

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE WATER POLICY-2013 (DRAFT)

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 Water is the elixir of life. Water, as a resource is one and indivisible: rainfall, river waters, surface ponds and lakes and ground water are all part of one system. It is part of a larger ecological system and vital to the essential environment for sustaining all life forms. It is a basic need for all life forms. Therefore, water must be managed in the most optimal manner so that consumption and development needs are met on a sustainable basis for ensuring its availability for our progeny.
- 1.2 In Himachal Pradesh availability of water is highly uneven in both space and time. Precipitation is confined to only about three or four months in a year and varies from about 600 mm in Lahaul & Spiti district to around 3200 mm in Dharamshala District Kangra. However, in spite of heavy rain and snow during the rainy season and winter the summer months are periods of water scarcity in many areas as the flow in the rivers and nallahs is quite low and traditional sources also dry up.
- 1.3 Therefore, the usage of water as a scarce and precious resource has to be planned, along with conservation and management measures, on an integrated, environmentally sound and sustainable basis, keeping in view the socio-economic needs of the community.

2. NEED FOR A WATER POLICY

- 2.1 Use of water has many socio-economic aspects and complex issues of equity and social justice as also environmental sustainability, public health concerns and development. Complex issues in regard to water usage and distribution have to be addressed systematically.
- 2.2 Expansion of economic activity inevitably leads to increasing demands for water for diverse purposes: **domestic, commercial, industrial, irrigation, hydro- power generation and recreation, etc.**
- 2.3 The domestic and industrial water demand in rural areas is expected to increase sharply as the development programmes improve economic conditions and **more industries come up there. Impounding of water for hydropower generation will also increase** as the potential in this sector is harnessed. Disputes in sharing of water between individuals and or communities hamper the utilization of water through scientific planning on basin/sub basin basis.