

Press Note

Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013

Tamilnadu is a severe water-scarce State in India, as the available annual per capita water resources is only 650 cubic metres as against the national average of 2000 cu.m. It is far less than the minimum annual per capita requirement of 1000cu.m. Its total water resources are only about 2% of that of the nation with a population share of about 6%. In the State, total surface water potential at 75% dependability is estimated as 16,769 M.cu.m. (592 TMC) and ground water potential as 22,380 M.cu.m.(853 TMC). In addition to this, the State receives about 7300 M.cu.m.(260TMC) from the neighbouring States based on earlier agreements made between them, which are also subjected to frequent disputes. So there is an imperative need for using the available scarce water resources more judiciously through efficient management of the river basins including local fresh water ecosystems duly considering the future demands also.

DHAN Foundation, Madurai convened a Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013 on 9-11 December 2013 at TNAU, Coimbatore along with National Ground Water Conference organised by WTC, TNAU. Tamil Nadu Water Week focused on **Water and Food Security** as theme. Tamil Nadu Water Week was joint event organized by MIDS, Chennai, WTC, TNAU, Coimbatore, and CWR, Anna University, Chennai. The First Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013 was convened at Coimbatore by the DHAN Foundation and WTC, TNAU with the following objectives as:

Objectives of the Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013:

- To sensitize the collective action by the various stakeholders working in the water resources of the state for addressing the future challenges of water scarcity and its implication on food production and security in Tami Nadu.
- To provide the space for the primary stake holders namely farming community to share their experiences of collective action at various regions of the State for water resources management and food security.
- To consolidate the learning's and action leads of the theme of the event and feed the same to India Water Week and World Water Week subsequent to the proposed event to be held at Delhi and at Stockholm respectively during the year 2014.

The first Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013 was inaugurated on 9th December 2013 along with the National Ground Water Conference in the presence of Dr.K.Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore, Er.Chandhrashekar, Chief Engineer, Central Water

Commission, Coimbatore, Mr.M.Vasimalai, Executive Director, DHAN Foundation, Madurai and Dr.B.J.Pandian, Director in charge, WTC, Coimbatore. Mr.M.P.Vasimalai shared on the purpose of Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013 and its significance and he ruled out that this is going to be regular event like India Water Week organised at Delhi and World Water Week organised at Stockholm and the deliberations of the TN Water Week every year would feed in to above water weeks. This year theme of the water week is Water and Food security. Dr.K.Ramasamy Vice Chancellor given presidential address and Er.ChandhraShekar Chief Engineer of Central Water Commission given key note address emphasising the importance of water related issues and efforts taken by the central water commission and government of India.

After the formal inauguration, the technical sessions of the National Ground Water Conference was happened for two days on 9th and 10th December 2013. There were about 178 papers with six major themes of the Ground Water management and Development have been discussed through simultaneous sessions with the facilitation of experts from the various fields of the subject.

As part of the Tamil Nadu Water Week 2013, the parallel seminar and event was conducted on 10th December 2013 with participants from Centre for Water, Anna University and Madras Institute of Development Studies. First half day, the CWR Chennai has given the session on various researches taken up by the centre. Dr.Sakthivadivel, Founder Director of CWR were given the lead address. During the afternoon session, The Madras Institute of Development studies took the lead and conducted the session on Water and Environmental Security in Tamil Nadu – A Critical Overview. Dr.S.Janakarajan, Affiliate Professor MIDS and Prof.Venkatachalam have given the presentations on theme of the environmental security of Tamil Nadu and the session was chaired by Dr.Kaarmegam, Dean, Rajalakshmi Engineering College.

The third day the DHAN Foundation conducted exclusive conference on Food and Water Security: Role of Small scale water bodies-Opportunities and Challenges. During the inauguration, Dr.S.Janagarajan given the key note address, Mr.M.P.Vasimalai & Mr.R.Vasavalingam given inaugural address and Dr.B.J.Pandian given special address. Then parallel session with papers presentation and experience sharing of farmers from different parts of the state has happened. The concluding event with the dignitaries for Tamil Nadu Water Week and National Ground Water Conference have happened at the end. 58 declaration from the discussions of Ground water management under six major themes and 21 declarations as part of the Tamil Nadu water week were shared at the concluding event. It was declared that next water week 2014 will be held at Madurai and it will be jointly organized by the four partner institutions namely CWR Anna University, Madras Institute of Development Studies, WTC of TNAU and DHAN Foundation and DHAN Foundation will anchor the event as organizing

secretariat. The theme would be announced soon. The website also launched for the event with link <http://www.tamilnaduwaterweek.org/>

The draft resolutions of the Tamil Nadu Water Week in details:

1. Conservation of existing small water bodies is an imperative approach for water and food security

- Tanks as a storage structures in all existing ones should be improved to adapt to climate change.
- Creation of dead storage in coastal district tanks support in ground water improvement as well as common uses by the community due to water scarcity period.
- Massive survey of cart tracts and field channel to acquisition of common water ways by Government.
- Massive project is needed to establishment of community well in tank command system.

2. Protecting Rivers in the State by the Government involving all the stakeholders is very essential

- Rivers are part and parcel of environmental security of the State and they need to be protected from 'hazardous' pollution, dumping wastes, sand mining and depletion.
- River based improvement plan will be taken by the WRO with involving different stakeholders.
- Government should / must undertake valuation of environmental accounting principles as a new concepts getting prominence now-a-days.

3. Water management for effective use must be a new paradigm shift in stakeholders' approach

- Focusing micro irrigation techniques in agriculture as mandatory.
- Water budgeting at micro watershed or village level.
- Water management practices should be followed by introducing less water consuming or drought tolerant varieties in agriculture.
- Participatory hydrological monitoring and water budget for crop planning.
- Water management expert should be there in block level and monitor the water budget on different cropping system.
- Micro irrigation technique should be mandatory as a regulation by the Government for all groundwater users in agriculture.

4. Water Reuse / Recovery must be introduced for active practice and implementation

- A law should be enacted that to form the committee in and around of factories to monitor and control the effluent of factory waste in to water bodies and agricultural land.
- Reuse of wastewater at local bodies like village panchayat or panchayat union through DEWATS model.

5. New measures for incentivising farmers to involve crop production enhancement

- Offering the interest free loan for crop productivity and enhancement up to Rs.1-2 lakhs similar to Andhra Pradesh Government.
- Focusing on small millet production and consumption for ensuring the food and nutrition security.
- Reorganisation of land less farmers who are engaged in lease cultivation should be considered in ongoing Government scheme.