SCIENCE – POLICY - PRACTICE INTERFACE – A CRITICAL CHALLENGE

THE BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER BASIN

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How can we improve the influence of science in policy and practice?

- The case of the Brahmaputra Basin
THE YARLUNG - TSANGPO
BRAHMAPUTRA – JAMUNA RIVER BASIN

• Origin Of The River – Angsi Glacier, covers 580,000 km² area across four countries: China (50%), India (34%), Bangladesh (8%) and Bhutan (8%).

• River has opportunities and challenges – Hydropower, navigation, agriculture as well as flood and erosion risk in the floodplain.
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

**Policy**
- Basin shared by four – unequal in size and power
- Domestic/National interests
- No basin-wide treaty
- ‘Securitization’ of water (based on perception and not real science)

**Community**
- Limited/restricted access to information
- Little effective communication between stakeholders
- Proponent and opponent of development

**Mistrust, hostility and suspicion - a complex relationship**

**Lack of information and knowledge (under researched basin)**
The Brahmaputra Dialogue – Strategy to induce cooperation in BRB (SAWI) ..2013
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE BRAHMAPUTRA
AT THE BASIN LEVEL

- Water resources vulnerability and security assessment of Yarlung Tsangpo - Brahmaputra – Jamuna transboundary river basin (Collaboration with IITG, IWM, Yunnan University) - National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)

- Understanding the impact of Climate change on Hydropower development in the BRB basin (IITG taking the lead with BD partners)

- Benefit sharing in the Brahmaputra Basin (in proposal phase)
Basin level study conducted to generate narratives on gender roles during disasters in India (Arunachal Pradesh and Assam), Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Women can be identified as one such marginalized group – whose issues can be different during a disaster from their male counterparts.

Their voices and concerns usually do not find a place in transboundary decision making process.

The effect of floods and erosion need to be studied through the elements of gender roles and differential capacities to adapt to disasters, occupation, age, ethnicity, and daily association with the river (apart from livelihood).
INSTITUTIONAL AND POWER MAPPING IN BRB

- Define the existing distribution of power and decision-making within governance structures and institutions for the management of the river
- Identification of the key actors, their interactions and locus of control
- Preliminary exercise has been conducted for India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and China in the previous phase

Diagram:

- Literature survey
- One on one interviews
- Power Mapping – Delphi Method
Bringing experts together, generating more scientific knowledge, developing modeling capabilities and sharing data is not enough to enhance science – policy – practice interface.

Effective ways of generating actionable knowledge that is trustworthy, can be easily communicated, and will be used by all sides to enhance policy and program implementation.

Generating new knowledge (outcome) is not enough.

Process of generating knowledge should be collaborative and able to generate trust among stakeholders.

Scientific inputs should not be used only to justify decision that has been already taken.

Should be used as inputs during the decision making stage.
Thank you

Brahmaputra in Guwahati

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