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Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

PhD in Law and Governance

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(Thesis – Interrogating Governance of Global Commons: The Politics of Climate Justice in Bundelkhand)

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M.Phil. in Law and Governance

2013-2015

(Thesis – The Political Economy of Global Public Goods: A Study of Climate Stability)

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M.A. in Political Science

2011-2013

Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

B.A. Honours in Political Science

2008-2011

Minor: Sociology in Contemporary India, Culture in India- Modern

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Visiting Fellow – Centre for Internal and Regional Security (IReS) (April 2017 – present)

Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi

Deputy Manager – Policy & Planning, Innovation Systems Branch (September 2016 – April 2017)

Development Alternatives, TARA Crescent, New Delhi

Teaching Assistant – Environmental Governance (Winter semester 2015)

Centre for the Study of Law & Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

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Assisted in the fieldwork in the project on collective organization in India, headed by Professor Yanick Noiseux, University of Montreal.

AWARDS:

- **SYLFF fellowship** or the 'Jawaharlal Nehru Young Leaders Fellowship' under the Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund of the Nippon Foundation and Tokyo Foundation for 2016-17.
- **Selection to visit Kyoto University**, Japan as a short-term visiting researcher during April-May 2018.
- **UGC-NET (National Eligibility Test)** and **Junior Research Fellowship (JRF)** in Political Science – 2018.

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS**Book chapters:**

Maheshwari, G. (2021). *Interrogating Emergent Climate Communication Discourses in India*. In W. L. Filho, J. Luetz, & D. Ayal (eds.), **Handbook of Climate Change Management** (pp. 1-20). Cham: Springer.

Maheshwari, G. (2021). *Comparative Interrogation of Climate Resilient Communities in South Asia*. In R. Brears (ed.), **The Palgrave Handbook of Climate Resilient Societies** (pp. 1-16). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Journal publications:

Migration policy and politics in India; **Economic and Political Weekly**; Vol. 53, Issue No. 28, 14 Jul, 2018.

Migrant Crisis in Kerala; **Economic and Political Weekly**; Vol. 51, Issue No. 48; November 26th, 2016.

The Policy of Financial Inclusion in India: The Paradox of Inclusive Governance; **Journal Global Policy and Governance**; Volume 5, Number 1; Spring 2016; pp. 25-32.

Contextualizing the Sustainable Development Goals in India's Policy Discourse; **Punjab University Research Journal Social Sciences**, Vol 23(3), 2015.

Global Public Goods and International Developmental Aid; **Journal of Global Policy and Governance**; Volume 4, Number 1; June 2015; pp. 161-170.

Paradox of the Developmental State in India: Revisiting New Economic Policy; **Journal of Politics & Governance**; Vol. 3, No. 2/3; April-September 2014; pp. 49-56.

Reports:

Policy Report – Climate Security in the Bay of Bengal; Clingendael Foundation and Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies; forthcoming September 2021.

Research Report (Indexed: JSTOR) – *Indo-Dutch Cooperation on Sustainable Futures*; Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies; August 2017.

Book chapter – *Environmental Protection; Three Years of the Modi Government*; Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies; May 2017.

Co-author – *National Green Economy Barometer: Scoping the 'Status of Transition'*; March 2017; Development Alternatives and Green Economy Coalition.

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS

- *Speaker* – **Local level governance of global atmospheric commons in India; DSA Ireland International Postgraduate Conference**; 25th September 2020; Online mode (Zoom application); Organized by Development Studies Association of Ireland (DSAI) Undergrad Liaison & Postgrad Network forum.
- *Speaker* – Environment & climate change; **Consultation on 'People's Manifesto for 2019 General Election'**; 26th February, 2019; Constitution Club of India, New Delhi; Organized by PAIRVI, MAUSAM, CECOEDECON.
- *Speaker* – Paper on Climate vulnerability and Inter-State Migrant workers in Kerala: Mapping just outcomes; **Two Day National Seminar on Interstate Migrant Workers in Kerala: Labour and Civic Life**; March 6-7th 2018; Loyola College of Social Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram and Indian Social Institute, Bangalore.
- *Speaker* – **Ensuring Equity in Paris Agreement Rulebook: PRECOP Consultation**; 23rd October, 2017; India International Centre, New Delhi.
- *Speaker* – Conference on **Climate Change and People's Voice** organised at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS), New Delhi on October 5th, 2015.

- *Paper presentation* – Paper titled “The policy of Financial Inclusion in India: The paradox of inclusive governance”; **18th Annual Conference of Indian Political Economy Association**, jointly organized by Indian Political Economy Association (IPEA) and Giri Institute of Development Studies (GIDS), Lucknow, 15th-16th November, 2014.
- *Paper presentation* – Paper titled “US-India climate change cooperation: Hegemonic bilateral provision of a global public good” presented at the **Two-Day International Conference on Indo-US Relations and South Asia, organized by Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab**, in collaboration with The American Embassy, New Delhi, from 29th to 30th October, 2014.
- *Paper presentation* – Paper titled “Paradox of the Indian developmental state: A re-evaluation of the New Economic Policy” presented at the India International Centre, New Delhi, for the **2nd National Conference on Politics & Governance**, organized by the Management Development Research Foundation, on 3rd August 2014.



Comparative Interrogation of Climate-Resilient Communities in South Asia

Policies, Practices, and Discourses

Garima Maheshwari

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	South Asia: Discursive Shifts in Climate Policy and Practice	3
3	Mapping Climate Resilience in South Asian Policy Frameworks	7
3.1	Climate Resilience in Indian Policy Frames	7
3.2	Climate Resilience in Bangladesh Policy Frames	9
4	Operationalizing Climate Resilience: Policy-Practice Divergence	11
5	Conclusion: Finding the Shared Common Good Outside Statist Contours	13
6	Cross-References	14
	References	14

Abstract

Resilience forms an important part of climate adaptation governance, having evolved, as a concept, to reflect its various contested framings. Traditionally, its original mainstay has circumscribed it within the systems approach, specifically centering around the concept of a socio-ecological system (SES) which has the ability to absorb any external disturbance and yet retain its fundamental structure (Holling 1973). Highlighting the relationship between adaptation and resilience from a systems perspective, Berkes (Sustainability 9:1–12, 2017) argues that, in multilevel complex systems, the concept of resilience has brought adaptation to address itself to uncertainty and change.

Keywords

Resilience · Adaptation · Climate policy · Governance · Community · South Asia · India · Bangladesh

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Interrogating Emergent Climate Communication Discourses in India

Garima Maheshwari

Contents

Introduction: Discursive Framings of Climate Communication as a Political Process	2
Dominant Meta-Narratives as Discursive Levers of Communication	5
Dilemma of Moral Assertion Through a Framework of Aggregated Preferences	7
Community as a Moral Entity: Climate Communication in India	9
The Discursive Disconnect Between State and Community	12
Conclusion: Recovering the Democratic Deficit in Climate Communication Discourses	17
Limitations of the Chapter and Way Forward	18
References	18

Abstract

The relevance of climate change communication to Indian policy and practice discourses on climate change are scarcely referenced and have yet come to play a pivotal role in policy and political fields. While existing theories of climate change communication – evolved in the context of the global North – have mainly focused on a range of factors that influence public risk perceptions, awareness and beliefs about climate change, as well as the role of media in representing climate-specific debates, in the case of global South, the trajectories of climate communication are notably scarce.

This chapter attempts to fill this theoretical lacuna by tracing how climate change communication has evolved as a field in the Indian context, by deploying the methodology of discourse analysis. The chapter examines two types of material to examine the discourse of climate communication in India through which expressions have been most visible, viz., climate-centered movements and views of practitioners engaging with local communities and politics as a field of climate communication.

A study of the Indian context reveals that the factors shaping climate communication are notably different from those posited in the context of developed

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Contextualising the Sustainable Development Goals in India's policy discourse¹


Garima Sharma

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signed in September 2015 inaugurated the onset of a new and potentially more ambitious policy framework in the international development discourse. Building on the broad success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which expired in 2015, the SDGs were negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also referred to as the Rio +20, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, and involving large participation of the private sector, civil society actors and governments. Resulting in an outcome document suitably titled the 'The Future We Want', the SDGs focus on international developmental outcomes hinging on three pillars viz. economic, social and environmental.

The criticality of their integral success depends on the extent to which we have been able to learn lessons from more than a decade of MDGs, at both global and national levels.

A Political History

With multiple global crises – climate change and environment, food and water crisis, new forms of predicted global migration as a result of natural disasters, to name a few – occupying a constant space in the international governance agenda, the idea of Sustainable Development Goals inspires an easy consensus. However, the politics that precedes its history in the international development discourse has been marked by a constant contestation of a pure neo-liberal global agenda. As a forerunner to the SDGs, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed in 2000 after the failures of the exclusion of social development from economic goals became evident.



Research Journal

Prior to the
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Fund (IMF)
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Global Public Goods and International Developmental Aid

Garima Sharma

Abstract The modalities of international development aid have formed one of the central themes of international governance discourses, since the historical provision of development aid to the recipient countries has been closely interlinked with governance conditionality calling for structural changes in these countries. Since the past decade, the governance modalities of developmental aid have assumed new dimensions, shaped by the emergence of the ‘Global Public Goods’ approach in the international development discourse. The purpose of this paper is to explore the conceptualization of international developmental aid through such an approach. It seeks to analyze whether the Global Public Goods approach provides an alternative to the hierarchical and unequal structure of the existing development aid discourse or reinforces it in new ways. This paper will thematically address three broad areas –re-framing the international developmental aid question through a public goods approach to examine the manner in which this issue is conceived in a global public goods framework; the extent to which this approach can be seen as an alternative by assessing the modalities of the relationship between development aid and global public goods and; finally, to interrogate the politics underpinning such an approach itself to problematize its ability to counter the traditional governance discourses.

Keywords Global public goods - International development - Aid financing - Governance

JEL Classification F50 F3 F1 F6 F5

Migrant Crisis in Kerala

Need to Change the Political Culture

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The Kerala government is under pressure to enforce action to deal with the rising migrant population in the state after the arrest of a migrant labourer as the suspect of rape and murder of Jisha, a Dalit law student. Keeping track of the migrant population in the absence of an identification database would violate the constitutional provisions of the right to work. By launching an insurance scheme to incentivise migrants to voluntarily register themselves, the government is planning to track migrant workers. Profiling by the state, even under the garb of welfare schemes, will further justify the existing middle-class ire against domestic and regional migrant labour.

With the rape and murder of a Dalit law student, Jisha, in Kerala triggering a series of protests on the gross violations of women's rights in the state and becoming a massive issue during the recent assembly elections, the major brunt has been borne by the migrant population in Kerala. This only intensified further with the arrested suspect turning out to be a migrant worker. The place at which the murder took place was only a few kilometres from the town of Perumbavoor or the "mini-North India," which houses the majority of migrant population in the state. Even prior to this incident, migrants across the state have been targeted heavily by the local population for crimes as petty as theft and on grounds of mere suspicion.

Construction of the Migrant

The events across Kerala come at a time when migrants all over the world, and especially in Europe, are being constructed as a convenient "other" on whom the systemic economic and sociocultural problems can be foisted. This perception is in marked departure from the manner in which migration has been viewed as a predominantly policy issue throughout the decades of 1990s and 2000s. The inflow of migrants to developed countries was welcomed as a panacea to the ageing population and demographic decline, with the number of international migrants rising from 36 million in 1991 to 191 million in 2005 (Arnold 2012).

The fact that the pre-2008 period was also characterised by an optimistic world economic and financial outlook helped in not explicitly highlighting the ire caused as a result of distribution of welfare services among the incoming populations, especially if they were skilled personnel, while unskilled personnel continued to remain largely unwelcome.

In Kerala too, migrants have filled the gap created by the exodus of Keralites to the Gulf countries, since the local Malayali population tends to opt only for white collar jobs. While the current political patterns across the world are increasingly being premised on ire against all migrants, in general, the primary material fallouts of such an attitude are on the migrant workers who live in conditions of economic precarity. This precarity of the migrants persists primarily through the soft governance techniques of power deployed by the state to ensure that the migrant—who contributes critically to the economy—is neither settled nor driven out, but continues to exist as an object of economic extraction and exploitation by the state. In David Harvey's *Right to the City*, the larger process behind this was documented through the depiction of cities as contentious, competing spaces with rampant exploitation of the worker to sustain the consumption of the population. This is precisely what is happening in Kerala.

Migrants in Kerala

Migrants in Kerala, whose numbers, in the last three years, have swelled to almost over 7% of the population, are mainly employed in low-skilled jobs. They work in almost all major sectors—such as hospitality, transport and construction—as masons, farmhands, security guards, waiters, drivers, etc (Viju 2016). They suffer deplorable living conditions, and face a situation where they are both necessary to the basic economic functioning of the state. Kerala will have a massive vacuum if migrants were to leave these services and are yet seen by society as outsiders who vitiate the traditional culture and unbalance law and order.

In the last five years, migrants have been increasingly blamed for the rising crime rates—1,770 cases naming migrants as the accused (Sudhir 2016)—and the import of insurgents from India's border states. The state is almost always complicit in the mainstream social thinking. The migrants are paid lower wages than the locals working in the same jobs and they have been subjected to routine checks by the state's health department which

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Migration Policy and Politics in India

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The *India Migrations Reader*, edited by S Irudaya Rajan, provides a basic conceptual precursor to later works, like *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Migration* (Rajan and Bhagat 2018) and the forced migration theme of the most recent India Migration Report (IMR) 2017 (Rajan 2018). The two later works aptly contextualise the latest issues of intersections between environmental vulnerability and forced migration, along with issues of entrenched social identities. On the other hand, the *India Migrations Reader* is based on a compilation of insights from the first five India Migrations Reader series published between 2010 and 2014. Therefore, it provides a complete and essential policy background for researchers who have started exploring the contours of migration and its existing policy framework in India.

When read in conjunction with critical current developments in the Indian migration patterns, the book essentially helps formulate answers to two important sets of questions. These questions revolve around “rights” and give a sense of contesting the logistical and mechanistic construction of migration, as is often done by policy. First, despite basic advancements, why does the Indian migration policy framework continue to remain at a rather incipient stage in terms of covering the vulnerabilities faced by migrant labour? Second, what are the interlinkages between India’s structural political economy of capital and the movement of internal migrant labour, and how does this relationship have an impact on the loopholes that can be exploited in the current legal policy framework of migration?

Given the recent trends of reverse migration that have been witnessed from the Gulf to developed centres like Kerala as a result of the latter’s demographic precipitation as well as its rising number of migrating workers from other states, it becomes all the more important to enable changes within the existing migration policy framework. In order to address the rights of

India Migrations Reader edited by S Irudaya Rajan, *Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2017; pp x + 188, ₹695.*

migrant labour, this book provides the necessary exploration of economic and social issues afflicting migration policy and politics in and around India.

State, Migration and Justice

Before launching into the international and internal migration patterns that have an impact on Indian migrant workers, it is necessary to understand the fundamental nature and drivers of migration. Clearly, the migration economy is heavily influenced by economic opportunities as well as increasing forced displacements. While the long-term economic calculus does take into account the aspirations of migrants to settle permanently at the place of destination, this is more often true for the diaspora than for temporary skilled and unskilled migrants who venture out to fulfil their economic objectives. This is especially so in the case of unskilled labour migrating to regions such as the Gulf, where the working conditions and recent laws—such as Nitaqat, discussed in this reader—leave them with little choice but to participate in the remittance economy and eventually return home.

“Precarity” is the operational word for the conditions of such workers who migrate from South Asia to the Gulf. There is little corpus of well-institutionalised laws to guarantee a defence from vulnerability. In a way, the economy spawned by migration has become a semi-autonomous and self-perpetuating entity, where the state has become a direct beneficiary of the remittance economy, but has done little to oil and smoothen the cogs of the machinery.¹ This has been explained well in the book, which indicts India’s current international migration policy on a number of grounds. The book reflects on the persistence of rather outdated migration laws, which are not well implemented, and the lack of an integrated forward-looking international migration policy.

As flagged in the reader, the paternalistic notion of “protection” as reflected in the Emigration Act, 1983—guaranteeing “protection by exception” only to those with lesser educational qualifications and economic backgrounds—has paradoxically led to an incentive for adverse selection of the recruitment process itself. Middlemen, employers and keen workers remain poised to exploit loopholes in the system by using the “weakness” card. Clearly, the outdated system is at odds with the products and advancements offered by the modern economy, which could be utilised towards just ends. For the authors of the book, this may mean expanding the ambit of protection to include a number of risk mitigation and insurance products and suitably rewarding skilled migrants, so as to equalise the playing field. Essentially, the state should move away from its current role as a protector to that of a facilitator, giving full space to a competitive environment and a deregulation process spearheaded by non-governmental entities.

While these prescriptions are certainly better than the existing corrupt economy of deliberate adverse selection, they should also be placed in their appropriate political context. Advocating for a facilitating role for the state raises larger questions of justice in the state–market divide. How much ground does one actually cede to the market? To what extent can levelling the playing field actually equalise the capabilities of workers? These questions become crucial in the debates on migration, since rights of the migrant workers and the drivers of migration form a contentious part of the obstructions in the migrant economy. Therefore, there needs to be a subtle acknowledgement of the fact that infrastructural improvements will continue to have their limitations in a liberal policy framework, unless political questions of justice and capabilities are concretely addressed.

A recent illustration of this can be seen in the form of policy initiatives being undertaken for migrant workers by the Left Democratic Front government in Kerala. While the policy initiatives to provide a social security net and inclusion to interstate migrant workers across a number of areas, such as education,