

Abstract:

Water is an essential resource for both the social and economic development in any country and when it is available in sufficient quantities and acceptable quality; it is extensively used for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes including drinking and washing, watering of livestock, growing crops and the manufacture of finished goods that require wet production processing. In Kenya, adequate water is available only in 20% of the country's landmass whilst in the rest and biggest portion of the country including the arid and semi-arid lands, water has to be mined from the ground or harvested in dams, and pans prior to its use in any sector of development. Due to the scarcity of water in the arid and semi-arid regions of the country and its uneven and poor distribution in the high and medium potential areas, it needs to be conserved, protected and apportioned for its various uses in an integrated and sustainable manner. In this paper, an overview of the water resources in the country is provided with particular focus on the Tana basin, which is one of the most important drainage basins in the country. The main issues that need to be addressed in managing the available water resources in an integrated manner are provided and the necessary institutional frameworks for integrated and sustainable water management in the basin proposed.