Electricity for Urban Industrial Development OR Water for Agriculture:
Policy and Technological Challenges of Water-Energy Nexus in India

Abstract

India, one of the fastest growing countries in the World, must address the million-dollar question of who gets the benefits from scarce water resources -- the industrial and manufacturing sector or the small farmers attempting to climb up the development ladder. Water is the next biggest frontier of conflict around resource distribution in India after land. While India is still debating its policies for regulating acquisition of agriculture land for industrial development, water policy is still in its nascent stage.

These conflicts will be illustrated with case studies of water allocation highlighting the water-energy nexus, namely, the nexus between water for electricity generation and water for agriculture. This is a newly emerging development dilemma in India that is putting the urban-industrial economy up against the rural-agrarian economy. The challenge will be to understand the complexities of this nexus and evolve amicable policy through participatory processes and technological innovations. The way we tackle this problem will determine whether it will be a ‘win some-lose some’ game or a ‘win-win’ game for the parties involved in this water-energy nexus.