

D R I N K I N G W A T E R -
S U P P L Y I N T H E R U R A L -
H A B I T A T I O N .

C M D R S T U D Y R E P O R T
C M D R , D A R W A D .

P R E F A C E

Access to and availability of safe drinking water supply can be considered as an index of socio-economic development of a country, just as electricity consumption per capita has been taken as such an index in some studies. In view of heavy and increasing pressure on the water resources of the country due to growing population, urbanization and increasing extraction of water resources for the purpose of industrial and construction activity, per capita availability of water supply may go on declining. Nature's method of replenishing the used water resources, suggests the need for a judicious handling of the supply of and demand for such resources. It has been some times said that during the 21st Century it is neither the resources of tangible reproduceble physical capital, nor the human capital resources, nor even the foreign exchange resources which would be the crucial impediments in the developmental process. But, water resources would be considered as the crucial factors for the socio-economic development of the country. It is in this background that necessary measures will have to be taken, in advance, to identify and preserve the water resources in the country.

The available data for the early 1980s suggest that while in the middle income countries more than 60 to 70 percent of the population had an easy access to safe drinking water, in the developing countries it is heardly less than 1/3rd of population which had this access. In India it was around 1/3rd of a total population which had an easy access to safe drinking water (World Bank; Social Indicators of Developing Countries, May 1983) the position obtaining in India during the early 80s with regard to water supply was indeed shocking. During this peiod 63 percent of the the villages had to be considered as not having easy access to safe drinking water. The conditions of different states in this regard were not uniform. In Karnataka, for example, as many as 58 percent of the villages were considered as having acute water supply problem. Though the things have apparently improved over time, the situation, however cannot be considered satisfactory and not a matter of concern. A constant vigil on the problem is necessary in order that people are not made to suffer on account of the absence of adequate drinking water.

The Rajeev Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission launched upon a project of identifying the problem villages and also estimating the extent of this problem in different states. The Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research was one of the research institutions which was asked to undertake the survey of different villages in the selected districts of Karnataka in order to find out whether there was at all any source of drinking water supply in the village, whether water is potable in the available sources and if potable then how long the water is likely to last. Such questions about access, quality and availability of water supply in the selected districts of Karnataka would obviously help policy making with regard to taking suitable measures for creating new sources of water supply, preserving the existing ones and also improving the quality.

CMDR expresses its thanks to Rajeev Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission for assigning this important work of surveying the rural habitations in Belgaum, Bidar, Bijapur, Dharwad and Gulbarga districts of Karnataka and also providing the necessary financial assistance for undertaking the survey.