



INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES KOLKATA

(A Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences funded by the Government of West Bengal)

SALT LAKE CAMPUS • DD 27/D, SECTOR 1, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA 700 064

Seminar Notice

Professor Siddhartha Mitra

Professor of Economics

Jadavpur University

will present a paper titled

The Impact of Poverty on the Environment: Surprising Findings from the Indian Case

Abstract

In the 1980s a powerful school of thought, propagated by the Brundtland Commission Report and seconded by powerful think tanks, developed which asserted that poverty was a major cause for environmental degradation. This implied that significant alleviation of poverty would also substantially reduce environmental degradation. Some reasons were given for this view, prominent among these being the compulsion of poorer households to mine natural capital to meet their needs, sometimes in a dirty manner. In course of time, a less recognized counter-school emerged which pointed out the flaws in the Brundtland hypothesis: the greater gasoline consumption of richer households, their greater possession of consumer durables sourced from natural capital, and the higher power of the rich to mine limited and open access natural capital for commercial gain, among others. The debate needs to be obviously resolved through quantitative studies, hitherto lacking in the Indian case. Using results from NSSO data for 3 recent years and 4 sources of dirty fuel we show that there is a general tendency for the non-poor to consume more of these fuels than the poor. This is a surprising result and it shows that poverty alleviation, though desirable, is probably not even a partial cure for environmental degradation. Some explanations for this result, based on the relative magnitudes of clean fuel consumption by the non-poor and poor, are provided.

Date: February 15 (Friday), 2019

Time: 3.15 pm

Venue: IDSK Seminar Room, 5th Floor

All are Welcome

Subhanil Chowdhury

(Subhanil Chowdhury)

Convenor, Seminar Committee, IDSK

(9830059671)