

## Forestry intervention key to river revival : Experts

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PUNE: Defining the riverscape and identifying tree species for plantation in riparian zones through forestry intervention is the need of the hour for rejuvenation of Godavari, Krishna and Narmada rivers, said experts at a Detailed Project Report (DPR) meeting on their revival on Wednesday. The Institute of Forest Biodiversity (IFB), Hyderabad, is the Centre-appointed nodal institute looking into the preparation of the Godavari river DPR, which is currently in phase 1 of data gathering.

As per the project outline, the DPR is to be submitted by March 2020, following which a five-year implementation window will translate its suggestions into ground reality. The Institute of Wood Science and Technology, Bengaluru, is looking into the DPR on Krishna river rejuvenation, while the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is looking into the DPR on Narmada river rejuvenation.

“Primarily, we have to deal with river basin management. Implementation of DPR will take forestry policies to new level as they will be site specific, and based on the interest of local population,” said IFB director D Jayaprasad, who is also the team leader of Godavari DPR project. He hoped that it would also lead to catchment area development. “Micro watershed development is the basis of the whole project. Rainfall needs to percolate through the soil, so that aquifers are strengthened,” Jayaprasad said. S Patnaik, project nodal officer of Godavari rejuvenation DPR, said one of the main reasons for the project was to alleviate drought, particularly in Deccan and Marathwada regions, by strengthening groundwater in aquifers.

He added that the DPR compiling phase will last a year. “We have identified 5km as riparian buffer zone for Godavari. For each of its eight tributaries, we have identified 2km as buffer.”

IWST associate professor and consultant of the Krishna DPR, B C Nagaraju, said, “There will be a focus on repairing the riparian zone as a keystone ecosystem.” Regarding the Narmada DPR, scientist Naseer Mohammad from TIFR, said, “We will focus on solving forest degradation. Sand mining is another problem, so is direct discharge of municipal waste into the main river.”

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