

WATER TODAY EVERYWHERE!!!! ITS FUTURE???????

Water will be a key constraint in the future, not only at the national level but also for human survival, eminent agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan said in a function to release the India Book of the year 2004, brought out by The Hindu.

He is not merely stating a scenario but reflecting the mood of all the scientists, ecologists, environmentalists etc. Water has become a major topic of discussion with the ever increasing instances of drought and floods throughout the world. Ground water is lowering and pollution has seeped into the aquifers. Major rivers have become dirty drains and safe drinking water is a problem especially in far flung areas.

An example is of the famous Dal Lake in Srinagar which has turned into a dumping ground reported 'The Pioneer'. Untreated sewage is leading to rapid growth of algae decaying the lake slowly.

M.S. Swaminathan also said that need of the hour is augmentation of water resources and the methods that needed serious consideration including the inter-basin transfer of water and working out a cost effective method of desalination of sea water.

The need for exploration of the Indian seas to continue research is fulfilled by the Ocean-sat 2 satellite mission developed by ISRO. Data from the satellite mission will be used for data on coastal habitats, erosional and depositional areas. With help from IRS in coastal area land use and coastal morphology steps are being taken towards coastal management.

It is also important to curtail the demand for water. Anything and everything should not be allowed in the name of development and globalization.

With the country's 55% irrigation need is drawn from ground water, it is important to undertake ground water harvesting seriously. This was said by the Union

minister for water Resources while inaugurating a central ground water board office in Bangalore.

Seas have always borne the brunt of human action. The bush administration in US proposed, that to mitigate global warming CO₂ from air should be trapped and let out in the deep sea. The scientists on the other hand are saying that such a step can disrupt the ecology of the sea and destroy the ecosystem. Such an action is outrageous as the sea is already facing disaster from human activities such as oil spill or excessive sea transportation, further degradation should be negated.

The scientists have studied and revealed that hydel projects and pollution are responsible for depleting fish population in rivers. National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) and Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI) did the research in connection with the Beas Sutlej Link project.

In Canada's Broughton Archipelago fish farms are destroying the picturesque beauty of the village of 80 belonging to the Kwicksutaineuk tribe by polluting their waters. The farms are jeopardizing the entire food chain of the river systems and the nearby forests, lament the villagers.

All news is not bad news and some people have undertaken methods to preserve water for their own betterment. A community effort in Karnataka's Dharwad taluk has helped dismiss the chronic water problem. The effort of the villagers led to construction of barrages to store the rain water, allowing the farmers to grow their crops without being dependant on the rains. The villagers got help from an NGO, a local engineer and CAPART.

In Tiruvarur district of Tamil Nadu scientists, NGO's and governmental organizations started a programme of integrated sea water farming to revitalize the local economy. Villagers were encouraged to take up water harvesting,

enhance stock of prawns and grow salt loving plants which yield a number of useful products. The experiment is involving local people, self-help groups and NGOs.

The lure of money though is a constraint on the natural environment. Thailand is flouting all human right cries against the military govt of Burma and planning to construct two dams on the river Salween. The second largest river in the area after Mekong and bordering Burma and Thailand would produce a combined 5332 mega watts of power and submerge huge areas of prime forestland. The project is of billions of dollars and the government gets a fat amount of money in lieu of the right to build the dams benefiting Thailand. It is sad business that the preservers of this small but beautiful country have turned its destroyers.

Combined efforts of the people, the government and environmentalists only, can help the world save the lifeline from destruction.

WWF-India as an ENVIS Centre/Node has been keeping a tab on the media activity on environment related issues and carries out analysis on different issues in media.

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