



**GOVERNANCE
AWARDS
2019**
12-12-2019

EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Shri Umakant Umarao, IAS

(Secretary, Panchayat & Rural Development
Department, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh)

For developing an environmentally sustainable business model for water conservation and harvesting

A 1996-batch Madhya Pradesh cadre IAS officer, Umakant Umarao is a B.Tech in civil engineering from IIT Roorkee. He also studied economics. When he joined as District Collector of Dewas, he had a number of focus areas in mind in the education and healthcare sectors. But he realised early into his stint that a much larger crisis was looming over the region due to deficient rainfall. Dewas was perhaps the first district in India where water was brought by a train, much before Latur. His challenge was to find an economically viable and sustainable solution to Dewas' water woes. His efforts resulted in the construction of 16,000 ponds with over 1,000 farmers earning more than Rs 25 lakh a year. Also, Dewas has not only seen a speedy rise in groundwater level, it has also witnessed a 20-fold increase in irrigated land from a mere 18,000 hectares to more than three lakh hectares.

The Dewas model has since been adopted by farmers in districts like Vidisha, Ratlam, Mandasaur, Ujjain and Raisen in MP, Bundelkhand in UP and Marathwada, Latur and Chandrapur in Maharashtra. The MP government adopted the Dewas model in 2008 under the name of Balram Talab Yojana to create mass impact. The model was identified by the United Nations as one of the top three water management practices globally. Umakant Umarao's other initiatives such as the Janani Express to reduce IMR and MMR have been successfully adopted by the MP government and supported by UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He is also credited for significantly improving the overall education quality of government schools in tribal areas. He was instrumental in reviving the Narmada biologically to ensure its sustainable flow.



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