



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI  
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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This study is concerned with social aspects of sustainable development. It attempts to understand social sustainability by examining the water supply systems in Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya. The focus is on ‘water equity’ in terms of domestic water access and supply, and ‘water governance’ practiced by the traditional institutions. This study also explores the traditional institutions of the *dorbar shnongs* operating in the urban setting in the context of domestic water distribution. The nature of water governance carried out by these institutions is examined to understand their role and contribution to water governance in the city. Comparisons are drawn to highlight the practices that are directly and indirectly contributing to water supply and how as a part of the hydrosocial cycle, these institutions affect the outcome. The study closely examined three localities in the municipality area and four localities in the non-municipality area. Of the many significant findings, one shows that closely knit communities, through the traditional institutions, can successfully distribute water and look after and protect water sources. The *dorbar shnongs* play a vital role in the augmenting water supply in some localities in the city. Water creates interdependencies among the actors. But this is weakened by modern mechanisms of government and urbanization itself.