

Water Crisis and Sustainable Management

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The book "Water Crisis and Sustainable Management" is an edited book, brought out on the occasion of the XXV Conference of the Institute of the Indian Geographers, held at the Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. The book has been edited by D.N. Singh Jagdish Singh and K.N. Prudhvi Raju and published by the Tara Book Agency, Varanasi. It is a 296 page paperback publication. The price of the book is Rs. 400/-.

Theme

The focal theme of the Conference and that of the book has been aptly chosen, in tune with the declaration in tune with the declaration of the United Nations, marking the year 2003 as the International fresh Water Year. The problem of disparity in the distribution of water resource and its deteriorating quality has reached such an extent that it has taken the shape of a global crisis. Keeping the present scenario in mind, it can be said that the book not only addresses a theme which is a major concern in the contemporary world but also tries to highlight on some of the possible solutions to the problem.

Water crisis is a multifaceted problem. Identification of the causal factors behind these problems and finding solutions for them demands a multi-disciplinary

approach. The list of contributors, provided before the content reveals that, though the conference was basically a geographer's meet, significant number of the contributions are from disciplines like Chemical Engineering, Geology, Geophysics, Botany, Environmental Science and also from the State Land Use Board, Govt. of U.P. Since, water crisis and its management is an issue of National importance, the keynote address on Cartography for Water management by the Surveyor General of India seems to be appropriate.

The Content

The book compiles 25 papers, of which some deals with the appraisal of water resource and its sustainable management in a broad global or National perspective, while others are more area specific. The papers can be broadly categorized into three groups. The 1st category includes the papers by Upadhyay and Ambasht. These two papers principally deals with the socio-economic and ecological aspect of water resource conservation in the global context. Ambasht gives a new economic dimension to the concept of 'Virtual Water Trade'. The papers give stress on the holistic approach in water resource management.

The 2nd category includes, in all 9 papers, by B. Banerjee, Dikshit, Kayastha,

Srivastava, M. Banerjee and M. Singh. These papers have evaluated India's water resource and focussed on the prospects of sustainable water management in India with special emphasis on the utilisation and recharge of surface and ground water storage. Dikshit assesses India's water resource in the light of the global scenario and India's population problem. B. Banerjee and D.N. Singh gives a critical assessment of the proposed interlinking of Indian rivers and ventures upon the problem of inter-state water disputes and over exploitation of water resource. Qureshi and J. Singh in their papers bring out the need for an integrated land and water management in India. Kayastha in his paper gives a model for flood plain (SPF) management, in the form of a diagram, but the model lacks supporting explanation.

The 3rd category includes 14 papers, which takes up the problem of water resource management in particular areas, mostly in the form of case studies. The problem of regional variations in water potential in the Uttaranchal and Arunachal Himalayas have been taken up by O.P. Singh et al. and S. Singh respectively. H. S. Sharma, Rao et al. and S. K. Sharma, in their papers take up the problem of water resource depletion and the potential areas of water resource management in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Andhra. S. K. Sharma has critically analysed the spatial variations and discrepancies between the supply and demand of resource in Tons basin (M. P). Rao et al. in their paper has put forward the methods of micro-level ground water recharge and management, while Jog et al. proposes the development of water parks for effective rain water harvesting. R. B. Singh emphasises the impact of community

participation in water management through construction of water reservoirs along the contours of the mountain slope. Gupta et al. A. L. Singh and Tripathi has discussed the effect of urbanization on deteriorating quality of water in Raipur, Aligarh and Varanasi respectively.

Comments

The papers compiled in the book gives the reader a clear insight into the water problem of India, both in the National and regional scale, however, the papers appear to be rather haphazardly compiled. The editors could have divided the book into two sections from the National and regional perspectives and placed the papers accordingly. Moreover, from the publication date it appears that the book is a pre-conference publication, and not a "proceeding" in its true sense. It lacks the post presentation critical remarks and interactions, which are of great academic significance. Poor readability of text and glaring misprints, together with poor printing quality of some figures calls for greater care on part of the editors. The paper by M. Sigh lacks a reference list, while in Kayastha's paper none of the figures are numbered. Apart from these few lacunas it is a reasonably good publication and provides valuable information regarding India's water resource crisis. However, it is surprising to note that none of the papers have taken up the problem of arsenic contamination of ground water, which has reached alarming proportions in many parts of India

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