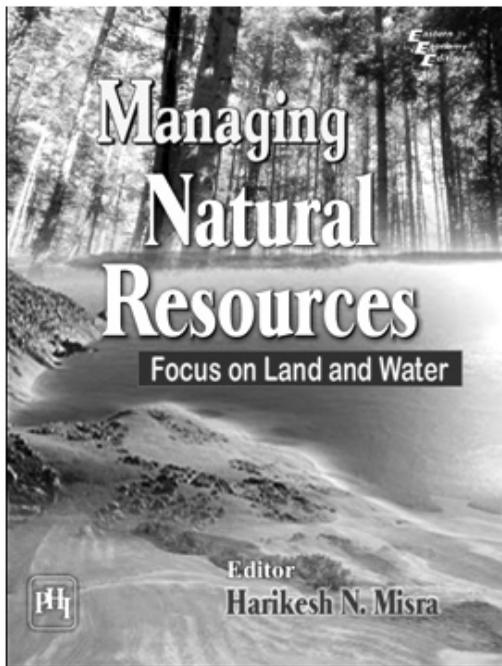


## Book Review 3

**Harikesh N. Misra, Editor (2014)**

Managing Natural Resources: Focus on Land and Water (Felicitation Volume in Honour of Professor R.L. Dwivedi), PHI Learning Private Limited, Delhi XXXIV+361 p, 90 fig., 87 tables, ISBN-978-81-203-4933-9



H. N. Misra has accomplished the task of collecting and editing a number of diverse papers, under the broad theme of environmental challenges, in the book, *Managing Natural Resource: Focus on Land and Water*, in a very skilful way. The book has been brought out as a felicitation volume in the honour of Professor R. L. Dwivedi. The front matter contains under the title “Professor R. L. Dwivedi – A Reine Geographer” a laudation by H. N. Misra, as

well as two photographs of Prof. Dwivedi, including the one with his family, and the list of his publications and theses guided.

The book includes, besides the introduction by H. N. Misra, 28 papers. The papers have been arranged in four parts: 1. Conceptual Background - An Overview, 2. Land Resources, 3. Water Resources and 4. Natural Resource Management. These sections do not reflect a clear division, and as it happens, there is some overlapping of themes.

The first part “Conceptual Background” begins with a contribution by R. P. Misra and H. N. Misra, entitled “Natural Resources and Development - Focus on Land Water and Minerals”. After a comprehensive account of the world’s land, water and mineral resources, the authors enumerated seven basic issues, related to the future survival and wellbeing of humankind. In this context, they emphasise four priorities namely 1. assessment of resources, 2. level of awareness, 3. economic vulnerability and alternatives, and 4. universal legislation for conservation of resources. The exhaustive paper by Baleshwar Thakur on “Population Resources and Development” looks at the problem from a global as well as historical perspective. A reader can find

here different theoretical approaches to population growth. The author has assessed seven historical or present-day efforts that tried to evaluate the relationship between population and resource availability or adequacy beginning from Malthus and ending with the Global 2000 Report, the Resourceful Earth, and the Earth Summit. The paper by Graham P. Chapman and Rudra Kalyan “Water as Foe, Water as Friend – Lessons from Bengal’s Millennium flood” is very special as it combines a detailed study of the processes that were involved in the occurrence of the exceptionally devastating flood of September 2000 with the actual description of what one of the authors experienced and wrote down at that time. The authors propose that future flood management should try to consider a sustainable policy of open flooding. Ocean resources find a place in Harvir Sharma’s “Resources in the Indian Ocean and National Security”. Besides detailing the importance of different ocean resources, the author focuses on India’s Exclusive Economic Ocean Zone and the need for the protection of its wealth.

The second part “Land Resources” includes seven papers, some general and some region specific. Arun Chaturvedi and A. K. Maji have provided an overview “Land and Land Use Planning” in this section. The authors are concerned about the discrepancy between the economic growth in general and the slow agricultural growth in a highly rural society. They underline the need for scientific land use planning that take into account the soil and land characteristics as significant determinants that influence the crop growth potential. Besides different planning approaches, the paper also looks at land use policies.

One would like to mention the paper of S. K. Sharma “Population Resource and Development – The Contemporary Situation in Madhya Pradesh”. The paper examines the land resources of different regions of Madhya Pradesh, classified in different land capability classes. By using different parameters like nutritional density, carrying capacity of the land etc. the paper concludes that a critical stage has been reached, which would require an innovative resource creation to alleviate rural poverty in the low productivity areas of the state. Other areas covered in this section are Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The third part “Water Resources” also contains seven papers. Three of them relate to river basin studies, namely the Yamuna and the Brahmaputra basins and the drainage basins of the Kashmir valley, the remaining four are concerned with groundwater and with rainwater harvesting. H. N. Misra and Ashutosh Mishra in “Perennials in Peril: A Case study of Yamuna River Basin” start their paper with a detailed geographical profile of the Yamuna basin and divide the trunk river into four main sections. Then they analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the 99 districts lying in six states, besides Delhi, and relate them to the present hazardous status of the Yamuna including decreasing water flow, increasing pollution, deteriorating ecosystem and increasing encroachment on land. They then suggest different urgent steps to save the river, some of them related to the river itself, like dredging and reduction in pollution, and others concerned with watershed planning in general and the definition or the territorial limits of Yamuna.

The last section “Natural Resource Management” includes nine papers, two of them referring to the mountain environment, two to urban water supply, namely Nagpur and Allahabad, two to drought management and three suggesting different models of water conservation. Monika Kannan in “Drought Mitigation in Rajasthan” finds remote sensing and GIS combined with agri-meteorological data and field surveys a relevant technique in the planning of the dry areas of Rajasthan. How NGO’s (Pani Vikas Team) could motivate villagers to adopt water conservation measures, what hurdles they faced and what were the positive outcomes can be seen in Abdul Shaban’s “Role of NGO in Water Conservation and Village Development”. In their paper “Watershed Development Model and the Case of Bihar”. H. N. Misra and Ashutosh Mishra have explained why they consider watershed development most appropriate for India. They worked out a model and then explained how it could be successfully adopted in the different watersheds of Bihar.

Professor H. N. Misra, the editor of the book, *Managing Natural Resources: Focus on Land and Water* has taken great care in the organisation of the text. The book is illustrated with numerous useful tables and relevant figures. It offers the readers different approaches to promote their understanding of natural resources including, land, water, forest, mountain environment and ocean resources. Above all, it discusses different land management practices from command control to a community based involvement or adaptive use and, most preferable, an integrative methodology.

The papers constitute a valuable reading material. It would be only appropriate if the book could find a place in many college and university libraries and thus become accessible to students.

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