

Incentives and Disincentives for Groundwater Conservation – How to Bell the Cat?

Saturday 12th September 2020 4.00 pm- 6:00 pm IST

Language- English II Platform: Zoom

Panelist



Dr. Srinivas
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Moderator

MoJS Research Chair, Centre for
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Mr. Mohinder P.
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Speaker

Former Chief Operating Officer,
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Dr. Aditi
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Speaker

Principal Researcher, IWMI

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Ms. Mridula
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Speaker

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Dr. Nilanjan
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Speaker

Director, Observer Research
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Dr. R.
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Speaker

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Instructions

Registration to join the webinar is free.

Registration is Compulsory and on a first come first serve basis.

Registration Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5foAzwSKQqm9bj8TwRO2gg

Last Date of Registration: 11th September 2020.

Participants will receive a confirmation email indicating the, Passcode and Link for the online platform.

Programme Coordination and Technical Assistance

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Organisers of the Webinar

This webinar is jointly organised by Indian Society of Ecological Economics (<https://ecoinsee.org/index.php>) and Partners in Prosperity (www.pnpindia.in).

Importance of the issue

In the last five decades, the number of farmers dependent on groundwater irrigation has risen sharply, and inadequate regulation on water use, lopsided price incentives, and energy subsidies to farmers have proliferated exploitation of groundwater through borewells. Wastage of water in agricultural activities is the main source of water use inefficiency in India. The farms consume more water to grow the same volume of crops compared to the global averages. Despite being a water-scarce country, agricultural exports include water-intensive crops such as Basmati rice, cotton, sugar, etc. Around 60 percent of agriculture depends on groundwater, while 80 percent of rural people use it for their domestic needs. The dire state of water governance in the country is result of both state and market failure. Every rice farmer, who is over-exploiting groundwater to grow paddy (with guaranteed procurement by the FCI), is undermining a public good to increase her/his private gain as s/he pay nothing for the environmental and social externalities with the society bearing the costs. The failure of the state is in instituting the wrong incentives and also in the mismanagement of water systems. Unless the mismanagement of water resources are addressed and disincentives put in place to prevent over-exploitation of water, the country is likely to witness rising water-related crises and conflicts in the years to come. The phenomenon of free or subsidised electricity has negatively affected the quality of electricity supply to rural consumers, the financial health of DISCOMs, and the State Governments. Unsurprisingly, power sector reforms have called for reduction of subsidies to agriculture. However, such reforms have been largely ineffective. There is also strong resistance from the farmers on hikes in electricity tariffs. Attempts to incentivise farmers away from paddy to less water-intensive crops like maize had limited success. The linkages between agriculture, groundwater extraction, and electricity pricing deserve a more nuanced understanding. A more holistic perspective and joint efforts by all stakeholders can address the challenges in electricity-based ground water irrigation.

Expected Outcome

The proposed webinar is conceived by bringing agronomists, water specialists, ecological economists, policymakers and others on a single platform would greatly enrich understanding on policy-relevant issues on water conservation and sustainable use focusing agriculture. The Webinar will help finding answers on how best India can manage its water using various economic instruments, particularly in the context of rice and cotton cultivation, the two water-intensive crops.

Target Audience

Scholars, activists, policymakers and citizens working or concerned about issues of water and climate change are encouraged to attend