

Water and Sanitation

1. Learnings from Policy Process Analysis: Governance of Large Water Infrastructure(s) in the Global South

Convenor	NC Narayanan, Professor, Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay Miranda Schreurs, Professor, Technical University of Munich
Keywords	Water and Sanitation, Large Infrastructure, Policy Process
<p>Call for Abstracts</p> <p>In the Global South, the pursuit of development and modernisation has led to state-driven ambitions of structural interventions, particularly in large infrastructure projects. This includes interventions in the water sector, for example, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) facilities, multipurpose projects (large dams), groundwater management, etc. Advanced by the trajectories of the Global North, the motivations, and approaches to building and governing these large infrastructures and networks have evolved, with contemporary challenges like climate change shaping the latest endeavours. Yet, the involvement of the state, and the factors influencing it, remain central to policy developments of such projects in developing countries like India.</p> <p>Recent advances in the dimension of policy process studies suggest a promising field for deeper explorations of each stage of policy development, providing insights into broader contextual factors shaping policy processes. This presents an opportunity to unearth knowledge which may otherwise remain unsubstantiated, through a meticulous analysis of factors at play in such processes.</p> <p>Building on this understanding, the panel aims to investigate the emerging knowledge from policy process analysis, including the dynamics between actors, and the institutions involved. It encompasses all stages in a process over time, including varying junctures, and factors which affect/ influence a policy process.</p> <p>The panel invites research(es) analysing different stages of policy processes, with a sectoral focus on water, but not limited to it. We welcome submissions from related sectoral studies with thematic alignment. The panel particularly seeks interdisciplinary studies focused on qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. The call extends to theoretical and empirical studies, inviting scholars and early career professionals from diverse disciplines whose research aligns with the landscape of policy process studies.</p>	

2. Designing Digital Public Goods in Water: Balancing Oversight Autonomy

Convenor	C. Shambu Prasad, Professor, Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA)
Co-Convenor(s)	Manu Srivastava, COO, Arghyam
Keywords	Digital Public Goods, State Capacity, System Innovation
<p>Call for Abstracts</p> <p>The application of digital technologies in public policy has hitherto focused largely on increasing access, reducing transaction costs and enabling greater data capture for monitoring and evaluation. However, its</p>	

effectiveness in complex public systems that involve multiple agencies and actors in the generation, use and dissemination of knowledge and coordinating between central and state government agencies, remains a challenge. The panel seeks to explore newer insights in creating digital public goods in the water sector.

We invite scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and technologists to contribute papers that address the challenges and opportunities in designing technology platforms for federated structures. Potential topics may include, but are not limited to, case studies of successful platform implementations and empirical research on the impact of technology design on policy outcomes. Contributions that offer innovative ideas, interdisciplinary approaches, and critical analyses are particularly welcome. Papers should aim to contribute to our understanding of how technology can be harnessed to meet the needs of complex governance structures while fostering local innovations and adaptations.

We encourage submissions that:

- Propose new frameworks or models for technology platform design in government settings.
- Analyse current implementations of such platforms in various countries, especially those in the Global South, to draw lessons and insights.
- Discuss the policy implications of technology-driven governance models, focusing on the balance between central control and local autonomy.

3. Governing Small-Scale Water Service Providers: Dependency, Functioning, Opportunities, and Challenges

Convenor	Sachin Tiwale, Fellow, Water and Society Programme, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)
Keywords	Water and Sanitation

Call for Abstracts

Independently operating small-scale water providers (SSPs) serving households through tankers, refilled plastic jars, sachets, and push carts are common across cities in the global south (Kariuki & Schwartz, 2005; Morinville, 2017; Stoler, 2012). The proliferation of SSPs as an alternative to piped water is understood as the response to the inability and unwillingness of formal water utilities to serve certain pockets of the city. These pockets, often including informal settlements and peri-urban areas, are perceived as less serviceable (difficult site, terrain, and layout), financially risky and less attractive, or not favourable by authorities due to socio-political issues related to class, ethnicity, political patronage, and land tenure (Cheng, 2014; Schwartz & Sanga, 2010; Solo et al., 1993). The SSPs have also penetrated spaces served by centralised piped water supply (CPWS) where piped water does not fulfil the qualitative and quantitative water requirements of households (Kooy, 2014). SSPs operating in different forms are found across small and medium towns and metropolitan cities in India. Our recent study indicates that the services provided by SSPs are availed across the class and formal and informal settlements.

The SSPs are increasingly recognised as gap-fillers, entrepreneurs, flexible, innovative, and demand-responsive, who were otherwise labelled as mafia and exploiters earlier (Kjellén & McGranahan, 2006; Njiru, 2004; Schwartz & Sanga, 2010; Solo, 1999). However, the service provided by SSPs raises several issues about access, quality control, affordability, environmental pollution, and social justice (Stoler, 2017). Moreover, these SSPs are largely unregulated and leaving millions of citizens entirely dependent on privately operated SSPs for critical services such as water supply is unwise. Therefore, it is imperative to establish an institutional framework tasked with monitoring and regulating the functioning of SSPs to safeguard the interests of citizens.

Against this background, this proposed panel aims to understand the dependency of citizens on SSPs and the functioning of these SSPs in cities in India and initiate a conversation about the policy pathways governing these SSPs. This panel is explicitly considering the following key research questions:

- How do these SSPs function across towns and cities in India? (e.g. nature of service providers, scale of operation, source of capital, business strategies, and customer engagement)
- What is the extent of dependency of households on these SSPs?
- What are the existing policies, rules, and regulations influencing the functioning of SSPs?
- What are the policy pathways and associated challenges to govern the functioning of SSPs?

4. Addressing Water Conflict and Policy Responses in the Global South: Strategies for Sustainable Development

Convenor	Raosahab Bawaskar, Teaching Faculty, Maharashtra National Law University, Aurangabad And Director (Honorary), Water Policy Centre, Aurangabad
Keywords	Water and Sanitation, Diversity and Public Policy, Climate Change

Call for Abstracts

Water scarcity and conflict over access to water resources are pressing challenges facing the Global South, exacerbated by factors such as population growth, urbanization, climate change, and inadequate governance structures. This panel aims to delve into the complex dynamics of water conflict in the Global South and explore policy responses aimed at mitigating these conflicts and promoting sustainable water management practices.

The Global South, encompassing regions such as Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, faces unique water-related challenges due to its diverse socio-economic, cultural, and environmental contexts. In many countries within these regions, water scarcity is a daily reality, affecting millions of people’s livelihoods, food security, and overall well-being. Furthermore, water scarcity often leads to conflicts among various stakeholders, including communities, industries, and agricultural sectors, over access to limited water resources. This panel centred on the research question, what are the key drivers of water conflict in the Global South, and what policy responses are most effective in promoting sustainable water management and resolving these conflicts?

This panel aims to explore the multifaceted challenges of water conflict in the Global South and examine policy responses aimed at promoting sustainable water management practices. We welcome submissions from researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and experts working in fields related to water governance, environmental sustainability, development studies, and conflict resolution. Papers addressing the following themes are particularly encouraged:

- Understanding the Root Causes of Water Conflict
- Analysing Policy Responses and Interventions
- Exploring Socio-Economic Implications
- Showcasing Case Studies and Best Practices
- Water Diplomacy