Acknowledgements

What keeps me going is a short dictum from my father. He has regrets that he could not study. His father did not want him to study. So he became a farmer. What he reminds me time to time is: “in future you must not say that your father did not want you to study.” Thus I started my journey.

Honestly speaking, I was introduced to this subject by Professor Shantha Sinha way back in 2004-2005. She had asked me to give a thought to it and see if I am interested. It was not very appealing to me initially, as I always wanted to work on some issues from the core political science discipline such as Democracy, State politics, etc. So I started rather reluctantly; but after a year or so, I found myself in the world of water. To my astonishment, I found water a vast subject and it actually involves all those core issues of political science discipline which I always fancied. However, I cannot stay away from revealing the most important incident that prompted me to unravel this world of water.

In the summer of 2006, while attending an interview for a fellowship grant for the present study at the University of Hyderabad, the experts in the interview board who learned about my research area (the politics of access to water), tried to impose the perception that water is not about politics but economics. They held that it actually falls under the discipline of economics and asked how am I going to explore it. This had an electrifying impact on my thoughts.

And what followed was a quest for understanding the issue of water with a new vigour, across the disciplines of economics and political science. In the months that followed, I was reviewing literature, meeting people, experts and government officials dealing with water, community leaders and my peer groups to have a better understanding of the subject. It took me to several places (Agra, Jaipur, Delhi, Bangalore, Trivandrum, Chennai, Kolkata, and Bidhan Nagar), discovering the landscape of urban India. I had also got the opportunity to be associated with several institutions (Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad Metro Water Board (HMWS&SB), Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE), and National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) which really provided a platform to meet people from water sector.

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