

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:

**INEQUALITY AND THE EMERGING WATER MARKETS OF RURAL
MAHARASHTRA**

Project Number

HSS0852

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Research Clusters:**Research Themes:**

Highlight which of the Academy's CLUSTERS this project will address? <i>(Please nominate JUST <u>one</u>. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)</i>		Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address? <i>(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)</i>	
1	<i>Material Science/Engineering (including Nano, Metallurgy)</i>	1	<i>Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture</i>
2	<i>Energy, Green Chem, Chemistry, Catalysis, Reaction Eng</i>	2	
3	<i>Math, CFD, Modelling, Manufacturing</i>	3	<i>Infrastructure Engineering</i>
4		4	<i>Clean Energy</i>
5	<i>CSE, IT, Optimisation, Data, Sensors, Systems, Signal Processing, Control</i>	5	Water
6	<i>Earth Sciences and Civil Engineering (Geo, Water, Climate)</i>	6	<i>Nanotechnology</i>
7	<i>Bio, Stem Cells, Bio Chem, Pharma, Food</i>	7	<i>Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research</i>
8		8	Humanities and social sciences
	<i>Semi-Conductors, Optics, Photonics, Networks, Telecomm, Power Eng</i>		<i>Design</i>
	HSS, Design, Management		

The research problem*Define the problem*

Water markets for agriculture have seen a great shift in recent decades, influenced by legal evolution, technological changes, and demand factors, as well as climate change and cropping pattern shifts. Some key questions that need urgent research include: Why and how are new water markets emerging in rural Maharashtra? How are these water markets related to the new liberal economic philosophies that Indian governments are attached to? What kind of political, social, cultural and ideological factors underpin this phenomenon? How is the ownership or joint-ownership of water resources changing? How are different stakeholders being impacted by these changes? By stakeholders we mean rich-medium farmers, poor and landless farmers, livestock and dairy farmers, local industries, urban residents and infrastructure companies. An important dimension of this project will be to consider the situation of female headed rural households in the case of poor and landless farmers. We define water resources as broadly including rivers, lakes, nullahs, irrigation canals, dams and groundwater.

Project aims*Define the aims of the project*

This project will focus on two levels of analysis: (i) a comparison of arid districts with well irrigated districts in Maharashtra and a (ii) comparison of influential stakeholders with poor and landless farmers and urban residents in arid regions. The political economy of rural Maharashtra in this project, requires us to focus on the balance of economic power between influential stakeholders and those that lack influence. For example, rich farmers are setting up 'water associations' to increase their influence over water resources, but how these work and how less influential stakeholders have responded to these remains unknown. In particular, we need to understand the impact of these changes on female headed rural households, given the long-term absence of poor/landless husbands, brothers and fathers who seek and engage in work outside the villages. The role of the state, policy makers, the media and scholarly experts also needs to be considered

– for example, how and why are Indian definitions of ‘drought’ changing: drought was once thought of as synonymous with ‘food scarcity’, but now state responses to food access means that the concept of drought has been increasingly ignored despite the frequent struggles for drinking water by man and beast.

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

1. A better understanding of the emerging scenario regarding water markets in rural Maharashtra
2. Crucial inputs for policy-making to enhance equity in water access across different stakeholders.
3. Understanding the linkages between socio-structural changes, economic reforms and water markets in rural Maharashtra

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

1. The project directly seeks to contribute to the theme of water- focusing on the interface between policy making, resource use, and governance / equity concerns; more efficient and equitable access to and use of water is the target objective in the long run
2. The project will use social science perspectives both theoretically and methodologically, and contribute to innovation in both areas, especially with reference to emerging areas of regulatory policy studies

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

1. Background in related social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, policy studies, geography, social work, or development studies
2. Strong skills in qualitative methods, and a basic set of skills in quantitative skills is expected
3. Significant amount of field work is expected.

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

Select up to **(4)** keywords from the Academy’s approved keyword list (**available at <http://www.iitbmonash.org/becoming-a-research-supervisor/>**) relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Water, Inequality, Villages, Climate Change