

INSEE NEWSLETTER

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Designed by:
INSEE Secretariat at IEG, Delhi

FROM J. BANDYOPADHYAY, PRESIDENT, INSEE

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the publication of the Newsletter of the INSEE is being resumed. On behalf of all the members of the Executive Committee (EC) of the INSEE, I convey greetings to all our members and readers. In a period of academic development when the limits of economic assessment of the ecological processes and endowments are constantly expanding, exchange of knowledge and ideas among the various disciplines of natural, social and policy sciences is essential. The Newsletter of the INSEE is an attempt to promote such processes of interdisciplinary understanding. It is a pleasure to see that the fourth Newsletter of INSEE is ready for publication.

The past year had been a very eventful year for the INSEE, when our Society hosted the Ninth Biennial Conference of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE). Several books are in the process of being published as a result of that Conference. The INSEE, however, needs to strengthen its membership and network within India. The members of the EC have taken several steps to enhance our membership. I urge all readers to help the society in this task. The increased membership will be useful for the INSEE in making its inputs to the national policy making process.

Forthcoming Events

- 1. Environmental Governance**
the Fifth Biennial Conference of
"The Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE)"
21-23 January 2009 in Ahmedabad, India
- 2. ISEE – 2008**
"Applying Ecological Economics for Social
and Environmental Sustainability"
7-11 August 2007, at Nairobi, Kenya

ISEE CONFERENCE AT DELHI – 2006

The Ninth Biennial Conference of the International Society for Ecological Economics took place at the Indian Habitat Centre in New Delhi, between December 15th to 18th 2006; which was organized by ISEE (International Society for Ecological Economics) and INSEE (Indian Society for Ecological Economics). The theme for conference was “Ecological Sustainability and Human well-being.”



Amartya Sen and Joan Martinez-Alier - the argumentative Indian and the argumentative Catalan: Leah Temper.

Pushpam Kumar, The Secretary of INSEE, Executive committee was the main organizer of ISEE-2006.

Mr. Kirit Parikh, member of the planning commission, was Guest of Honour at the Inaugural session. He has explained the prospects for energy supply in the rapidly growing economy of India.

ISEE - President, Joan Martinez Alier, has given introduction to the conference.

Jayanta Bandyopadhyay (President, INSEE) was also a speaker in the same session.

C. Hanumantha Rao (President of Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi) and Robert Costanza, founder of the journal “Ecological Economics: First President of ISEE back in 1989, was other speakers of inaugural session.

In the plenary sessions, Helmut Haberl spoke on the methodologies for measuring the “metabolism of society” with results for many regions between 1700 and 2000; John McNeill traced a survey of environmental historiography across the world, and had some remarks to offer on the relations between environmental history and ecological economics. Jacqueline McGlade showed the work on land use by the European Environment Agency of which she is the brilliant executive director; Sunita Narain, an activist and thinker, spoke on the political economy of defecation and water use in the conurbation of Delhi; Simon Levin explained the history of ecology until its recent encounter with the discipline of economics, revising the evolution of social norms to protect the environment. The plenary sessions were chaired by Kanchan Chopra (cofounder of INSEE), Charles Perrings



Robert Costanza: Virginia Hooper



Pushpam Kumar and Peter May: www.isee2006.com

(past-president, ISEE), and Peter May (president-elect, ISEE).

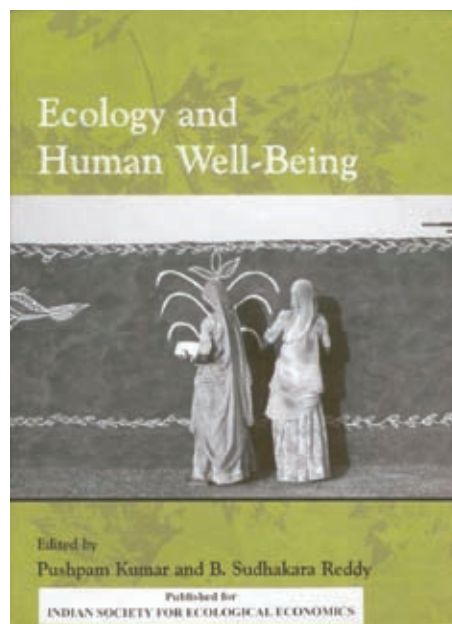
Perhaps for the first time in the history of ISEE conferences, there were sessions on corporate accountability, led by Peter Utting, ESEE president, Arild Vatn, was a plenary speaker focusing on the history of corporations and liability rules. Other sessions under the guidance of Juni Paavola, Kinsuk Mitra, Ron Janssen, dealt with participatory methods, environmental conflicts, and multicriteria evaluation of projects and policies.

A roundtable honoured the memory of Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen (1906-1994) analyzing the significance of his work for Ecological Economics, with contributions by John Gowdy, Kozo Mayumi and others. The Board of the ISEE decided in Delhi to make a Georgescu-Roegen Award every two years to a scholar less than 35 years of age who has published in the journal "Ecological Economics".

The Kenneth Boulding prize for 2006 was awarded to Richard B. Norgaard, who received a standing ovation. To summarize his lecture, he traced an optimistic balance of the advances of our field of study as shown by the presence of many trans-disciplinary ecological economists in the teams that wrote the Millennium Environmental Assessment.

In the final session Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize in Economics, introduced by Anantha Duraiappah, discussed poverty and environment, the threats to the environment but also its improvement, and how environmental services not only satisfy livelihood needs but also allow the deployment of human freedoms. This was followed by thirty minutes of questions and answers enjoyed by audience and speaker. The pragmatic virtues of the Stern report on the economics of climate change were defended by Sen when questioned by Clive Spash. According to Sen, Stern says that climate change is a gigantic market failure.

New book from INSEE Family



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SAVE THE TIGERS?

Gopal K Kadekodi

Ever since the Tiger Reserves project was launched in 1973, by now as many as 28 Reserves have been designated. These Reserves cover a total area of 37873 sq kms of forest area (with 29893 sq kms of forest cover in the Reserve and another 25439 sq kms out side the Reserve as buffers in 2002). According to the Tiger Task Force Report (2006) India as a whole there are about 3642 tigers (in 2001-02), of which about 1576 are within the Tiger Reserves, and over 2000 tigers are out side the Reserves.

The most recent tiger counts carried in 2006-7 however, tells a sad story about the survival of these big cats in India. From the recent Census in 2007, just about 461 tigers are estimated to be in the Reserves from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh (excluding the Indravati Reserve). These are anywhere from 40% to 60% down from the 1973 estimates.

Over the years, significant decline in forest cover and biodiversity within the Reserves have been found. This fact itself raises a fundamental question about the survival possibilities in areas outside the Reserves, wherein tigers are in conflict with both humans and other animals to hunt for the limited biomass.

Two different questions therefore arise. First, with the fact that many more tigers are outside of the Tiger Reserves (about 56%), investments on the existing Reserves do not seem to be effective. Second, even with two important Acts to resolve the man-animal conflicts, namely, the modified Wildlife (Protection) Act in 2006 and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, the country is still finding it difficult to resolve the rehabilitation and co-existence problems of the Reserve forest dwellers.

Economics of valuation of biodiversity resources is still very primitive. The fundamental purpose of such Reserves is to create aesthetic values of tigers and related biodiversity, which are not easy to measure. There are no good market based institutions on biodiversity conservation. The solution to this seems to be empowering

and rewarding the forest dwellers in wildlife protection, in return they should pledge to co-habitat with them.



Reference:
Gopal K Kadekodi (1997):
'Valuation of Biodiversity',
in Uppendra Dhar
(Ed.): **Himalayan
Biodiversity Action
Plan**, Gyanodaya
Prakashan, Nainital.

“HOW SHOULD INDIA RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE?”

(First Published in Economic Times, July 17, 2007)

Kanchan Chopra
Director Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi

With the publication of the latest IPCC Report and the Stern Review of the Economics of climate change, it is relevant to ask: how is India likely to be impacted and what should we do about it? The IPCC report (2007) states that coastal lands, deltas areas in South Asia and the monsoon will be impacted. According to the report,

- At lower latitudes, crop productivity is projected to decrease for even small local temperature increases (1-2°C), which would increase risk of hunger.
- The most vulnerable industries, settlements and societies are generally those in coastal and river flood plains, those whose economies are closely linked with climate-sensitive resources, and those in areas prone to extreme weather events, especially where rapid urbanisation is occurring.

The above implies that agricultural productivity in some parts of India, in particular the arid and semi-arid regions will be impacted negatively. The anticipated change will also impact vulnerable populations in deltaic regions of the country. India must take a proactive stand on this, factor in climate change into medium term development projections and target at sustainable development using non-conventional energy sources and new technologies

The following possibilities exist for designing policy responses towards the above. To begin with, we can examine emerging world markets in carbon credits and create appropriate structures to enable our industry to take advantage of similar market opportunities. Given that a range of technologies with varying emissions are in use in India, is there a possible fiscal mechanism by which India can create its own CDM fund? This can perhaps be on the lines of the EU emissions trading scheme with state and sector specific emission allowances over and above which credits need to be purchased and this results in an emerging market in carbon credits? A recent survey estimated that 65% of companies in Annex I (largely developed countries) countries are planning to buy credits rather than cut their own emissions. Indian companies are also likely to have similar behavioral approaches and the question is relevant.

Secondly, opportunities for better use of by-products (such as GHG emissions) exist and some productivity increasing win-win situations have been shown to exist. Note for instance that Shell is pumping CO₂ from a refinery in the Botlek area of the Netherlands to green houses producing fruit and vegetables. Could we use such technologies? At what kind of international price of carbon? What would be the impact on productivity of these products? And in which parts of the country? Similarly, technologies for methane capture from coal fields, from animal waste and perhaps rice fields deserve to be studied in depth as possible win-win options.

To encourage alternative sources of energy, better planning for integrating supply of power from non conventional sources with that from traditional sources can be undertaken. Government regulation (in the form of fixed quotas from renewable sources) can be combined with reliance on markets for competing renewable sources to create innovative institutional structures as has been tried out successfully in California.

Thirdly, planning for cities which are vulnerable in particular in coastal areas needs to take into account impending possibilities of sea-level rise. The current Urban Renewal Mission and other initiatives on urban

planning need to view cities as “urban ecosystems” Also existing Coastal Zone Regulations and related law needs to be understood and implemented better. This of course is a matter of improved governance.

Finally, while the IPCC predictions with regard to climate change based on the global state of knowledge, are enough for us to initiate pro-active policy, more precise regional models of impact of climate change for South Asia are needed. The IPCC reports, for instance that “crop yields could decrease up to 30% in Central and South Asia by the mid-21st century.” This needs to be investigated further and research in this area needs to be given priority.

As we pursue some of the above mentioned forward looking policy options, we shall ensure that India is viewed internationally as a fast growing nation which also views its commitments to the future of planet earth in a responsible fashion. We owe it to ourselves and to the planet.

A REVIEW ON Report of the Expert Group on Groundwater Management and Ownership, by Planning Commission, New Delhi, September 2007.

Groundwater Users Wake up: Danger Ahead !

In India, groundwater, categorized under minor irrigation, has proven its major contribution through its 19 million wells; 55% of irrigation, 85% of rural and 50% of urban drinking water supplies comes from groundwater. Factors like, short-gestation, better control over its operation, and subsidized power supply and loan schemes of the government have boosted up, puncturing more holes on the earth to tap groundwater. Over the last four decades, India has witnessed more withdrawals than its recharge levels, causing environmental damages to the resource base and its costs. India is going to face severe groundwater scarcity in the year 2025 and in 2050 the demand is likely to outstrip the supply of ground water.

All these, have led to raise questions like, how do we make groundwater use more sustainable, who owns it, and what kind of policies, legal frame and institutions would be more useful. To answer these questions, the Planning Commission of the Government of India, had set up an Expert Group Committee in 2005, which submitted its report in May 2007. The report is an outcome of two years of labour put in by a group of groundwater management experts. The report provides an excellent status review of groundwater management and its ownership. Reader-friendly presentation makes it easy for readers to browse through. Labour of love by the committee members also indicated in its good dissection of problems and exposing its intensity (e.g, table 7 provides options for decision makers, based on various states' experiments).

Tracing the ownership of groundwater to land owners from the Indian Easements Act of 1882, the report lays the way for invocation of both Environmental Protection Act and internationally accepted principle of Public Trust Doctrine to be adopted by the State. The expert group recommends a need to differentiate the legal approach in urban areas from that in rural areas. The report shares the view that a new legislation to amend the Easement Act to make groundwater a State or community property could be rather complex, both from the point of view of legal steps and the follow-up monitoring activities involved. While ownership and use rights

rest with private land owners, state can intervene and regulate when extraction is excessive. Hence, no change in the basic legal regime relating to ownership or use rights has been suggested. Importantly, only a few states have legislated regulation and management of groundwater on the basis of the Model Groundwater Bill, which is restrictive, iniquitous and difficult to enforce.

Involving PRIs and user groups, as suggested by the report, should be seriously considered by all states. At rural level, the report laid the ground for formation of groundwater management at village levels and recommends the forward and backward linkages with various institutions involved in groundwater management. The report suggests panchayats to organize a village Groundwater Cooperation Committee to allocate water rights and oversee that farmers restrict their use of groundwater within their rights. Importantly, to facilitate implementation of these management options, sufficient groundwater data needs to be generated by Central and State Groundwater Boards. Finally, the mandate of the CGWB needs to be shifted to a role of facilitator rather than a regulator.

Recharge schemes have not been beneficial to the desired extent due to incompatibility between selection of sites and technology with the hydrological conditions. At the same time groundwater is not a renewable resource and it should be treated as "Conditionally renewable resource". Therefore the user has the obligation to recharge it. Especially farming community should have the provision in every piece of land or every hectare of land with bunds to prevent runoff of rainwater. Restricting groundwater extraction to less than long-term recharge levels is a good suggestion. But it requires enabling the local agencies with adequate teeth to effectively monitor this. Unfortunately, most of the data is still six years old. This is high time, in this information technology enabled country, to focus on up-dating data on annual basis through appropriate mechanisms.

Linking basic reasons for excessive extraction of groundwater as pricing of crop, supply of free/ subsidized power supply, the report recommends the use of various instruments like efficient use, restricted power supply/removal of unwanted subsidies to ensure the proper utilization of groundwater. However, the report also highlights the fact that higher electricity prices would adversely affect water markets, the brunt of which has to be borne by small and marginal farmers.

Membership

Membership Eligibility

Membership of the INSEE shall be open to any individual or corporate body who is in agreement with the objectives of the Society and who is prepared to work for their furtherance.

Subscription

The subscription for annual membership falls due at the beginning of each calendar year.

Annual membership fees should be paid in advance in the month of January, and for new members whenever membership commences and in January thereafter.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to revise the membership fee for any category from time to time, subject to a ratification by the General Body.

Membership Details

Individual Life Membership: Rs.2000/-

Ordinary Membership: Rs.200/- per year

Student Membership: Rs.100/- per year (for five years only)

Corporate Body (including registered Bodies and Trusts)

Ordinary Membership

Non-Profit Institutional-2500-per year

Others-3000 -per year

Life Membership :Rs.10,000/-

Membership form:

<http://www.ecoinsee.org/memberform.htm>

Address Change form:

<http://www.ecoinsee.org/address.pdf>

The expert group suggests separating feeders for agricultural pumps so as to ensure that non-agricultural losses of electricity are not wrongly attributed to farmers. The group also argues that if uninterrupted power is supplied at stable voltage during pre-specified period, farmers might be encouraged to use water more efficiently. The committee observes that groundwater is an open access common property resource and this nature influences people to overexploit leading to tragedy of commons.

A review of groundwater management in Spain, Mexico, United States indicates non-suitability to Indian conditions. However, the strategy adopted by Oman to combine demand side measures to control and conserve water resources with supply side measures to augment the resources has the potential for successful replication in India.

The market based economic instruments should be evolved and implemented to regulate exploitation of ground water apart from encouraging them with economic instruments such as subsidies to harvest rainwater, switching over to tap water with adequate and timely supply of tap water by municipalities. The report further suggests that the effectiveness of groundwater management could be substantially improved through investments in watershed development, water conservation and artificial recharge based on application of advanced technical tools such as remote sensing, GIS, integrated with information technology systems.

¹This quick review is a combined effort of K.V. Raju, Lenin Babu, C. Nanjundaiah, Sarbani Mukerjee. All from the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore.

OPEN HOUSE

**We welcome your views and comments on
National Environment Policy 2006, and will be
part of next newsletter.**

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY – 2006

Bijlee M. Deshmukh

National Environment Policy – 2006 has been approved by the union cabinet on 18th May 2006. A diverse developing society of India faces numerous challenges in the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental arenas. Major challenges, which attract immediate attention, are poverty, health care and education.

India, as a nation understands the need for balance and harmony between economic, social and environmental needs of the country. The National Environment policy (N E P) – 2006 is intended to be a statement of India's commitment to making a positive contribution to international efforts. The N E P is intended to mainstream environment concerns in all development activities.

The social and economic context of population growth has been detailed in the National population policy 2000, which recognizes stabilization of population for sustainable development. It is increasingly evident that poor environmental quality has adversely effected human health environmental factors are estimated as being responsible in some cases for nearly 20 percent of the burden of disease in India.

Objectives of NE P

1. Conservation of critical Environmental resources.
2. Intra-generational Equity Livelihood security for the poor.
3. Inter-generational Equity.
4. Integration of environmental concerns in Economic and social development.
5. Efficiency in Environmental Resource use.
6. Environmental Governance.
7. Enhancement of resources for Environmental conservation.

Principles

The policy has evolved from the recognition that only such development is sustainable, which respects ecological constraints, and the imperatives of justice.

1. Human Beings are at the centre of sustainable development concerns.
2. The Right to Development.
3. Environmental Protection is an Integral part of the Development process.
4. The precautionary Approach.
5. Economic Efficiency.
6. Entities with "Incomparable" values.
7. Equity
8. Legal Liability.
9. Public Trust Doctrine.
10. Decentralization.
11. Integration.
12. Environmental Standard Setting.
13. Preventive Action.
14. Environmental off Setting.

Strategies and Actions.

Action plans would need to be prepared on identified themes by the concerned agencies at all levels of Government – Central state / UT, and local.

Some suggested themes are as follows:

1. Regulatory Reforms – under this theme, the major concern is given on, Revisiting the policy and legislative Framework. With this Process related reforms, substantive reforms that particularly consist of :-

1. Environment and Forests Clearances.
2. Coastal Areas.
3. Living Modified Organisms.
4. Environmentally Sensitive Zones.
5. Monitoring of Compliances.
6. Use of Economic principles in Environmental Decision making.

2. Enhancing and Conserving Environmental Resources: Perverse production and consumption practices are the immediate causes of environmental degradation, but an exclusive focus on these aspects alone is insufficient to prevent environmental harm. The major cause for environmental resource degradation lies in policy, which needs to be redressed.

Environmental resources are outlined as:

1. Land degradation.
2. Desert Ecosystem- It is of major concern as near about 40% of India's geographical area consists of arid and semiarid region.
3. Forests and wildlife.
4. Biodiversity, traditional Knowledge, and Natural Heritage.
5. Fresh water Resources-which includes
 1. River systems.
 2. Ground water.
 3. Wetlands.
6. Mountain Ecosystems.
7. Coastal Resources.
8. Pollution Abatement –consists of Air, water, soil and Noise pollution
9. Conservation of Manmade Heritage.
10. Climate change.

3. Environmental standards, Management systems, Certification and Indicators:

Under this theme, sub themes cover:

1. Environmental standards and
2. Environmental Management systems, Ecolab ling and Certification.

4. Clean Technologies and Innovations

5. Environmental Awareness, Education and Information

6. Partnerships and stakeholder Involvement

7. Capacity Building

8. Research and Development

9. International Cooperation

10. Review of the Policy.

11. Review of Implementation.

INSEE – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006-2008

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The membership fee can be paid either through a cheque (within Delhi)
or a Demand Draft drawn in favour of INSEE,
and posted along with the enclosed membership form.

Website of INSEE <http://www.ecoinsee.org>

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