



Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

Chennai, India

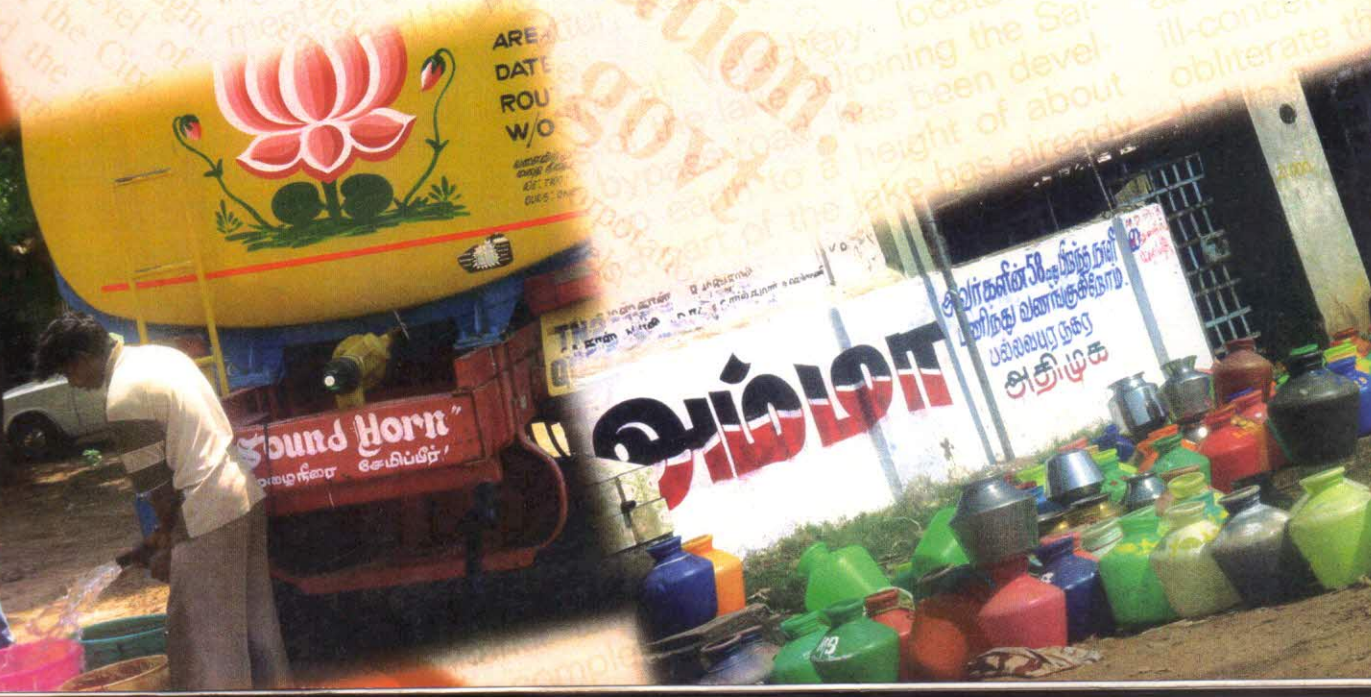
FROM THE STATES
Housing in lake areas
choking water source

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Chennai Water Crisis – Myths & Realities

Indiscriminate development of housing projects around water resources and the already scarce water supply...
Water Action Group (CAG) has sought measures to improve the level of...
In an open letter to the government, the Consumer Action Group (CAG) has sought measures to improve the level of...
...the tank and the building... almost a year with the... pumping or draining of... objection from the local... ter in the nearby lake...
Similar encroachments tanks and lakes at... Tirusvallyur town and at Mogappier lake... advertised to be sold... At Chitlapakkam, ne... with a land spread... away for building... a channel for carry... for houses is to... water...
The CAG points out that... situated in the... dras Metropolitan... pluses are distributed as micro-flood... ill-conceived... obliterate the...



“Chennai’s Water Crisis: Myths and Realities”

Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group

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Chennai

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Introduction:

Countries in the Asia Pacific region including India are facing scarcity of water. Studies reveal that certain regions are facing a particularly acute situation and the state of Tamil Nadu in South India is one of them. The root cause is not just the paucity of resources but primarily their mismanagement. The mismanagement has three main dimensions;

1. The overexploitation of water resources through excessive extraction;
2. Unplanned growth and expansion in infrastructure and construction;
3. Surface and groundwater pollution.

Aquifers have been left bone dry, due to excessive extraction not only for domestic purposes but also for industrial purposes. In coastal areas, the problem gets compounded because of saline water intrusion. Water intensive industries operating in water-rich areas have largely been responsible for not only depletion but also the contamination of water sources. Pollution by leather tanneries in Vellore region, dyeing units in Tirupur region and the SIPCOT industrial estate in Cuddalore are just a few of the many examples in the state.

Several water bodies – lakes, ponds, tanks, backwaters, wetlands and other waterways – are all being subject to unplanned urban development and have now disappeared (or are disappearing) under construction and infrastructure projects. The few that are left often become sites for garbage disposal, particularly in urban areas.

As a result, not only is the quantity of water available for human consumption rapidly dwindling but its quality also is being compromised.

The Millennium Development Goals adopted by all the members of the United Nations makes a call to '*halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015.*'

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, states that '*managing the natural resources base in a sustainable and integrated manner is essential for sustainable development.*' It necessitates '*water and sanitation infrastructure and services development, ensuring that such infrastructure and services meet the needs of the poor and are gender-sensitive.*'

It requires governments and agencies to '*Facilitate access to public information and participation, including by women, at all levels in support of policy and decision-making related to water resources management and project implementation*' and also to '*Adopt prevention and protection measures to promote sustainable water use and to address water shortages.*'

These international declarations are the ideology behind this Study.

