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'India to be a Ã¢â?¬Å?Water Scarce CountryÃ¢â?¬? by 2025'

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A report on the Indian Water Industry was launched on the inauguration day of EverthingAboutWater Expo. Mr Ravi B Budhiraja, chairman, Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority, inaugurated the 12th EverthingAboutWater Expo, held on May 21-23 at the Bombay Exhibition Center in Mumbai.

EverythingAboutWater Expo is South Asia's largest and one of the world's leading annual water event, showcasing latest technologies in the water and wastewater management sector.

The study was conducted by EverythingAboutWater, a consulting firm in water sector. The report analyses the water supply and demand trends, and finds India to be a water scarce country with an imbalance in demand and supply. It also indicated a huge opportunities across the spectrum in infrastructure development for water supply and wastewater management. The industry is creating a ~$13 billion market opportunity and growing more than the rate of 10 percent. The Industrial market is going to be the big opportunity till 2020, with growth in wastewater recycling and industrial water treatment.

Countries like India, Mexico, China and Brazil use maximum water for agriculture, unlike the western countries which uses 70 percent to 75 percent water for industrial needs. Industrial water use in India is about 40 billion cubic metres (bcm) which is nearly 6 percent of the total freshwater abstraction. Annual wastewater discharge from industry is 30.7 bcm. Water demand for industrial and energy usage is projected to increase to 191 bcm by the year 2025. Pollution control board norms for all manufacturing industries are planned to become more rigorous and enforcement would become stricter, due to higher public scrutiny.

Mr H Subramaniam, chief oprating oficer, EA Water said, "water sector is a sunrise opportunity in India, and is likely to see significant investment in the next 5 years. Over 1 million jobs would be created in the next 3 years, as new infrastructure for water supply, distribution and wastewater treatment needs to be created and maintained. Mega projects like the Ganga River Cleaning, Smart Cities and Swachh Bharat are creating an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in the water industry"

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India is witnessing growing scarcity, decreasing water quality and rising cost of fresh water. On the other side the demand for water is growing, as the industrial and economic activity is rising. The higher level of Environment regulations and increasing awareness about water quality and health will force the water treatment industry to get more organised & introduce advance technology. India is forecasted to be one of the Top 5 BOOT markets for desalination.

Currently, desalination plants provide approximately 1 percent of the world's drinking water supply and this number is increasing every year. Estimating the global market value for desalination is extremely difficult as it is composed of a few large projects. However, the global market is roughly $12 billion per year -about $6 billion per year in capital expenditures and about $6 billion per year in operating expenditures.

The Indian market for desalination is very small, but likely to grow. There are only a handful of desalination projects built and operational in India. Most of these existing plants are in the industrial sector. About 30 desalination plants are expected to be installed in the next three years in India, particularly in the power, oil and mining industry as capital and operating costs come down. The cost of desalinated water is projected to reduce by 20 percent in the next 5 years and by 50percent by the year 2020.

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