NR07 / The politics of climate change: The governance of local climate adaptation in India

Topic : Research

Chair : Rama Mohana Turaga (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

Second Chair : Pallavi George (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The politics of climate change: The governance of local climate adaptation in India

Research Track

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India is one of the countries highly vulnerable to serious impacts from climate change, considered one of the grand challenges of the 21st century (Calvin et al., 2023). This makes adaptation a critical imperative for public policy. The National Action Plan on Climate Change, launched in 2008, and the subsequent state action plans have provided a broad framework for top-down planning in India, providing guidance for adaptation at the local level. Simultaneously, local communities already facing the impacts of climate change are undertaking independent adaptation actions, either individually or through local collective action. The extant literature acknowledges the mismatch between the “one-size-fit-all” top-down adaptation plans and the need for locally embedded adaptation solutions (e.g., Dolšak and Prakash, 2018). While the intervention at the higher levels of government is required to bring financial resources and technical knowledge, local communities bring a deep contextual ecological and socio-economic knowledge to inform the design and implementation of adaptation policies (Uyttewaal et al., 2024). However, much of the political authority to make policy decisions is embedded within the national and state governments, potentially creating tensions in adaptation governance (Nightingale, 2017). Following these debates, in this panel, we invite papers - both conceptual and empirical - that broadly explore the politics of local adaptation planning and policy. The questions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Are there attempts in top-down policy processes to incorporate the participation of local stakeholders? How effective are such processes in bringing coherence?
- How are indigenous and local knowledge systems integrated, if at all, in local level adaptation planning processes? How are the epistemological and ontological differences across different knowledge systems reconciled (or not) in the policy process, if at all?
- Are there attempts to create new institutional structures at the local level to design and implement climate change adaptation policies? Does the design of institutions differ from the existing institutions and how?
- How does power and resource asymmetry between different actors - for example, local knowledge holders vs. scientists, local governments vs. higher levels of governments - influence the effectiveness of local adaptation policies and planning processes?
- What challenges do the local politics pose to the ability of local communities to autonomously design and implement adaptation policies?

Please submit an abstract of not more than 500 words.

References

Calvin, K., Dasgupta, D., Krinner, G., Mukherji, A., Thorne, P. W., Trisos, C., Romero, J., Aldunce, P., Barrett, K., Blanco, G., Cheung, W. W. L., Connors, S., Denton, F., Diongue-Niang, A., Dodman, D., Garschagen, M., Geden, O., Hayward, B., Jones, C., … Ha, M. (2023). IPCC, 2023: Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647

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Uyttewaal, K., Stoof, C. R., Canaleta, G., Cifre-Sabater, M., Langer, E. R., Ludwig, F., Kroeze, C., Moran, P., Ottolini, I., & Prat-Guitart, N. (2024). Uplifting local ecological knowledge as part of adaptation pathways to wildfire risk reduction: A case study in Montseny, Catalonia (Spain). Ambio, 53 (10), 1433–1453. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-024-02030-7

CALL FOR PAPERS

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