**Press Release**

**PNB Housing launches Watershed Development
Project to replenish villages in Rajasthan**

***~ Rolls out water conservation and agricultural infrastructure in Nadoti block of Karauli; mobilizes Village Development Committees for smooth functioning~***

**Rajasthan, 01st March 2022:** PNB Housing Finance’s CSR arm, Pehel Foundation, in association with Gurugram-based NGO, SM Sehgal Foundation, launched an integrated watershed development project, Jal Khushhali, in the Karauli district of Rajasthan. This project targets to reduce economic and social vulnerability of small and marginalized farmer communities of Chainpura and Muhana villages of Nadoti block in Karauli district.

Jal Khushhali is set to harvest groundwater, rejuvenate the existing natural resources and enhance agricultural productivity by building ponds and two check dams. The project will facilitate the improvisation of water and sanitation infrastructure to provide clean water facilities and safe health for the people of Karauli. Simultaneously, an awareness campaign will be executed by Pehel foundation to educate local communities about water conservation practices.

Uncertainty in rainfall patterns and lack of awareness of sustainable agricultural practices among marginalized farmers is the major reason for low productivity and medical complications. A team of grassroots-level representatives will help focus on building capacities of village panchayats with the help of Village Development Committee (VDC) to improve their functioning towards critical services and schemes.

Elaborating on the project, **PNB Housing Finance Managing Director and CEO Hardayal Prasad** said, “In rural geographies, water scarcity has been a perennial problem. In ancient times, rural people were well conversant with water-harvesting techniques via natural means such as the construction of ponds, check dams and artificial reservoirs. Keeping this traditional trove of knowledge in mind, this watershed development projects is being launched along with local communities to recharge groundwater reserves. It is imperative to co-opt local stakeholders actively in water-security initiatives as their involvement lends greater heft to water conservation efforts. Besides, the participation of rural cohorts acts as a key tool for empowering local communities. Therefore, the approach adopted by Pehel Foundation in our projects will benefit all small and marginalized farmers in these regions”.

PNB Housing, as an integral part of this partnership model, invests in initiatives like Jal Khushali that can guide rural development to enhance water-harvesting, protect natural infrastructure assets, restore and rejuvenate degraded water bodies to make cities water secure.

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