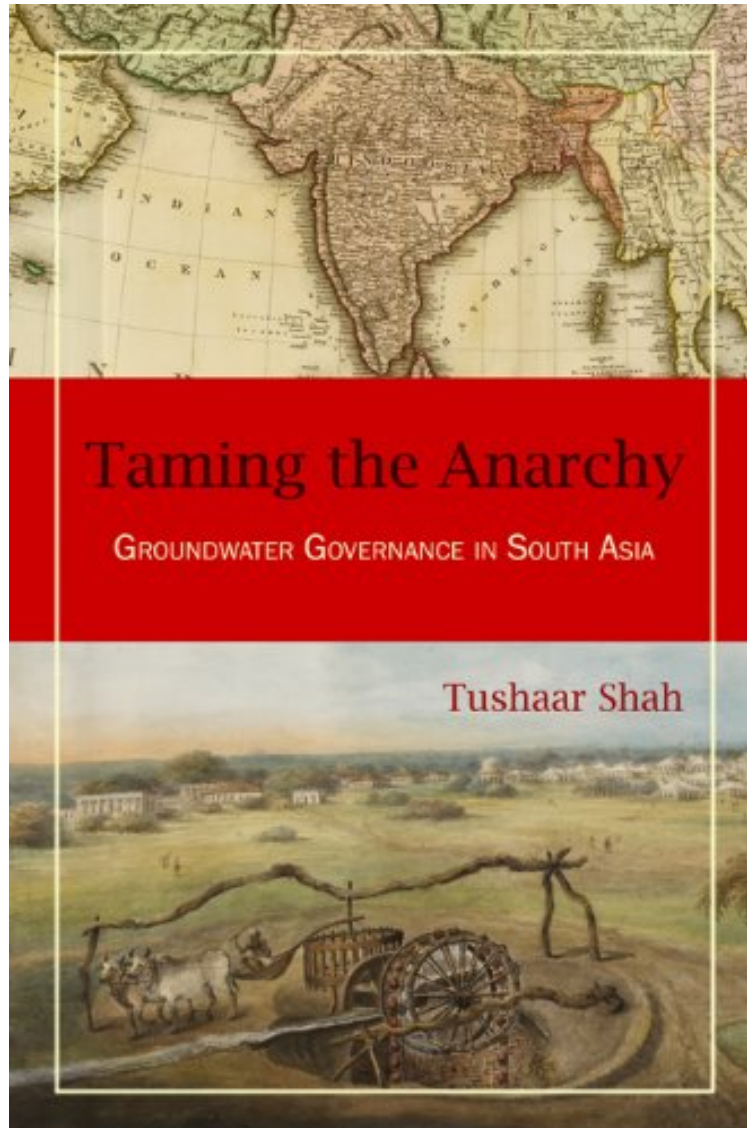


Taming the Anarchy: Groundwater Governance in South Asia

Tushaar Shah

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Tushaar Shah : Taming the Anarchy: Groundwater Governance in South Asia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Taming the Anarchy: Groundwater Governance in South Asia:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Sustainable groundwater irrigation in South Asia By Jacob Kijne This book is written for politicians, practitioners and scientists by one of the world's best groundwater hydrologists. Tushaar Shah explores the reasons for the decline in flow irrigation and the great expansion of pumped irrigation in South Asia. The author describes the present situation as one of atomistic groundwater economy which governments are unable to

manage at present. Nevertheless, to secure the future of food production in South Asia, pump irrigation needs to be supplemented by viable canal irrigation. The author proposes various private and civil initiatives that should be introduced to ensure that tube well irrigation is sustainable, recognizing that groundwater potential varies a great deal between regions with alluvial aquifers and those in hard rock areas. Salt water intrusion in coastal areas and mixing of saline water from deeper layers of alluvial aquifers threaten this sustainability. The future of food production in South Asia justifies close attention to the analyzes and proposals contained in this interesting and provocative book because inadequate future food and fodder production in South Asia is bound to have a significant global impact. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A text key for understanding the region's evolving issues

By Midwest Book Review
College-level libraries strong in Asian social issues and history will find this a specialty item key to understanding resource management in the entire region. South Asia's irrigation system has become a chaotic landscape of individually owned wells and government management is desperately needed. The social and ecological issues at stake has stymied both scientists and policymakers: Tushaar Shah investigates the history and changes affecting South Asian irrigation patterns and considers its social and ecological impact alike in a text key for understanding the region's evolving issues.

In 1947, British India—the part of South Asia that is today's India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—emerged from the colonial era with the world's largest centrally managed canal irrigation infrastructure. However, as vividly illustrated by Tushaar Shah, the orderly irrigation economy that saved millions of rural poor from droughts and famines is now a vast atomistic system of widely dispersed tube-wells that are drawing groundwater without permits or hindrances. *Taming the Anarchy* is about the development of this chaos and the prospects to bring it under control. It is about both the massive benefit that the irrigation economy has created and the ill-fare it threatens through depleted aquifers and pollution. Tushaar Shah brings exceptional insight into a socio-ecological phenomenon that has befuddled scientists and policymakers alike. In systematic fashion, he investigates the forces behind the transformation of South Asian irrigation and considers its social, economic, and ecological impacts. He considers what is unique to South Asia and what is in common with other developing regions. He argues that, without effective governance, the resulting groundwater stress threatens the sustenance of the agrarian system and therefore the well being of the nearly one and a half billion people who live in South Asia. Yet, finding solutions is a formidable challenge. The way forward in the short run, Shah suggests, lies in indirect, adaptive strategies that change the conduct of water users. From antiquity until the 1960's, agricultural water management in South Asia was predominantly the affair of village communities and/or the state. Today, the region depends on irrigation from some 25 million individually owned groundwater wells. Tushaar Shah provides a fascinating economic, political, and cultural history of the development and use of technology that is also a history of a society in transition. His book provides powerful ideas and lessons for researchers, historians, and policymakers interested in South Asia, as well as readers who are interested in the water and agricultural futures of other developing countries and regions, including China and Africa.

'[A] sobering account of water depletion in the Indian subcontinent.' *The Economist* 'An important and...provocative book. Shah...exhibits in this book the rare skill of being able to write for both politicians and practitioners while maintaining the scientific rigor of the groundwater scientist that he is.' *Irrigation Science* 'The contributions *Taming the Anarchy* makes to irrigation governance globally are far-reaching. It should be a vital resource for academics, water policy planners, NGO activists, environmentalists, and concerned citizens.' *Human Ecology* '[A] remarkable book. It provides a well-researched history and political analysis of the groundwater governance problem.' *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research* 'This book is likely to have a significant impact, both on decisionmaking and future research in the region. The book is the best assessment and analysis of irrigated agriculture in South Asia that exists...South Asia can be seen as a proving ground for the groundwater boom and bust cycles that will inevitably play themselves out in other regions.' Christopher Scott, University of Arizona 'Very likely to be a book that will significantly shape the debate on India's irrigation economy, particularly the groundwater economy. The book will push many people to think 'outside of their box.' Peter P. Mollinga, University of Bonn 'Taming the Anarchy is an authoritative treatise on groundwater governance that offers incisive insights and powerful ideas for planners and policymakers to rid the region of its groundwater madness.' Sudhirendar Sharma, d.sector.org

About the Author
Tushaar Shah is a senior advisor at the International Water Management Institute.