EDITORIAL

The "Hydrology Review" which was earlier published by the Indian National Committee of the International Hydrological Programme since 1975, has been continued till 1985 Issue under the same title by the HILTECH Secretariat. However, keeping in view the national character and wider scope of HILTECH, it has been thought appropriate to give the journal an Indian name and accordingly this first issue of "Jal Vigyan Sameeksha" is being brought out as a publication of the High Level Technical Committee on Hydrology by the HILTECH Secretariat in National Institute of Hydrology. During 1985, the country has witnessed one of the worst droughts in living memory, which has affected 260 districts in fourteen states covering a population of 15 crores and equal number of cattle. This drought has also adversely affected agriculture and crop production in 435 lakh hectare cropped area. The recurring phenomenon of drought in some part or the other of the country with varying intensity almost every year is causing not only misery to the human and animal population but has also been seriously affecting our agriculture based economy. This first issue of "Jal Vigyan Sameeksha" has, therefore, been devoted to the theme of 'Drought' covering its various aspects.

Though the phenomena of drought is a typical hydrological extreme like flood, however, there is considerable difference between their characteristics. Instead of developing rapidly, droughts are of the creepingtype disaster, developing over some period of time, often leading to or requiring various adjustments by the people in drought stricken area. The economic and social responses of droughts are also quite different from those of floods. The phenomenon of drought occurs on almost a continental scale spreading its consequences into entire regional or national economy. For combating droughts, various water use activities have to provide for built-in adaptability and have to take suitable steps to minimise the consequences of drought when it occurs. Such measures could also include provision for storage of water within a region and transfer of water from adjacent regions.

One might not be very optimistic about the prospect of forecasting droughts; but the past experience certainly points towards the need for developing appropriate and viable drought management strategies to meet the challenges posed by the drought occurrence year after year. The hydrologists and the administrators in the Central and State governments are required to develop both short and long term management strategies to cope with the drought hazard not only scientifically and economically but also socially. The public at large and farmers in particular need to be educated about the ameliorative measures and crop planning in the event of the first signs of drought occurrence. The administrators have to evolve rational water management measures in assigning priority to water supply for different users; domestic, agricultural and industrial.

It is hoped that ideas expressed and information provided by different authors in their papers would lead to better understanding of the complex phenomena and help in planning of drought management activities in the country.