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Special Issue: GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY- WITH AN EYE TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A NOTE FROM THE ORGANIZERS' DESK
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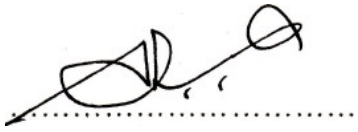
The twentieth century saw groundwater abstraction across the world peaking enormously. This was primarily driven by population growth, technological and scientific progress and economic development. By far the largest share of the additional volume of water that has been abstracted has been allocated to irrigated agriculture. The surge in groundwater development for irrigation started in Italy, Mexico, Spain and the United States as far back as the early part of the century and continued in South Asia, parts of the North China Plain, parts of the Middle East and in northern Africa during the 1970s, and this still continues unabated today. The global groundwater abstraction rate has tripled over the last 50 years and still is increasing at an annual rate of between 1% to 2%. Widespread abstraction has resulted in depletion as well as pollution that have posed a daunting challenge in providing safe, sustainable drinking water to future generations. Today the world is at a great degree of peril due to this unbridled abstraction for which the world has no other option but to move towards groundwater management from groundwater exploitation. This is critical for providing a sustainable platform for the future. Participatory approach to particularly groundwater resource management by involving government agencies, users and stake holders is very important for water policy guidelines in our country and more so in the district of Murshidabad where Arsenic contamination in the groundwater is unbridled. Today groundwater has become an interdisciplinary subject. Professionally, it is no longer confined in the realm of hydro-geologists and engineers; it is also attracting economists, sociologists, ecologists, climatologists, law enforcers, institutional experts, communication specialists and others. Analysing groundwater from these different perspectives puts it in a wider context, resulting in changing views on this natural resource. Today it is no longer about mere awareness generation but active involvement by people from all walks of life to check this slide. For this a collaborative program involving regional and international scientists as well as people from the community level needs to be envisaged for groundwater sustainability measures. Sustainable management plans are warranted based on holistic understating of the aquifer system. This plan should incorporate both the supply side and demand side management options. The onus is on us to provide our future generations with clean and safe drinking water to ensure their existence.



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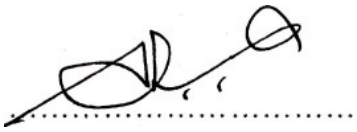

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