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‘India will face water scarcity by 2025’

Special Correspondent

Fifty countries in the world will face stress or scarcity of water by 2025 and India is one of them. While half of India faces physical scarcity, the remaining half faces economic scarcity of water resulting in sale, Professor of the Department of Geo-Engineering of Andhra University P. Jagadeeswara Rao has said.

Speaking on ‘Water resources: issues and challenges- a geospatial perspective’ at Andhra University Research Forum’s programme on Tuesday, he said the country lacked a coherent water policy. The per capita consumption came down to 1820 cubic metres in 2001 from 5,177 cum in 1951. Eighty per cent of the diseases were water-borne and every week 47,000 children were dying owing to diseases caused by contaminated water.

Prof. Jagadeeswara Rao said as against 11 per cent domestic

consumption in developed countries in India it was only 5 per cent. However, free supply of water was not possible in view of costs involved in pumping, treatment, and delivery. Contamination of water was a big problem with industrial effluents in cities and use of fertiliser in agriculture in rural areas, he said. The country was also facing increasing scarcity with lakes and rivers drying up, saltwater ingress and groundwater depletion. Water laws and audit were yet to be in place.

Conservation stressed

Prof. Jagadeeswara Rao stressed the need for conservation stating that the forest cover had slipped from 35 per cent in 1947 to 21 per cent now. Deforestation would cause soil erosion and prevent precipitation required for rainfall. Conservation through various means like check-dams, gulley plugging and rainwater harvesting needed to be taken up.

Prof. Jagadeeswara Rao said nano technology was said to have the potential to desalinate one litre saltwater at a mere one paisa but when it would become a reality was not yet known. Andhra University College of Engineering Vice-Principal P.S. Avadhani also spoke. Chief Convener of

the forum K.R. Rajani said water-related issues came into sharp focus with bifurcation. Convener S. Adishesu and co-convener S. Jhansi Rani participated.