

Water footprint study by IIT Hyderabad under HMDA region

Food industry consume 70% of virtual water followed by electric power at 25%



Prof. D Chandrasekharam (L) and visiting Prof. D Koteswar Rao who conducted the study.

Hyderabad: A water footprint study conducted by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad in the Hyderabad Metro Development Authority (HMDA) region has indicated that 96 per cent of water was being consumed as virtual water i.e. hidden water that goes into production of food and other services, and only 4 per cent of water was consumed directly or physically.

The IIT Hyderabad study said the urban areas under HMDA consumed nearly 20 times more virtual water, which is consumption of food and other items produced by using water. The water foot print study considered both the virtual water and physical water consumption patterns in HMDA areas and observed that food industry was involved in consuming 70 per cent of virtual water followed by electric power at 25 per cent. Surprisingly, the fossil fuel sector used only 1 per cent of the total water consumed in Hyderabad, the study said.

The study led by Prof Dornadula Chandrasekharam, visiting Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Hyderabad, and his Research Scholar Dagani Koteswar Rao, was published in the peer-reviewed international journal ‘Sustainable Cities and Society’.

“The obvious image of water consumption that comes to mind is the active or direct water ingestion by human beings, but the water footprint of humankind extends far beyond. Every single item that we use in our daily life, has used water at some part of its lifecycle,” Dr Chandrasekharam said.

The assessment of water footprint embedded in products was done in four broad categories including food consumption, fuels based on fossil energy, electric power and direct water through municipal drinking water. “To formulate strict water policies and constructive water governance for virtual and physical water quantification, it is necessary to take into account both physical water and virtual water,” the researchers said.

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