

WATER SCARCITY MAY LEAD TO WAR

It is almost impossible to imagine that the total area water on earth's surface is about 114,361 kilometers but this immense quantity is of little use as 96.5% of it is brackish. Methodology for desalinating is beyond the capacity of 95% of the countries. And it is also not possible to tow ice burghs from the solar regions to the arid regions of the world. We may expect future water shortages of life threatening magnitude in many parts of the world.

Under the auspices of the UNESCO a global effort to apprise the water was launched during the International hydrological decade (1964-74) and it was inferred in the world water conference at Hague that there is enough water but not yet not clearly usable water for the needs of some 330 crore people (37% of the world population) will be confronted by serious shortages of water 2025 because only about 29% of is as fresh water. For human use of drinking hygiene and other purposes like consumer goods. During the 20th century human population grew from 116 crore to 600 crore to share a maximum of 42 lack cubic kilometers of fresh waters which is impossible to increase significantly. Every additional increase in human population reduces the amount of water available for each person on earth.

An inhabitant of the cool temperate zones like Europe, North America, requires three to four liters of water to satisfy his physical and psychological needs per day. People living in hot climates requires six or more liters per day. For oil/industrial worker working in deserts of West Asia or North Africa and similar areas about twelve liters are adequate But if the consumer takes beer instead of water the figure becomes 720 liters as about 60 liters of fresh water are required for production of one liter of beer. A Scholar who quenches his thirst of knowledge with three books for one month weighing one kilogram each has to accept the responsibility for consuming 750 liters of fresh water as about 250 liters of water are required for production of one kilogram of paper. It is perhaps alarming to learn that about 20,000 to 30,000 liters of water are required for manufacture of one average size of saloon car., especially when there are about 80 crores of cars running our planet. Even more alarming is that tremendous quantities of fresh water are required to ensure adequate food for the growing global population. Depending upon the local climatic conditions on an average 800 to 1500 liters of fresh water are consumed to produce one kilogram of cereal for food.

The average daily consumption of water per person varying from 160 liters in Germany to about 250 liters in United States reflect only the measurable household consumption giving a false picture of the actual total quantity of water consumed: in reality goes far beyond daily household use.

According to the status given by UNESCO demand for freshwater for household use accounts for only 7.5% of the total consumption of about 24.5% for the industry. Agriculture in the roll as produce of food consumes

about 68%. Despite the worldwide efforts to encourage the economical use of water the unbridled growth of population especially in developing countries is likely to make water shortage **the most serious in near future.**

According to guidelines issued by WHO (World health organization) a human being on a average needs about 2470 liters per day for food, hygiene, education, industrial production and other purposes to maintain living standards without endangering health. The average total consumption per head varies between 3,000 cubic meters in United States and 2000 to 2500 cubic meters in other developed countries with a renewable water supply of 2,000 to 2,500 liters per person per annum, are regarded as non critical. Serious problems arise when supplies fall below 1,500 cubic meters per person (Water stress levels), African continent has the largest number of countries living under water stress levels.

Firstly the fresh water resources are not equally distributed throughout the world. Secondly fresh water that comes from rain, snowfall, and melting of glaciers rarely stays where it is needed most. The nature of water and its physical properties cause it to run off evaporate and sleep to unreachable depth. The humans themselves burden the fresh water with industrial and organic wastes rendering it unusable for drinking and hygiene.

About 40% of the world population lives in regions fed by rivers which flow through two or more countries are getting burdened by political conflicts largely attributed to issues over the sharing of water. Within our own country (i) Karnataka on one side Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh on other side (ii) Punjab on one side, and Haryana, Rajasthan etc on other side are having political confrontation for quite irrespective of the fact which party or collation is running the government in any of these states. At the international level areas with potential armed conflicts are (i) **West Asia i.e Golan Heights, involving Israel, Syria and Jordan etc.** In South Asia between **India and Pakistan over the sharing of waters of the Indus system.** Pakistan's interest in annexing Jammu & Kashmir State is **more for having full control of the rivers Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rather than the muslim majority areas.** In the east between India and Bangla Desh for sharing the waters of **Ganga, Bhramputra rivers and their tributaries.** I am not sounding alarm bells but China if at any stage will **dam and divert the waters of Indus, Satluj or Brahamputra what fill be fate of northern parts of the Indian sub continent.** In the African continent Egypt, sudan Ethopia and scores of other countries are likely to get involved in armed conflicts over the sharing of the limited resources of water.

Unlike wars for gold, silver oil opium, **wars for water have not taken place till now but are most likely to take place in near future.**

By .M.M.Munshi

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