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Water on paper

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Andhra Pradesh is one of the important agricultural States, accounting for around seven to eight per cent of the production of food grains in the country. It is, among others, served by the nation's two major rivers — Krishna and Godavari. Comprising different agro-climatic zones, the State, created in 1956, is also known for having a large number of tanks.

There are nearly 30 lakh agricultural pumpsets in the State which are covered under the scheme of free power supply.

Vital data

Capturing these vital data and much more, the publication under review is an outcome of a laborious study by a team of enterprising researchers, throwing much light on the southern State. In the form of a coffee table book, the publication does not just deal with water. Physiography and land-use characteristics of the State and livelihood of people are all covered.

The book is full of maps, graphs and tables to explain different complex aspects of the condition of water resources in the State. A box item on the tragic accident of a tank breach leading to the collapse of a railway track in Nalgonda district and washing away of nine bogies of a fast passenger in October 2005, claiming over 100 lives, reminds one of another sad accident involving the death of more than hundred passengers of a passenger train, which was washed away in Dhanushkodi in December 1964 when a cyclone crossed the coast.

The section dealing with water and livelihood provide many interesting data such as economically poor blocks, rural agricultural labourers and persons with least assets. The part concerning water management is the most interesting. It is relevant to others too. The authors have concluded that there is an almost perfect correlation between poverty and lack of access to irrigation.

Even though the authors have acknowledged that they have attempted to analyse the data available in the public domain, they have, by not pricing the publication and making it freely available, sent out a message which carries far more significance than the core subject — information on a critical sector such as water should not be turned into a “tradable commodity.”

WATER RESOURCES OF ANDHRA PRADESH: Sanjay Gupta, Anne Chappuis and Satya Prakash Tucker; Pub. By IWMI-Tata Water Policy Program, [International Water Management Institute](#) and Visual Information System for Action, Hyderabad. Not priced.

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