Government of India
Ministry of Jal Shakti
Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation
(National Water Mission)
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Proceedings of the Thirtieth (30th) Water Talk held on 17th September 2021

- National Water Mission (NWM) has been organizing a seminar series-'Water Talk' -to promote dialogue and information sharing among participants on a variety of water-related topics. The **'Water Talk'** is intended to create awareness, build capacities of stakeholders and encourage people to become active participants in the conservation and saving of water. NWM has so far organized 29 ***'Water-Talks'*** on a range of topics dominating the sector concerns.
- **Thirtieth (30th) Water Talk** in this series was held on 17th September 2021 on a virtual platform, was organized by NWM with the support of Water Digest, the official media partner for the webinar. The talk was delivered by **Dr. M Ramachandran, IAS(Retd), Former Secretary, Govt. of India and Former Chief Secretary, Uttrakhand State.** He played an active role in the field of urban planning and management with prime focus on sustainable urban water management. **Shri G. Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, NWM** and officials of NWM attended the webinar along with other participants. The talk was also live-streamed through Facebook and other social media platforms of various organizations under MJS. There were over 1 lakh viewers in this e-water talk.
- **Shri G. Asok Kumar**, **Additional Secretary & Mission Director,** NWM welcomed the participants to the ***30th***Talk of the 'Water Talk' series. He gave a brief overview of the 'Water Talk' initiative and mentioned how the switch from the physical to digital platform has amplified the reach of the talks both geographically & numerically with people participating from all across the world from countries like Australia, China, and Nigeria. He also mentioned that along with Water Talk, National Water Mission also took the initiative of organizing ***Water Tech Talk*** which is organized on second Friday of every month with people coming from academia and industries and informing us about the various progress which we have made in water sector. Hon'ble Prime Minister launched the ***'Jal Shakti Abhiyan:Catch the Rain'***campaign on 22nd March 2021, on World Water Day, addressing 2.5 lakh Sarpanches, along with District Magistrates/ District Collectors from all the states. During the launch programme, He ended his address by mentioning the key activities of the campaign include geo-tagging and making inventory of all water bodies, preparation of GIS based water conservation plans and setting up of Jal Shakti Kendra in all the districts, which will act as knowledge Centre for water related issues. In urban setting of India, low intensity development (LID) is required to capture high intensity rainfall and prevent storm water flooding by constructing innovative urban water conservation structures such as modular blocks, permeable pavements and green infrastructure in patches to collect and recharge groundwater.

- The topic of the e-talk by **Dr. M Ramachandran, IAS (Retd),**was **"Urban Water**

Management in India - Issues & the Way forward"for creating a paradigm shift in urban water management and its governance. Dr. Ramachandran complemented National Water Mission for initiating such as important campaign ***"JalSahktiAbhiyan: Catch the Rain"*** campaign. Urban is the small part when it comes to overall water management. There is a need of involving people and other stakeholders for water conservation. People may think why there is a segregation between rural water and urban water? It is so because urban authorities deals with the subject specific to urban development whereas in rural regions, rural authorities' deals with village level development. Moreover, management of water is more complex in urban areas of the country. Piped water supply is available in the urban areas but who is responsible for water demand management is still a challenge to identify. There are different water stakeholder such as Municipal Corporation, Public Health and Environment Engineering Department, etc. in urban areas. Meeting the water requirement is primary focus for both habitants living in rural and urban areas. As we know, 135 LPCD water supply is required to maintain for people in urban areas but in practice it is followed to due to certain reasons. As per Census (2011), 71.2% of urban population facing water scarcity and does not have access to safe drinking water; only 21% people have the facility to access clean water near their premises. These figures shows huge gap between water demand and supply. There is a need to ensure access to safe and clean access to water in urban settings. Another issues is equitable distribution of water in urban areas due to leakages in the water distribution system. Issues in terms of water supply infrastructure in India: coverage is limited, pressure drop during water supply to households, intermittent water supply from three to six hours instead of 24x7 regular water supply.

- He highlighted that Non-Revenue Water is around 50% of the total water supply in the city or small town. Lack of proper metering system to measure water consumption in many cities. 70% leakages are from pipes provided to consumer connections. There should be more emphasis on replacing old rusted pipes with new one and also install ultrasonic sensors (fixed) with telemetry to provide water consumption data at regular interval on a cloud platform. National Mission's in India must focus on ensuring water security and adequate water availability instead of augmentation of water supply schemes.
- Some solutions to overcome the challenges of irregular water supply and demand: water supply must be managed through Public Private Partnership so that water may become a commodity because what we value we conserve. Nagpur became the first city where PPP model was successfully implemented for 24x7 regular water supply. Awareness is necessary amongst people to use water efficiently instead of wasting it. There is a need to clarify mandate of Water Supply and Sanitation scheme to service providers which could involve decentralization, transparency and accountability, bring down waste water wastage to reuse of treated waste water to meet the growing demand of water for increasing population.

- The talk was followed by a session of questions and answers wherein members from the audience were invited to discuss their queries with the speaker. The webinar saw some interesting and unique questions from people across the country.

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