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Interview with Dr.S.K. Ambast, Director, Indian Institute of Water Management(IIWM), Bhubaneswar

Dr.S.K. Ambast
Director, IIW M

"A drop of water saves life, not tons of gold"

Water is the life line of all the living beings on the earth. Had there been no water, there would have been no life on the planet earth. Thus, we are the fortunate children of the mother earth providing us the nectar of water which is the source of origin of our life. Approximately 72% area of the earth is full of water and to our amazement our body which appears as a solid format, contains nearly 80% of water. It can be safely said that water is the prime ingredient of keeping body and soul together. But it is a matter of regret and astonishment that though water is so valuable for existence of life on the earth, we never pay any attention to its proper utilization, as a result of which the entire animal kingdom may perish in centuries to come.

At this crucial stage when serious attention is given by the govt & other organizations for conservation and proper utilization of water ,the Nijukti khabar team is glad to meet Dr. S.K Ambast, who by virtue of his academy excellence and dynamic Administrative capability is holding the responsible and prestigious post as the director ICAR-IIWM, Bbsr. As morning shows the day, his childhood days bore testimony to his future greatness. Born in the soil of Chhattisgarh in the year 1965, he pursued his academic career as BTech (Agril. Engg)-1986, MTech (S&W eng)-1988, Ph.D (Water Resource Eng)- 2001 from IIT Delhi. He started his humble professional career as a Research Associates on 02.01.89 in Indira Gandhi Agri University, Raipur . By dint of his hard work, sincerity and diligence he could climb the ladder of success holding the posts of Asst.Prof, Scientist(SS),HOD(NRM division, Port Blair), Director(A, Port Blair), Project Coordinator (CSSRI, Carnal) & Director (IIWM, Bbsr from 22.01.15). Recognizing his merit at national/ international level he has been awarded with Vasant Rao Naik Award-1998,Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fellowship-2001,Best Poster Paper Award-2011 & Indian Society of Coastal Agricultural Research-2010. Apart from his official assignment, he is also a source of inspiration at social level. His indomitable quest to know the unknown is quite exemplary & amazing. Travelling is his favorite hubby exploring the historical monuments across the country. He shares his strange experiences which provide light on the cultural heritage of the country.

ICAR-IIWM

Sir, will you please give brief history of establishment of IIWM at Bhubaneswar ?

❖Realizing that water has been and will remain a crucial resource which is being utilized and affected due to increasing population, industrialization, urbanization, deforestation and above all climate change. The ICAR- Indian Institute of Water Management (formerly Directorate of Water Management, erstwhile Water Technology Center for eastern region), Bhubaneswar was established on 12 may 1988.

Sir, what are the aims and objectives of the institute?

❖The aims and objectives of the IIWM are to conduct research and extension work in the field of assessment of water availability ,groundwater recharge, groundwater use at regional level, evaluation of pressurized irrigation system, groundwater assessment and recharge, water management in horticultural and high value crops, basic studies on soil, water, plant relationship and their interaction, conjunctive use of canal and underground saline water, drainage studies for enhancing water productivity, enhancing productivity by multiple use of water, rainwater management in high rainfall areas.

Sir what are the schemes under taken by this Institute ?

❖Basically this Institutes takes of Management on (1).Rain Water (2).Canal Water (3).Ground Water (4).Waterlogged Area (5).Waste Water

Sir, in the event of drastic change of environmental condition owing to global warming , what are the vision and mission of the Institute ?

❖Projecting our vision to the situation which would arise after 30 to 35 years i.e around 2050, we have a vision of sustainable development of on-farm water management technologies for enhanced agriculture productivity and improved livelihood under different agro-ecological regions.

The mission of the Institute is basic, applied and strategic research activities to address diversified water management issues with institutional linkages, infrastructural support and capacity building to achieve sustainability and growth.

Sir, what are the challenges in the field of water management and how to address the challenges?

❖In order to know the challenges i like to highlight the fact in Indian scenario. It is interesting to note that India supports 17 per cent of the human and 15 per cent of the livestock population of the world with only 2.4 per cent of the land and 4 per cent of

➤Contd. Page 16

the water resources. Out of the total annual precipitation of 4000 billion cubic meters (BCM), the utilizable water resources of the country have been assessed as 1123 BCM, of which 690 BCM is from surface water and 433 BCM from groundwater sources. It has been projected that population and income growth will boost the water demand in future to meet food production, domestic and industrial requirements.

ICAR-IIWM

Sir, what are the projects under taken by this Institute ?

❖ This institute has taken of massive and extensive projects for the management of water in our state as mention below:
(1)ICAR Flexi-Check Dam(Rubber Dam) (2)Runoff Recycling Model through Alternate Land and Crop Management Practices (3)Development of Self Reliant Farming System (4)Improving WP through Conservation & Recycling of Runoff, Seepage and Multiple use of Water (5)Enhancing Irrigation Efficiency in Canal Command through Improved Surface & Pressurized Irrigation (6)Deficit Irrigation under Drip System for Rice-based Croping Sequence in Canal Command Area (7)Enhancing WP in Irrigated Production Systems under Climate Variability through Integrated Water Resources Utilization (8)Groundwater Decline in India using GRACE Records (9)Portable Drum based Drip System for Sub-marginal Farmers (10)Technological Options for Comprehensive WRM in Non Exploration Zone of Coastal Odisha (11)Delineation of WL Areas in Eastern India to Formulate Strategies for Enhancing WP (12)Drainage Planning of Eastern Coast Delta using Geoinformatics (13)Mitigating Seasonal Waterlogged Areas through Land Shaping and Aquatic Crops (14)Design of Small Filter for Reducing Contaminants in Poor Quality Water (15) Identification of Suitable Crops for Wastewater Irrigation (16) Agricultural Water Management Portal (AWMP) (17)Technology Dissemination Services (18)Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (19)Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav .

Sir, what are the infrastructural facilities available in this institute ?

❖The institute has well furnished building spreading over-5.71 hectors. The research farm of the institute is located at Deras,Mendhasal and is 30 km away from Bhubaneswar. The institute has four well-equipped laboratories, soil-water-plant relationship laboratory, irrigation and drainage laboratory, hydraulic laboratory, and plant science laboratory with all latest equipment for research activities. An engineering workshop also cater to the needs of the institute. In addition to these ,three field laboratories also exit at the research farm, viz, meteorological laboratory, pressurized irrigation system, and agricultural drainage system. The institute has its own web server and regularly updated website (**www.iiwm.res.in**). The entire network administration of the computers ,internet and website management is looked after by the ARIS cell. The ARIS cell also accommodates a fully developed GIS laboratory . The institute also has a well established library, conference hall, committee room, training hall, guest house etc. Besides AICRP coordinating unit, statistical hub, PME cell, video conferencing facilities are also functioning.

Sir, what is the staffing pattern of the Institute ?

❖The staffing pattern of the institute is as follows:
Director,RMP-1,Scientists-35,Technical-17,Administrative-16,Skilled Supporting Staff-11

Sir, what message you would like to give to the people of Odisha, specially when we are facing acute scarcity of water both for drinking and irrigation purpose ?

❖We the people of Odisha are fortunate enough that we have adequate resources in Odisha. What is needed is to conserve harvest and utilize the developed water resources so that we can produce more food with less water & double the farm profitability. We have adequate technical supports to achieve the goal.

Interview taken by Niren Shome & Kabita Pattanaik