

Dr. Rajendra Singh

(born 6 August 1959) is a well-known water conservationist from Alwar district, Rajasthan in India. Also known as "waterman of India", he won the Stockholm Water Prize, an award known as "the Nobel Prize for water", in 2015. Previously, he won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for community leadership in 2001 for his pioneering work in community-based efforts in water harvesting and water management. He runs an NGO called 'Tarun Bharat Sangh' (TBS), which was founded in 1975. The NGO based in vil hori-Bhikampur in Thanagazi tehsil, near Sariska Tiger Reserve, has been instrumental in fighting the slow bureaucracy, mining lobby and has helped villagers take charge of water management in their semi-arid area as it lies close to Thar Desert, through the use of johad, rainwater storage tanks, check dams and other time-tested as well as path-breaking techniques. Starting from a single village in 1985, over the years TBS helped build over 8,600 johads and other water conservation structures to collect rainwater for the dry seasons, has brought water back to over 1,000 villages and revived five rivers in Rajasthan, Arvari, Ruparel, Sarsa, Bhagani and Jahaj Wali

He is one of the members of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) which was set up in 2009, by the Government of India As an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the Ganges (Ganga), in exercise of the powers conferred under the Environment (Protection) Act,1986.^[5] In 2008, *The Guardian* named him amongst its list of "50 people who could save the planet".^[4] In the UK he is a founder member of an NGO called the Flow Partnership which aims to counter the negative effects of soil erosion and flooding.

Rajendra Singh was born at village Daula in Baghpat district in Uttar Pradesh near Meerut. Both sides of his Rajput family belong to the zamindari tradition, and he was the eldest of seven siblings. His father was an agriculturist and looked over their 60 acres of land in the village and where Singh did his early schooling.^[1]

An important event in his life came in 1974, when still in high school, Ramesh Sharma, a member of Gandhi Peace Foundation visited their family home in Meerut, this opened up young Rajendra's mind, to issues of village improvement, as Sharma went about cleaning the village, opened a *vachnalaya* (library) and even got involved in settling local conflicts; soon he involved Rajendra in an alcoholism eradication program.^[1] Another important influence was an English language teacher in school, Pratap Singh, who started discussing politics and social issues with his students after class. At this time Emergency was imposed in 1975, making him aware about the issues of democracy and formulate independent views.^[1] After finishing high school education. He enrolled for post graduation in Hindi literature, at another college in Baraut, affiliated with Allahabad University. He became the leader of a local chapter of *Chatra Yuva Sangarsh Vahini*, a student activism organisation founded by Jaiprakash Narayan (Magsaysay Award, 1965), though after Jaiprakash fell ill, the internal power politics disillusioned him. Dr. Singh is a BAMS doctor by education.