

## Conclusion

18. India is not a water deficit country, but due to severe neglect and lack of monitoring of water resources development projects, several regions in the country experience water stress from time to time. Further neglect in this sector will lead to water scarcity during the coming decades. It is, therefore, necessary to prevent this crisis by making best use of the available technologies and resources to conserve the existing water resources, convert them into utilisable form and make efficient use of them for agriculture, industrial production and human consumption.

19. Imposing regulatory measures to prevent the misuse of water and introducing rewards and punishment to encourage judicious use of water, will be helpful towards conserving water. Awareness and orientation of all the water users to change their lifestyle to conserve water, can help the country to tide over the water crisis in the future. The challenge is manageable provided we have favorable policies and mechanisms to persuade our people to change their lifestyle. The need of the hour is to recognise the enormous gravity of water related problems and their consequence on all aspects of human life and existence, which are already becoming apparent. Unless solutions are found at the micro and macro levels simultaneously, in a country the size of India, it is unlikely that this serious and looming threat will be resolved.

20. Apart from the crisis in the Himalayan River basins in India, there is a parallel threat in the countries of China, Nepal, Bangladesh and even Pakistan. Lack of water will mean food shortages in these countries, which India will have to contend with on a regional level. Workers who have lost their farmland in Bangladesh or Nepal will likely migrate to India, causing a serious security threat to the country. Any instability in these countries will lead to

further instability in the region, of which India is the most prominent entity. Most importantly, since all the Indian Himalayan Rivers are transboundary in nature, the problem will not be truly solved unless the solution is also transboundary. Long term solutions will be found only through joint action and collaboration. Even if the water crisis in somehow staved off in India, unless it is resolved in Nepal or Bangladesh as well, it is not likely to matter. When discussing water problems in India, policy makers often speak in nebulous terms, implying that the problem is not immediate or already in our midst. This mindset will first and foremost have to change, as the problems are already here, and their consequences have already started to affect Indians across the country.

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