

**GROUNDWATER RESOURCES OF INDIA** by Subhajyoti Das. National Book Trust, Nehru Bhawan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase- II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110 070. Pages 248. Price Rs. 110.

Every student and literate person must have some access to a basic knowledge of the occurrence of groundwater, its potential, safe use and its limitations in terms of quality and quantity. This need has now become all the more so with slow depletion of this natural resource almost all over the world, thanks to increasing demand by a burgeoning population.

The book under review, by a professional specialist in this field, amply justifies the need for educating the public on this subject. The contents, distributed in 10 chapters, succinctly brings out almost all aspects of this problem using different types of presentation of data in the text with tables, on its quality, where it can occur, its relation to crops, the usual pollutants, methods to obtain it on to the surface etc.

It is not as some tend to believe, that ground water is a *patala ganga*, flowing beneath the surface, waiting to be tapped at different depths by different mechanical means. There are so many external and internal factors that control the occurrence of this resource, as for example, precipitation and its duration, nature of the sediments and rocks that permit its accumulation and flow, some topographical conditions that aid in its augmentation, preservation or even depletion. The author has very clearly dealt with all these aspects.

Efforts are being made by the State and Central governments through their respective organizations to enact suitable legal regulations for the purpose of controlling of groundwater management and development. The methods being adopted for the estimation, exploitation and conservation are well documented. Chapter 6 on State-wise groundwater potentials is a brief review of the nature of the

sediments and rocks present in the respective States in different geological formations and the methods that are being adopted/may be adopted for the extraction and optimum use of this resource. Chapter 7 on conservation and augmentation deals with what all should be taken note of by planners at every level of operation, from the Centre to even an individual farmer or a householder. The appendices clearly indicate to the reader that there is much more than what meets the eye in the study of this subject in terms of relation to precipitation, favourable and unfavourable sediments and geological structures, constituents of water, types of wells that need to be constructed and last but not the least, water harvesting structures, on a major and minor scale.

The author has packed within about 248 pages substantial data to present a very clear picture of this resource in India and the book is reasonably priced. A few tables with data from different sources, and sketches may appear to be a little beyond an average student's ability to understand, but they will be valuable sources of additional information for those deeply interested in this subject. Perhaps, the Hydrogeological map of India (already published by the Central Ground Water Board in 1999) would have been a welcome addition. That would show pictorially as to why this resource is not uniformly distributed in all parts of the country. The book must find its place in libraries of high schools and colleges apart from those of the governments and the public.

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