

Managing Basic Amenities : A Study of Shortages and Constraints in Residential Water Supplies in Rajasthan V. Ratna Reddy

The present paper makes an attempt to estimate the demand for water in the three major sectors at a disaggregate level. Besides, the extent of shortages in residential water supplies in urban as well as rural areas is analysed in the light of financial and other constraints. It is observed that in most of the districts the present shortages in urban areas are due to the policies pertaining to pricing, supply regulations, etc. rather than due to the supply constraints. Whereas the shortages in rural areas are of quantitative as well as qualitative nature. Very few villages are covered with piped water supplies and the quality of water available is very poor in most of the villages. In number of villages water shortages have led to the development of water markets and villagers pay much higher rate for water when compared with their urban counter parts.

I Introduction

Demand for water can be grouped under three major sectors namely, municipal, irrigation and industrial demands. Though the social priority of these segments assumes the same order, in terms of quantities actually consumed it may not be so. The shares of these three components in total demand vary across the countries or regions depending on the level of development and extent of industrialisation. For instance, in most of the third world countries agricultural sector consumes a lions share of the total water demand while industrial sector accounts for a major share in the developed countries. Thus, in the developing countries like India these relative shares may change in future with the process of development. Looking at the presently developed countries, it is likely that the shares of industry and municipal sectors may grow at a faster rate than the share of agricultural sector in countries like India. Therefore, in the light of limited total water resources, the allocation of water among different uses assumes a great importance in the coming years. In this context it would be useful to understand the present allocation between sectors and the existing shortages.