



a place of mind

Bejoy Thomas

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment

Whose water? Challenges and complexities in wastewater reuse in peri-urban Bangalore, India



Bio: Bejoy K Thomas is a social scientist, and Fellow in the Water, Land and Society programme at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, India. He has a Masters in Economics (Cochin, 2001) and a PhD in Development Studies (Tilburg, 2009). Thomas has a strong record of conducting problem driven research and working in interdisciplinary teams along with environmental scientists and engineers. His early work was on multidimensional poverty and participatory development. He has recently been part of a large research initiative on water in urbanizing areas, looking specifically at peri-urban areas and villages around Bangalore. Visit <http://www.atree.org/research/ced/lwl/ACCUWa>

Abstract: Wastewater reuse has become an accepted practice in cities and peri-urban areas. However, in developing country settings, wastewater reuse presents multiple challenges. First, water treatment infrastructure is limited, implying that water reused may not meet the required water quality standards. Second, food crops grown in peri-urban areas and irrigated with contaminated urban wastewater pose health risk. Third, in water stressed cities, demand for wastewater may result in competing claims over it and lead to or aggravate conflicts between various users, such as urban residents and peri-urban farmers. I will draw upon research conducted in the water stressed city of Bangalore (also known as Bengaluru) in India and its peri-urban areas to illustrate these issues. In particular, I will focus on how peri-urban agriculture in the region has changed over the last 20 years, the role of urban wastewater and possible contestations around it.



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IRES & UBC Farm Joint Event