

MINI DRINKING WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES

In spite of heavy annual rainfall, and numerous rivers and ponds, the State of Kerala is paradoxically situated among the country's lowest per capita ground water availing state. Water plays an important role in the welfare of societies through its wide spread linkages. Water needs are complexly linked with the daily life and its scarcity can be an obstacle to economic growth. The important aspects in this regard are (i) the availability of water for production and income generation; (ii) water for domestic needs, which have a significant role in maintaining human health; and (iii) sustainable environmental management. Among the water users in different sectors, consumption by households has very specific influence on human well-being. Even though the household consumption constitutes only eight per cent of the total water usage, the value of water for household purposes is reckoned much higher than the value of it for industrial use and farming.

Hence, providing potable water to all sections of the society becomes one of the major concerns of the governments. The problem of financing the water service may be one of the contributing factors for institutional change. In this context, privatization or market based profit dominated approach to water supply service has emerged as a policy suggestion to tackle the problem. However, privatization of an essential service of water is not politically and socially viable. Further market strategies and privatization tend to raise inequalities. Another approach, aiming both economic and environmental sustainability includes decentralized development with co-operation of NGOs and local communities. Community management of drinking water has recently emerged as an alternative.



Declining water table has a consequence on the family managed drinking water supply. In this background, conservation of the exiting water resources and its efficient management becomes the priority issue at policy level.

Providing rural drinking water supply is one of important functions of the Panchayat system. Wherever the water supply is lower than the norms laid down by Government, augmentation of water supply is to be taken up. Drinking water has to be provided within 1/2 km of the habitation.

It is proposed to start six numbers of mini rural drinking water supply schemes in the project area, of which two has been started under the EPA.