

Lifestyle change to drive Ramnadi rejuvenation

City stakeholders draw up plan on KVIFF sidelines to engage with locals in imbibing eco-friendly habits

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A comprehensive plan to revive Ramnadi by changing lifestyle habits of locals residing around it has been devised by NGOs, students and other stakeholders.

Residents living around the river would now be expected to reduce pollutants thrown into it and equipped with nature-friendly habits like the use of organic soaps, treating sewage through biological means and other changes over the next three years during which the project will be executed.

The decision was reached by various stakeholders in the city through a three-day brainstorming session at the Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival (KVIFF) under the Ramnadi rejuvenation project.

A 15-point action plan has been drawn to take various steps to revive the dying river. The plan would be executed over a span of three years where different stakeholders of the city would join hands to take the cause forward. A major part of the river rejuvenation comprises awareness and creating pressure groups that would attract the attention of governing authorities.

"Sustainable lifestyle means the way of life that would not harm the next generation and leaving a less human footprint on the environment,"



Saplings have been planted along the river as part of the project

said Anil Galkwad, founder of Vasundhara Swachata Abhiyan.

He said the plan mainly involves resorting to a sustainable lifestyle that would least harm the environment and ecosystem around the river.

"Various NGOs are already committed to creating sustainable products like detergents, tooth powder and other materials that could be used by the residents along the river bank. This would ensure lesser chemicals entering into the river," he added.

Galkwad said that many people have small patches of land under cultivation at the banks. "These areas could do better without the use of chemical fertilisers and experts working on natural farming methods to avoid intoxicating the river," he added.

Landscaping of nature-friendly plants, sand, gravel and charcoal through layers would also be done as a part of the project to treat the sewage entering the river. "About 95 per cent of water can be treated which be-

comes usable for gardening, farming and other purposes," Galkwad said.

Shalaja Deshpande of RVITNadi, a city-based NGO working on river cleaning said, "The priority will be to remove blockages of live springs, wild weeds and removing concrete from the river floor and free the suffocating river."

"Garbage removal, plastic removal along the banks, stopping the dumping of waste and construction material and restore the river to its original flow is on the agenda for the first year," she said, adding that efforts would also be put to improve the visibility of the river.

Deshpande said that schools, colleges and other communities along the river would be educated on living toxin-free lifestyle through fortnightly workshops.

Other efforts would include creating a walking path, developing community spaces to make the river accessible to people. "The local corporators will have to play a key role in bridging the gap between residents, NGOs, volunteers and local governing body to intervene wherever necessary," Deshpande told *Mirror*.

The Sagarnitri project would also be implemented where students would be asked to collect plastic at the source and dispose of in a safe way. Promoting the use of eco-friendly sanitary napkins and other initiatives would be taken to have minimum impact on the river.