



Research Paper

## Sand mining and its impact on agriculture and ground water depletion in Karnataka- A natural resource economic prospective

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**ABSTRACT :** The study was conducted in Kolar district of Karnataka state in the year 2014, to analyze how sand mining was affecting economic activities of farmers and rural people who are dependent on agricultural land, causing externalities and implications on labour scarcity, ground water depletion, welfare loss and inefficiency. The results of the study clearly indicated that the depth to water in borwells has increased by 64 per cent due to sand mining from 550 feet to 900 feet. These are the prima facie indicators of ground water depletion due to illegal sand mining in the sample villages of Kolar district. The price of agricultural land, before sand mining was around Rs.5 lakhs/acre shot up to 20 lakhs/acre, an whopping 300 per cent. The land price depends on the depth of sand availability, land area, quality of sand, road connectivity and labour availability to excavate sand. An estimated 707 acres of agricultural land valued at Rs. 140 crores were lost due to sand mining in sample villages, rendering them totally unfit for cultivation forever. Neither this land can be cultivated nor used for any other purpose including construction, since these lands are located in far interior and are excavated to depths exceeding 15 to 20 feet. The associated welfare loss due to income, employment, food insecurities will exacerbate the predicament. Hence, the government should make and enforce policies that prohibit sand mining activities on agricultural lands. Village institutions should also be empowered and monitored to implement these policies at local levels.

**KEY WORDS :** Sand mining, Ground water depletion, Village institutions, Filtered sand, Externalities

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