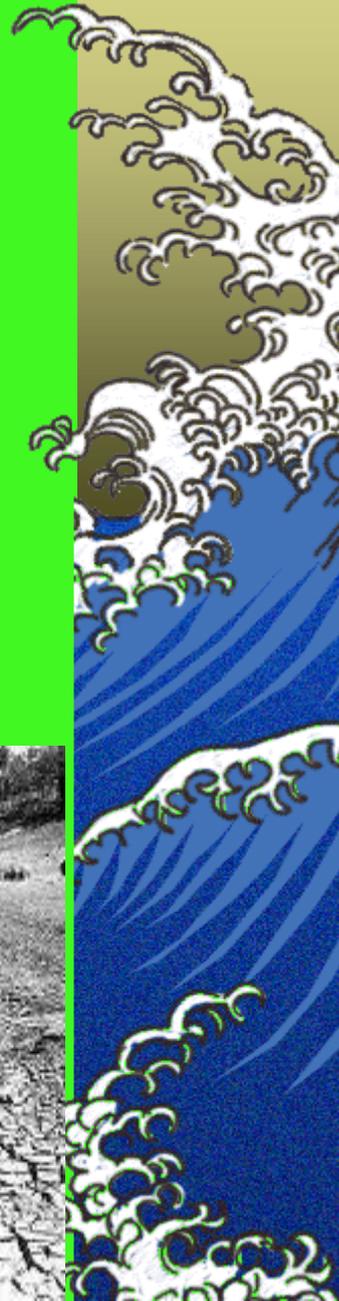


✦ *Writing Environmental History of Asia : Climate, Water and the Issue of Sustainability*

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✦ *In South Asia, water is at the heart of politics between the nations as they increasingly face the challenge of meeting the growing needs of their populations. Within nations, the disputes and conflicts over the control of flowing waters are evidence of the growing need for water.*



✦ *Thoughts and concerns about water in South Asia were intimately tied up with climate or clouds, rainfall and sunshine – this is one area where we have not noticed much movement so far despite the opening up of the new frontier of environmental history*



- ✦ *Water flows have not only shaped social and political institutions in India and South Asia, they have also legitimised them*
- ✦ *medieval kings and chiefs exercised their power on gifted water flows, creating landscapes which inscribed their domination into the hydrology and thus naturalised it*



✦ *Rivers and water resources have been central to the prosperity and survival of the human civilization in South Asia.*



- ▶ *The shrinking of glaciers in the Himalayas could affect the water supply for hundreds of millions of people. In countries like India and China, the water hoarded during the rainy season as snow and ice for discharge in the desiccated season would be reduced. There are many more mountain ranges where snow or ice regimes are changing, including the Alps and the Andes.*





- ✦ *I will argue that study of astronomy and astrology in ancient India became imperative because of their connection with changes in seasons and weather condition which were important for agricultural activities.*
- ✦ *It would be plausible to argue that even the progress of Mathematics in India was prompted by the need to understand the climate behaviour.*



- ✦ *At times of scarcities, such as droughts, or excesses, such as inundations, victims are invariably chosen by class and gender, the poor being affected first and most, turning them into ‘environment refugees’. For example, in Bangladesh, where poor water quality affects entire communities, women from poorer communities suffer more than men, reflecting an unequal power balance.*



9 Drinking water shortage in the summer months...a common feature...



The issue of class and gender still remains to be addressed....



# The unknown and unregistered environmental refugees....





- ✦ *Large scale hydraulic infrastructures have come to be synonymous with development in today's South Asia; for flood control, they have been used sparingly; for hydropower generation, their contribution has not been the major source of the total electricity supply.*



✦ *Rainwater harvesting, watershed development, traditional irrigation systems, small hydel, or low and temporary embankments for dealing with floods are principles and techniques of water resource management.*



- ✦ *Richard Grove has already shown the connections between drought in South Asia and the institutional responses to it and the beginnings of modern scientific understandings of climatic teleconnections between global scale tropical circulation and the strength of the Asian monsoon. It is high time to embark on a project of constructing a comprehensive history of water and climate in South Asia.*



Let there be a new  
beginning.....



*Thank you very much for  
your kind attention*

