

8th Set of Research Grants, Dec 2004

SANDEE recently made several research and study grants in South Asia. A brief description of these grants is presented below. This information may be particularly useful to new applicants seeking to obtain SANDEE research funding.

Estimation of Pro-Poor Tourism Potential in Indian Sundarbans, Indrila Guha and Santadas Ghosh, India

The government's latest strategy to involve large Indian business houses to lure tourists to Sundarban National Park (SNP) is a positive effort to promote tourism in this biodiversity rich mangrove area. But this can have negative impact on the vibrant informal economy of the local poor, who are the small service providers like boatmen, guide, cycle-van puller and food vendors. In this study, Indrila and Santadas propose to measure the value of recreational services provided by SNP and also understand the role of tourism in reducing local poverty. They will objectively investigate whether the government could have generated greater revenue for itself through an improved pricing policy while keeping the current pro-poor mode of tourism intact.

The Power Purchase Agreement in the Wind Energy Sector: A Comparative Study of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Pushkala Ratan, India

Wind energy is an important source of emission-free clean energy. In India, efforts are underway to encourage project developers from the private sector to finance and install new wind energy generation plants. However, the development of wind energy sector has been very slow thus far. The primary research question in Pushkala's study will be to address whether and if performance of wind farms in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka can be explained through the features of existing purchasing power agreements.

The Effect of Natural Resource Scarcity on Household's and Women's Time Allocation Decisions in Rural India, Supriya Singh and Neetu Chopra, India

Resource scarcity has a direct effect on women and girls in rural communities as they are the primary collectors and users of natural resources. Neetu and Supriya propose to examine whether resource degradation causes women to spend more time in resource collection and less time on income-generating activities. An important goal of this analysis is to inform the policy debate on whether, and to what extent, improved natural resource management—e.g., reforestation, regeneration of grasslands, building water-conserving structures, can alleviate poverty by increasing the time that households and women spend in income-generating activities.

The Analysis of Heterogeneity Effect on Peoples' Participation in Joint Management of Protected and Reserved Forests in West Bengal, Lekha Mukhopadhyay, India

Designing voluntary collective action programmes for managing common pool resources is a difficult task in heterogeneous societies. Lekha proposes to highlight this issue in the context of forest management around the Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal, India. She will examine the impact of economic, political and ethnic heterogeneity on household and village community decisions to participate in forest management programmes.

Impact of Pesticide Use in Rice Cultivation on Fresh Water Fishes in the Chalan Beel of Bangladesh, Abdul Wadud, Bangladesh (Conditional Grant)

Rice production and fish production in the Chalan Beel have a close mutual relationship with the use of water and land resources. First, they are competitive in the use of land and water. Second, rice production discharges pesticide into water bodies causing an external cost to fish culture, which, in turn, leads to an increase in fish prices. In this project, Abdul will study the impacts of pesticide use in rice field and its effect on fish production in the Chalan beel and he proposes to suggest policies for socially optimal uses of pesticides on agricultural land.

Social Cost-benefit Analysis of Shrimp Farming in Coastal Tracts of Tamilnadu and Union Territory of Pondicherry, L. Umamaheswari, India

The short-term financial returns from shrimp farming are high but shrimp aquaculture in coastal rice paddies has long-term welfare implications. The present study attempts to examine if it is socially desirable to go in for shrimp farming in rice fields when the effects of environmental externalities such as salinization are taken into consideration. This micro-level study will identify appropriate policy measures for the development of sustainable shrimp aquaculture in the region.

Valuation of Indoor Air Pollution in Rural Areas of Central Nepal, Krishna Pd. Pant, Nepal (Conditional Grant)

Traditional fuels are the primary source of energy for cooking, lighting and heating in rural households of Nepal. Since most of the traditional Nepali houses are designed with few windows or ventilations (mainly to conserve heat), they do not generally have flues or chimneys. Therefore, concentration of indoor air pollution (IAP) is believed to be high within the rural households. In this study, Krishna Pant seeks to assess households' existing demand for interventions that reduce health risks from indoor air pollution. The findings of the research is expected to provide a foundation for developing pragmatic intervention programs to address the problems of IAP in rural households that will help alleviate rural poverty and reduce child mortality.