

CWPRS Pune Commemorates World Water Day 2026; Experts Call for Gender Inclusivity and Digital Innovation in Water Governance

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Pune, 26 March 2026

The Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune, organized a high-level workshop today to commemorate World Water Day 2026. The event, aligned with the United Nations theme "Water and Gender: Where Water Flows, Equality Grows," was held at the CWPRS Auditorium and brought together leading experts to discuss the critical intersection of water sustainability, gender equity, and technological advancement. The workshop focused on India's unique water challenges and the role of scientific research in securing a water-resilient future for the nation.



In his welcome address, Dr. Prabhat Chandra, Director, CWPRS, emphasized the strategic importance of water resource management, stating that "Jal Shakti is Rashtra Shakti." He highlighted that while India supports nearly 18% of the world's population, it possesses only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, making efficient governance a national priority. Dr. Chandra lauded the contributions of women in the sector, noting that "encouraging greater participation of women in water science and engineering" is essential for innovative research. He further reiterated CWPRS's commitment to its "Vision 2047," which aims to establish the institute as a global center of excellence for climate-resilient water infrastructure and advanced dam health assessment.



Prof. Basudev Biswal of IIT Bombay, attending as the Guest of Honor, addressed the technical evolution of the field, specifically regarding "Parsimony in Hydrological Modelling in the age of AI." He observed that while India possesses immense talent, there is a significant need for better internal platforms, remarking that "in India, we lack platforms to connect." Prof. Biswal urged the engineering community to bridge the gap between technical expertise and policy, stating, "We as engineers somehow do not take a lot of interest in policy making," and stressed the importance of developing indigenous technologies to ensure national "reliance on technology" and resilience against global service disruptions.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Hanumant T. Dhumal, Executive Director of the Maharashtra Krishna Valley Development Corporation, shared profound field insights regarding water scarcity and management. Reflecting on the geographical disparities in Maharashtra, he noted that some regions face "flood and drought at the same time," highlighting the complexity of utilizing a few days of effective monsoon rainfall for 365 days of demand. He concluded by emphasizing that the modern challenge is not just volume, but the "availability of pure water" amidst increasing urbanization and pollution.



The workshop also featured technical presentations by Dr. (Mrs.) Prajakta Gadge on sustainable solutions and Mrs. Jaee Edalabadkar on comprehensive dam safety. A significant highlight was the screening of a digitized archival film from 1954, featuring Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at CWPRS, preserved under the National Film Heritage Mission. The program included a creative skit by CWPRS staff on gender and water, concluding with a vote of thanks by Shri P. Kunjeer, Scientist 'E'.

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