

'SHIFT FOCUS TO WATER PRODUCTIVITY'

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

The Economic Survey 2018-19 has said as far as agriculture is concerned, the country should shift its focus from land productivity to irrigation water productivity and on devising policies to incentivise farmers to adopt efficient ways of water use.

This should become a national priority to avert a looming water crisis.

Agriculture remains the predominant occupation in terms of number of people employed. Also, agriculture is dependent highly on water. So, appropriate mechanism needs to be framed for economical use of water among small and marginal farmers, said the Survey.

"The cropping pattern in India is highly skewed towards crops that are water-intensive. The incentive structures like minimum support price, heavily subsidised electricity, water and fertilizers have played a significant role in the misalignment of crop patterns in the country," said the Survey, adding that the water guzzlers, paddy and sugarcane, consume more than 60% of irrigation water available in the country, reducing water availability for other crops.

The survey said States such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, which have high land productivity, tend to have very low irrigation water productivity, reflecting inefficient use of water and the need to re-calibrate cropping pattern.

"Adopting improved methods of irrigation and irrigation technologies will have a critical role in increasing irrigation water productivity," it said.

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