



विकास प्रबंधन संस्थान  
Development Management Institute

## Sixth DMI Foundation Day Symposium

February 13-14, 2020



The Development Management Institute (DMI) organised its Sixth Foundation Day Symposium in collaboration with UNICEF, on February 13 & 14, 2020 at Bihar Museum, Patna. The theme for the Symposium was “Water Governance: Issues and Challenges”.

Today, the entire ecosystem is endangered because of unsustainable demand for clean water, the encroachment of water bodies for construction and other economic activities and alarmingly increasing pollution in remaining existing water resources. Against this backdrop, the development discourse in the Symposium centred around four subthemes –

1. **Fostering Community participation in water governance**
2. **Issues in groundwater use and availability**
3. **Building resilience in wetland conservation and governance**
4. **Reimagining drinking water governance**

The Symposium brought together scholars, researchers, policymakers, practitioners and innovators together to deliberate and share actionable solutions to address problems related to water governance. The Symposium was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Dr. Rajendra Singh, popularly known as “Jalpurush” or the “Waterman of India”.

Prominent among those who shared the dialogue and deliberations were Shri Arvind Kumar Chaudhary, IAS, Principal Secretary, RDD, Government of Bihar, Shri Dipak Kumar Singh, IAS, Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mr. Nicholas Osbert, Chief, WASH- UNICEF India, Shri Joe

Madiath, Founder, Gram Vikas, Shri Eklavya Prasad, Megh Pyne Abhiyan, Dr. Ruchi Shree, TMBU, Bhagalpur, Dr. Dipankar Saha, Shiv Nadar University, Dr. Ashok Ghosh, Chairman, BSPCB, Dr. Somnath Bandopadhyay, Nalanda University, Dr. Sunil Chaudhary, TMBU, Bhagalpur, Dr. M. Dinesh Kumar, IRAP, Hyderabad and Sri Sayed Masood Husain, former Chairman, Central Water Commission.

Dr. Rajendra Singh, Hon'ble Chief Guest said that Water Conservation, Revival and Rejuvenation can be achieved by learning from the grassroots. Sharing his quote that "Water is Climate and Climate is Water", he compared water to mother since both share a common nature of nourishment. Stressing upon the need for protection of Neer, Nadi and Nari, i.e. Water, River and Creator, he called upon the environmentalists and the government to join together in finding a solution to the emerging water crisis. He cautioned against the danger of A Third World Water War between the thirsty and the powerful, defining powerful as a person or system which encroaches, pollutes and overexploits the natural resources. On this occasion, he released his book "Main hi Jal Hoon".

Shri Asadur Rahman, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF, said that UNICEF values research particularly concurrent monitoring and Capacity Building which could inform the programming in WASH. In order to achieve this objective UNICEF has collaborated with DMI to establish 'WASH Observatory'.

Shri Dipak Kumar Singh while stressing upon the need for constant recharge of the underground water reservoir, said that water is not infinite. Throwing light on the precarious situation, he warned that the time is not far when we will be moving from an era of abundance to scarcity to emergency. It is a general myth that Bihar is a water abundant state as 138 blocks have already become water-stressed. Wetlands works as the kidney of our ecosystem, hence, there is a need to organise the people of Bihar around this issue.

Mr. Nicolas Osbert, Head of the WASH section, elaborating on the theme "Re-imagining Drinking Water Governance" said that the main source of drinking water in rural Bihar are hand pumps which are shallow bore and subject to bacteriological and chemical contamination. He informed that drinking water contamination is the primary source of death of around one hundred seventeen thousand children under five due to Diarrhoea. Praising the Bihar Government's initiative – Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal Yojana to provide one hundred and fourteen thousand piped water supplies to households in Bihar, he said that there is an opportunity for decentralised planning and community participation. While recognising peoples' participation in water governance, he said that as duty bearers we need to focus on Capacity Building of Community Institutions, PRI, NGOs and Government Departments.

Dr. M Dinesh Kumar, Executive Director, Institute for Resource Analysis and Planning (IRAP), Hyderabad reminiscing the great scholar Chanakya as a pioneer in water governance and water management, raised some pertinent questions related to water governance such as Community Participation in Management and Ownership through his presentation titled "Tap Water for Every Indian Household by 2024: Converting Dream to Reality".

River Biologist Dr. Sunil Chaudhary informed that Wetlands are under severe stress due to rapid urbanization, industrialisation, and agricultural manifestation and that governance of wetland should be inclusive and participatory including all stakeholders.

Dr. Somnath Bandopadhyaya of Nalanda University shared his views on the primary relation between water and Bihar. Suggesting a way ahead for the conservation of wetlands, he said that the participation of community and government should be based on objective settings and the need of the hour is to explore eco incentives and to go for knowledge network based on ecology, hydrology, rights /privileges.

Shri Sayed Masood Husain (Former Chairman, Central Water Commission) delivered the valedictory address. Sharing that India has complexities and conflicts among states with respect to water use availability, he emphasised on the need to focus on water conservation as it is crucial for food and energy security.

The DMI participants presented a colourful cultural programme in the evening. The Symposium ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Surya Bhushan of DMI and Shri Prabhakar Sinha, WASH Specialist of UNICEF.