

THE INDIAN SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

ANNUAL REPORT

2012-2013

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About INSEE

The Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE) was established in New Delhi (India) on September 24, 1998. It was registered as a Society under the Societies Act in January 1999. INSEE is a regional society affiliated to the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE).

INSEE aims to further the cause of sustainable development by providing a forum for continuous dialogue among scholars, practitioners and policy analysts working on different aspects at the interface of economy, ecology and the social and the natural environments.

In the process, it strives to promote new thinking and better understanding on a range of issues of national and international interest, such as institutions, governance and instruments for sustainability, energy analysis and policy, environment and trade, environment and development, the valuation and accounting of ecosystem functions and services, climate change and the global commons. The list, of course, is far from being exhaustive. The Society works to disseminate the results of research and its policy implications to national and international bodies (governmental and non-governmental) through multiple avenues such as conferences, workshops, networking and publications.

Various activities of INSEE in 2012-13 are given below:

1. Events Organized

(a) Panels

- The INSEE organized a panel on Valuing Ecosystems: Challenges and Approaches at the 72nd Annual Conference of Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Banaras Hindu University, 17-19 November 2012, coordinated by Purnamita Dasgupta. Kanchan Chopra chaired this session; Purnamita Dasgupta, Indira Devi and Jagdish Krishnaswamy, were the other panelists. A S Raghubanshi, Director, Institute of Environment & Sustainable Development at BHU summarised the presentations. This was the first time INSEE collaborated with another association in organizing a panel. The efforts of P G Chengappa (ISAE), Amita Shah (INSEE) and Indira Devi (ISAE-INSEE) are noteworthy in this regard.

India, has a large agrarian economy dependent on diverse eco-systems, providing crucial services ranging from dispersal of seeds, drought and flood mitigation to

cycling of nutrients, bio-diversity and sustainable livelihood options. The panel provided an overview of the approaches and the challenges of valuing such ecosystem services, along with specific and focused discussion on certain techniques and their application to specific contexts in India: tangible and intangible flows, non-linear changes, multiple services and their interconnectedness. Kanchan Chopra provided an overview of sustainability issues and human well being, discussing important conceptual frameworks such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and the alternative approaches available to value ecosystem services. Purnamita Dasgupta presented different methods of valuation for ecosystem services developed within environmental economics as relevant to the Indian context, highlighting the advantages and challenges including those of distributional aspects, instrumental and non instrumental metrics. Jagdish Krishnaswamy presented detailed case studies on the opportunities for synergies and trade-offs in ecosystem functions and services, relevant for contributing to the understanding of these processes in relation to human welfare. Indira Devi presented a case study on how the negative externalities associated with agricultural production, can be monetarily valued by using health cost estimation technique for the harmful effects of pesticide use, leading to the notion of an ecologically adjusted cost of production.

- INSEE had sponsored a panel and a talk at Urban Biodiversity Conference 2012, at IIT Mumbai, 8-9 October, 2012. Rapid urbanization has made the issue of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services in urban landscapes an important issue. The purpose of the panel was to initiate greater awareness of the methodological, ecological, socio-economic and legal aspects of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services in urban landscapes.

Jagdish Krishnaswamy and Leo Saldanha gave talks and held a panel discussion on Conservation in Cities on 8th October, respectively titled 'Spatial and temporal dimensions of above ground carbon in Bangalore city' and 'Conserving Commons is fundamental to making Indian Cities Habitable'. Krishnaswamy had focused on integrated remote-sensing-ground measurement based technique to estimate above ground carbon storage in trees, and its spatial distribution in relation to the distribution of two other ecosystem services, recharge to ground-water and water bodies as well as biodiversity, apart from the institutional and urban planning aspects of retaining and enhancing the city's carbon storage services and the resilience of this service to future growth and expansion. Saldanha had explored the complex socio-economic and governance issues towards achieving a socially just and biodiversity and ecosystem services friendly urban environment in India's cities; the successful public interest litigation effort to secure the future of water

bodies and lakes in Bangalore and Karnataka was used as illustration. Saldanha and Krishnaswamy then discussed these issues with the audience with questions related to the efforts to secure Bangalore's water bodies. Harini Nagendra gave a talk on 9th October, titled 'Conservation in Cities - The impact of urbanization on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Bangalore'. It was focused upon results from a long term program of research in Bangalore, to describe how changes in urban policies and attitudes towards conservation and nature impact biodiversity and ecosystem services in the green spaces and water bodies of Bangalore, with the aim of providing informed inputs for management and policy.

(b) Training Programmes

- A training Workshop on Ecology and Economics was organised jointly with the Gujarat Institute of Development Research, (GIDR), South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE), and ICSSR Western Regional Centre, Mumbai, 29 November—2 December, 2012 in GIDR, Ahmedabad. The workshop had focussed on three themes in the broad domains of Ecology and Environmental Economics, *viz*; Ecosystems Management, Economics of Climate Change, and Policies and Instruments for Green Growth.

The twin objectives of the Workshop were to: (i) give orientation to the young scholars/PhD Students on the foundations of ecological economics and domains of interdisciplinary research; (b) provide practical guidance to the scholars for pursuing the specific research issues identified by them.

The resource persons for the Workshop were: Amita Shah, INSEE and GIDR; Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore; Pranab Mukhopadhyay, SANDEE and Goa University; K.S. Kavikumar, Madras School of Economics; Nilanjan Ghosh, INSEE and Multi-Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., Mumbai; Seema Purushothaman, Azim Premji University, Bangalore; P.K. Viswanathan, GIDR.

The Workshop had a judicious mix of technical sessions comprising 11 lectures by the resource persons and 30 presentations by each of the participants about their ongoing research work including independent research, MPhil or PhD research. Participants came from all corners of the country. They were given a CD containing the Reading Materials and Presentations by the resource persons as well as participants.

In the Valedictory function held on 2 December 2012, Certificates were given to the participants by Prof. Keshab Das, Professor, GIDR. The function also included a feedback session wherein the participants provided their feedback with specific suggestions for improving the analytical skills of the researchers working on the thematic areas of Ecosystems as well as Economics of Climate Change. It was reflected that the three institutions (ie., GIDR, INSEE and SANDEE) could take further initiatives in strengthening the capacities of the researchers in many ways.

It was coordinated by Pranab Mukhopadhyay, Nilanjan Ghosh, P.K. Viswanathan and Jharna Pathak. Advisors were Kanchan Chopra, Amita Shah and Priya Shyamsundar.

2. Publications

- **Special Issue in *Conservation and Society***

Seema Purushothaman coordinated an INSEE special section in *Conservation and Society* 11(4), Oct-Dec, 2013 (*forthcoming*), titled ‘Beyond money metrics: alternative approaches to conceptualising and assessing ecosystem services’; other members of the editorial team were Bejoy K Thomas, Rosa Abraham and Uppeendra Dhar. It was prompted by the growing importance of the concept and valuation of ecosystem services, especially in the mainstream policy discussions, a practice that has been occurring at a rapid pace. Conventionally, the valuation of ecosystem services has been synonymous with estimating the economic (monetary) value of these services, limitations of which need to be acknowledged. In addition, the socio-political and institutional dimensions of ecosystem services are largely overlooked in the debate. Against this backdrop, this special section has critically reviewed the current thinking and practice surrounding ecosystem services and to present emerging alternative approaches. The section contains the following papers:

Seema Purushothaman, Bejoy K Thomas, Rosa Abraham and Uppeendra Dhar, ‘Editorial Introduction’

Bhim Adhikari and Arun Agrawal, ‘Understanding the social and ecological outcomes of PES Projects: A Review and an Analysis’

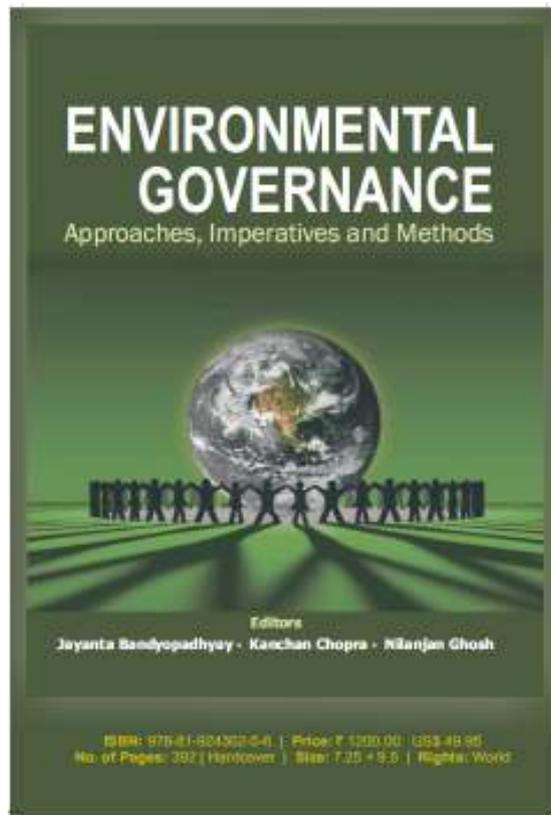
Nilanjan Ghosha, Emil Uddhammar, ‘Tiger, Lion and Human life in the heart of wilderness: Impacts of Institutional Tourism on Development and Conservation in East Africa and India’

Beatriz Rodríguez-Labajos and Joan Martínez-Alier, *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity: Recent Instances For Debate*

Sharachchandra Lele, Oliver Springate-Baginski, Roan Lakerveld, Debal Deb, and Prasad Dash, *'Ecosystem Services: Origins, Contributions, Pitfalls, and Alternatives'*.

- **Volume on *Environmental Governance* edited by Jayanta Bandopdhyay, Kanchan Chopra and Nilanjan Ghosh**

Environmental Governance: Approaches, Imperatives and Methods (fifth INSEE conference volume) was published through Bloomsbury India, in September 2012. Editors were Jayanta Bandopdhyay, Kanchan Chopra and Nilanjan Ghosh. A brief description of the volume follows:



The inherent ‘growth-fetishism’ of economies and the consequent large scale anthropogenic interventions in the natural ecosystems and processes have led to environmental degradation and depletion. As a result, from the over-arching need for sustainable development, environmental governance has emerged as one of the biggest intellectual and administrative challenges facing human societies.

The book analyses the related interdisciplinary links between knowledge, policy and governance in relation to the natural environment, from the local to the global. With essays written by

some of the foremost thinkers in its domain from various parts of the world, who have experience of working at diverse levels, this collection will be useful for research and as a text for university students. It will also be of great value as a compendium of public knowledge on environmental issues, and is expected to

provide the critical base for creating future pathways for policy making and environmental governance

Apart from an introduction by the editors titled 'Environmental Governance: The Crucial Interface of Science, Economics and Policy', it includes 16 papers spread across three sections: Approached and Challenges, Imperatives and Instances, and, Methods and Tools.

This volume was reviewed in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Gopal K Kadekodi, 2013, 'Debating Environmental Governance', 58 (22), June 1, pp. 34-35), and in *The Hindu* (Sanjay Chaturvedi, 'Towards a science rooted in public interest', November 13, 2012)

INSEE Membership

As on March 31, 2013, INSEE has 377 Life members and 7 Life Members Corporate Bodies, one ordinary member and 5 student members. The total membership thus stands at 390.

Executive Committee members of INSEE (2012-2014):

President: Amita Shah, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad.

Vice President: Nilanjan Ghosh, Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., Mumbai.

Secretary: Pranab Mukhopadhyay, Goa Universty, Goa.

Treasurer: Purnamita Dasgupta, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

Joint Secretary: S. Jyothis, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad.

Members:

Vishwa Ballabh, XLRI Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur.

Anamika Barua, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati.

Rabindra Nath Bhattacharya, (formerly with) Calcutta University, Kolkata.

Kanchan Chopra, (formerly with) Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi.

Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore.

Kinsuk Mitra, InsPIRE Network for Environment, New Delhi.

Nandan Nawn, West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata.

Seema Purushothaman, Azim Premji University, Bangalore.

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