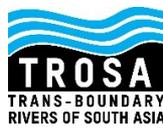


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## **SHIFTING LANDS, FLOWING WATERS: TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION FOR WATER AND RELATED ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIA**

### **International Roundtable Conference**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2020**

**Organized by Oxfam India and Jamsetji Tata School of Disaster Studies, TISS, Mumbai**

### **THE BACKGROUND**

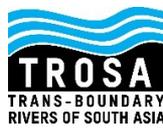
The intrinsic linkages between South Asian countries, rooted in geopolitics, demography, socio-economic and cultural ties, suggest that dynamics in one country often lead to cascading impacts – be it policies and practices around use of natural resources or devastating impacts of disasters or changing climatic conditions, and these could potentially affect the entire region adversely. With the growing threats of climate induced disasters the consequences of an ill-prepared nation or weak transboundary governance processes are likely to be unprecedented and cumulative across the region, which in turn may aggravate fragilities in peripheral and vulnerable geographies.

South Asia is home to many ethnic and religious groups in diverse agro-climatic zones, which have a long history of interaction around livelihoods and natural resources, a shared culture and issues that produce conflict or co-operation. While the region is well endowed with natural resources, it is also exposed to the highest levels of disaster risks including floods, droughts etc impacting the population and the ecosystem in many different ways. As countries are evolving their strategies to manage and respond to these disasters, experience and situation on ground demands that intergovernmental regional platforms like SAARC, ASEAN also need to develop greater convergence on transboundary issues of livelihoods, trade, use of natural resources, disaster response and recovery coordination. In addition, these approaches need to be risk-informed in order to leverage their intervention strategies.

Water from great river systems such as the Indus, Mekong, Ganga and the Brahmaputra are shared by different nations and have also been the source of tension and disagreement at different levels, affecting the vulnerable communities the most. There is considerable evidence of riparian communities being caught in the cycles of poverty induced by risk and vulnerabilities.

Among these multi-faceted concerns, transboundary water governance assumes significance and includes the management of various risks and hazards. Water related vulnerabilities must be read along with the various underlying socio-political, economic and administrative systems which influence the general well-being of the riparian communities across nations. Only then can

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transformation be achieved in a desired direction.

There is a need for policies in South Asia to deepen their agenda towards just and equitable sharing of water resources across riparian regions. In this regard, national policies and allied administrative approaches must be oriented towards water security of riparian communities. Such people-centered policies will bring about a positive change in the lives of the marginalized and vulnerable water-dependent groups.

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

This roundtable will focus on examining and exploring in transboundary contexts, the challenges faced by vulnerable communities, efforts to overcome these. We invite papers that dwell on possible avenues for intervention by the governments, local communities, the private sector and civil society organisations, while placing the rights of vulnerable communities at the centre stage. The Roundtable also welcomes papers that emphasize the need for more efficient and transparent risk informed governance across South Asia with policy implications and recommendations with a special focus on river basins in the region. Papers may also focus on aspects beyond water resources and reflect on issues of transboundary governance around other resources such as forests, flora and fauna, and impacts of disasters and climate change.

Papers that discuss experiences and efforts in enhancing participation of various national governments or civil society organisations and the local communities across the borders, to work towards adopting a common framework in order to reduce extant friction, are welcome. Efforts may be around livelihoods, information sharing and exploring cultural synergies between communities.

## **THE ORGANISERS**

Oxfam with their flagship project Transboundary Rivers of South Asia has worked extensively in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar on the issue of risk informed governance with multiple stakeholders. Oxfam India in collaboration with the CSO in India and Bhutan is already working on strengthening people to people ties for building progressively trust and confidence for improvement in ecosystem management and conservation, early warning systems and evidence-informed dialogues with riparian communities in India and Bhutan as envisaged in the Kokrajhar Declaration of 2019. TISS with nearly 70 years of experience in social sciences has worked on

several projects on water governance, ecosystem management, disaster polices and risk informed planning in recent times in different countries. The two institutions, in collaboration are organizing this two -day International Roundtable in Mumbai on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Researchers and practitioners are invited to submit an abstract of their original work, in doc format titled “*Abstract-Name of Author, -<Title of Paper>*” <*Email and phone number for communication*> ” to [roundtable2020@tiss.edu](mailto:roundtable2020@tiss.edu). In a coveragepage, authors are requested to provide their name, institutional affiliation and a 100 word author profile by January 30, 2020.

**Abstracts** must be written in English (Times New Roman font, size 12, single space) and should not exceed **500 words**. All authors, whose submissions are accepted, will be invited to send their **full paper not exceeding 7000 words** within 3 weeks. The papers are expected to critically examining one or more the following themes –

- Economy, Society and Culture in transboundary resource sharing: conflict and co-operation, nature of challenges- everyday dynamics and formal and informal responses
- Contemporary water governance framework in South Asia (reflecting on the issues of justice and rights of riparian communities).
- Trasboundary disaster governance and policies that relate to resource management
- Water Governance networks and alliances in South Asia
- Political economy of communities depended on transboundary rivers
- Risk informed planning and governance for transboundary resources management (implications for at-risk populations- like women, youth and children, fisherfolk, indigeneous communities, etc).
- Policies and engagement at national level between South Asian countries on risk informed governance.
- Avenues for collaboration between different stakeholders for developing risk informed governance framework.

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACT: FEBRUARY 20, 2020

CONFIRMATION OF ABSTRACT SELECTION: FEBRUARY 25, 2020

SUBMISSION OF FULL PAPER: MARCH 15, 2020

VENUE: Old Conference Hall, Main Campus, TISS, Mumbai

DATES: April 3, 2020 to April 4, 2020

CONTACT PERSON: Ms. Aruna Chavan – arunac@tiss.edu

## **ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

### **Conference Convenors**

**TISS:** Ms. Saumya Kumar and Prof. Janki Andharia, JTSDS, Mumbai

**Oxfam India:** Mr. Animesh Prakash and Mr. Mukunda Upadhyay

### **Other Members of the Organising Committee:**

- Dr. M. Irshad, Assistant Professor, JTSDS, TISS
- Ms. Lavanya Shanbhogue, Assistant Professor, JTSDS

**---EOM---**