

Water misuse essay sample

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



OUR pot of water woes is brimming over. That does not seem surprising, according to Ramaswamy R. Iyer, since even though India is one of the few countries in the world which is blessed with an adequate quantity of water, there is a tremendous amount of mismanagement of water resources. While the country has over 4, 000 billion cubic meters (bcm) of annual rainfall and almost 2000 bcm of river flow, the reality remains that we have had constant lamentations about the shortage of water and the destruction of fertile soil because of the overuse of water. According to experts, we have already poisoned most of our major rivers to the extent that their waters are not fit for drinking any more and very soon would be unfit for irrigation as well. Under such circumstances, Iyer suggests, it is important to remove ourselves from the hurly-burly of water conflicts, mull over our relationship with water a little more than it has been possible till now and then, serendipitously think of a constructive way out. That calls for wisdom which has been lacking till now in our management of water resources. In this thought-provoking book, Iyer quickly takes us through the various conflicts that have marked the use and misuse of water since Independence. He looks at the various demand-driven policies made by the government for the management of water. However, fulfilling the demand does not necessarily result in an efficient use of water. For a long time, the main focus of the government was to increase the amount of water for irrigation to increase food grain production. Today, over 80 per cent of the total water used in India is for agriculture. However, of the water available for irrigation, more than 60 per cent is wasted. India is one of the few countries in the world where the cities provide as much as 200 litres per capita per day of water.

It goes without saying that most of it is wasted, used for cleaning toilets, washing cars and maintaining gardens. No wonder our fields and cities constantly starve for water and our states busy fighting over it. Karnataka battles Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra fights with Karnataka, Punjab has its sword drawn against Haryana and Madhya Pradesh is getting ready to battle both Utter Pradesh and Gujarat. The fights have become so intense that today even the Supreme Court is wary of pronouncing firmly on the judicious distribution of water resources lest it be drawn into an irresolvable conflict. While the state governments battle each other for water, they find it increasingly difficult to manage the supply to their own citizens. Hence they are trying to palm off the management of water resources to private parties in the hope that private ownership of water would ensure market rates being charged for the water use and correspondingly less wastage. Whether this would generate even more inequalities is a matter that the states are not willing to consider at the moment. All this suggests that we are completely lacking in water wisdom, insists Iyer. Hitherto we have left the matter of planning for water in the hands of experts. Engineers, planners and economists may be very well in providing suggestions on how best to go about using our water resources, but for every expert there seems to be an equal and opposite expert who under political pressure is willing to provide contrary advice equally strongly backed by scientific evidence.