

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study aims to understand and address the paradox at the heart of the groundwater governance challenge in order to promote proactive reforms towards its management. The study focuses on the national, state and local level institutions. At the national and state levels, it analyzes the policy, legal, and institutional arrangements to identify the demand and supply management and incentive structures that have been established for groundwater management. At the local level, it assesses the operations, successes, and constraints facing local institutions in the governance of a number of aquifers within India. It attempts to understand the practical issues that arise in establishing robust national governance frameworks for groundwater and in implementing these frameworks at the local as well as State level.

The report is divided into nine chapters following which a list of references used in the dissertation is provided. The first chapter in the beginning provides a brief background to the study and defines “groundwater governance”. In this report it refers to “those political, social, legal, and administrative systems that are explicitly aimed at developing and managing water resources and water services at different levels of society that rely solely or largely on groundwater resources”.

Chapter 2 provides the legal status of Ground water under constitutional provision of Entry 17 of List II and Entry 56 of List I in the seventh schedule. It also discusses the Central Government Initiatives for circulation of Model Bill to regulate groundwater development to all states and different sections of the water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Chapter 3 describes the method and approach adopted for the preparation of the dissertation. It constitutes of surveys and interviews with farmers, government agencies, NGOs and WUGs to examine the relationship between the political, social and legal issues in the light of institutional set-up that ensures good governance.

Chapter 4 The literature reviews is based on the findings and recommendations of “Deep Wells and Prudence: Towards Pragmatic Action for Addressing Groundwater Overexploitation in India” ,which focuses mainly on aquifer intensive abstraction groundwater issues (World Bank 2010).Number of Groundwater Management Advisory Team (GW-MATE) case profile and strategic overview series publications, which addressed in more detail the local level , reports on groundwater quality-related aspects of Ministry of Water resources and planning Commission.

Chapter 5 is on “The Governance Framework”. A brief overview of key aspects related to ground water and its lacunae in the national water policy of 1987 and 2002, the report points at ground water in the Indian legal system and policy framework, following which the institutions that govern the development and management of ground water is elaborated.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 are on “Case Studies of Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) Project and Hivre Bazar, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra. The chapter discusses in detail about these cases.

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 are on “Findings of survey reports” and “Recommendations”. It states that the existing Central Groundwater Authority needs strengthening and the Indian Easement Act, 1882 requires threadbare interpretation in light of the overexploitation of groundwater by landowners. A summary of recommended implementation actions for managing intensive groundwater abstraction and actions required for protecting ground water from overexploitation. Further it also highlights at the actions required to strengthen CGWA.