

# 'Felling led to water scarcity in Ooty'

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By Our Staff Reporter

**UDHAGAMANDALAM, APRIL 24.** The need to adopt a land use pattern, which would not only be economically beneficial to the farmers but also ecologically safe particularly with regard to water resources was stressed by the Collector, Supriya Sahu, at a workshop on "The Nilgiris Water Resources" organised under the aegis of a Kotagiri-based NGO, Keystone Foundation, here today.

Stating that it was ironical that the hilly district with grasslands was facing water scarcity,

she said that so far this year the shortfall vis-a-vis rain stood at 40 per cent. She attributed the water scarcity to the indiscriminate felling of trees, unplanned extension until recently of eucalyptus and wattle plantations and the land rapidly losing its capacity to retain water. The traditional systems of rainwater harvesting had become scarce and the available water was being mismanaged. Lamenting that most of the government-sponsored schemes suffered due to lack of inter-departmental coordination, she said that while the population of this hill

station had grown considerably the resources had diminished. While 25 major rainwater harvesting schemes have been put in place in various parts of the district, it was necessary to evolve schemes exclusively for the Nilgiris as, "what is applicable to the plains is definitely not applicable to the Nilgiris".

The Development Commissioner and Secretary, Youth Welfare and Sports Development, K.S. Sripathi, said that while formulating schemes the Nilgiris should be treated as a separate entity and not clubbed with other districts.