

Workshop held on "Reviving Springs in Uttarakhand"



**By OUR STAFF REPORTER
DEHRADUN, 22 Jun:**

"Drinking water shortages will become grave in Uttarakhand especially in the rural mountain areas due to climate change," said Chief Secretary Shatrughna Singh, at a workshop, here. "In recent years, Uttarakhand has experienced low winter rainfall due to climate change. This has accelerated the drying of springs, chal-khals and ground water seepages. Hence, there is an urgent need to focus on recharging these sources of water for which the Uttarakhand Government is

willing to join hands with civil society organisations." Singh was speaking at a workshop on "Reviving Springs in Uttarakhand" held on 21-22 June at a local hotel, here, organised by People's Science Institute, Dehradun, with the financial support of Arghyam, Bengaluru. Almost 60 participants from various government departments like the Union Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation; RMDD, Sikkim; Soil & Water Conservation Department, Meghalaya; Land Resources Department, Nagaland; Indian Institute of Soil & Water

Conservation; NIH Roorkee; Central Groundwater Board; Forest Department, Uttarakhand; Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan and civil society organisations attended this workshop.

The objective of the workshop was to share experiences of spring revival in the Himalayan states with stakeholders and implementation agencies in Uttarakhand and to develop a draft programme on reviving springs in the state.

Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson, Arghyam, pointed out that springs are the fountain

heads of our river systems. They need to be revived not only for maintaining the ecological balance, but also for stabilising the state's economy since the livelihoods of majority of the people in the mountainous regions depends on springs.

Dr Himanshu Kulkarni from ACWADAM, Pune, highlighted the role of geohydrology in spring shed development and watershed management in the Himalayan region. The Himalayas are one of the most studied and researched regions of the world. Eleven major river systems are associated with

the Himalayas. At the same time, Himalayas are somewhat of a blind spot with regards to groundwater. There is very little reliable data on ground water there. "Groundwater has strong links with politics, society, economy, and environment. Most of the time these stand in conflict with each other," he said.

Presenting a draft concept note on reviving springs in Uttarakhand, Dr Ravi Chopra, former Director, PSI, said, "Springs have been drying up in the state. Fortunately, in the last decade or so the concept of spring shed development has been successfully demonstrated at many locations in the Himalayan states. The time has come for state government, civil society organisations and local communities to come together to revive springs in a sustainable manner and equitably use the water. For this a sound understanding of the hydrogeology is also essential."