

Gadkari calls for Faster Utilization of Funds under Command Area Development Programme

Conference on Command Area Development inaugurated

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari has called for faster utilization of funds allocated for Command Area Development (CAD) under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP). Inaugurating the daylong conference on CAD in New Delhi today the Minister expressed concern over the fact that funds allocated for CAD have not been adequately utilized, and said that the overall purpose of AIBP will be defeated if CAD is not implemented properly. Shri Gadkari said that scarcity of water is one of the main reasons for large scale migration of people from rural to urban areas. He said scientific planning and management of water resources is the need of the hour. Referring to various new irrigation practices such as micro, drip, sprinklers irrigation etc. Shri Gadkari said this would result not only in saving water but also enhance agricultural production and will reduce agricultural cost per acre. Shri Gadkari said instead of going for large dams we should explore the possibility of going for check dams, rubber dams and small barrages. He called upon the experts to deliberate on these issues and get rid of redundant technologies and old concepts.



Addressing the conference Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri UP Singh said that CAD usually has not been given due importance in irrigation but is very important for agricultural production. Command Area Development includes developing infrastructure for micro irrigation, land leveling, participatory irrigation management and scheduling cropping patterns. All these are important to enhance agricultural production and meet the objective of More Crop Per Drop and Har Khet Ko Pani. He further said that there is a gap in irrigation potential created and its full utilization. CAD helps in fully utilizing the system developed for irrigation. He expressed the hope that this conference will bring out some meaningful and concrete suggestions.

Command Area Development Programme was launched by Government of India in 1974-75. It was restructured and renamed as Command Area Development and Water Management (CADWM) Programme in 2004. The programme is being implemented *pari-passu* with AIBP since XII Plan. It is being implemented under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) as a component of Har Khet Ko Pani. From July, 2016 onwards, the CADWM implementation is focused on the mission mode completion of the 99 Priority Irrigation projects through NABARD funding. Two of the main objectives of PMKSY are Har Khet Ko Pani and More Crop Per Drop. In order to achieve these objectives, successful implementation of Command Area Development works becomes most important. Water may be available in the reservoir or canal but it has to reach each farm and farmers need to use this limited water in the most efficient way. This is possible only on successful implementation of both structural and non-structural components of CADWM and taking over of the system by the Water Users Associations for sustainable operation and management.

The day long conference was attended by experts and senior officials of WAPCOS, CWC, NWDA and Ministry and discussions were held on Command Area Development and Water Management- Need for New interventions, CADWM implementations under PMKSY, Participatory Irrigation Management and Pani-Panchayat in Odisha.

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