

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INSEE FOR THE YEAR
2001-2002

Annual Report of the Activities of the Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE) for the year 2001-02

This report covers the major developments of activities of the Society for the period since April 2001 till date. These activities have been the following.

1. Workshop on Methodological Issues in Ecological Economics.

The INSEE workshop on Methodological Issues in Interdisciplinary Research on the Environment was conducted as a 3-day Workshop and hosted by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED) in the Campus of the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore during 22-24 July 2001. The objectives of the workshop was to discuss the following:

- (a) the types of interdisciplinary crossings that are needed for successfully addressing environmental issues in research, teaching and policy advocacy on the resources and the environment
- (b) the philosophical, cultural, institutional and practical constraints in such activities involving interdisciplinarity and means for overcoming these constrains to facilitate multidisciplinary approach in research, education and policy decisions on the environment.

The workshop was organised and co-ordinated by Dr. S. Lele, Prof. Bina Agarwal and Prof. Gopal Kadekodi. It was attended by 20 primary participants and several eminent scholars from different disciplines including Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Ecology, Environmental Science, Climatology, Geography, Forestry and other Technology studies. Prof. Sheila Jasanoff of Harvard University delivered the keynote address in the inaugural session. The eminent scholars who spoke in the workshop or chaired in the plenary sessions included Prof. Charles Perrings (University of York), Prof. Juan Martinez-Alier (University of Barcelona), Prof. Dilip Ahuja (NIAS, Bangalore), Prof. Anand Patwardhan (IIT Mumbai), Prof. P. S. Ramakrishnan (JNU, New Delhi), Dr. Ramchandra Guha (Bangalore), Prof. Kailash Mahapatra (ISI Calcutta), Prof. Kaushik Basu (Cornell University) and Prof. Jyoti Parikh (IGIDR, Mumbai).

The discussions in the workshop were considered to be very useful and sensitising for the participants as indicated by their feedback. A large number of ideas and suggestions emerged from the deliberations which included, among others (a) compilation of a reader of interdisciplinary research on the environment for INSEE members, (b) holding a one day training workshop on "Basic Hydrology for Social scientists" preceding the Second Biennial Conference on Water and (c) broadening INSEE's membership base by reaching out to ecologists, environmental scientists and non economics social scientists in India who are working on

interdisciplinary issues. The workshop also suggested institutional changes required to be brought into the functioning of UGC, MOEF, ICSSR and Planning Commission so that their respective designs of activities concerning curriculum for degree programmes, environmental management capacity building, sponsorship of research projects or faculty recruitment and project appraisal for investment policy decisions etc. could effectively incorporate the basic elements of the interdisciplinarity in research, teaching and policies on the environment. The full proceedings of the workshop has now been prepared and edited by the three co-ordinators of the workshop and published. We thank Dr. S. Lele, Prof. Gopal Kadekodi and Prof. Bina Agarwal for making the workshop a success.

2 . Training Programme -cum- Workshop on Hydrology for Social Scientists.

It may be noted here that we have already implemented one of the suggestions regarding workshop cum training programme on hydrology for social scientists. This was organised it as a one-day pre-biennial conference event on 18 December 2001 at the Indian Institute of Forest Management Bhopal. This programme was attended by more than 20 participants and addressed by 3 eminent experts who joined it as resource persons. The programme was considered to be very useful by the participants for capacity building in interdisciplinary research. The detailed report of this Training Programme -cum-Workshop will be available at the office of the INSEE. We thank Dr. S. Lele and Dr. Madhu Verma for organising this training programme-cum-workshop very efficiently at short notice.

3. Second Biennial Conference on Water Resources, Sustainable Livelihoods and Eco-System Services

The Second Biennial Conference of INSEE on Water Resources, Sustainable Livelihoods and Eco-System Services was held at the Indian Institute of Forest Management Bhopal on 19-21 December 2001 (for 2 ½ days) which hosted it. It received financial support from Swedish International Development Agency and Winrock International. The Conference was attended by 110 researchers, practitioners and scholars as participant and resource person. The sessions at the conference gave opportunities to scholars to present their findings and have dialogue on topics ranging from technical to interdisciplinary issues.

Prof. C. H. Hanumantha Rao, President of INSEE delivered a thought provoking Presidential Address "Some Reflections on Sustainable Use of Water for Irrigation in Indian agriculture" in the conference in the inaugural session. The conference was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Digvijay Singh who emphasized the interrelated issues of water resource and the livelihood of the poor in our society. Prof. Y. K. Alagh delivered the valedictory address on the emerging institutions for rural development and their relevance in the context of water resources in the concluding session of the conference.

There were in all 11 technical sessions on the following sub-themes, in which 31 papers were presented by participants:

- Industrial pollution and water quality
- Water conservation and demand management
- Valuation of water quality and quality
- Ecosystem services and wetland management
- Urban water supply
- Coastal water resources
- Institutions of water management
- Water conflict and political economic issues.

The conference included two round tables on the following themes:

- Methodological issues in linking the natural sciences and the social sciences
- Water policy

In addition to the above three plenary sessions were organized which were addressed by eminent resource persons like Prof.J Bandyopadhyay, Prof.N. Sengupta, Prof. Brij Gopal on interdisciplinary as well as policy related issues. Shri Ramaswamy Iyer's paper was presented by Shri V.B.Eswaran in a plenary session. Prof.John Proops, President of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) also addressed the participants of the Conference in one of the plenary sessions to speak on ISEE's initiatives to promote research in the emerging area of ecological economics and on the possible co-ordination between INSEE and ISEE for reaching the benefits of such initiatives to the researchers of developing countries like India. Besides, senior experts like Professors Kanchan Chopra, A. Vaidyanathan, Ram Prasad, Katar Singh, K.G.Saxena, P.S.Ramakrishnan, Jyoti Parikh, M.N.Murty, B.N.Goldar, D.N.Pandey, Suprava Patnaik, Bhaskar Vira, Mr.V.S.Rekhi, Mrs.Nirmala Buch and Dr.Peter Mollinga among others chaired sessions or spoke as a panalist in the round table to lead discussions. A detailed report of the Conference has been prepared by Dr. Purnamita Dasgupta and Dr.Sarachchandra Lele and has been published in the Economic and Political Weekly vol 38, No. 18 May 4-10, 2002.

We must mention here that INSEE is extremely grateful to the IIFM Bhopal and Dr.Madhu Verma in particular for hosting and organizing excellently the holding of the conference

The work on publication of the proceedings of the conference is in progress.

4. Round Table on Water Policy:

Following the Second Biennial Conference on the broad theme of Water, it was decided that a Round Table on Water Policy issues would be organized. The Round Table discussions took place on 10 May 2002 in New Delhi. Participants included senior officials from the Ministry of Water Resources and the Department of Agricultural Research and Education of the Central Government, researchers from a number of institutions, representatives of non-governmental organizations supporting watershed development and water management, and representatives of bilateral and other donor agencies. Apart from background materials, papers written on policy issues by invited authors were circulated to the participants. The President of INSEE Prof. C.H.Hanumantha Rao, opened the discussions, after which Shri Som Pal, Member, Planning Commission gave the keynote address. Smt.Radha Singh, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Water Resources, then spoke to present the views and concerns of the Ministry. This was followed by remarks by discussants who commented on the policy papers and gave their observations and views. The rest of the day produced a lively discussion and presentation of views by the participants. The main points which emerged at the Round Table will be brought out in a document which will be circulated to the policy makers in the government, research institutions and leading NGOs.

5. Representation of INSEE in the ISEE Conference:

We are glad to record that Dr. Pushpam Kumar visited Tunisia and participated in the conference of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) held there on 6-9 March 2002 as nominee of the INSEE. Dr.Kumar presented INSEE's methodological approach of multidisciplinary in the analysis of environmental issues in sustainable development perspective. His presentation was very well received. ISEE financed the visit of Dr.Kumar to attend this conference. His detailed report on the Conference is available at the INSEE office at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

6. Finances:

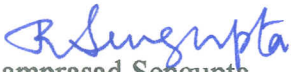
The normal expenses of day-to-day activities of the Society such as holding of EC meeting, General Body meeting and organisation of round tables/workshops, etc are being met from the initial grant of the Ministry of Finance, of an amount of Rs. 12 lakhs received in April 2001. The Round table of March 2001, the Methodology workshop of July 2001 and the Pre-conference workshop-cum-training programme on Hydrology for Social Scientists were financed out of this grant.

Shri V. B. Eswaran, Treasurer, has presented the Audited Accounts of the year 2001-02 and the details of the current financial position of the Society at the

meeting of the EC on 10 May 2002. I would like to point out that the Second Biennial Conference was financed by grants from Winrock India and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for respective amounts of Rs. 2.5 lakhs and Rs. 13.5 lakhs approximately. The Round Table on Water Policy on 10 May 2002 which falls in the year 2002-2003 has been financed out of the savings out of the SIDA grant with the approval of the donor. It may be further mentioned that INSEE has obtained FCRA registration with the support of the Ministry of Finance in 2001.

As the activities of INSEE are picking up now, the balance of the Finance Ministry grant, would soon be exhausted. Anticipating this the Society applied for the sanction and release of a second grant of Rs 12 lakhs. In response to this application a Visiting Committee of the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance headed by Dr. Tarun Das, Economic Adviser visited the INSEE Office at IEG, Delhi on 8 September 2001, met the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Faculty-in-Charge of INSEE and discussed future problems and prospects relating to financial matters of INSEE in details. While the Committee appreciated the need for financial support in the initial phase of formation and consolidation of the Society, it pointed out in the course of discussion the importance of taking steps by INSEE for its long run financial sustainability. In the meanwhile we are in touch with the Finance Ministry for the second grant.

7. I end here by thanking the members of General Body, the EC and Dr. Pushpam Kumar, Faculty-in-charge of INSEE, and the staff of the IEG, Delhi for their co-operation in the activities of the Society.


Ramprasad Sengupta
Secretary, INSEE
New Delhi, 10 May 2002.