

# INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON HIMALAYAN RIVER SYSTEMS: TRANSBOUNDARY APPROACHES TO LAND AND WATER GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH ASIA



## Hosted By:

Department of Geomatics Engineering,  
School of Engineering  
Kathmandu University, Nepal

## Organised By:

Department of Geomatics Engineering,  
Kathmandu University, Nepal  
&  
Department of Geography,  
University of Manchester, UK

JOIN US!

**APRIL 16<sup>Th</sup> - 17<sup>Th</sup> 2025**

Funded by International Science Partnerships  
Fund 2024/25 (ISPF) via Research England

More Information: <https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/persons/meheubub.sahana>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/reshma-shrestha-4b606b59/>

**International Symposium**  
**on**  
**Himalayan River Systems: Transboundary Approaches to Land and**  
**Water Governance in South Asia**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Hosted By:**

Department of Geomatics Engineering, School of Engineering, Kathmandu University, Nepal

**Organizing partners:**

Department of Geography, University of Manchester, UK  
Department of Geography, Presidency University, Kolkata, India  
North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Associate Partners:**

South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA)  
Land Management Training Centre (LMTC)

**Funding Partners:**

International Science Partnerships Fund 2024/25 (ISPF) via Research England

**Background:**

The Himalayan River Systems (HRS) are critical to sustaining the livelihoods, economies, and ecosystems of South Asia. Originating from the Himalayan range, major river systems such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Indus traverse multiple nations, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and China. These rivers serve as vital sources of water for agriculture, drinking, energy production, and industrial activities, supporting millions of people across these regions. However, the governance of these transboundary water resources is fraught with complex challenges, arising from competing national priorities, anthropogenic pressures, and the escalating impacts of climate change. In recent years, water governance in South Asia has become a focal point for geopolitical tensions, environmental degradation, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The diverse and often conflicting needs of riparian countries, exacerbated by rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrial expansion, have intensified competition for water resources. Disputes over water allocation, infrastructure projects such as dam and barrage construction, and environmental conservation are pervasive, as nations strive to reconcile domestic water demands with the imperatives of regional cooperation. Climate change further complicates this scenario by altering hydrological patterns. Glacial retreat, erratic monsoon behavior, and fluctuating river flows jeopardize water security and amplify the risk of water-related disasters such as flash floods and droughts. These evolving challenges underscore the urgent need for integrated and sustainable

approaches to land and water governance, fostering not only resource management but also regional resilience and cooperation.

The international symposium titled “*Himalayan River Systems: Transboundary Approaches to Land and Water Governance in South Asia*” seeks to address these critical issues by convening scholars, policymakers, experts, and stakeholders. Scheduled for April 16–17, 2025, at Kathmandu University, Nepal, the symposium is a collaborative initiative between the Department of Geomatics Engineering, School of Engineering, Kathmandu University, and the Department of Geography, School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), University of Manchester, United Kingdom. This symposium will facilitate an exchange of knowledge, promote capacity building, and explore innovative strategies for transboundary governance of land and water resources. Key themes will include climate adaptation, equitable water-sharing frameworks, and sustainable land-use planning. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, the symposium aims to advance policy-level methodologies and frameworks that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improving land and water governance in the Himalayan region. This initiative aspires to contribute to a more resilient and cooperative approach to managing shared resources in South Asia.

**Theme and Sub-themes:** The focal theme of this international Symposium will be ‘Himalayan River Systems and Transboundary Land and Water Governance in South Asia’ and the sub-themes are as follows:

- Increasing Frequency of Water-Related Disasters (i.e., Floods, and Droughts)
- Climate Change, Impact of Glacial Melt and Altered River Flows on Water Availability.
- Role of Remote Sensing and GIS in Himalayan River Monitoring and Management.
- Use of AI and Data Analytics for Predicting Water Disasters in Himalayan Region.
- Integrated Land and Water Management and Governance
- Water-sharing Treaties and Agreements in South Asia
- Political and Diplomatic Challenges in Transboundary Water Governance.
- Water Access, Poverty, and Livelihoods in Vulnerable Regions of Himalayas.
- Dams, Barrages, and Hydropower Projects: Economic Benefits vs. Ecological Impacts.
- Adaptive Strategies for Climate Resilience in Land and Water Management.
- Nature-based Water Management Practices for Himalayan River Systems (HRS).
- Traditional Knowledge Systems (TKS) for sustainable river management.
- Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Approaches in South Asia.
- Water Conservation Technologies and Innovations.
- Opportunities for Sustainable Infrastructure in Himalayan River Systems.
- Land Use Planning for water induced Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Looking Water Governance from Land Governance Perspective
- Other related Themes

**Key Organizers:** The key organizers of this international Symposium are:

1. **Dr Meheub Sahana**, Department of Geography, University of Manchester, UK
2. **Dr Reshma Shrestha**, Department of Geomatics Engineering, School of Engineering, Kathmandu University, Nepal

3. **Dr Upasak Das**, Global Development Institute (GDI), University of Manchester, UK
4. **Dr Nimesh Dhungana**, Humanitarian Conflict Response Institute, University of Manchester, UK
5. **Dr Priyank Pravin Patel**, Department of Geography, Presidency University, Kolkata, India.
6. **Dr Md. Abdus Samad**, Department of History, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Description of the Planned Activities and Timeline:** The planned two-day symposium in Kathmandu aims to provide a comprehensive platform for the exploration of transboundary river dynamics, traditional knowledge systems, and integrated land and water management, with a particular focus on the Himalayan River Systems. **Day 1:** The morning and early afternoon sessions of the symposium will feature the presentation of working papers, keynote lectures, and facilitated dialogues, fostering meaningful knowledge exchange among participants. In the post-lunch session, participants will engage in an interactive panel discussion to share insights and discuss their ongoing research with the symposium team. **Day 2:** The morning session will continue with presentations, discussions, and collaborative dialogues. The post-lunch session will be dedicated to a project dissemination symposium led by the symposium organizers, highlighting findings from the ongoing research project. Following the symposium, a field activity is scheduled for April 18, 2025. Participants who wish to join will have the opportunity to explore the challenges of water management and traditional practices in disaster-affected areas of the Kavrepalanchowk District, which recently experienced severe flooding.

**Abstracts:** The interested applicant can submit a 2-page CV along with an abstract (within 500 words) on the Symposium theme or sub-themes. Initial abstracts should be emailed to Dr Sk Ajim Ali ([skajimali.saa@gmail.com](mailto:skajimali.saa@gmail.com)) and Dr Reshma Shrestha ([reshma@ku.edu.np](mailto:reshma@ku.edu.np)) by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Files should be sent and uploaded in Google drive in MS Word format, and the file name should be the first author's surname. Please include names, affiliations and contact details in the Google form. All Abstracts will be reviewed and selected by the scientific committee of the Symposium.

Call for Abstracts Opens	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
Deadline for Abstract Submission	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Notification of Accepted Abstracts	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Registration	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
In-Person's Symposium Dates	16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Post- Symposium Field Activity	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Submission of Full Paper and Future Research	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Registration fees:** The participants no need to pay any registration fees.

**Contact information:** For more information on the Symposium, please contact with:

Dr Sk Ajim Ali: [skajimali.saa@gmail.com](mailto:skajimali.saa@gmail.com)

Dr Reshma Shrestha, Kathmandu University Email: [reshma@ku.edu.np](mailto:reshma@ku.edu.np)

Dr Mehebab Sahana, University of Manchester: [mehebab.sahana@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mehebab.sahana@manchester.ac.uk)

Opportunity to published in an open access special issue. Frontiers in Water Research (Special Issue on Water Resources in South Asia: River and Glacial dynamics, climate change and societal-water interactions.)

**We look forward to welcoming you at Kathmandu University, Nepal**