

World Water Day Celebration - 22nd March 2015
Dr. MCR HRD Institute, Road No.25, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad



Headline: The South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS), and the Government of Telangana - State Water Sanitation Mission (SWSM), Department Rural Water Supply & Sanitation (RWSS) celebrated the World Water Day on 22nd March 2015, at Dr. Mari Channa Reddy, Human Resource Development Institute, Hyderabad. This event was sponsored by WaterAid India.

Delegates: Delegates in this event were representatives from the state and district level government departments, Civil Society Organisations like NGOs, CBOs and academic institutions. Some of the key participants in the event were Dr. K. Tirupatiah, IFS Additional Director General, MCR HRD, Shri J. Vishwanath- Director – State Water and Sanitation Mission, Government of Telangana, Shri. D. Ronald Rose, IAS, Nizamabad District Collector, Mr. Nitya Jacob, Head of Policy, WaterAid, M. V. Ramchandrudu, CEO, WASSAN, Dr. Ramachandraiah, Professor, CESS and Dr. Anamika Barua, Executive Director, SaciWATERS.

The event: As the United Nations celebrated World Water Day on March 22, 2015 across the globe, SaciWATERS also celebrated this day at Hyderabad jointly with WaterAid and the Government of Telangana, State Water and Sanitation Mission.

World Water day is when the world comes together to celebrate water and deliberate upon the pertaining issues and solutions. This particular event focussed on increasing water scarcity and quality issue in Telangana state. The gathering saw experts from different disciplines within the water sector speak about the socio-economic and technical issues concerned with the quantity and quality of water. “Increasing water demand, declining quantum of water due to huge demand, increased contamination and exploitation have created physical scarcity of water. Water conflicts would now go beyond trans-boundary to the community and household levels” says Dr. Anamika Barua, Executive Director, SaciWATERS. The physical quantity of water is threatened due to the changing environmental and climatic conditions. Anthropogenic activities contaminate the available water adding to reduced availability of potable water. She urged for the need for



sustainability in the water resources development. In the inaugural address, Shri J. Vishwanathan, Director, State Water and Sanitation mission noted that 'Increased water demand which has to be dealt with meticulous planning'.

Further, highlighting the issue Shri K. Tirupathiah, Additional Director General, MCHRD Institute mentioned that 'Water is life' and 'if water sector suffers, it might paralyse all other sectors' says. Mr. Nitya Jacob, Head of Policy, WaterAid India also mentioned that "quality standards need to be set". He also emphasized on "regular operation and maintenance, protection of the available water supply, and importance of water budgeting". Shri Tirupathiah added that "water issue is beyond political, technical and physical issues, it's more of a multi-dimensional issue". Dr. Giridhar, Assistant Professor, JNTU supplemented that to truly address the challenges, behavioural and attitudinal changes are needed. In the time of paucity of good water management practices, Mr. Ramachandrudu, CEO of WASSAN shared a ray of hope through successful practices of water and sanitation management within few Nirmal Gram Puraskar villages in Telangana.

On this occasion, Dr. Aditya Bastola from SaciWATERs shared the findings of the baseline study on water quality across the rural areas of Nizamabad district and the assessment of the status of water quality testing State Laboratories in Telangana. It was found at households, most people prefer tube-well water. Bottled water usage was preferred more in urban settlements. Rural communities are seldom aware of water quality measures and the trained personnel's rarely tested the quality of water even when the water quality field testing kits were local provided.

Mr. Satheesh, Chief Chemist of the Telangana State Lab mentioned the lab testing protocol is available and the state labs are diligently working towards regular water quality testing. Shri Ronald Rose, Collector of Nizamabad district appreciated the study, said that the "success of this project lies in whether the consumer knows about his right to clean drinking water". He mentioned that the challenge lies in as to how these findings will be shared and taken up within villages. He categorised water as a high priority item and also informed about the new scheme "Hamara Jal Hamara Jeevan" which is a new scheme of the Government to make one sustainable district.



The day's deliberations highlighted that a sustainable way forward to resolve the challenges of scarcity and quality is also by pooling our resources and enabling a symbiotic relationship between the government and civil society towards joint action.