

EDITORIAL

2023: The Year that Our Planet's Environmental Signals Played Loud and Clear

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The year 2023 saw quite a few global science policy alerts. The first was the UN Water Conference in New York, held decades after the first one in 1977 in Argentina when, ironically, it was under a military dictatorship. At the conference, the Global Commission on the Economics of Water (GCEW) defined water as a global and local (“glocal”) common good and warned about impending, critical, multi-dimensional water crises such as the breaching of the planetary boundaries of the water cycle and water injustice to humans as well as ecosystems. GCEW asked for renewed governance and economic thinking on water management at all scales.

The other global issue that came to our attention was the presence of invasive species in ecosystems. Invasive species are non-native species that have been introduced to an ecosystem and have particular characteristics compared to other exotic species. They can displace native species, proliferate and establish themselves, and cause ecological damage, which translates to economic losses of \$423 billion globally as per a report released by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). In the Indian context, the interest in the economics, livelihood dimensions, and ecology of the management of invasive species and native fish in Indian waters is gaining ground.

In our current issue, three papers address aspects of water management and fisheries in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Odisha that resonate well with the messaging from the global science policy discourse.

The other global crisis whose urgency was felt more sharply in 2023 was climate change. The past year broke records in terms of warming episodes across the world. Additionally, we witnessed the effects of an El Nino

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phenomenon, which may be followed by a super El Nino in 2024. India received delayed western disturbances, snapping at the heels of the southwest monsoon and triggering devastating floods in North India. Further, this year was marked by a weakened southwest monsoon, which led to reduced agricultural productivity and impacted farmers. We were reminded of the need to design effective adaptation policies and recast our development pathways and infrastructure to be resilient and mindful of vulnerability and exposure in sensitive and fragile ecosystems.

The papers and book reviews included in this issue are welcome additions to the literature on various dimensions of climate change and broader environmental challenges. This issue also presents a commentary on the draft new green credits policy proposed by the Government of India, which goes beyond carbon credits. It seeks to incentivize the private sector to invest in a diverse set of green interventions, aiming to offset emissions and the damage caused by development projects and industry. The potential and pitfalls of this policy need careful analysis. On the methodological side, we have the application of a cost–benefit analysis on the use of modern energy in cooking.

Great teachers and mentors are pillars of academia who help train the next generation of scholars. Late Professor Rabindra—one of the pioneers of environmental economics in India—was one such educator. Rabin da was much loved by his students and friends and this issue has a heart-warming tribute to him from one of his students.

Asmita and the editorial staff manoeuvred the journal to new strengths and achievements in 2023 with a welcome mix of papers on diverse topics.

We expect EES to continue attracting globally relevant research that will impact both academia and policy as the journal enters the eighth year of its existence. We are grateful to our reviewers and contributors for their faith, time, and efforts.

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