Environmental Valuation in South Asia

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press 4381/4, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi 110002, India

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107007147

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First published 2011 Reprinted 2011

Printed in India at Replika Press Pvt. Ltd.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Environmental valuation in South Asia / edited by A.K. Enamul Haque, M.N. Murty, and Priya Shyamsundar.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "Provides an overview of different environmental problems in South Asia and examines how economic valuation techniques can be used to assess these problems" -- Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-107-00714-7 (hardback)

- 1. Environmental economics--Asia, South. 2. Environmental quality--Asia, South.
- I. Haque, A. K. Enamul. II. Murty, M. N. (Maddipati Narasimha), 1942- III. Shyamsundar, Priya, 1964- IV. Title.

HC430.6.Z9E5425 2011

333--dc22 2010040402

ISBN 978-1-107-00714-7 Hardback

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Preface

Applied research in environmental economics has gained momentum in recent times and is viewed as a means to aid environmental management. The South Asian Network for Development Economics and Environment (SANDEE) has contributed to this momentum in South Asia, a region with a vast and growing ecological footprint. During the last ten years, SANDEE has sponsored research on several aspects of environment and development. It has also organized numerous workshops to meet training needs.

SANDEE uses innovative strategies to build capacity in environmental economics. Researchers and managers from universities, governments and NGOs are provided with repeated opportunities to improve their skills. The process for an economist to produce a useful piece of research is detailed. It involves his/her attending a teaching workshop, writing a research proposal related to an environmental problem in his/her country, presenting ongoing research to receive comments, receiving guidance from a SANDEE advisor and writing a manuscript. The final research output is peer-reviewed by an international expert. Thus, SANDEE research is grounded in the realities of local problems but benefits from the advice of scholars from around the world.

This book contains contributions from SANDEE researchers and advisors. The papers in the book are on environmental valuation in South Asia and provide information for designing sustainable development policies. They constitute detailed micro case studies of air, water, land and forest resources from the region.

The studies in this book have benefited from comments from many experts including Kenneth Arrow, Partha Dasgupta, Jean-Marie Baland, Kanchan Chopra, Herath Gunathilake, K. G. Maler, Subhrendu Pattanayak, E. Somanathan, Rehana Siddiqui and Jeff Vincent, to name a few. Many chapters have also been anonymously peer-reviewed. The editors have acted as advisors on specific projects and worked with several researchers from the beginning to the final culmination of this book.

The credit for producing the research presented in this book also goes to the highly motivated team at the SANDEE Secretariat. Manik Duggar, Pranab Mukhopadhyay, Kavita Shresta, and Anuradha Kafle, who were at SANDEE when these studies were done, have made the development of these projects possible. Current staff, including Mani Nepal and Krisha Shresta, has continued to work with the same spirit.

The task of preparing this book from SANDEE projects was entrusted to the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) with M. N. Murty as coordinator. The IEG organized three book-related workshops and brought together contributors so that they could further develop their chapters. The former Director, Kanchan Chopra and several IEG faculty and staff provided intellectual and administrative support. We express our thanks to them.

Finally, we are thankful to SANDEE'S donors – IDRC (International Development Research Center), Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), NORAD (Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation) and the World Bank for their financial assistance, and, to the staff who represent these agencies on SANDEE's Board for their advice and support.

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