

Economising Riverine Ecology

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ABSTRACT

Water resources of a country constitute its vital assets. India is richly endowed with a network of great rivers. But pressures of rapid population growth cause rapid depletion of water resources. Economy and ecology can progress jointly by harnessing natural energy resources. Developing economies should aim at alternate energy, to keep both economy and ecology in pink of health.

Indian water legislations are such a farce that even decades after independence, clean water is not a fundamental right. We cannot demand legal enforcement of safe drinking water due to ill defined guidelines set by Union ministry of urban development in its development schemes or a political tool used by forgetful politicians during canvassing days. Disputes arising out of contested river water entitlements between states are often intractable. New dispute resolution paradigms are needed. Unless we have strict laws even dozens of M.C. Mehta's cannot do anything for the still deteriorating yet headline grabbing *KALINADI OF MEERUT*.

We can make successful ventures of river linking projects by effectuating public-private partnerships, instead of government machinery alone. Rehabilitation and river-linking should happen in an effective public-private relationship. I talk of a profitable deal for corporate world where existing digital infrastructure and basic educational skills of people can be used for cheap labor demands and mass provision of decent jobs, in lieu of contracts for building dams and inland waterways across rivers. Interlinked rivers provide respite from floods and drought altogether and shall also provide hydroelectric power and inland waterways for transport of goods.