

## **World Water Day celebrated in VFSTR**

World Water Day grandly celebrated in VFSTR on 22<sup>nd</sup> March organized by the NCC cadets under the supervision of the NCC coordinator, Mr. Siva Koteswara Rao and other faculty members. NCC cadets and about 100 students took out a rally from A Block to U Block. NCC instructors from the battalion and other faculty members spoke on the occasion at the Sravanthi Seminar Hall.

**World Water Day (WWD)** is celebrated on 22 March every year to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The United Nations General Assembly initiated this response on 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day.

When we neglect our ecosystem, it results into environmental damage and climate change. Degradation of vegetation, soil, rivers and lakes due to these changes further leads to floods, drought and water pollution.

The theme for WWD, 2019 is, “**Leaving no one behind**”.

This theme is a refabrication of 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 6(SDG 6). This goal focuses on the water availability without depriving anyone.

People without safe water are struggling to survive in today’s world. Women, children, refugees, indigenous and disabled get unnoticed and discriminated for accessing safe water.

**Safe water-** it is simplified manner for ‘safely managed drinking water service’ water that is purified (free from contamination), accessible on the premises and available when needed.

Having safe water is a basic human right which must be sufficiently available, accessible, affordable for personal and domestic use to everyone. This is important for public health and hence, crucial for a developed, stable and prosperous world.

To ‘Leave no one behind’, the emphasis must be towards including marginalized and ignored people. Laws and regulations must recognize the right to water for all which is possible when sufficient funds are fairly and effectively aimed at those who need it the most.

### **Facts-**

- 2.1 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services worldwide.
- 1 in 4 primary schools have no drinking water which forces students to use unsafe water.

- More than 700 children under the age of 5 years die from diarrhea because of unsafe water and poor sanitation.
- In **eight out of ten** households with water off-premises, women and girls are responsible for water collection.
- Globally, over 80% of the wastewater generated by society flows back into the environment without being treated or reused
- Agriculture currently accounts for 70% of global water withdrawals mostly for irrigation, industry takes 20% of the total water, the remaining 10% goes to domestic use and the proportion used for drinking water is much less than 1%.
- Approximately, 4 billion people experience severe water scarcity for at least a month every year.
- By 2030, 700 million people could be displaced by severe water scarcity.
- By 2050, the world's population will have grown by an estimated 2 billion people and global water demand could be up to 30% higher than today.

**Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)\*:** It is an initiative of Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs with the mission to focus on water supply, sewerage facilities, storm water drains to reduce flooding, creating and upgrading green spaces and other facilities in the urban areas.

**Central Water Commission\*\*** acts to promote integrated and sustainable development and management of India's water resources by using state-of-art technology and competency with coordinating all stake holders.

### **World water day — not a day too soon**

India's stressed water sector requires focused policy attention and sustained follow-through action. The Mihir Shah committee report, which gauged the extent of the crisis, specifically stated that if present usage patterns continue, as much as half the demand for water nationwide will remain unmet by 2030. Already, the ground reality is of falling water tables and the drying up of rivers, in the backdrop of more variable rainfall patterns and rising water demand.

The way forward is to sustainably manage our water resources, in the face of agrarian distress and rapid urbanisation. There's the pressing need for new institutional mechanism and governance structures to address rising turbulence in the water economy. The Mihir Shah report called for a National Water

Framework Law as an essential corrective to Common Law principles, so that the state at all levels holds water resources in public trust for the community. Our water usage levels for major crops are two to four times the global norm, which

need to be proactively reduced. The draft Water Framework Bill calls upon states to augment water security with incentives for reducing water intensity, heightened diffusion of drip irrigation, conservation methods and active groundwater recharge.

There is a clear crisis of sustainability as 60% of the country's districts face serious groundwater over-exploitation, even as 80% of our drinking water and two-thirds of irrigation needs are met by groundwater. India has to add water to the urgent agenda of environmental action that has suffered neglect far too much for far too long. And this cannot be done by the ministry of water acting on its own. It must be a concerted national effort in which everyone joins in and every ministry has an identified role.