

Focus On Water: Abdul Rahman Mohammed

by Smart Water & Waste World | Feb 2, 2022

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Abdul Rahman Mohammed, CEO, Sahara Industry

India: Until a few years ago, we were not talking about water the way we do it now. The water scenario has changed drastically in the last decade from abundance to scarcity. The liberalization process brought about the growth of our economy, our population, our prosperity; but it also led to extracting more natural resources from the planet including higher levels of water extraction and use while also creating more pollution with these resources. The surface water availability per capita in India in 1991 was 2309 cubic meters which have been reduced to 1486 cubic meters by 2021. About 36% reduced in three decades and estimated to reduce further to only 1191 cubic meters in next less than three decades.

The government of India being aware of the situation has formulated the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development which envisages the transfer of water from water surplus basins to water-deficit basins to improve the availability of water in

the scarce regions. It also formulated guidelines for the States to adopt suitable measures to local conditions to promote recharge of groundwater with a focus on rainwater harvesting and water conservation measures.

The increasing water demand and falling per capita availability, water use and energy efficiency, deterioration of water quality, declining of available resources, loss of surface storage facilities, increasing conflict for water, inefficient use in irrigation, overexploitation, and depletion of groundwater resources, increasing water pollution and soil salinity in irrigated lands, lack of management of resources, aging and dilapidated water infrastructure in the country, untreated wastewater accumulation, ignorance of used water resources potential, significant change in usage pattern combined with urbanization and industrial growth has taken a big toll on the water sector in the country.

The Union Budget for the year 2022-23 is presented today and I am happy that the Honorable Finance Minister has allocated good resources towards water infrastructure development in the country. Rs.60,000 Crore budget for providing clean drinking water to 3.8 Crore additional rural households in 2022-23 under the flagship scheme of JalJeevan Mission will bring a change in the lives of people. We at Sahara Industry are very hopeful that the issue of drinking contaminated and polluted water will be resolved with proper water treatment facilities being installed at all village and gram panchayat levels as well as in the individual households. The budget allocation under Swachh Bharat Mission, Clean Ganga, AMRUT Scheme, and River Interlinking projects will help in developing robust water and wastewater treatment and management facilities at various levels.

The allocations towards Water Supply, Irrigation, Sanitation, and Rural Infrastructure development will translate into enhanced economic activities in the rural heartland. It will also help India in attending to the water crisis situation and making clean drinking water available to people in the country.

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