

Women spend over 200 million hours every day to fetch water from distant place

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The Vice President of India, Shri **M Venkaiah Naidu today called for a nationwide campaign on water conservation and urged each citizen to become a water warrior in saving every drop of water.** He said that it was time for everyone to realize the gravity of the situation and adopt water-saving measures at the earliest or else the world would face severe water shortage in the future.

Speaking virtually at the Mission Paani's Jal Pratigya Diwas event organized by News 18 and Harpic, the Vice President stressed the need for taking collective action to avert a major water crisis. Shri Naidu lauded the initiative by News 18-Harpic and called it a step in the right direction. He also complimented them for observing Jal Pratigya Diwas.

The Vice President said that only 0.5% was available for drinking out of the 3 % of freshwater that was available on earth. "India has more than 18% of the world's population but has only 4% of the world's renewable water resources," he added.

Mentioning a UN report, the Vice President said around 2.2 billion people currently did not have access to safely managed drinking water, and around 4.2 billion, or 55% of the world's population, were currently living without safely managed sanitation.

Drawing attention to the adverse effects of water scarcity on women and children, the Vice President said, "Women spend over 200 million hours every day to fetch water from distant places. Sharing the burden with their mothers, globally children spend 200 million hours each day for collecting water."

Pointing to some of the factors leading to water crisis the Vice President said, "Rapid urbanization, growing population, expanding industrial and agricultural activities, indiscriminate drilling of borewells, climate change and careless use of water are some of the factors leading to water shortages."

Expressing his concern over water scarcity in India, the Vice President said, "The water situation in India is also worrisome and we cannot remain complacent by adopting a 'chaltha hai' attitude."

Shri Naidu said that it would take many pledges to turn the tide.

He appealed to take a pledge to protect every pond, every river, every spring and every brook from plastic bags, detergents, human waste, garbage and industrial effluents. He urged the farmers to adopt economical irrigation methods, manufacturing units to commit to saving water and people to turn off taps after use. "Conscious efforts need to be made at the household level and by communities, farmers, institutions, industries, and local bodies to supplement the efforts of governments and non-governmental bodies in promoting water conservation," he added.

He advised taking sustained measures to prevent pollution of water bodies, contamination of groundwater and proper treatment of domestic and industrial wastewater. "Micro-irrigation practices like drip and sprinkler systems have to be promoted in a big way for efficient use of water for agriculture," he added.

Shri Naidu called upon scientists and researchers to solve the challenge of water shortage by exploring innovative methods like desalination technology, collecting dew and wastewater recycling.

Recalling the recent call given by him for 'Jal Andolan' on water conservation, the Vice President lauded the government for taking several initiatives towards saving water. He said, "The Namami Gange Programme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Atal Bhujal Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission and Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) are laudable initiatives."

He also expressed his happiness over the creation of Jal Shakti Ministry, to give an impetus to integrated management of water resources, promote water conservation, recharge, re-use and ensure water security.

Appreciating the steps taken by some of the states towards solving the water crisis, the Vice President complimented Meghalaya for its water policy and Goa for achieving 'Har Ghar Jal' target. He suggested that every state must have a water policy. He also lauded Gurugram in Haryana for making rainwater harvesting a must for all and Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh for achieving a rainwater recharge of 3.57 TMC of water.

Complimenting News 18 for this initiative, Shri Naidu hoped that every news channel, newspaper and media organization will take such initiatives so that the message reaches people easily. He also wanted the icons from cinema, sports, political, social or other fields to lend a helping hand to turn water conservation into a people's movement.

The Vice President complimented music wizard, AR Rahman for his composition of Paani Anthem and noted lyricist Prasoon Joshi for penning down its lyrics.

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Kishore Ajwani, Managing Editor, News 18, Shri Anand Narasimhan, Executive Editor, News 18, officials, teachers and school children were among those who participated in the virtual event.

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