

Sustainable Water Supply System in India: Public Private Partnership

R.K. Khitoliya

Department of P.G. Environment, Punjab Engineering College
Sector-12, Chandigarh - 160 012, INDIA

Kamal Kumar

Department of Civil Engineering Department, Punjab Engineering College
Sector-12, Chandigarh - 160 012, INDIA

ABSTRACT

Conservation and equitable distribution of our limited fresh water resources and its management is one of the greatest challenges being faced by human development. According to the recent World Water development report, about 20 percent of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water. There are serious concerns on the availability of fresh water in India as it has 16% of the world's population and only 2.45% of the world's land resources and 4% of the world's fresh water resources. It is imperative that immediate steps be taken to avert a crises. The National Water Policy, 2002 also addresses some of the concerns of the three main stakeholders i.e. Rural, Urban and Industrial Sectors and suggested few measures for developing and conserving the National Water Resources. Water supply is primarily a State subject and funding of such projects have been essentially supported through the plan provisions of the State Govts. It is being increasingly realized that the user participation, either as provider or for performance assessment can be critical to the effectiveness. The provisions and operations at the local level can be better handled by the user or community group. Participation of users and Panchayats as stakeholders in the system could also enable a consensus to be built on user charges as well as decentralize maintenance and operation functions. The success of programmes like the "SWAJAL PROJECT" which was started in 1996 by the Govt. with World Bank assistance has shown that water resources can be managed as a commodity with the help of local institutions. This paper advocates the community participation as a viable solution for sustainable water supply.