

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON Water Resources Policy in South Asia

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SaciWATERS

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DAY 3 UPDATE

Gender, Poverty and Water Governance in South Asia

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The concept of water governance provides tool for understanding gendered pattern of access to water within the broader social relations. Gender, water and poverty interlinkage can be understood in the broader social relations and in the preview of water governance. The third day of the conference witnessed two sessions dedicated for deliberating on these issues. Presenting the case from Gujarat in western India, Sara Ahmed emphasized on the necessities of the political articulation and women's empowerment through the need for water management more than the institutional space or capacity building. "There is a need for further empirical studies about actual household patterns of decision-making related to water use" said S K Lal. Nazeer Memon from Sindh, Pakistan showed how gender-blind policies in irrigation have impinged upon the already skewed institutional space for women and gender insensitive infrastructure. Highlighting the

case of Nepal, Pranita Bhushan Udas, emphasized that the issue of gender inequity is part of the larger debate on social inequity. "Thinking and acting on gender in water importantly involves efforts to change normal ways of knowing in water" stressed Margreet Zwartveen. She highlighted that the struggles between gender knowledge and normal water knowledge is about epistemologies, metaphors, symbolisms and ontologies.

Evolving an analytical framework and exploring appropriate methodologies for empirical investigation to study the interface between water, poverty and gender empowerment, Amita Shah and Seema Kulkarni spoke about the two discourses water and poverty and gender and water and issues that bridge them together. The three presentations from Asifa, Jyotirmayee and Nazmun were on empirical research of project on water, poverty and gender and the changes that it had brought about in women's lives.



"There are many organisations and initiatives underway for capacity building in IWRM and CB project of SaciWATERS is taking the lead in this arena in South Asia especially with their programmes and activities of Education and Research in the four partner institutes in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. "

Nimal Gunawardena

"Through the development of people based water resources management policies and programmes there is a scope for rural communities (69% of country's population) to benefit from the resources from the 92% of the country's geographical area."

Thinley Gyamtsho



"The actors, and their policies are diverse, not confined for a 'place-based nexus' to manage watershed, as presumed by contemporary IWRM programmes."

V.S. Saravanan

"Reposition vulnerability and resilience at the core of development, climate and disaster policy along with reinserting indigenous knowledge, and technology and world views in resource policy."

Daanish Mustafa



"Local firms are better positioned to feel a greater stake in the wellbeing of their local society, to feel in relationship with their local communities and to act in ways that earn public trust, compared to multinationals whose actions have historically proved the opposite."

Kumudini Abeysuriya

"Every river in India, if you look at the source, originates from our national parks and sanctuaries. The conference has been very enlightening but I really wish there was a greater emphasis on bio-diversity issues"

Bahar Dutt



From the SAWA Fellows



"SAWA Fellowship Programme has enabled me to apply the integrated approach for water management in any research field"

Md. Sydur Rahman, The First SAWA Fellow to graduate, IWFEM, Bangladesh University for Engineering and Technology, Dhaka.

"SAWA Fellowship Programme enhances different knowledge capacities and ideologies by providing opportunities to share the knowledge of various countries, universities, and research institutes."

M T M Mahees, PhD Candidate of SAWA, PGIA, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka



It is because of the SAWA Fellowship, I am here in the water sector today"

M.G.T.S Amarasekara
SAWA Fellows, PGIA, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

"SAWA Fellowship Programme offers courses on Gender & Water and Field Research Methodologies thus bringing the neglected components of IWRM viz. equity, social justice and conservation of natural environment into the water engineering curriculum".

Mr. Sultan Ahmed, IWFEM, Bangladesh University for Engineering and Technology, Dhaka.



DAY THREE IN PICTURES



WATERSTRUCK



WOMEN WATER PROFESSIONALS OF SOUTH ASIA

Ms. Pranita Bhushan, a young energetic water professional from Nepal, is presently pursuing her PhD at the Water and Engineering Group, Department of Environmental Science, Wageningen. **SaciWATERs** brings to you her thoughts on being one of the budding women water professional in South Asia.



What motivated you to pursue a vocation in the water sector?

I have a keen interest in natural resources studies. Water has a very important role to play in the nature as well as in economic growth. My work in the high mountains helped me to internalize the fact that access to water is both a social and technical issue. I was later involved with the National Federation of Irrigation Water Users Association, where I realized that water is also a political issue. I got more interested in understanding the dynamics of Water In/equity. Thus, I applied for a scholarship to pursue Masters Degree in a water related course at Wageningen University. The training at the Wageningen

University was an eye opener for me. It helped me understand the need for interdisciplinary sciences in the contemporary world. I feel that professionals trained in interdisciplinary water sciences are better equipped with facilitating skills. They can play a crucial role in constructive engagement that Pragma Gyawali mentioned yesterday.

What constraints do you feel as a women working in the water sector?

Majority of the professionals working in water sector are male (engineers). In the initial days, I used to feel a little apprehensive about the work atmosphere. Every step made me conscious of the uncharted terrain lying ahead. As a woman researcher (using

anthropological research methods), I do have different experiences than male, especially the way society perceives you when you are traveling alone and staying alone in new places.

What are the opportunities that you see in this sector for aspiring women water professionals?

The gender balance in any profession brings healthy working environment which will have reflection on gender balance/sensitive delivery of the work. There is still a need for energetic young women to get into this profession.

PARTNERS - CROSSING BOUNDARIES PROJECT

Crossing Boundaries Project, a joint effort of **SaciWATERs** and Water Engineering Group at Wageningen University, is being implemented in collaboration with five South Asian partner institutions. The main focus is on capacity building on gender and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in South Asia of water professionals through higher education, innovation and social learning-focused research. The project also works towards knowledge base development, and networking.



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