



**Opening Session** Mark Redwood, Sara Ahmed

Mark Redwood opened his address by describing IDRC's interest in its Climate Change and Water (CCW ) program which is evident from the fact that it is funding a hundred projects, in over fifty countries and more than twenty programs in South Asia. He further elaborated the objectives of the CCW program which were mainly to reduce the effect of climate change on water security and the way they were trying to achieve this was by way of supporting research. He stated that building capacities of researchers is the main goal of IDRC.

The peri-urban project was a successful example of the kind of work supported by IDRC. Sara Ahmed's speech set the context of the conference; she mentioned that the main aim of the project was to study the implications of water security in peri-urban areas, which are under dual stress of climate change and urbanization. She mentioned that the strong point of the team of SaciWATERs was that it operates with an interdisciplinary approach. This has helped give a well rounded perspective to the project.

**Session 2** Project Overview - Ashutosh Shukla, M Shah Alam Khan, Vishal Narain, Sreoshi Singh and Anjal Prakash

Vishal Narain gave an introduction to the concept of peri-urban, and explained that for this project peri-urban was to be understood as an analytical construct, which focussed on the flows of goods between rural and urban. Further professor Khan elaborated on the rising level of salinity due to urbanization and climate change in Bangladesh. He expressed that rising tidal levels were also a concern for coastal areas of Bangladesh. The research study noticed that cropping patterns were changing and people were opting for salinity resistant crops, Prof. Khan also elaborated on how people were combining and using social capital to lease ponds. This was further supported by Dr Narain's analysis of the Pundits in Budheda. He talked about social capital guiding adaptation in peri-urban Gurgaon. Further for the Hyderabad site, Sreoshi Singh expressed that this study was a pioneer in gendered study of water security. All four site presentations showed that people in peri-urban areas have adapted to water insecurity using a mix of technology and institutions. Summing up the project, Dr. Prakash said that the peri-urban water security team assessed local needs and capacities and also helped create awareness and provide solutions with respect to climate change and water insecurity adaptation

practices. The interventions undertaken by the project team for this purpose were diverse. They ranged from building awareness to forming village level water committees.

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### Session 3 Cross Cutting Issue - Purnamita Dasgupta, Shahjahan Mondal and Rajesh Sada

In a study to understand cost benefit analysis of River Mayur, Dr Dasgupta said that reviving a river was a practically justifiable solution to tackle water scarcity. Speaking purely from an eco-systems perspective, a river is an asset. Currently the Mayur River in Bangladesh, is suffering from increasing salinity and massive dumping. Although, this solid waste has given rise to land bodies, over which people claim their property rights, the primary services of the river have disappeared. A cost benefit analysis was done, and data was collected through a mix method approach of

household interviews, focus group discussions and secondary data sources. Post analysis, the highest benefit shown is that of flood control and a final result suggests that reviving a river is justifiable. Dr. Mondal presented the climate study that was done to check its effect on peri-urban water security in the peri-urban water security project. A few of the many key findings, were as follows; temperature has been increasing across all four research sites, and Khatmandu shows the highest rise, while rainfall has been increasing in Bangladesh, and is reducing in Gurgaon. The issue here is considered to be rainfall pattern variability and not intensity. All four research sites show, people's perception regarding rainfall has been that it is declining. Apart from rainfall, local perception is in consistency with secondary data. It is felt that lower water availability in peri-urban areas, will lead to resource use conflict. Rajesh Sada further expressed that in Khatmandu most people consider temperature to be rising, people feel that cooler days are going down. The methodology here used has been a mix of focus group discussions and household survey. People perceive rainfall to be decreasing and a key result has been that 76% feel crop production has gone down. They also feel that the population of weed and pests is rising due to climatic factors. As an adaptation to this perceived lesser rainfall, people are capturing rain water through roof top harvesting, going in for lower water demand crops and also looking for livelihood diversification.



### Session 4 Interlinking Research to Policy and Practice - Jasveen Jairath, Navdeep Mathur, Ajaya Dixit, Seema Kulkarni, Sultan Ahmed

The panel discussion during the last session discussed the importance of researchers making an impact at the policy level. There was almost a consensus amongst the participants that researchers should not remain isolated or keep away in their intellectual ivory towers away from the realities of the world. They need to engage with policy makers in order to bring about change in the society. They need to engage with the policy makers effectively. For this purpose they need to think creatively and find different ways of collaboration. Effective communication was identified as a necessary tool to address this challenge. Very importantly, it was suggested that engagement with policy makers cannot be sporadic. For this purpose there is a need to adopt a consistent and long term strategy and think creatively. Only such an approach could bring about change at the ground level. Finally, Mark Redwood concluded the session by reiterating the necessity of multidisciplinary approach to research.



### DAY 1 in Pictures



**SaciWATERS**

South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary  
Water Resources Studies

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Centre de recherches pour le développement international

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