trees were tide holy thread of brotherhood and the message gone to numerous people for make change in their attitude and become tree friendly.

resources. Village action plans for the forthcoming year are put together and individuals publicly commit to help, with GVNML keeping a record of the promised actions.

A big ceremony in the centrally located town of Nagar marks the culmination of the yatra. Each team shares their experiences of village consultation and celebrities in the world of water management and state level government members attract crowds.

After each Padyatra, the event is reviewed by GVNML, and follow up activities take place like handing out tree saplings.