

The Hindu- 25- February-2023

ERCP takes political twist as M.P. approaches SC for stay

Rajasthan is seeking national status for the proposed project to be built at a cost of at ₹37,200 crore; set to benefit 13 districts, it would be a major initiative for interlinking the Parvati, Kali Sindh and Chambal rivers

Mohammed Iqbal
JAIPUR

The proposed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP), set to benefit 13 districts through interlinking of three rivers, has taken a political twist as neighbouring Madhya Pradesh has approached the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the project's execution. Rajasthan has also been demanding the national project status for ERCP.

The Supreme Court has issued notices to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry and the Environment Ministry, the Central Water Commission and the Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh governments in the case. The matter will come up for hearing in the apex court on March 17.

Madhya Pradesh has also sought a stay on the construction of the Navnera



A view of the dried-up Ramgarh dam near Jaipur. FILE PHOTO

barrage on Kali Sindh river in Kota district.

The ERCP is a major initiative for interlinking of the Parvati, Kali Sindh and Chambal rivers. While Madhya Pradesh has raised objections in view of the Chambal river flowing 376 km in that State, the Rajasthan government has maintained that any of the two States could use water from its catchment area as well as 10% of the water received from the other after an agreement reached in the

Inter-State Water Control Board in 2005.

Madhya Pradesh has itself built the Mohanpura dam on the Newaj river, a tributary of Parvati river, and the Kundalia dam on Kali Sindh river, because of which about 2.65-lakh hectare irrigation area was developed in that State. The no objection certificate was obtained by the Madhya Pradesh government after the construction of dams in 2017.

Chief Minister Ashok

Gehlot has termed the M.P. government's petition an attempt to deprive Rajasthan of its share of the river waters. He said the ERCP's detailed project report had been prepared in compliance with the 2010 guidelines of the CWC and added that both the Centre and Madhya Pradesh were trying to stop the rightful water for eastern Rajasthan.

"An average of 19,000 million cubic metres of water is wasted every year in Chambal and flows into the sea, according to the data of the CWC's river gauge station in Dholpur for 36 years. The ERCP requires only 3,500 MCM of water to meet the drinking and irrigation needs of the people of Rajasthan," Mr. Gehlot said in a statement.

He said creating legal hurdles in the implementation of ERCP amounted to playing with the future of Rajasthan. With the issue of

granting national project status to ERCP remaining unresolved, the State government has started the work with its own resources and is constructing the Navnera-Bisalpur-Isarda link, Mahalpur barrage and Ramgarh barrage at a cost of ₹9,600 crore. The national project status will fix the share of the Centre and the State in the expenditure in the ratio of 90:10 for the project, the cost of which has been estimated at ₹37,200 crore.

The districts which will benefit from the project are Jhalawar, Baran, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Tonk, Jaipur, Karauli, Alwar, Bharatpur, Dausa and Dholpur, where a population of 3.5 crore resides. The national project status has been sought on the ground of the fact that the huge project cost could not be borne by the State government alone.

The Times of India- 25- February-2023



TIMES evoke

A PIECE OF WATER, A HANDFUL OF SHADE

The idea of 'the commons' was first outlined in 1833 by William Lloyd, an English economist, discussing grazing in shared rural areas. Amidst today's high-tech living, English villages and sunny pastures might seem quaint. Yet, modern Western civilisation is rooted in this discussion for the commons led to maintaining three realms, private and state-run property alongside resources shared by all. Today, UNESCAP defines the 'global environmental commons' as the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and space, plus biomes within national borders whose thriving — this includes rainforests, land and biodiversity — is vital for the planet. India has a rich history of commons, from village ponds and forests to lakes, pastures and ancient trees, used by communities for resources and recreation.

Such commons are under grave threat globally now, the Anthropocene embodying their over-exploitation by a few. The 'tragedy of the commons' speaks in grim statistics — UNEP finds plastic in the seas measures 199 million tons, turning the azure into marine 'dead zones'. As nations discharge emissions into a shared atmosphere, WHO finds 99% of the global population breathes dangerous air. Untrammelled urbanisation, mining and ranching are causing huge deforestation and erosion — the World Atlas of Desertification estimates 75% of Earth's land is degraded, the UN fearing soil desertification could impact two billion people by 2030. Meanwhile, the biodiversity extinction rate is hundreds of times higher than in the last ten million years, Earth losing birds, animals, insects and plants at extraordinary speed. Mauling the natural world generates a vicious cycle — as we overdraw on the elements, we lose natural resources and the species which rejuvenate nature itself.

However, solutions are still possible. As Times Evoke's global experts emphasise, these are ingrained in appreciating the importance of the commons. From this awareness can stem more sustainable behaviour, including concerted global action on stemming pollution and deforestation, expanding agroforestry and habitat restoration, creating protected areas for biodiversity and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. Alongside, it is vital to empower communities to manage commons equitably, these being the only places in the world where everyone has a right to some water, some shade.

The Times of India- 25- February-2023

'From water to air, the global commons must be managed with rules — and climate justice'

Sunita Narain is director general of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). Speaking to **Srijana Mitra Das** at *Times Evoke*, she discusses the global commons, their 'tragedy' — and potential:

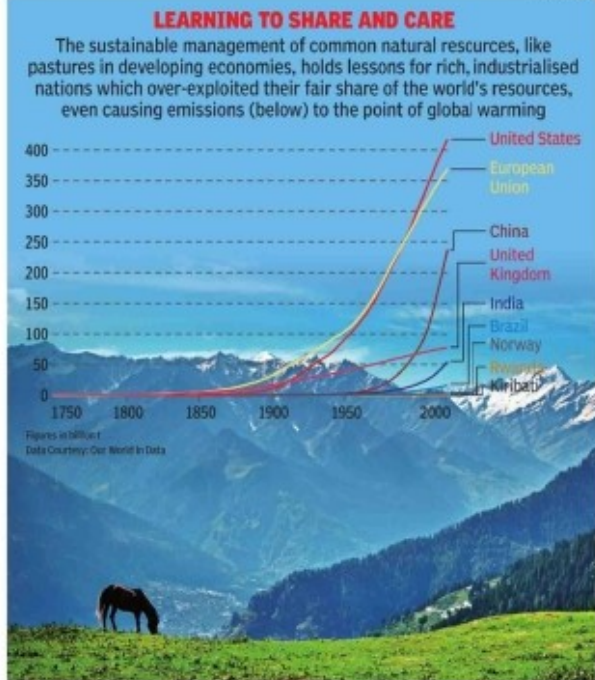
What does 'global commons' mean?

■ This refers to shared resources — the biggest issue around which this became a point of policy is the atmosphere. In 1991, Anil Agarwal and I wrote a report titled 'Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism'. This was based on the idea that we are all dealing with a common resource, namely the environment. Our understanding emerged from our research in India where we studied common property resources in villages, such as grazing lands and forests. One of our biggest learnings was that to sustainably manage such commons, you need rules and cooperation, based on fairness — if a farmer who rears goats, for instance, doesn't get a portion of the produce from the commons, they will let their goats graze there, thereby damaging shared resources. We argued that it was crucial to address the atmospheric commons with the same principles of equity and cooperation.

The global commons shows we are entirely interconnected — if one country has emitted, this impacts others. Without principles of fairness, we can't hope for cooperation and countries to cut emissions at the scale needed. Initially, the 'global commons' idea was only applied to the oceans, with the Convention on the Seas the first discussion around this. But the world didn't come together for a serious discussion here, the larger part of the oceans situated in the global commons still being unregulated, which is why the crises of plastics,



DEEP TRAGEDY: The globally shared seas are polluted by all but tended by few



over-fishing and oil pollution continue.

What do 'the tragedy of the commons' and 'natural debt' mean?

■ The first describes what ensues without shared management systems where everyone agrees to cooperate. Grazing lands, forests and common water bodies in villages are enduring examples — if we don't have a system of governance where everyone who is a member of the community (and this can be a collective of nations, residents in a colony or a village) agrees to abide by certain rules, there will be a tragedy of the commons where people will pollute ponds or over-use forests. Importantly, 'the commons' exist everywhere — they are also, say,

the roads everyone uses. These need rules too which should be adhered to with discipline, a system of management, deterrence and cooperation. This is predicated on fairness — if everyone using roads understands that the rules apply to all equally, it gives people confidence in the system. Deterrence must also be applied across the board — you can't penalise a small polluter, for instance, but let a big polluter get away. These rules must be founded on cooperation — for the global commons, nations must agree on how to preserve shared resources. Without that, tragedies unfold.

The concept of 'natural debt' emerged in the 1990s, explaining how some countries have overdrawn on their

share of the global commons. Consider the United States which occupies a huge portion of the world's carbon budget, way beyond its fair share. It has overdrawn on natural capital to build financial capital — but its natural debt, just like a financial debt, needs to be paid for.

Does this idea have relevance for climate equity and environmental justice?

■ Absolutely. Climate justice is fundamentally based on the management of the global commons. This is no moralistic issue — how the global commons has been treated must lie at the heart of cooperation among nations, guiding ambitious climate agreements now.

Going forward, what kinds of international pacts would be most effective in preserving the shared global commons?

■ We should revisit 1991's climate agreement. That was based on the principle of equity, saying there was a common but differentiated responsibility among countries and developed economies needed to act first while rules would be made for other nations, based on their use of the global commons. That was taken forward by the Kyoto Protocol, with the same principle recognising the responsibilities and contributions of countries, which would help set their emissions reduction targets.

However, this was inconvenient for some rich polluters in the world — hence, the 2015 Paris Agreement was reached



THIS WILL ECHO: Deforestation anywhere has ecological impacts across the planet

which essentially says everybody should cut emissions as much as they can but has no abiding rule-based governance. We urgently need this — consider the

THE COMMONS & YOU

■ We consume **coffee at home, work and for recreation** — but over-consumption is causing severe **habitat loss** and endangering 60% of the plant's species. Alongside, coffee's carbon footprint isn't light. With non-organic farming, processing, packaging, transport, etc., **one pound of roasted coffee produces 11 pounds of carbon** — ensure you're drinking **sustainably grown coffee**



■ **Water** is a shared resource — and often, tragically wasted. **A ten-minute shower takes over 1,00,000 glasses of drinking water**, even while water scarcity impacts four billion people worldwide. Ensure you **fix leaky faucets and control lawn watering times** — a **lighter diet will also help**, with a meat burger demanding over 1,600 litres of water

■ Everyone likes new clothes — but **85% of all textiles reach dumps each year**, one garbage truck of clothes being burned **each second**. Think before you discard — **making one cotton shirt takes 700 gallons**, enough for one person to drink eight cups per day for over three years

Research: UNEP, Harvard Business School, WWF

discussions on whether India should contribute to the loss and damage fund. This is unbelievable because India is not a major emitter — in terms of scale of emissions or its contribution to the total carbon emitted in the world, even till 2030, there is no way India can be on the list of big polluters. We need rule-based governance around the global commons, including an acceptance that a finite amount of CO₂ can be emitted into the world's atmosphere to keep temperatures under 1.5° C. This sum must be divided globally, based on nations' per capita, etc. It should then be understood that if a country has exceeded its share, it must cut by a certain amount and it can also trade and buy from other countries' share. That would allow for a proper rule-based system to help mitigate climate change.

The Tribune- 25- February-2023

21 Solan water sources may go dry by April 15

AMBIKA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SOLAN, FEBRUARY 24

The Jal Shakti Department (JSD) is bracing for long summer months with the state already witnessing higher than normal temperatures for the past few days. It has identified 21 potable water schemes in Solan division which could go dry by April 15.

The hill state remained 26

Scanty rain to blame | Dept braces for summer months

26% LESS PRECIPITATION

- Hill state witnessed 26% less than normal precipitation this winter
- Against 149.4 mm, it received 110.4 mm of rainfall
- Of 21 sources facing threat, 13 are in Dharampur block, 6 in Solan & 2 in Kandaghat



per cent rain deficient this winter season. As against the normal rainfall of 149.4 mm,

merely 110.4 mm was recorded. Though some rain could be received in the coming

weeks, scant rainfall has become a cause of concern.

Sumit Sood, Executive Engineer, JSD, Solan, said 21 potable water schemes could go dry, at least partially, by April 15, if no rain was received in the coming weeks. Of these, 13 schemes are in Dharampur block, six in Solan and two in Kandaghat. "To deal with the water scarcity, 22 new hand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

21 Solan water sources may...

pumps will be installed in areas identified as critical by the field staff, while 57 existing ones where the water level is found appropriate will be re-energised," said Sood. At least 11 places have been identified where tankers would have to be pressed into service to meet the water requirement. Besides, the JSD is procuring new motors for Giri water scheme which caters to Solan city, he said.

The work to augment water supply to 179 villages in Kasauli segment through the Giri river will be completed by July. This triple stage scheme will benefit a population of 45,458 and it will supply 7.5 million litres of water per day. Residents hope the scheme will help tide over the impending water crisis in summer months.

Business Line- 25- February-2023

Don't let water scarcity boil over

CONSERVE. Harvesting rainwater during monsoon by building storage capacities will help avert the impending water crisis

A Narayanamoorthy

There's a lot of talk about water scarcity in summer, but not so much when the southwest monsoon starts in June and the northeast, in October. The World Bank and the NITI Aayog have been putting out reports that India is going to face major problems due to water scarcity. So, is it right to talk about water scarcity only in summer season and forget about it in the rainy season? How can water scarcity be prevented during summer without increasing storage capacity during the rainy season?

As India's population continues to grow and with most people still engaged in agriculture, water scarcity can be all the more debilitating. According to a report by US-based World Resources Institute (2015), approximately 54 per cent of people living in India are already experiencing water scarcity.

Similarly, a World Bank report estimates that the average per capita water available will decline from 1588 cubic meters to less than half that by 2030. Another study on climate change and water by the World Bank in 2016 has warned that the countries with water scarcity could lose up to 6 per cent of their GDP by 2050. In such an intimidating scenario, shouldn't water conservation in the rainy season be discussed?

UNPRECEDENTED CHANGES

Unlike in the past, many unprecedented changes have been taking place in water storage. Although the number of large irrigation dams has increased from 236 in 1960 to 5,334 in 2020, the gross water availability of dams dwindles during summer.

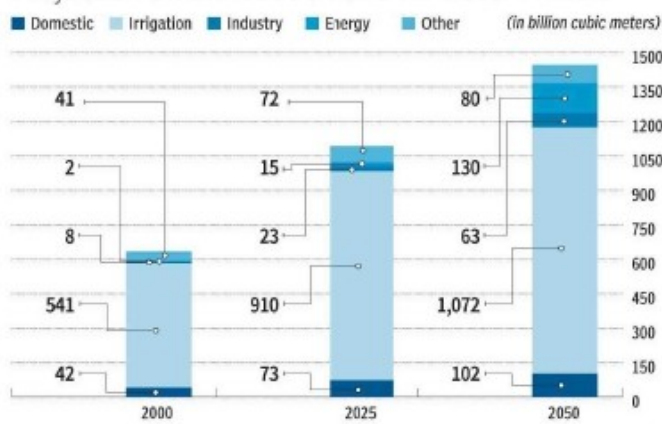
Studies show that perennial rivers like Ganga, Godavari and Krishna dry up in many places during summer. It is estimated that the level of groundwater in Ganga and Brahmaputra, which are said to be the largest groundwater rich river basins in the world, declines by 15-20 mm per year.

Owing to human and other interventions in the catchment area, the sediment deposit in the water storage area of major and medium dams has

The Ministry of Water Resources has estimated that the country's total water demand (1,447 bcm) may exceed the amount of water available for use (1,123 bcm) by 2050



Projection on annual demand for water in India



Source: Ministry of Water Resources (2008)

increased, which is reducing the total water storage. The 'Compendium of Sedimentation on Reservoirs in India', published by the Central Water Commission (2020), shows the water storage capacity of dams declines by 0.95 per cent per year due to silt deposit alone.

AGRICULTURAL DEMAND

The Ministry of Water Resources has estimated that the country's total water demand (1,447 bcm) may exceed the amount of water available for use (1,123

bcm) by 2050, due to the rapid economic development and increasing population (see chart).

On the other hand, due to income and market-related reasons, farmers have been cultivating more water-intensive crops in recent years. For example, between 1990-91 and 2020-21, the area under water-intensive sugarcane increased by 32 per cent, paddy by 6 per cent, and banana by 129 per cent. This has led to a rapid increase in the demand for water in recent times.

As the overall economic growth of our

country is still heavily dependent on the agriculture sector — which also accounts for about 90 per cent of the water consumed — India needs to address water scarcity more urgently than other countries. With growing scarcity of irrigation in many parts of the country over the past few years, farmers are facing many difficulties in cultivating crops; in some States, farmers have even committed suicides citing crop failure due to water scarcity. Such occurrences can affect the country's food security.

POINTERS FOR FUTURE

Considering the rapidly increasing demand for water and declining potential, steps must be taken to conserve every drop of rainwater. Thanks to the efforts taken by some individuals in Rajasthan, the small water bodies that have not been maintained for years have been brought under use now. Similar efforts need to be taken in every State to store water during the rainy season.

As predicted by the IPCC, the climate change is causing major changes in the rainfall pattern. Rainy days have decreased over the past few years, and in several parts of the country the amount of rainfall for a year falls in a day or two.

For example, in a single day, Mumbai received 950 mm of rainfall in 2005, Chennai 494 mm in 2015, and Mount Abu 770 mm in 2017. In November 2022, Sirkazhi in Tamil Nadu received 420 mm of rainfall in a single day. There are no provisions to store such rainwater now. Therefore, non-conventional approaches should be adopted while planning to construct new dams to store water.

The 5th Minor Irrigation Census mentions that India has a total of 6.42 lakh small water bodies. Due to lack of proper maintenance, their storage capacity has been declining. As a result, the irrigated area of tanks has declined sharply from 45.61 lakh hectares in 1960-61 to 16.68 lakh hectares in 2019-20.

Various government committees have pointed out that small water bodies have been encroached upon and destroyed at many places. Measures should be taken to maintain these water bodies on a sustained basis.

Considering the reduced water storage capacity of most dams due to silting, urgent action is needed to remove them through various means. If actions are not taken to harvest and store the rainwater during monsoon, water scarcity will become a perennial problem soon.

The writer is former full-time Member (Official), Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, New Delhi. The views are personal

Rashtriya Sahara- 25- February-2023



जल संकट

मनोज दुबे

जन-भागीदारी से निकलेगा हल

गर्मी का पारा चढ़ने के साथ पानी को लेकर संकट की स्थिति फिर से हर तरफ बढ़ती दिख रही है। वैसे भी लचर जल प्रबंधन और जल संचयन के प्रति उदासीनता के कारण विश्व के कई देश आज जल संकट का सामना कर रहे हैं। जलवायु परिवर्तन के कारण आने वाले समय में यह समस्या और गहरा सकती है। बात भारत की करें तो दुनिया में पीने योग्य जितना पानी है, उसका चार फीसद पानी भारत में है।

सरकारी आंकड़े बताते हैं कि वर्षा जल संरक्षण के लिए सरकारों द्वारा तमाम उपाय करने बावजूद हम बारिश के पानी से मात्र 300 मिलियन क्यूबिक मीटर ही रोक पा रहे हैं, जबकि वर्तमान में देश में 750-800 मिलियन क्यूबिक मीटर पानी की आवश्यकता है। 50 साल पहले हमारे देश में प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के लिए पांच हजार क्यूबिक मीटर पानी उपयोग के लिए उपलब्ध रहता था, लेकिन आज घटकर यह 1500 क्यूबिक मीटर रह गया है। यानी दुनिया में जिस देश में जल को जगदीश मानने की परंपरा थी, दुर्भाग्य से आज उस देश में ही सबसे ज्यादा कंटैमिनेटेड वाटर रिसोर्स हैं। हमें समझना होगा कि प्रकृति हमें एक चक्र के रूप में जल प्रदान करती है। हम इस चक्र का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा हैं और इस चक्र के थमने का अर्थ है, हमारे जीवन का थम जाना। प्रकृति के खजाने से हम जितना पानी लेते हैं, उसे वापस भी हमें ही लौटाना है। भूमिगत जल स्तर का लगातार नीचे खिसकते जाना भविष्य के लिए खतरे की घंटी है। इसलिए जरूरी है कि लोग प्राकृतिक जल संसाधनों को दूषित न होने दें और पानी को व्यर्थ न गवाएं। सरकारों के

साथ-साथ समाज को भी जल संकट के प्रति गंभीर होना होगा। अच्छी बात यह है कि केंद्र सरकार इस बात को गंभीरता से समझ रही है कि लोगों में जल एवं प्रकृति के संरक्षण के प्रति सामूहिक चेतना का निर्माण करके ही जल संरक्षण के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। आने वाली पीढ़ी को उसकी जरूरत के हिसाब से पानी मिल सके इसके लिए बेहद जरूरी है कि जल संरक्षण से जुड़े अभियानों में जनता को, सामाजिक संगठनों को और सिविल सोसाइटी को ज्यादा से ज्यादा जोड़ा जाए। स्वच्छ भारत अभियान इसका सबसे बड़ा उदाहरण है। स्वच्छ भारत अभियान में जब लोग जुड़े, तो उनके भीतर एक नई चेतना का संचार



हुआ। अब केंद्र के साथ ही सभी राज्य सरकारों को जन-भागीदारी की यही सोच जल संरक्षण के लिए भी जनता के मन में जगानी होगी। जल संरक्षण के लिए आज देश के प्रत्येक जिले में 75 अमृत सरोवर बनाए जा रहे हैं। विश्व में यह अपनी तरह का अनोखा अभियान है और अच्छी बात यह है कि इसमें जन-भागीदारी जुड़ी है। आने वाले समय में पेयजल की समस्या विकराल रूप धारण करे इससे पहले पॉलिसी लेवल पर भी पानी से जुड़ी परेशानियों के समाधान के लिए सरकारी नीतियों और ब्यूरोक्रेटिक प्रक्रियाओं से देश को बाहर आना होगा। जल संरक्षण के लिए केंद्र

सरकार द्वारा शुरू की गई 'अटल भूजल संरक्षण योजना' एक संवेदनशील अभियान है और इसे उतनी ही संवेदनशीलता से आगे बढ़ाने की जरूरत है। भूजल प्रबंधन के लिए बनाए गए प्राधिकरण सख्ती से इस दिशा में काम करें, ये भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा। इसके साथ ही अगर जलवायु परिवर्तन के खतरों से निपटना है तो भूजल रिचार्ज के लिए सभी जिलों में बड़े पैमाने पर वाटर-शेड का निर्माण करने के बारे में राज्य सरकारों को विचार करना होगा। इसके अलावा पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में स्प्रिंग शेड को पुनर्जीवित करने का जो कार्यक्रम शुरू किया गया है उस पर तेजी से काम करना होगा। जल संरक्षण के लिए वन क्षेत्रों को बढ़ाना सबसे ज्यादा जरूरी है। हाल के वर्षों में हमने देखा है कि 'कैच द रेन' अभियान ने लोगों के बीच एक आकर्षण तो पैदा किया है, लेकिन सफलता के लिए अभी बहुत कुछ करना जरूरी है। इसमें दो राय नहीं कि बीते कुछ दशकों में जल संरक्षण की दिशा में ऐसी गंभीरता नहीं दिखाई गई जैसी वर्तमान केंद्र सरकार द्वारा दिखाई जा रही है। इसका सबसे अच्छा पहलू यह है कि अब इस दिशा में ऐसी योजनाएं तैयार हो रही हैं, जिनसे आमजन को जोड़ा जा रहा है।

इस बार के केंद्रीय बजट में स्वच्छ भारत मिशन (ग्रामीण) के लिए 7192 करोड़ रुपये और जल जीवन मिशन के लिए 70,000 करोड़ का बजट आवंटित है। वहीं, देश की नदियों को जोड़ने के लिए 3,500 करोड़ रुपये का प्रावधान बजट में है। साथ ही अटल भूजल योजना के लिए 1000 करोड़, नेशनल हाइड्रोलॉजी प्रोजेक्ट के लिए 500 करोड़, प्रधानमंत्री कृषि सिंचाई योजना के लिए 8587 करोड़ आवंटित किए गए हैं। जल से जुड़े इन क्षेत्रों में मोदी सरकार द्वारा जारी भारी-भरकम राशि जल संकट से निपटने के प्रति उसकी प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाती है, लेकिन लोगों को भी इस दिशा में गंभीरता से सोचना होगा। जल की सुरक्षा किसी सरकार या संगठन का ही नहीं, बल्कि देश की 140 करोड़ लोगों का सबसे बड़ा दायित्व होना चाहिए।