

## **ABSTRACT**

Most African governments are aiming to provide a supply of clean and safe water for rural people by the year 2000. Faced with a rapid population growth rate of four percent per annum (the highest in the world) and limited high-potential agricultural land, the Kenyan government recognizes the need to examine the problems and prospects of developing the water resources of the marginal, semiarid areas for agricultural and domestic use. Wise management of the scarce resources of these areas entails an understanding of the factors which influence supply and demand of water and is a matter of urgency. Few studies exist on total or per capita water consumption in rural areas. This paper presents the results of a recent survey of rural agricultural and domestic water consumption in the Machakos district, an ecologically marginal area of Kenya