

## ZERO DAY

I submitted a case study for Indian plumbing today (IPT), published by Indian Plumbing Association, titled "Beginning of the end" and the same was published by the World Plumbing Council (WPC) in their book "Environmental Aspects of Plumbing". That was in 2013, and now after only 5 years, we are having serious water issues. It is indeed scary that, water which was taken as granted and given the least priority is now becomes a major issue involving more and more areas in India and abroad.

The case study highlighted and warned that unless we take water management and conservation on war footing, we will be seeing the end. Recently in June 2019, we are having alarming situation in south Indian city of Chennai, other metros and more than 350 municipal corporations are helpless and are able to provide water once in 3 days, for an hour, as reported in times of India.

The case study done by a news channel, shows worse situation in rural areas. The majority of low income or poor population is involved in arranging few litres of water every day, walking long distances to procure water. The burden is on helpless women and children as men are involved in earning their daily wages, and many a times, they also join in losing their earnings. The rural areas had no piped water supply, but had nearby wells, ponds or river streams which gave them enough water and ponds were a boon in summer months. The wells became dry due to fall in water table; the ponds were taken up by land mafia, and in many cases helped by the authorities in the name of development. There was an entire lake destroyed, so that a hospital can be built. The cities many of them had mega IT projects, malls etc mushrooming at super speed and one felt proud as how the country is progressing, but the overall thinking of water requirements and sources like ground water, water bodies as well as Rivers was kept at a backburner. It will soon become essential to give permission to take up a project, only when there is enough water available.

I had in my last case study, had written that "one must remember that there is enough water to satisfy everybody's need, but not enough to satisfy everybody's greed. It seems that this statement is now to be modified, as there is not enough water for all.

Lack of proper water conservation as well as infrastructure has delayed the solution to the problem despite spending huge amounts, be it laying of pipelines, or river cleaning etc. In a recent report, by a news channel shows billions being spent in one state, Madhya Pradesh in central India, with no relief to common man, same is the case with rivers, which were worshipped like gods, have now become waste drains. We are accelerating the "End".

Blame game goes on, but the scenario is getting bad to worse. The cities wherein water table has gone too low and there is not enough water have resorted to tankers, which transport water from bore wells located away from cities; they are fast boring at a feverish speed and further destroying the ground water.

When the same was objected by a court order, the tanker association went on a strike, and as authorities were helpless, and in order to avoid law and order situation turned blind eye and the demand for tankers is increasing day by day. Lot of hotels and construction sites are running on tanker water. Few years back, it was the commercial institutions which were buying water from tankers, but nowadays people residing in houses, Group housing

complexes, urban slums etc are all buying water. The city of Gurgaon, adjacent to New Delhi and other towns are ending up with huge part of their income on buying water from tankers as they are helpless. There is law and order issue when tankers supply water to urban slums as there are mad rushes to fill up a bucket of water. The supply is much less than the demand, but has anybody thought how is this going to be in the future?

As India population growth is increasing, the pressure on agriculture is high. This has put extreme demand on water, and unplanned boring is done, resulting in dangerous levels of water table as well as water contamination. The experts put agriculture consumption at 75 to 80 %, and now we are seriously planning, how to grow with minimum water. The think tanks have proposed that even 10 to 15 % saving in this field will be very helpful to save ground water.

The present government, is serious to be on realistic mode, has formed a new ministry for water, known as "Jal shakti".

There is a project to have piped supply to all, but where is the water to feed these pipes? The Indian Government has to plan with the Actual availability of water. We have to now respect mother nature, and give full stress on reviving ponds and water bodies, start worshipping rivers, and do not take water for granted.

The Delhi jal board is planning to revive ponds and make huge man-made reservoir (filled up with monsoon rains) on a large piece of land in outer Delhi. This can take care of water needs in summer months for entire Delhi. Hope this comes out successfully. Also, a project of harnessing water from nearby lakes (Renuka, kishau and lakhwar in neighbouring states) is to see the light of the day without further delay. Water is a national resource and does not belong to a particular state and as a national asset, interstate claims to be settled with fair share for all. Another aspect which industry has shown, to reuse water, as 90% of water used goes as waste water. Delhi jal board now is putting up mega sewage treatment plants and is selling not only treated water, but also untreated waste water at nominal cost. Fast track of these types of projects is need of the hour. Awareness by way of water conservation, reuse, harvesting etc is being propagated by Indian plumbing association on pan India basis. We hope to now minimize the damage already done to mother nature and have taken pledge to "I save water."