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Regional Training for South Asia Water Studies (SAWAS) Fellows on Interdisciplinary Research Methods



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SUMMARY

As part of the South Asia Water Fellowships (SAWA), a training programme on Interdisciplinary Research Concepts and Methodologies was organized in Kandy, Sri Lanka from 28th November to 3rd December, 2015. The training programme was financially supported by International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada and CapNet.

The objective of the programme was to acquaint the participants with the qualitative and quantitative research methods. The training programme targeted the 22 recipients of the IDRC- SAWA Fellowships from four institutions in four South Asian countries: Bangladesh (Institute of Water and Flood Management - Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology), India (Centre for Water Resources -Anna University), Nepal (Nepal Engineering College) and Sri Lanka (Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture –University of Peradeniya). Five additional participants from the second batch of SAWAS Fellows also participated in the program from PGIA.

The workshop content covered the overview of IWRM across South Asia, gender and water, qualitative and quantitative research methods; followed by field visit. The sessions were interactive in nature. Participants got the chance to apply classroom learning in the field, with field trip during the programme, to an irrigation system in Dambulla. Students used PRA tools and made presentations of their field learnings on the last day of the workshop.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND – THE SAWA FELLOWSHIPS

South Asia's agricultural economies are vulnerable to extreme environmental events. Better management of water and other natural resources is fundamental to the development of the region. Climate variability and change, food insecurity, population growth and urbanization have intensified environmental disasters in the recent past. Poor land and water resource allocation, utilization and pollution have robbed the poor, particularly women, of livelihood and dignity. Such broad, yet closely linked issues can only be effectively tackled through a holistic interdisciplinary approach. The IDRC-SAWA fellowships seek to address these issues, by providing the opportunity to train a generation of water professionals to tackle water issues using multi-disciplinary approaches that are sensitive to women, the poor, environment and sustainability.

This project continues as part of an earlier project coordinated by SaciWATERs namely the Crossing Boundaries project. This project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and is implemented by SaciWATERs and its four partner institutions, namely.

- Institute of Water and Flood Management (IWFM) of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Center for Water Resources (CWR), Anna University, Chennai, India
- Center for Post Graduate Studies, Nepal Engineering College (nec), Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA), University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

The objectives of the project are firstly; to create a new generation of interdisciplinary water professionals in South Asia trained to deal with issues of climate change adaptation, water and food security, in order to do this, this project has instituted the IDRC-SAWA fellowships. Secondly, the project aims to generate action-oriented research in the aforementioned fields through Master's degrees in Integrated Water Resource Management in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Thirdly, it has been noted that women and girls are often the primary users, providers and managers of water in rural and urban households, thus being the most affected by planning and policy in water resources. It has often been seen that women's voices are not taken into consideration when forming policy. Additionally, it is seen that women are underrepresented in the field of water resources engineering and policy making. This project seeks to address this imbalance by awarding 80 percent of the fellowships to women; the rest of the fellowships will be awarded to men from lower socio-economic groups. Fourthly, it aims to share knowledge and ideas about water issues in the South Asian context, through meetings and exchanges between fellows. This is especially important as it fosters the spirit of regional and trans-boundary cooperation in the fellows, which would hopefully lead to larger regional cooperation in future. Such interdisciplinary, regional and trans-boundary co-operation is essential for IWRM

approaches. Fifthly, the projects supports free access to the journal “South Asian Water Studies” and encourages young water professionals to publish peer reviewed journal articles.

ORGANIZERS

Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA), is a semi-autonomous institution of the University of Peradeniya, established in 1975 with the objective of in-country capacity building for postgraduate education in Agricultural Sciences and related disciplines. During the last 35 years, the institution has awarded more than 2000 M.Sc., M.Phil. MBA and Ph.D. degrees. In addition, it has immensely contributed to the development of the country and the region through research and capacity building programmes. PGIA organises its annual research symposium; the PGIA Annual Congress facilitates the diffusion of postgraduate research in agriculture and related disciplines to a wider audience. Due to the close association between the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya; PGIA gets the support of more than 100 academics with Ph.D. level qualifications for its academic and research programmes. In addition, PGIA gets the assistance of postgraduate academics, researchers and other professionals from various organizations in the country. Hence, it has established a reputation as a centre of excellence in postgraduate education in agriculture and related disciplines in the region. PGIA conducts its academic activities under the Boards of Study’ the Board of Study in Agricultural Engineering is one of the most active of the eleven boards of study of the PGIA. In order to develop critical mass for the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), the Board of Study in Agricultural Engineering launched a postgraduate program on IWRM in 2001. The M.Phil and M.Sc in IWRM program helps to meet the manpower requirements of the private, public as well as NGO sectors, and contributes to solving critical issues in the water sector through its research programs.

SaciWATERs : the South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, is a policy research institute at Hyderabad, India and working on the issue of water resources education, capacity building, research and action in South Asia. It is committed to bringing about structural changes in the dominant water resources management paradigm in South Asia by focusing on transforming water resources knowledge systems through working with universities and academic institutions. The key ideas are in interdisciplinary approach to undertaking water resources issues from a pro-poor, gendered and human development perspective and emphasis on exchange, interaction and collaboration at South Asia level. SaciWATERs is active in three domains- Education, Research and Advocacy (www.saciwaters.org).

SPONSORS

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Canadian Crown Corporation that initiates, encourages and supports research in developing countries in order to help find practical and sustainable solutions to social, economic and

environmental problems that are being faced in these countries. Additionally, IDRC on the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions (<http://www.idrc.ca>).

Cap-Net UNDP is an international network for capacity development in sustainable water management. It is made up of a partnership of autonomous international, regional and national institutions and networks committed to capacity development in the water sector. Cap-Net UNDP was initiated at the UNDP Symposium on Water Capacity Development in 1996 and launched in 2002 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education with funding from the Dutch Government. Since then, Cap-Net UNDP has grown into a global hub for capacity development and networking in sustainable water management with additional funding from the Swedish and Norwegian Governments, and the European Union. The Cap-Net UNDP programme is a part of the Water and Ocean Governance Programme of UNDP, within the Sustainable Development Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. The programme is executed by United Nation's Office of Project Services (UNOPS), Water and Energy Cluster.

WORKSHOPS OBJECTIVES, PARTICIPANTS PROFILE AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this training programme was to build capacity of the SAWAS Fellows towards research methods used in social research. As the students of the partner institutes are trained, through their curriculum, in technical aspects of water resource management, this training aimed to orient them mainly to social inclusion in their decision making.

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

The participants for this training programme were those who were selected as fellows as part of the third batch of South Asia Water (SAWA) fellowships, through a competitive process from each of the four partner institutes. Five fellows each from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and four fellows each from India and Nepal were in attendance, as well as an additional five people from the host institution, leading to a total of twenty seven participants. All participants were pursuing post graduate level courses in IWRM. Most had a conventional civil engineering background and few were with Agriculture background. Introduction to concepts of qualitative research and gender were important to develop an interdisciplinary perspective in their approach towards water issues.

OUTCOMES EXPECTED

It is expected that at the end of the sessions followed by the field work the fellows will have fundamentals know-how of the qualitative research approach. And will appreciate the importance of inclusion of social dimensions within the technical solutions they design as part of their assignments in future.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

KEY RESOURCE PERSONS AND FACILITATORS

- **Dr. N.D.K Dayawansa:** Senior Lecturer in Agricultural Engineering at the University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- **Prof. B. V. Mudgal,** Professor, Centre for Water Resources, Anna University, Chennai, India
- **Prof. Kem Raj Sharma:** Professor, Nepal Engineering College, Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Dr. Shahjahan Mondal,** Assistant Professor, Institute of Water and Flood Management, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Dr. Samad,** Theme Leader, IWMI, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- **Prof. E.R.N. Gunawardena,** Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
- **Prof. W.A.D.P. Wanigasundara,** Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
- **Dr. Vishal Narain,** Associate Professor, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India
- **Prof. Sucharita Sen,** Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
- **Dr. Anamika Barua ,** Executive Director, South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS). Hyderabad, India
- **Mr. Manoj Jatav,** Research Fellow, SaciWATERS. Hyderabad, India
- **Ms. Monica Priya,** Research Associate, SaciWATERS, Hyderabad, India.

METHODS USED FOR FACILITATION

The workshop lasted for six days, with multiple sessions on each day. The following methods of facilitation were used.

Interactive Sessions: The sessions were interactive in nature. Each classroom session included class room lecture using power-point, followed by discussion of about 15 minutes. Participants were encouraged to take active part during the discussions.

Group Exercises: Participants were divided into different working groups with each country student in each group. For the field practicum, four groups were formed.

Field Exposure: A full day field visit was organized to provide exposure to participants on irrigation system in Dambulla.

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS

The programme was held for a total of six days, between 28th November and 3rd December, 2015, in Kandy. Each day had multiple sessions; the programme agenda is provided in Annexure.

DAY 1 : INAUGURAL SESSION

Chief Guest: Prof. U.B. Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya

Dr. N.D.K Dayawansa, (Senior Lecturer, PGIA): Welcomed the dignitaries. She gave brief introduction to the training workshop.

Prof. U.B. Dissanayake, (Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya): Welcomed all the guests and expressed that he is happy to know of such initiative where SaciWATERs has joined hands with the institutions from South Asia to encourage the students to work on water management issues and also said that it's a means of fostering relationship between the four countries.



Dr. Anamika Barua (Executive Director, SaciWATERs): Welcomed all to the workshop. She gave background of the IDRC SAWAS Fellowship. She pointed out that most of the interventions made are for the people to benefit, but most of the times these interventions have conflict with what people demand. Thus, the engineering institutes were chosen give the potential decision makers exposure to concepts of social science research. Water professionals need to be focused beyond technicalities. Gender focus within the fellowship is to encourage women to enter this field. She also encouraged the fellows to contribute to the SAWAS Journal.

This was followed by an introduction of all the fellows present there and the four country coordinators had spoken about how SAWA fellowship and the Crossing Boundaries project have benefited the institutions in training water professionals with an interdisciplinary lens.

Panel Discussion on IWRM

The panel discussion on Integrated Water Resources Management mainly focused on IWRM experience sharing by the four countries. Dr. Anamika Barua chaired the session.

Overview of IWRM in India: Prof B V Mudgal

He initiated the discussion by posing a question on how the impact of climate change on water resources can be measured. He then pointed out on how every nation is looking at maximizing benefits through technological innovations, thus ignoring sustainability and how the conflict between development and sustainability is reaching a tipping point. Focusing on India, he said that in the last few decades the population has risen three folds and so has the per capita demand for water but the development of water resources is showing downfall. He then spoke about Earth Summit 1992, which has been the first ever framework that laid thrust on IWRM.

Trajectory of IWRM Journey, Nepal: Prof Kem Raj Sharma

The presentation started with the genesis of IWRM at Nepal Engineering College. This entire session mainly focused on the expectation from graduates of nec upon completion of their Masters programme, the diversity in the background of the students that enroll into the programme and the thematic areas of IWRM. The focused areas of research by these students was discussed and the presentation ended with the achievements, and challenges and future opportunities.

Overview of IWRM in Bangladesh: Dr. Shahjahan Mondal

An overview of Flood Control project as an IWRM initiative was given. The presentation then went on to talk about the environmental impacts of the Flood Control Project, and seasonal water resources management in Bangladesh. It further laid emphasis on drinking water issues in Bangladesh.

Overview of Water resources Management in Sri Lanka: Dr. N.D.K Dayawansa

The presentation gave an introduction into the climate and water balance of Sri Lanka, as well as a brief look into historical practices of water management therein. A historical overview of the evolution of water policy in the country was also presented. It mentioned the importance of minor irrigation systems such as small tank systems to water security in Sri Lanka. The presentation then mentioned the water allocation and distribution mechanism and policy at the central and local levels. The session ended after the issues faced in Sri Lanka in large scale water resource development were discussed.

Water management issues and challenges- Examples from South Asia: Dr. Madar Samad

This session focused on building a water resilient economy in South Asia. The context was set by giving an overview of the poverty and food requirements in South Asia, South Asia's water crisis and how climate extremes in different seasons are having an impact on the water resources. The session laid emphasis on comprehensive assessment of water for agriculture, which is critical to ensure food security. It then focused on the importance to understand water-food-energy nexus and discussed on how the use of solar power is an upcoming trend which is a positive sign. The session also gave an insight into how investments in water storage improve water and food security, and also on up gradation of rain fed agriculture. The session ended with a discussion on policy and institutional reforms which are key to building a water resilient economy.

DAY 2

Concepts and Principles of IWRM and its current practices: Prof. Nimal

In this session Prof Nimal started with a quote given by US President Jimmy Carter, which is "Nature cannot be controlled". He then began his presentation with five paradigms of Water Resources Management wherein IWRM is the 5th paradigm. He went on to discuss about the three dimensions of sustainability, which are water in the environment, society and economy that underpin the political nature of IWRM. The session then focused on IWRM is a paradigm shift as it departs from the sectoral approach, with spatial focus on the river basin, and the importance of integration between sectors and administrative units as which is vital to realize IWRM.

Understanding and Doing gender: Prof. Sucharita Sen

The session essentially focused on theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in gender studies and the methodological guidelines to integrate gender into research. This session was the most interactive session in the entire workshop which has encouraged the students to look at water management issues from a gender lens.

Introduction to PRA Tools: Prof. W.A.D.P. Wanigasundara

The session gave an introduction to various PRA tools. It was a short session that was followed by presentations by students group from each country. Each group was assigned a topic such as showing the influence of various institutions

in a village through venn diagram, identifying the key stakeholders etc. The session was highly interactive in nature.



Documentary: Flow

Directed by Irena Salina the movie builds a case against the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply with an unflinching focus on politics, pollution, human rights, and the emergence of a domineering world water cartel.

Interviews with scientists and activists intelligently reveal the rapidly building crisis, at both the global and human scale, and the film introduces many of the governmental and corporate culprits behind the water grab, while begging the question "CAN ANYONE REALLY OWN WATER?"

DAY 3

Research Paradigms and Design: Dr. Vishal Narain

The session began with an introduction to paradigms in research, which are positivism, interpretivism, and critical social science. It then gave a detailing of various steps in research design, which essentially are, knowing your paradigm, and identifying one's contribution to the existing knowledge pool. Further the thesis design of positivism and interpretivism were discussed. While positivism has definite design interpretivism does not have a fixed style or format.

Qualitative Research: Methods and Approaches: Dr. Vishal Narain

The session focused on ethnographic methods and various tools that are used in fieldwork. It started with developing an understanding of what is ethnography, when does it suit, principles of fieldwork and steps to be followed in fieldwork.

Steps in field work were elaborated upon along with the ways to deal with key informants. Need for sampling was introduced. The session ended with various ways of assessing qualitative data.

Post graduate thesis development: Dr. Anamika Barua

This session gave an overview of the stages involved in thesis development. The 1st stage is developing a research design, which involves literature review. The presentation focused on how to do a literature review and the difference



between good and bad literature review, and also on referencing. The 2nd stage is research methodology wherein an overview of the various methods of data collection and description of methodological frameworks for analysis was given. The presentation then ended by giving key points on

writing conclusion, referencing and placing of annexures.

Quantitative Methods using SPSS: Prof. Sucharita Sen and Mr. Manoj Jatav

This session gave the participants hands on training on the SPSS software. They were instructed on the fundamentals of using the software for statistical



analysis. They were given demonstration on the data entry, data cleaning and data analysis using different statistical techniques such as central tendency, correlation etc.

DAY 4

Sampling methods, questionnaire design and administration: Dr. Shahjahan Mondal

This presentation was to build upon the concepts of social research through developing research questionnaire for field survey and understanding the sampling methods. The types of questionnaire, importance of relevance of questions to be asked, construction and administration of the questionnaire were discussed.

Introduction to the field site: Dr. N.D.K. Dayawansa

Galkiriyagama is a major irrigation system managed by the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka. The water allocation to the farmers in this system is based on the bulk water allocation concept in which farmers together with the officials decide how much of water they require based on the crops to be grown. To facilitate the process, participation of the farmers is made through farmer organizations.

Preparation by the Students for the field work: Short Proposals

In this session the participants were to form groups and prepare a research proposal based on the information gained in the previous session and the topics assigned to them. This was done with the guidance of project faculty. The participants of the training were given the following four topics to be studied by collecting relevant information.

- Assessment of the performance of Farmer Organization in the area
- Water management issues at distributary canal level
- Cultivation practices adopted under water stressed conditions and their effectiveness
- Drinking water, health issues and women in the area

Each group had to identify qualitative and quantitative methods they would use in order to address the research question.

DAY 5

Field Practicum – Damulla

Participants were split into four groups with different research topics. Participants then engaged members of the local community, the water users association, and other key informants in discussions and interviews with the help of the PGIA students for translations. This exercise proved to be useful for the students as most had never experienced primary information collection.



DAY 6

Preparatory session for students to present field observations

This session was the time given to participants in order to analyze the information collected through interviews and discussion during the previous day's field exercises. Students were expected to carry out analysis and present their findings on the same day.



Group Presentations

This session completely involved presenting the results of the field exercises that were held.

GROUP 1: Assessment of the performance of Farmer Organization in the area

This group presented their findings and observations in the form of a live TV show

GROUP 2: Water management issues at distributary canal level

This group made a powerpoint presentation to share their findings and observations.

GROUP 3: Cultivation practices adopted under water stressed conditions and their effectiveness

This group made a powerpoint presentation to share their findings and observations.

GROUP 4: Drinking water, health issues and women in the area

This group presented their observation in the form of a skit

After the presentations, each group was given feedback by Dr. Shahjahan Mondal, Prof. B. V. Mudgal, and Prof. Kem Raj Shrama as to improvements and further steps. This exercise proved beneficial to the participants.

Closing ceremony

The training programme thus drew to a close with the closing ceremony. Representatives from each partner institution, both students and faculty said a few words about the training programme. Dr. N.D.K. Dayawansa proposed the vote of thanks, after which certificates of participation were distributed to each participant.





Session	Timing	Person Responsible/ Resource Person	Remarks
Day 1: November 28th, 2015			
Registration	08:00 am – 08:30 am	PGIA Representatives	
Inauguration –Opening Remarks/ /About SAWA Fellowship Program/ Significance of SAWA/ Overview of the Training Programme	08:30 am – 09.30 am	Prof. U.B. Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya (Chief Guest) Prof. S. Samita, Director/ PGIA Dr. Anamika Barua , Director, SaciWATERS Dr. N.D.K. Dayawansa, Coordinator, IDRC- SAWA, PGIA	Chair: Director/ PGIA Welcome address: Coordinator, PGIA Project and Programme Overview: Dr. Anamika Barua Address: Director, PGIA Address, Vice Chancellor, UoP
Tea Break 10:30 am – 11:00 am			
Panel discussion on IWRM/ Experience Sharing by 4 countries	10:30 am- 1:30 pm	Dr B. V. Mudgal Dr. Shahjahan Mondal Dr. Robert Dongal Dr. N.D.K. Dayawanasa	Chair: Dr. Anamika Barua



Lunch 1:30 pm- 2:30 pm			
Water management issues and challenges – Examples from South Asia	2:30 pm- 3:30 pm	Dr. M. Samad	IWMI
Refreshment 3:30 pm- 4.00 pm			
Documentary/ Outdoor Activity	4.00 pm- 5.30 pm	Monica Priya	Ice breaking session



Session	Timing	Person Responsible/ Resource Person	Remarks
Day 2: November 29th, 2015			
Review of Day 1	9:00 am – 9:15 am	SAWA Fellows	
Concepts and principles of IWRM and its current practices	9:15 am- 10:15 am	Prof. E.R.N. Gunawardena, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya	PGIA resource person
Tea Break 10:15 am – 10:30 am			
Understanding Gender-Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	10:30 am- 12:30 pm	Prof. Sucharita Sen, JNU, New Delhi	
Lunch 12:30 pm- 1:30 pm			
Doing Gender-Methodological Guidelines	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Prof. Sucharita Sen, JNU, New Delhi	
Refreshments 3:30 pm- 4:00 pm			
Introduction to PRA tools	4:00 pm- 5:30 pm	Prof. W.A.D.P. Wanigasundara, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya	PGIA resource person
Documentary	5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Flow/ Women and the Politics of Water	



Session	Timing	Person Responsible/ Resource Person	Remarks
Day 3: November 30th, 2015			
Review of Day 2	9:00 am – 9:15 am	SAWA Fellows	
Research Paradigms and Design	9:15 am – 11:15am	Dr. Vishal Narain, MDI, New Delhi	
Tea Break 11:15 am – 11:30 am			
Qualitative Research: Methods and Approaches	11:30 am- 1:30 pm	Dr. Vishal Narain, MDI, New Delhi	
Lunch 1:30pm- 2:30 pm			
Postgraduate Thesis Development (Literature Review / methodology development/ Referencing)	2:30 pm- 4:00 pm	Dr. Anamika Barua, SaciWATERS	
Refreshments 4:00 pm- 4:15 pm			
Quantitative Methods using SPSS	4:15 pm- 6:30 pm	Manoj Jatav & Sucharita Sen	



Session	Timing	Person Responsible/ Resource Person	Remarks
Day 4: December 1st , 2015			
Review of Day 3	9:00 am – 9:15 am	SAWA Fellows	
Sampling methods, questionnaire design and administration	9:15 am- 11:00 am	Dr. Shahjahan Mondal, BUET	
Tea Break 11:00 am – 11:30 am			
Brief Introduction to the field site	11.30- 11:45 am	Dr. N.D.K. Dayawansa, PGIA	
Preparation by the Students for the field work: Short Proposals	11:45 am- 1: 30pm	Coordinators of PGIA,NEC, BUET and CWR	Presentation of proposals by the student groups
Lunch 1: 30 pm - 2:30 pm			
Session	Timing	Person Responsible/ Resource Person	
Day 5: December 2nd , 2015 (Venue – Galkiriyagama Block, Huruluwewa Project, Dambulla – Resource Persons: Mr. E.A.S. Epa, Mr. M.N.T. Peiris and Mr. N.K.M. Mallawaarachchi)			



Field Work	All Day	
Day 6: December 3rd, 2015		
Review of Day 5	9:00 am – 9:15 am	SAWA Fellows
Preparatory session for students to present field observations	9:15 am – 11:00 am	Dr. N.D.K. Dayawansa, PGIA
Tea Break 11:00 am – 11:30 am		
Presentation from the students	11:30 am – 1:30 pm	SAWA Fellows
Lunch 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm		
Closing and Certificates	2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	PGIA
<i>Site Seeing</i>		<i>3:00 pm onwards</i>