



Nat Geo Felicitates Varsha Raikwar as a 'Changemaker'

Change starts with 'One'

Radio Bundelkhand, an initiative of Development Alternatives, was established on 23 October, 2008 at TARAGram Orchha. This is Madhya Pradesh's first and India's second community radio station. The station broadcasts in the local Bundeli dialect and covers 4 blocks, 150 villages, and around 2 lakh people. The focus is to engage the local community in dialogues on common interests and issues and provide a source of entertainment. Over the years, Radio Bundelkhand has been successful to form volunteer groups and listener groups to ensure active community engagement in various radio programmes, spread awareness, and mobilise people.

Varsha is a resident of Niwari in Bundelkhand. While growing up, she noticed people, especially women, walk for miles together to collect water, as wells and hand pumps remain dried up for 5–6 months in a year. She was motivated to practice and promote water conservation. In 2017, when she joined Radio Bundelkhand as an RJ, as a woman, it was challenging for her to even be heard and accepted in the community. She realized that it will take her some time, but with continuous efforts and by achieving results, the community will accept her as a Woman Climate Champion. In October 2021, Varsha was named one of India's 17 Young Climate Leaders under the UN's "WeTheChange" campaign. Later, her story was covered by many news platforms.

Varsha was contacted by 'Gaia People', an independent documentary film production company who was working on the video series for NatGeo, India, via Instagram. Initially, she was interviewed on Zoom call, later a detailed plan was shared to film the event in December, 2021 at a Radio Bundelkhand studio, Varsha's home, and at village Rajavar in Niwari to cover the story of a farmer Prakash Pushwaha, who was the winner of "Kaun Baneyga SubhKal leader", a campaign organised by Radio Bundelkhand.

Once the filming was over, the team was in touch with Varsha, and in March, she received an e-mail invitation from NatGeo for the event on 19 April, 2022 in Mumbai.

On 19 April, 2022 at JW Marriot, Juhu, Mumbai, a press conference was held by National Geographic for their campaign "One for Change", to celebrate India's inspiring changemakers who are lighting a path to restore and preserve the Earth.

RJ Varsha Raikwar from Radio Bundelkhand was felicitated along with 9 others, for being a 'Changemaker' who helped bring the world to a better place.

The 'One for Change' campaign is a series of short films, combining 10 'changemakers', including Varsha, who contribute to Earth's conservation and restoration.

During the event, actress and UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, India, Dia Mirza, and Head of Network Entertainment Channels at Disney Star, Mr Kevin Vaz spoke about the initiative and their enthusiasm for the cause. As per Mr Kevin, "This campaign is launched to help us drive a much-needed and an essential conversation on how with just a small change, we as individuals, can make a huge difference in making our planet sustainable".

Actress, Dia Mirza added, "People underestimate the power of a small act or a small change but in all honesty, small acts in big amounts can be a force to be reckoned with".

The short films will be shown on various channels of National Geographic and Disney+ Hotstar from 22 April, 2022. Varsha's episode will be released in the coming weeks. The exact date has not been made known yet.