



Inviting abstracts for Documenting Flood Induced Conflicts in India

The Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India (Forum to be brief) is planning to document about 20 different types of flood induced conflicts in India. Those who are interested to contribute a case study should send in an abstract of not more than 300 to 400 words by 8th June 2011. The address for sending the abstract is provided at the end of this announcement.

The Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India, a network of organisations and individuals having interest, experience and expertise in understanding conflicts arising around water in the country and exploring options to resolve these water conflicts in the interests of peace and equitable sharing, management and development of water resources. The Forum presently is in its second phase of work and the focus is on conflict documentation, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Hence, an effort to document flood induced conflicts in India, an issue that has remained unexplored until date. In fact in its first phase the Forum had documented more than 60 cases of different types of water conflicts and this compendium has published by Routledge as a book: *Water Conflicts in India: A Million Revolts in the Making*. For more details on the work of the Forum you could visit <http://conflicts.indiawaterportal.org>

The context and rationale of this documentation

India is the most flood-affected nation in the world after Bangladesh. It accounts for one fifth of global deaths due to floods and on an average thirty million people are evacuated every year. The total area in the country viable to floods is 40 million hectares out of which 8 million hectare on an average is regularly affected.¹ There are 22 states and 1 union territory, there 137 districts are vulnerable to floods.

In the rural context, human and livestock population are particularly susceptible to flood casualties because of high population density, absence of zoning regulations, lack of 'effective' flood control, and lack of emergency response infrastructure and early warning systems. Other factors like lack of adequate evacuee sites above flood levels, accessible routes for reaching at safe sites, lack of public information about escape routes and other appropriate response activities renders communities more vulnerable. Floods too compel vulnerability amongst women, adolescent girls, children and senior citizens.

Urban deluges in the recent past have added a new dimension to the existing flood discourse. Urban floods trigger mass displacement of slum dwellers. Shortages of basic

¹ Flood: Trend and Social Impacts in Indian Context – PC Joshi, Dept of Anthropology, Delhi University; P Khattri, Dept of Anthropology, Delhi University; MM Singh, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi; M Fordham, Northumbria University, UK; Guha – D Sapir, Director, CRED, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium

conveniences and the sky rocketing price of fundamental essentials coupled with high inaccessibility quotient makes it difficult for poor and lower middle class people to overcome the catastrophe. Existing in floodwaters without refuge for several days has a detrimental impact on the same vulnerable groups.

There are claims that a catastrophe like floods does not differentiate between social groups and it influences all. However, on assessing the nature, intensity and duration of the devastating impact (both in rural and urban context), a specific consequence trend emerges. The preliminary assessment indicates that the vulnerability of the population depends on several social factors like age, gender, economic status, social cohesion, population density, gender, health status, race/ethnicity, residential status, culture etc. In Indian context, specifically another aspect of vulnerability is caste. The vulnerability quotient of floods has links with the causal factors of floods. However, further exploration of the linkages between the vulnerability quotient and the causal factors of recurrent and unprecedented floods in India is important to identify common space that could be the breeding ground for flood-induced conflict.

Conflict in context to floods can be defined as contradictory perceptions (between centre and state; state and non-state actors; vulnerable and secure groups and amongst vulnerable groups) over the course of action taken or to be taken in order to overcome the death-defying situation. Conflict proliferates because of factual disagreements between individuals, groups and institutions with different values, priorities, interests, resources, survival mechanisms and hopes. Flood induced conflicts take place between inter groups, displaced communities, within and outside the embankment, states, regions, and nations. The following categories can house few basic sources of conflict:

- Cause
- Occurrence
- Resultant
- Response
- Distrust and power struggles
- Policy/ies redressal

Floods unfortunately have never been looked through the keyhole of conflict, despite its presence in different magnitude, character, space, and locations. The problem of floods in itself has been colossal and diverse hence the discourse has remained confined to issues, which despite reiteration remains ignored by the answering authorities. Therefore, understanding the correlation between floods and conflict perspective will not only broaden the perspective of the existing arguments but also strengthen the effort to show case the extended influences of human induced disaster in the country.

It is in recognition of the need to document flood induced conflicts in India that the Forum invites abstracts. This initiative will highlight and create a prospect to deliberate on the much crucial aspect of floods in India, which has gone unnoticed over the years.

Abstract, the case study and the processes

Interested persons can send an abstract of any type of flood induced conflict in the country keeping in mind the discussion above. As mentioned earlier, it should not be more than 300 to 400 words. The abstract should, on the minimum, mention the location of the conflict, and also highlight the key issues, parties involved in the conflict and its present status.

A panel of experts appointed by the Forum will review the abstracts and select twenty abstracts for the case studies. Acceptance of the abstracts would be intimated to the authors by 15 June 2011.

The selected authors would have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Forum. The Forum would pay an honorarium of Rs. 10,000 for each case study and they – 50% would be paid at the time of signing the contract and the remaining 50% after submission of the final draft.

Megh Pyne Abhiyan through Eklavya Prasad would anchor this effort on behalf of the Forum and a committee constituted for this purpose would guide this effort. This committee would select the abstracts and also provide guidance to the entire process of documentation. The Forum would also try to organise a workshop where all the case study writers would be invited to present their draft versions. The Forum would publish the case studies as a compendium of flood induced conflicts and attempts would also be made to get the compendium published as a book through a professional publisher.

The attached **format** would provide the guidelines for the case study.

Important dates

Last date to receive the abstracts: 8 June 2011

Notification of the acceptance of abstracts: 15 June 2011

Last date for submission of the first draft of the case study: 20 July 2011

Kindly send the abstract as a .doc file via email to waterconflictforum@gmail.com