
Water! Water!! Everywhere!!! But for Everyone?

Most regions in India had a surfeit of water this year. Though late in many areas, it was very welcome. But not so welcome for those in Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad - and not so welcome for the farmers whose crops were inundated or washed away.

This is our problem with water - when it rains it pours, and leaves inundation and floods in its wake. Otherwise, we have drought, - parched throats and dusty lands. An unending cycle of plenty and scarcity.

Add to this - effluents from industry and urban drains, salination of aquifers, receding water tables, ... the predicament just gets more complicated and chaotic.

Bhakra dam - A different view, *Siddharth Narrain*, Frontline, Volume 22
- Issue 12, June 04-17,2005.
<http://www.flonnet.com/fl2212/stories/20050617000507700.htm>
[C.ELDOC. 0511/Bhakra_dam_A_Different_View.html]

Managing Water, *A Vaidyanathan*, Economic & Political Weekly: Vol.
XXXIX No.4, January 24, 2004.
<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&leaf=01&filename=6751&filetype=html>
[C.ELDOC. 0511/managing_water.htm]

Water Sector Reforms in Mexico : Lessons for India's New Water Policy, *Tushaar Shah, Christopher Scott, Stephanie Buechler*, Economic & Political Weekly: Vol. XXXIX No.4 January 24, 2004.
<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&leaf=01&filename=6754&filetype=html> [C.ELDOC. 0511/Water_sector.htm]

Moving Nimbly Beyond, Sunitha Narain, Down to Earth, April 15, 2005.
<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/editor.asp?foldername=20050415&filename=Editor&sec-id=2&sid=1> [C.ELDOC1.0512/Moving-nimbly-beyond-sunitanarain.html]

The response of our policy makers? More of the same, but on a larger scale - the stuff of contractors' dreams, everyone else's nightmares. 

Shripad Dharmadhikary exposes the holy cow - one of the first of India's Temples of Modernity, the Bhakra Nangal Dam, and shows us the flawed premises and the even more flawed conclusions that we still hold about mega-projects. It is a partisan perspective, but an inescapable one, if you believe that people, no matter how poor or powerless, are at the heart of the development discourse.

Ramaswamy R Iyer takes a more considered, and 'objective' approach to similar conclusions. **A Vaidyanathan**, The reviewer of his book, explains the broad canvas that Iyer provides for his reader on these issues. We need to delve into these aspects if we have to understand the issues related to water, and even more important, if we wish to act - as we should, - as concerned, active citizens, or as agents involved at the grassroots or at the policy level.

The box by the **WWF** refutes a crucial construct in our mindset - that growth implies degradation in the short-term, that it necessarily exacts sacrifice from the poor in the short-term. Not true, says this report.

In this globalised world, are there lessons to be learnt from elsewhere? Another 'third' world country, Mexico, has been going down the path of adjustment, structural adjustment. We can learn from its experience, says **Tushaar Shah, Christopher**

Scott, Stephanie Buechler - *and there are also situations that we need to be wary of.*

Sunita Narain *calls for a recognition that water reforms need to include the informal rural water economy within its ambit, and that it be given its due place. Reforms and effective policies do not necessarily entail merely pricing water as a commodity. It needs to focus on freedom to choose and reinvent our own way of working with water, based on need, and a mix of the new with the old.*

DEVELOPMENT POLICY
