

Millennium Post- 16- November-2023

# Looming water wars

With water running low and disputes high, internal and external conflict over this essential resource is impending



SHUTAPA PAUL

While India boasts of almost 18 per cent of the world's population, it has access to only 4 per cent of the global water resources

There is a war brewing and we are largely unaware. There are strong indications that the next crisis that could face our nation could be on account of water or rather the lack of it. While India boasts of almost 18 per cent of the world's population, it has access to only 4 per cent of the global water resources, making water one of our most precious resources.

You couldn't tell about the impending crisis of course if you see the amount of water being wasted everyday by households, factories, and the ignorant masses. Every year, our residential complex, for example, sends multiple missives, especially during the summer months, urging residents to be mindful about water usage. Use buckets and wet cloths instead of hoses to clean cars, limit the number of car washes in the month, water the gardens in the early mornings and evenings to ensure maximum water retention, and so on. And even so, water tanks roll in to supplement the water supply, our collective maintenance cost climbs year-on-year, and still certain households continue to squander water oblivious of their daily blunder.

There is no doubt that current and future wars will be waged over a right to resources. And in a quiet but assured way, trouble is developing within our country and at the borders. The unceasing Cauvery and Krishna water disputes between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and Telangana and Andhra Pradesh respectively, pass through ebbs and flows of protests and resolutions, without ever completely dissipating. Punjab and Haryana have long been facing off on the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal,



Climate change with its peak temperatures and erratic rains poses the most crucial challenge to water

with no treaty in sight. As per the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 'Global Study on Homicide Report 2023', 0.5 per cent of all interpersonal murders in India between 2019 and 2021 were related to conflict over water.

Look to the borders and there are stormier clouds there. A 62-year-old treaty between India and Pakistan to divide six rivers may come undone even after surviving three wars. In January this year, India issued a notice to renegotiate the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan that had been signed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan President Ayub Khan in 1960 in Karachi. Around the same time, Pakistan also raised objections on two of India's hydro-electric projects on the

Jhelum and Chenab rivers in Jammu and Kashmir, calling it a contravention of the Indus Water Treaty. Tensions persist between India and China over the Brahmaputra River as China's efforts become as much about land acquisition as water resource expansion. In August this year, India announced a revival of 12 hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh. Within days, China released a new map showing parts of Arunachal Pradesh and the entire region of Aksai Chin as part of its territory. China's upstream position is threatening, carrying with it the capability to sever water and food supply to certain parts of India. The peace between both nations is strained at the best of times, and has an unrelenting

sense of unease and distrust governing its relations.

Climate change with its peak temperatures and erratic rains poses the most crucial challenge to water. Fast depleting water tables and increasing cycles of rain deficit are prime scenarios leading up to heightened conflict. All suggestions point to keeping the issue of water outside of diplomacy, but that's hardly ever happened. Politics of conciliation and compromise seem to belong to a bygone era. With two wars already in the global arena and many smaller disputes also underway, it's hard to predict today when one nation will suddenly choose to prove its might over another. While we do know of the politics, mindset, and

aggression towards controlling water resources, unfortunately, not enough is being done to conserve it. Efficient and low-water irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation must be implemented wherever possible. Effective management of irrigation water, dry farming, crop diversification towards less water-consuming and drought-resistant crops, enthused rainwater harvesting, greater public awareness to collect, store, and conserve water, while avoiding wastefulness as a nation, is much-needed. We can decide on sharing and dividing water resources, however, the most essential aspect will actually be saving it.

*The writer is an author and media entrepreneur. Views expressed are personal*



The Tribune- 16- November-2023

# Centre approves water supply schemes for 54K households

102 projects worth ₹476.71 crore to be taken up across J&K

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15

The Central Government has approved new 102 water supply schemes worth Rs 476.71 crore for coverage of additional 54,752 rural households in the UT under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Those houses will be covered for which the provision for functional household tap connections had not been planned at the start of the mission.

The identification of these households was done during various public outreach programmes, like Back to Village, Block Divas, JJM Fort-night, gram sabhas and JJM awareness camps conducted by the department. "With the approval of 102 new schemes, it shall be ensured that no household is left without a tap connection within its premises," an official spokesperson said.

Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti, has impressed upon engineers to expedite the execution of these schemes to meet the agreed timelines for completion of the mission. He further emphasised upon the field functionaries to maintain highest degree of trans-



Water stored under a Central Government project in a mountainous area of the UT.

## 75% COVERAGE OF TAPWATER CONNECTIONS

- According to a Jal Shakti spokesperson, J&K has achieved 75% coverage of tap water connections, thereby entering into the 'high achievers' category at the national level.
- About 3,300 schemes have been planned under the Jal Jeevan Mission at an estimated cost of ₹12,975 crore which are at different stages of execution.

parency, accountability and accessibility to the general public for effective implementation of the mission.

It may be recalled that like other states and UTs of the country, Jal Jeevan Mission is being implemented in J&K with the involvement of various stakeholders, like Central Government's Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Jal Shakti Department, J&K, district administrations and the local communities. Pani samitis (water committees) representing local communities are playing a very

critical role in the implementation of the mission by partnering with the department in planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities. "As on date, J&K has achieved more than 75% coverage of tapwater connections, thereby entering into the 'high achievers' category at the national level. The FHTCs being provided are reported on the IMIS portal of JJM with Aadhar linkage of the beneficiaries," the spokesperson said.

So far, about 3,300 schemes have been planned under the

Jal Jeevan Mission at an estimated cost of Rs 12,975 crore which are at different stages of execution. The contracts of more than 98% works under these schemes have been awarded through e-tendering in a transparent manner and out of which around 87% works have been started on ground. The UT has already covered more than 1,000 villages, among which are some of the remotest areas like Batlan, Taraiyan and Chanbra villages in Kupwara's Tangdhar subdivision located near the LoC.