



# GEOGRAPHERS' NEWS LETTER

## Association of Punjab Geographers

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### 19th APG Meet and National Conference

Department of Geography, Khalsa College, Patiala (Punjab) is hosting 19th APG Meet and National Conference on Nov. 2-3, 2018. The main focus of this conference is to explore the potentialities, problems and prospects of **Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Environment** and their significance to man on a common platform to deliberate these issues and draw some meaningful conclusions by experts from various disciplines for concrete policy making. The themes for the deliberations are:

#### Main Theme:

#### Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Environment

#### Sub Themes:

##### Agriculture and Food Production Systems

- (i) Sustainability of Agriculture and Food Availability
- (ii) Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Production Systems
- (iii) Agricultural Land Use and Crop Diversification
- (iv) Horticulture, Agro-forestry, Social Forestry and Environmental Sustainability

##### Urbanization, Climate Change and Degradation of Agro-ecological Conditions

- (v) Industrial Development, Urban Sprawls and Agriculture
- (vi) Climate Change: Adaptation Strategies and Agricultural Sustainability
- (vii) Degradation, Conservation and Management of Soil and Water Resources
- (viii) Stubble Burning, Air Pollution and Crop Residues Management

##### Basic Needs, Inclusive Rural Development and Food Security Policies

- (ix) Education, Health, Sanitation and Gender Sensitive Policies on Nutrition
- (x) Rural Development, Inclusive Growth and Poverty Alleviation
- (xi) National Food Security Act and Policy on Food Security, Safety and Nutrition
- (xii) Agrarian Crisis, Indebtedness and Farmers' Suicides

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### State Level Geographical Quiz Contest 2018

APG congratulates all the conveners, at Zonal and State level, who had taken a first time historical initiative to spread the soul of Geography among all the students, across the State, by organizing Geography Quiz Contest-2018. This is done for a wider coverage and to make the subject more popular among students. This Geographical Quiz Contest was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, Zonal Level Quiz Contest was organized by different zones namely; Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Mohali, Patiala and Bathinda. The colleges with departments of geography in these zones competed at Zonal Level.

Zone-wise, BBK DAV College for Women, Amritsar conducted quiz contest for Amritsar zone; Doaba College, Jalandhar, conducted for Jalandhar Zone; SCD Govt. College, Ludhiana conducted for Ludhiana Zone; Govt. College, Mohali, conducted for Mohali Zone; Govt. Mohindra College, Patiala conducted for Patiala Zone and Baba Farid College, Deon, Bathinda organized for Bathinda zone. The following teams secured First Position at Zonal Level competition: Govt. Mohindra College from Patiala Zone, SCD Govt. College from Ludhiana Zone, Mata Gujri College, Fatehgarh

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Sahib from Mohali Zone, Govt. Rajindra College from Bathinda Zone, Lovely Professional University from Jalandhar Zone and BBK DAV College for Women from Amritsar Zone.

The winners at Zonal level further competed for State Level Quiz Contest organized at SCD Govt. College, Ludhiana. The host college won First position. Govt. Rajindra College, Bathinda stood

Second and Govt. Mohindra College, Patiala secured Third position at State Level Quiz.

After this successful practice of organizing Geography Quiz at college level, APG is further planning to organize it at school level, in the state, to make the subject more popular and practical among the next generation of the students.

### Winner Teams at Zonal Level Geography Quiz Contest -2018



#### Dr. Saminderjit Singh Young Geographer Award- 2018

Original research papers along with bio-data of the authors, who are Masters in Geography and have not attained the age of 32 years, are invited from all over India and SAARC countries for the Young Geographer Award competition. A soft copy of the paper prepared according to the format of 'Punjab Geographer' should be submitted in English to Dr. B.R. Thakur, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, H. P. University, Shimla (E-mail-brthakur53@gmail.com, mob-09418065518 who has been authorized by the APG Secretariat to coordinate this competition. The papers received later than 30th September, 2018 will not be considered for evaluation.

Evaluation will take place only if there are at least six participants. The awardee will be honored with a cash prize of Rs. 1000/-; a memento and a certificate of merit, while the participants attaining second and third positions will also be presented

mementos and certificates of merit in forthcoming 19th APG Meet and National Conference on 2-3 November, 2018 at Khalsa College, Patiala. The participants are requested to visit [www.apgorg.org](http://www.apgorg.org) for details of rules and regulations before submitting their paper to the coordinator.

**Note:** All the papers found eligible for presentation will be forwarded to the Editorial Board of the 'Punjab Geographer' to consider for publication.

#### **Devinder Singh Raina Memorial Meritorious Student Award 2018**

The Association of Punjab Geographers has instituted Meritorious Student Award, in the memory of Prof. Devinder Singh Raina, Department of Geography, University of Jammu, Jammu. The student standing First in M.Sc. Final year examination, 2018 of the Department of Geography of University of Jammu, will be honoured with this award at 19th APG Meet on 2nd November, 2018 at Khalsa college, Patiala hosting the 19th APG Meet and National conference. The Deptt. of Geography, University of Jammu, should intimate to the student and provide details to General Secretary, APG, so that award could be prepared and the student may be invited for this Award.

Association of Punjab Geographers is grateful to Dr. Gopal Krishan, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh for contributing Rs.10000/- towards the facilitation of this award.

#### **Punjab Geographer**

Original research papers are invited for publication from the members. Members can contact Dr. H. S. Mangat, E-mail [editor@apgorg.org](mailto:editor@apgorg.org). Please visit website of APG: [www.apgorg.org](http://www.apgorg.org) to see the guidelines for the authors and format of the paper. These details are also available at the website of the Journal: [www.punjabgeographer.org](http://www.punjabgeographer.org)

#### **New Website for the Journal**

A new website [www.punjabgeographer.org](http://www.punjabgeographer.org) has been prepared and launched solely for Punjab Geographer. All issues of the Journal, abstracts and full papers are available on this website. Members and researchers can visit this site anytime.

#### **New PG Department of Geography**

With sincere efforts of its Principal Dr. Dharminder Singh Ubha, Khalsa College, Patiala is going to start M.Sc. in Geography from session 2018-19. Dr. Gorakh Singh, Head of Geography Dept. informed that about 400 students are enrolled at undergraduate level which started its enrolment during the session 2015-16. The start of Postgraduate Degree will be a new milestone in the history of Geography Dept. and the College.

Association of Punjab Geographers sends its gratitude to the Principal Dr. Dharminder Singh Ubha, for such a high support to the subject of Geography and wish a grand success for the New Department. APG also appreciates the efforts of Dr. Gorakh Singh for making the undergraduate department a great success in a very short span of time which encouraged the Principal to take this new initiative.

#### **News from Departments/Colleges**

##### **Dept. of Geography, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla:**

1. Dr. Anurag Sharma has assumed the charge of Chairman, Dept. of Geography, HPU Shimla.
2. Mrs. Seema Choudhary, Assistant. Professor, has been awarded Ph. D. degree for her Doctoral thesis titled, "Quality of Life in Himachal Pradesh: A Case Study of Baijnath Block, Kangra District" in May 2018. This research work was done under the supervision of Dr. D. D. Sharma, Department of geography, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla.
3. Dr. BR Thakur attended International Geographical Union (IGU) Thematic Conference on "Practical Geography and 21st Century Challenges", held from 4th to 6th June, 2018, at Moscow, Russia. He presented a paper "Quality of Living Space in India: Issues and Challenges" on this conference.

##### **Dept. of Geography, Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra**

Dr. Rajeshwari, Professor, has taken over as Chairperson of the Department.

Three Professors of the Department attended International Geographical Union (IGU) Thematic Conference on "Practical Geography and 21st Century Challenges", held from 4th to 6th June, 2018, at Moscow, Russia.

1. Prof. Mahabir Singh Jaglan presented a paper on "Changing Crop Occupancy and Diversification of Cropping Pattern in Rajasthan, India during post liberalisation period".
2. Prof. Rajeshwari presented a paper on "Mortality and Disease Transition in Developed States of India", in a special session on Health Geographies.
3. Prof. Omvir Singh presented a paper on "Variability and Trends in Temperature, Rainfall and Discharge in Parvati Basin of Himachal Pradesh, India

#### **Geographical News**

##### **North may turn into a 'dust bowl'**

Chandra Bhushan, Deputy Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment, India says there are several similarities between prevailing weather conditions over North India and the ones that led to the creation of a "dust bowl" in America in the 1930s. Rising temperatures, change in wind and weather patterns, are all adding to the man-made reasons - unsustainable water-guzzling agriculture, lowering of groundwater and deforestation - to the possibility of North India turning into a "dust bowl".

"It's time the government recognises it and builds a narrative around land management and soil conservation or else we may be headed for more intense dust storms in future," he warns.

He says the ecological situation is quite similar to the "dust bowl" situation of 1930s in America. "Dust Bowl was a period of severe dust storms lasting nearly a decade, damaging ecology and agriculture and leading to mass scale migration. North India has not yet reached the level, but signs are forewarning to the unfolding of a similar disaster and it is time that the government steps in," he adds.

**Seven signs**

- Like "Great Plains (Prairies)", most parts of Punjab, Haryana, Western UP and Rajasthan are also arid and semi-arid, prone to extended periods of drought.
- Large tracts in these parts were converted into irrigated farmlands with deep mechanized ploughing of top soil since 1970s.
- Deep-rooted plants original to the area and trapping soil and moisture even during dry periods and high winds were replaced with water-intensive crops like paddy, wheat etc.
- Chemical and water-intensive methods further exploited soil and groundwater.
- While forests and natural vegetation decreased, construction activities and concretization increased.
- Due to climate change, high temperatures and high wind speed, soil is turning loose and being blown to cover far-off parts.
- Climate change is affecting the pattern of western disturbances, causing stronger winds and storms.

**(New Delhi, June 25-2018, Tribune News Service)**

**70 per cent groundwater in Malwa unfit for farms**

The study, published in the Arabian Journal of Geosciences, the official journal of the Saudi Society for Geosciences, says 76 samples from all 16 districts of Punjab's Malwa belt were assessed on two international parameters - Langelier Saturation Index (LSI) and Sodium Absorption Ratio (SAR) - commonly used for assessing the quality of water for agricultural and drinking purposes.

The study found concentration of calcium, magnesium, sodium, nitrate and flourine higher than the permissible limits, rendering 80.3 per cent area of Malwa unsuitable for drinking.

"The entire region is highly contaminated with nitrate, which

leaves children highly vulnerable to the blue baby syndrome," says Dr Surindra Suthar, the author of the study, an assistant professor at the School of Environment and Natural Resources, Doon University, Dehradun.

The study also found that 70 per cent of the groundwater in Malwa was unsuitable for irrigation. Analysing eastern and western Malwa separately, it found the water quality in eastern Malwa (Ropar, Patiala, Ludhiana) slightly better than in western Malwa (Fazilka, Muksar, Ferozpur). Only 35 per cent samples in eastern and 22.3 per cent samples in western Malwa were found suitable for irrigation.

Overall, the groundwater (95 per cent in eastern and 100 per cent in western Malwa) was found to be hard with calcium and magnesium levels exceeding the permissible limits, making it unsuitable for drinking purposes as well as agricultural practices.

The continuous use of low quality water will reduce fertility, the study warns, while suggesting that Malwa needs to shift to an eco-friendly agricultural model and adopt agrochemical practices, the focus being future food security without degrading environment and human health.

"To delineate the long-term effects on soil and human health, the groundwater must go under remediation before use," it stresses.

**Impact on agriculture**

- Presence of nitrate in irrigated water affecting crop productivity.
- Concentration of nitrate reduces soil permeability, affects internal drainage of soil and ultimately causes damage to standing crops.
- High concentration of magnesium in water affects the soil quality.
- It increases alkalinity and results in decreased crop yield.

**(New Delhi, June 26-2018, Tribune News Service)**

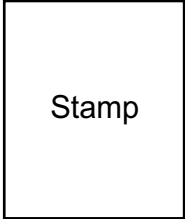
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