

Seventeenth Lok Sabha

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Title: Need to take radical steps to address water scarcity in the country.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Hon. Speaker, Sir, a new trend has come to our notice that urbanisation is often seen as synonymous with India's economic growth. But it is now reeling under shortage of water. Many big cities are already mired in deep water crisis or heading towards it. Mindless exploitation of groundwater has almost exhausted what could have been used as an option in times of crisis.

In 2018, a Report of NITI Aayog has stated that 21 major cities in India with a population of 100 million people would reach zero groundwater level by 2020. Further, continuous movement of people towards urban cities in search of employment opportunities have been aggravating the problem of water scarcity in urban areas.

In rural India, most villages do not have any civic supply of water and depend exclusively on groundwater. Rampant use of tube wells for irrigation has led to serious depletion of groundwater. Discriminate use of fertilizers and pesticides in farming is polluting both ground and surface water sources. It is true that as of now the poor bear the brunt of water shortages in our country. But the time is not far when people from well-to-do families will also face this problem. Unless steps are taken, India water management is bound to lead us towards a catastrophe of unimaginable and probably irreversible proportions.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to take radical steps to address the issue of water scarcity in our country. The Government at all

levels must come together to promote water conservation and prevent contamination of both ground water and surface water.

At this juncture, I would also like to request you one more thing. A decision is being taken by the Business Advisory Committee to club both water management and crisis with flood. This should be discussed separately so that relevant Ministries should answer it when the debates take place. But this is a very acute problem which India is going to face in 2020. NITI Aayog has brought it to the notice of the country.

I urge upon this House to deliberate upon this and also the Government to take adequate steps to restore our water bodies and ground water to the extent so that we can tide over the situation. Thank you, Sir.

माननीय अध्यक्ष: श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह को श्री भर्तृहरि महताब द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है ।