

About the Department

Water has always played a major role in human societies. It is literally a source of life and prosperity and a cause of death and devastation. Because of this close relationship between water and man, water resources management has been viewed as a crucial vehicle for socio-economic development.

Water resources development in the state was taken up in the late 19th century to curb the destructive effects of water, particularly the devastating floods of river Mahanadi. Though some noticeable works were done during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, concerted efforts were not attempted to remove regional disparity. Large parts of the state continued to remain in the grip of flood and famine in the pre-independence period. After independence, water resources development was given top priority in national agenda. Water being a State subject, State Governments were encouraged to invest heavily in hydraulic infrastructure in order to promote growth, mitigate risk and alleviate poverty.

At the initial stages, in Orissa, major & medium irrigation project works were under Public Works Department & minor (flow) irrigation works under the control of Revenue Department. In the year 1962, a separate Department called Irrigation and Power was set up to expedite the construction work of major and medium irrigation projects. Minor irrigation works were transferred to Rural Engineering Organization (REO) formed under Planning & Co-ordination Department. In 1980, the R.E.O was abolished and Minor Irrigation activities were transferred to the Irrigation and Power Department. The year 1990 witnessed major changes in Secretariat Administration, resulting in the reorganization of departments and creation of several new departments. A new department called Rural Development Department was created and Irrigation & Power Department was split into Department of Irrigation and Department of Energy. Major and Medium Irrigation remained with the Department of Irrigation, power generation went to the Department of Energy; Minor irrigation works were transferred to R.D. Department.

In the meantime, other sectoral demands of water such as domestic and urban agglomeration, industrial have been increased considerably which warranted an integrated water resources development and management approach. To face the challenge, first National Water Policy was framed in 1987. Following the principles of National Water Policy, the State Water Policy was framed in 1994, which underscores the need of a coordinated approach to the state's water resources development. Administrative initiatives were taken to bring all water-related subjects under one umbrella, and in the year 1994, Irrigation Department was restructured as Water Resources Department, which became the nodal department with regard to all matters concerning the State's water resources. Following the decision, in the year 1996, the Minor irrigation works dealt by R.D Department and Command Area Development works dealt by Agriculture Department were transferred to the Water Resources Department. As per the Orissa Government Rules of Business, the mandate of this department is given below.

1. Administration of various Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Act and Rules made thereunder.
2. Water for irrigation and navigation canal, drainage embankments and water storage and all works connected therewith.
3. Maintenance of Indian Waterways.
4. Construction and maintenance of building required solely for the administration of canals and embankments of Major and Medium Irrigation.
5. Flood control and river Taming works.
6. All matters relating to civil construction and maintenance of Dam projects except Upper Indravati Hydro-electric Project upto the point of generation in coordination with Energy Deptt.
7. All matters relating to land acquisition, land reclamation and resettlement in connection with the projects pertaining to the Department.
8. Command Area Development.
9. Excavation, execution and maintenance of Minor Irrigation as defined by Govt. of India from time to time and Tank Projects.
10. Lift Irrigation Corporation.
11. Orissa Pani Panchayats.

Organization:

The Department of Water Resources is headed by Shri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, IAS as Commissioner-cum- Secretary since 2.11.2008. The Department has 7 wings namely; Major & Medium irrigation, Minor Irrigation (flow & Lift), Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Land Acquisition, Finance, CAD&WM & Monitoring. Each wing is headed by an Officer. To achieve various objectives, the Department is assisted by seven organizations. The activities of these organizations are enumerated below.

Major & Medium : This organization deals with following works:

- Formulation of State Water Plan & State Water Policy.
- Implementation of Major & Medium Irrigation Projects and their operation & maintenance.
- Involving farmers in irrigation system operation & maintenance activities relating to Major & Medium irrigation projects.
- Interstate matters relating to rivers common to neighboring States.
- Flood control and Drainage works.
- Industrial water supply & collection of industrial water rate.

Minor (flow) : This organization looks after following works.

- Implementation of Minor irrigation Projects (flow) above CCA 40 ha and their operation and maintenance.

- Pani Panchayat (Participatory Irrigation Management) works of Minor (flow) Irrigation Projects.

Ground Water Survey & Investigation: Deals with exploration and regulation of ground water including creating mass awareness for artificial recharge in view of depletion of resources.

Command Area Development: Deals with construction of field channels, field drains & other multi-disciplinary activities of irrigated agriculture in selected command areas below the outlet.

Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation Ltd.: This Corporation was established in 1973 and is presently involved in construction of Lift Irrigation Projects.

Water & Land Management Institute: This autonomous organization was set up in 1996 to impart advanced training to officers and farmers associated with irrigated agriculture activities. Besides, this organization is also involved in research and consultancy activities pertaining to land, water and crop management.

Orissa Construction Corporation Ltd. (OCC) : The Corporation was established in the year 1962, under the Companies Act, 1956, as a wholly owned Government of Orissa enterprise to undertake construction activities. Later, the activities of this Corporation are extended to the field of construction consultancy and IT services.

For sustainable development of water resources in the state, the Department of Water Resources has taken a number of initiatives. This Annual Report presents an account of activities undertaken by the Department during the year 2008-09.