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Call to create awareness on water conservation

Staff Reporter

Projects fail because of vested interests: official

Thrissur has 4.5 lakh wells for 6 lakh households

Rainwater structures need to be well-maintained

Thrissur: Unrealistic policies and people's indifference are the major hurdles in the way of water conservation, Nivedita P. Haran, Principal Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management, has said.

Delivering the keynote address at the Southern Regional Forum of Water Community at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration here on Tuesday, she said that many projects failed because of the vested interests of policy makers and implementing agencies.

“Policy makers seldom go out and study grassroots problems or meet target groups. As a result, projects do not yield desired results. Hardly any project finishes on time. Nobody is accountable for the indefinite delay,” Ms. Haran said.

She said that a change in attitude, policies and implementation process was needed to achieve the goals in water resources projects.

Along with the conservation of water bodies, optimum utilisation of water too should be ensured, she said. Major drinking water projects do not cover even 10 per cent of target groups, Ms. Haran noted.

Speakers at the meeting stressed on the need to create awareness about water conservation.

Most often, rainwater structures had been maintained just to satisfy building rules, they noted.

Indiscriminate sand-mining and pollution have sounded the death knell of many rivers. River management funds are being used to construct roads leading to rivers, and this in turn helped the sand mafia reach river banks easily.

Ponds, wells and paddy fields were being filled by the land mafia resulting in floods and water-logging, the meeting observed.

Speaking on the district administration’s ambitious project Mazhpolima, a participatory well recharge programme, District Collector V. K. Baby pointed out that the objective of the project was to enhance health and welfare of the people through improved access to safe drinking water.

The community-driven project had given thrust to recharging groundwater table for sustainable water supply, he said. The district has about 4.5 lakh wells for six lakh households. The total cost of about Rs. 92 crore would largely be met by the households themselves, the collector

said.

The District Administration was holding the two-day meeting of the water community in association with the United Nations Solution Exchange.

The UN's Solution Exchange initiative builds Communities of Practice by connecting people with similar concerns and interests through email groups and face-to-face interactions.

The objective is to harness the country's vast knowledge pool.

Water is one of the eleven Communities of Practice established by the UN's Solution Exchange. Therambil Ramakrishnan, MLA, inaugurated the forum.

Scientists and activists from different parts of the country are taking part in it.