

Environmental Status of Leh and Adjoining Areas

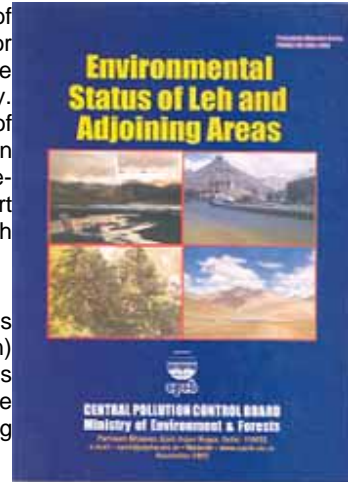
Foreword

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has taken up the task of preparing the State-of-the-Environment Reports and Pollution Profiles for different areas. This will help in dissemination of useful information on the status and trends of environmental quality in various parts of the country. Such reports/profiles are needed particularly for those areas in respect of which adequate information is not collated and documented. With this in view, CPCB carried out a study and brought out a State-of-the-Environment Report for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The present report is based on studies in leh district and its surroundings located in ladakh region lapped in the midst of snow-clad fringes of the Himalaya.

The report brings to light some interesting issues. Though the region is extensively drained by major rivers, water (an acute resource in the region) is neither abstracted for meeting drinking water needs nor does it serve as an affordable energy alternate in the form of hydel power mainly due to the burdensome silt land. Groundwater (tube wells) is mainly used for drinking water and devices installed for tapping solar energy to meet

power requirement. The water quality in rivers is suitable for human consumption except for high suspended solids and dissolved iron. leh town is supplied exclusively by tube well water which is meeting the water quality standards even without any conventional treatment. Total ban on polybag usage and voluntary refilling facility of mineral water bottles have helped in curbing the menace of plastic wastes.

I am grateful to my colleagues inspired by Dr. B. Sengupta, Member Secretary, CPCB for their painstaking efforts in conducting the survey for preparation of this report. I am also grateful to Shri Brij M. Sharma, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), leh who helped our team in finding their bearings in the region besides arranging for their travel permits. I hope, the findings of our team will be useful to the concerned agencies and general public.




Dilip Biswas
Chairman, CPCB