

International Ground Water Conference: IGWC-2011 – P.S. Navaraj, Yadava College, Madurai
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The Fourth International Ground Water Conference held at Yadava College during 27th to 30th Sep 2011 was organised by PG Research Centre Department of Geology, Madurai in collaboration with International Groundwater Congress (India) and Water Technology Centre (TNAU) Coimbatore. This event was sponsored by Department of Science and Technology, Department of Atomic Energy, Mumbai, Ministry of Earth Science, NABARD, CSIR, INSA, NGRI, TNSCST. Two hundred delegates including twenty foreign delegates (US, Japan, Australia, Moroak, Bangladesh, and France) attended and presented papers on themes such as Water Resource management, Application of RS & GIS in water Resource Assessment, Recharge Process and Artificial Recharge Mechanism, Groundwater modelling in the assessment and management of groundwater resources, Groundwater pollution assessment and management, Groundwater management issues/option and policies. C.J. Samathanam, DST Advisor, in his inaugural address said that fresh water constitutes only 2.5% of the water available in the world in the form of ice as well as water sources above and below the ground. The major share on the fresh water is used for food production. Samathanam complimented the State Government of Tamil Nadu for making rain-water harvesting mandatory for building plan approval. It is the need to create awareness about global warming and groundwater conservation.

In the keynote address Dr. S.N. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram

Rural Deemed University, pointed out the occurrence of heading through ice melting due to climatical changes. In another ten to fifteen years, the globe may get pooled. People are not compensating the extraction of water source from the ground. The dryness of the land leads to water leakage, drought, developing a high pressure in the land plate as well as sucking of water by the plants has been identified. C. Mayilsamy, Secretary for the Scientific Session explained about the various sessions being conducted in the conference. K.P. Navaneetha Krishnan, Secretary and correspondent of the College said that the conference was organised as a part of its social obligation and to involve the general public in groundwater conservation. An abstract volume was released at the meeting.

The impact of Climate change on groundwater resource was deliberated with special reference to hard rock terrain, Significant role of remote sensing in groundwater management, the success story of artificial recharge, the use of current technology in water management and impact of urbanisation and water sources are the topics that were discussed in length and breadth. Twenty five progressive farmers and twenty-five school children were invited to discuss with the experts of water management.

Prof. Vijay Prakash Singh from Texas University, US spoke on the future challenges in assessment and management of water resources in the monsoon climatic countries like India due to climatic variance.

Dr. Singh analysed comparatively the management techniques being taken up both in the developed and developing countries. The strengthening of weather forecasting, the introduction of highly sophisticated software's and installation of decision supporting tools, management of natural hazards are the areas where India should concentrate. He told the future challenges like improper rainfall pattern, fluctuating wind level, uncontrolled industrial exploitation, excess usage of agriculture chemicals, conversion of water bodies in to land sites ought to be streamlined.

Dr. Noaaki Shibasaki, Professor, Fukushima University, Japan presented an interesting paper on 3D-groundwater simulation model. He evaluated sustainability of Akaki well field near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

An interesting interactive session of scientists with a group of students was organised. The students raised inquisitive questions like how to stop the ration queue in getting water in future, whether Acacia is a boon or bane in terms of water management, how to effectively communicate water resource among public, how youngsters can enter into groundwater management field, whether water business has any environmental ethics. The progressive farmers and self-help women groups had a similar interaction. Farmers enquired about toxic free pesticides, low cost methodology to recharge the aquifer, drought resistance plant, less water stressed crops, water calculators. Scientists were pleased to answer all the queries.