



Renewable Energy
in the
Sundarbans

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FOREWORD

The Sundarbans are a unique part of this country, with an ecosystem that is at the same time as fascinating as it is fragile. Its geographical location and the unique situation of the people who live there provide a challenge for planners and development specialists in ensuring that the people living in that area are not only able to derive livelihoods and pursue occupations that give them a reasonable standard of living, but also able to do so in harmony with nature. An important element of an approach that would satisfy these objectives is the intelligent use of renewable energy technologies that not only makes it possible for the people of the Sundarbans to get adequate energy for a healthy and satisfactory standard of living, but also helps in minimizing their footprint on the earth's conventional energy resources that are being depleted, and the use of which leads to not only environmental problems at the local level but also climate change globally.

The Sundarbans are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, particularly in view of the threat of sea level rise. It is estimated that the global average increase in sea level during the 20th century was about 17 cm. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) has come out with projections for the 21st century, which indicate a range of increase between 18 cm and 59 cm. But the inertia in the system will ensure that sea-level rise will continue for several centuries. Such a prospect requires firm measures of adaptation to climate change, which would depend greatly on improving the income status of people living in the region. Given the difficulty of supplying conventional electricity and other forms of energy to the residents, renewable energy provides a unique means for fulfilling the demand for energy at the household level as well as providing a valuable input for creation of jobs, employment, and higher incomes at the societal level.

This book is an important compilation of what has been done and what is possible in the future to ensure that the people of the Sundarbans prosper and reach a level of well-being that enables them to meet various threats that they are likely to face

and some that they have been accustomed to since time immemorial. This volume has been written in an extremely readable manner, which would clearly convey to the reader the value of its contents and the resilience of its people.



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