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Deccan Chronicle
Deccan Herald

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Blitz

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RURAL WATER QUALITY

Lapses in monitoring

We need real time open-sourced spatial digital database of epidemiological assessments of water-borne diseases in the country

By Sriroop Chaudhuri and Mimi Roy

In India, potable water quality impairment is astoundingly diverse and ap-

(55%) of rural habitations examined in the last decade. Considering the habitations actually tested, at least one water source per habitation about 35% habitations appear contaminated. Apparently, only 3% rural habitations across the nation were fortunate to have all their water sources lab-tested.

Among habitations tested, Kerala topped the list with about 99% habitations found contaminated for at least one water source. For Kerala, the unequivocal champion of the nation's literacy drive,

cent MoDWS mandate, assure of nationwide water systems, hand-pumped wells, still form the core of RWSS. But with expanding human settlement, rising demand, climate change and increasingly deeper drilling, ground water contamination/salination events are becoming ever more common.

What's more, when polluted ground water is used for irrigation, it accentuates bioaccumulation potentials of toxic species in human tissues via consumption of contaminated crops. Sadly, even the

most common cause of contamination is arsenic, which is found in the ground water of many parts of the country. In West Bengal (22%), Assam (17%), Rajasthan (16%), Karnataka (15%), Andhra Pradesh (13%) and Odisha (12%), over 50% habitations are contaminated for at least one of their respective water sources.

Although official records show that people trained and FTKs established for national drink campaigns, the reasonably aimed at states districts, the

USGS, BGS, EPA, WHO, UNICEF offer hundreds of fellowships to study water quality impairment. But how many government fellowships

What we probably need is for health authorities of polluted areas to be advised on prime-time media slots. What we probably need is ample resources for our research communities around the country to investigate region-specific factors that influence water quality.

What we probably need is real-time open-sourced spatial digital database of epidemiological assessments of water-borne diseases, based on which efficient monitoring schemes can be devised at the grassroot level. But before all, what we absolutely need is realisation dawning at the crest of a pyramid so a few wheels can start turning at the grassroot level.

"Source: Official WOM&SP database. Data presented herein only reports lab-testing values, not that of FTKs. (The writers are assistant professors and assistant directors, Centre for Environment and Sustainable Human Development, DCE Global University, Sonapatna, Bihar.)"

water quality impairment is astoundingly diverse and ap-



Presently, the first states that over 50% habitations have been tested for water quality in at least one source. With Gujarat (92% habitations) leading the way. On the other hand, in J.P. Uttar Pradesh and Nagaland, only about 10% habitations appear fortunate enough to have at least one source tested. Overall, in 16 states, over 50% rural habitations lacked water testing (lab-based) during 2015-16 period, which gravely accentuates human health risks. Globally, India has always been a top runner for cases of arsenicosis (only after Bangladesh), and fluorosis.

Challenges in potable water quality monitoring draws from several interweaving factors such as weak regulation and enforcement of water quality standards, poor operation and management of RWSS, weak private sector accountability, lack of private sector involvement, sloppy disbursement of funds, lack of intersectoral collaboration and low awareness among rural population.

A burgeoning concern in water sector in India is over reliance on groundwater, the mainstay of RWSS. Even though re-

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'India ranks third in terms of large dams'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Roorkee (Uttarakhand), 19
February

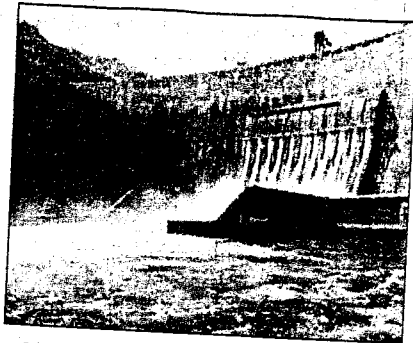
81-82

Over 400 delegates from across the country and abroad discussed ways to further strengthen the safety of dams during a two-day conference which culminated here today.

The third 'National Dam Safety Conference' focused on key challenges that are being encountered in the implementation of the Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP).

Dams have played a key role in fostering rapid and sustained agricultural and rural growth and development, which have been key priorities of the government of India since independence.

"The conference received an over-



whelming response with over 400 delegates attending and submission of over 70 technical papers from experts within and outside India. About 40 national and overseas organisations showcased their technologies, products and services through exposition organised at the conference venue.

"The professionals from the USA, Australia, Japan, the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, and Germany attended this event," an official release said.

Globally, India ranks third after China and the United States of America in terms of number of large dams with a total storage capacity of about 283 billion cubic meters.

"Close to 80 per cent of large dams have surpassed the age of twenty-five years, and many of them face the challenges of deferred maintenance.

"Many of these dams are considerably old (about 170 dams exceed the age of 100 years) and built in an era whose design practises and safety considerations do not match with the current design standards and the prevailing safety norm," the release said.

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Nitish demands decommissioning of Farakka barrage ST-22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Patna, 20 February

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar



today made a strong demand to the Centre to decommission the

Farakka barrage, saying it has no utility and causes floods in the state every year.

Kumar also protested against the proposed reservoir at Buxar and in Uttar Pradesh enroute Allahabad-Haldia waterway.

"We had made the demand to decommission Farakka barrage in West Bengal to the previous UPA government. I told this to Prime Minister Narendra Modi also that the Farak-

ka dam is causing heavy siltation in river Ganga which is a major reason for heavy floods every year in Bihar," Kumar told reporters.

"Many experts have also pointed out the disadvantages from Farakka dam and its original engineer from West Bengal involved in construction of the barrage had opposed it and was forced to leave the job," the chief minister said after a "Lok Samvad" (public dialogue) programme.

He said that during the previous UPA government of Manmohan Singh, the state had taken the then water resources minister Pawan Bansal to the barrage to show him how it was causing problem to Bihar and other riparian states.

"During flood last year when PM Narendra Modi had

talked to me I had told him about disadvantages accruing from Farraka dam and during a meeting with him explained this in detail also," Kumar said.

Flanked by state water resources minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lallan, the chief minister said that the barrage has been genesis of floods every year in Bihar.

Asked about West Bengal's stand on the dam, he said that state is also adversely affected by it but "I do not focus on what others say or is doing on this, since Bihar is affected by it grossly we are protesting against the barrage".

Kumar also protested the proposed construction of reservoir at Buxar enroute Allahabad-Haldia national waterways number I.

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यमुना की सफाई पर रिपोर्ट मांगी

नई दिल्ली। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने सोमवार को दिल्ली जल बोर्ड से राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में यमुना में अशोधित कचरा डालने से रोकने के लिए कार्यरत और निर्माणधीन सीवेज संयंत्रों (एसटीपी) का ब्योरा देने वाली रिपोर्ट दाखिल करने को कहा।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने डीजेबी के मुख्य अभियंता से विभाग के प्रमुख बी के गुप्ता से मंजूरी लेने के बाद इस संबंध में स्थिति रिपोर्ट जमा करने को कहा। मुख्य न्यायाधीश जेएस खेहर और न्यायमूर्ति डी वाई चंद्रचूड़ और न्यायमूर्ति एस के कौल की पीठ ने डीजेबी से पूरी परियोजना का ब्योरा और अभी तक हुई प्रगति के बारे में भी जानकारी देने को कहा है।

21-2-17