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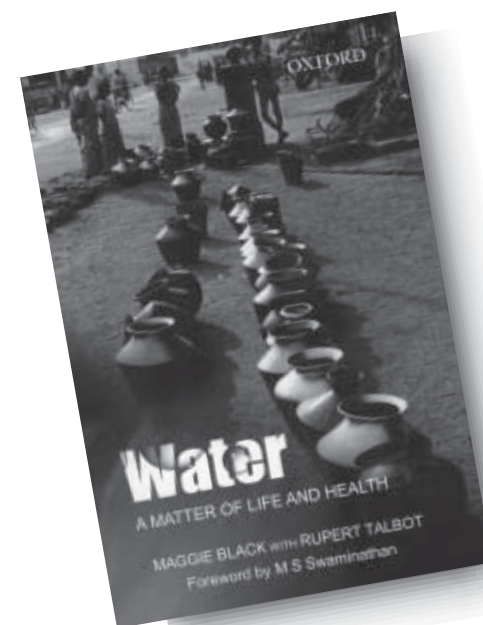
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Water

A Matter of Life and Health

MAGGIE BLACK with
RUPERT TALBOT
Foreword by M.S. Swaminathan

0195669312 2004 Rs 545

WATER **A Matter of Life and Health**

Maggie Black has written extensively on water-related issues for Unicef and other international organizations. Rupert Talbot has spent over thirty years with Unicef's Water and Environmental Sanitation Programmes in Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and India.

At a time when India faces serious problems of freshwater scarcity, groundwater depletion and environmental pollution, there is much to be learned from current and past programme experiences. This book examines critically what has been done and needs to be done to fulfill the promise of 'drinking water and sanitation for all'.

The central theme is Unicef's 35-year programme of support to rural water supplies in India—the largest and longest in the organization's history— which has helped bring water and sanitation to millions of villagers. However, as water tables drop and contamination mounts, serious difficulties persist. How will they and their children cope?

This book explores community-led, NGO and government approaches alike. From the Rajasthani farmer facing the fifth successive year of drought, to the sanitation *mistri* in West Bengal, to the Mysore school children chanting safe water messages, this is an account which brings to life India's perennial problems with water and health, asking how —and whether— they can be solved.

Readership:

This interdisciplinary and topical book echoes environmental thinking in India and will appeal to environmentalists, public health specialists, water activists and development practitioners. It will be especially useful to policy-makers, NGOs, international aid agencies, and researchers in the water supply sector.

This is a fascinating book, the story of how clean water and better sanitation were brought to thousands of Indian villages. The story is far from being one of linear progress: the ideological and technical debates come alive in these pages, as development fashions change and technological solutions vie with those rooted in community mobilization. This is development as it really is: complex, slow, conflictual, uneven – but ultimately inspiring.

— SIMON MAXWELL, Director,
Overseas Development Institute, London

This story of the largest rural water supply programme in the world should be read by everyone with a stake or interest in development policy, health services and poverty reduction strategies. It is one of the best analyses of what works and what can go wrong in rural development I have ever seen. UNICEF deserves credit for facilitating such an interesting and honest learning piece for us all.

— CLAUDE MARTIN, Director General, *WWF International*

'Maggie Black and Rupert Talbot have produced a wonderfully readable account of what India has faced, and now faces, in terms of rural drinking water crises. Their book will help us chart our future mission.'

— SUNITA NARAIN, Director,
Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi

This primary source book on drinking water and sanitation is going to be of immense value to state governments, field workers, policy-makers, donors and NGOs. A rare combination of social science insights and policy studies, it provides vital reference material for researchers and academics interested in people's participation and the use of technology for meeting basic needs.

— N.C. SAXENA, former Secretary,
Planning Commission, Government of India

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