

Call For Abstracts

Conference on: Navigating the Climate Crisis in Northern Himalayan Region of India: Rethinking Federal Governance

The conference aims to critically examine the imperative of reassessing governance strategies amidst the escalating climate crisis in the Northern Himalayan Regions of India, with a specific emphasis on the highly vulnerable region of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal. A vulnerability assessment report commissioned by the Government of India in 2018-19, based on socio-economic, demographic, and health status, agricultural production sensitivity, forest-dependent livelihoods, and access to information services and infrastructure, conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi, and Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, identified Jammu and Kashmir as significantly susceptible to climate impacts, ranking just below Assam and Mizoram.

Moreover, the report underscores that vulnerability is a comparative metric, clarifying that the evaluation does not depict Uttarakhand, or Himachal Pradesh as exhibiting low vulnerability in an absolute sense. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that while this relative assessment positions Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh as less vulnerable, it doesn't diminish the challenges posed by the recent climate crisis in these states. The recent tunnel collapse incidents in Uttarakhand and flash flooding across Himachal Pradesh in 2023 sheds light on the specific hurdles and adversities faced by the Northern Himalayan States, emphasizing that despite their comparative resilience, they are not immune to the broader issues associated with the climate crisis.

Various datasets from the State Disaster Management Authority underscore similar challenges and the fragility of the state in dealing with the climate crisis. For instance, due to the climate crisis, the Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA), established by the Ministry of Earth Science, Government of India, projects an increase in the average number of rainy days in the Himalayan region by 5-10 days in the 2030s. The eastern part of the Jammu and Kashmir region may experience an even more substantial increase, exceeding 15 days. Additionally, the intensity of rainfall is anticipated to rise by 1-2 mm per day, highlighting the immediacy of the threat evident in the increased incidents of flash floods and cloudbursts.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Jammu and Kashmir took proactive steps in 2011 to institutionalize the J&K State Council on Climate Change. This structured initiative,

comprising a Governing Council, Executive Council, and Expert Committee, has actively engaged in climate change mitigation and adaptation, encompassing sectors such as energy, water, agriculture, tourism, and disaster management. Given the multifaceted impact of climate change in J&K, UK, and HP a multistakeholder initiative, as envisioned by this conference, is imperative. The complexity arises from precipitation patterns affecting agriculture and posing potential food insecurity. Additionally, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) pose a significant threat, particularly in terms of flash floods and landslides in all the aforementioned states. The intricate nature of the climate issue is further amplified by the intersection of political challenges and external security threats in Northern Himalayan Region, necessitating the involvement of the central government. In this context, governance in these states and nearby regions not only faces distinct challenges arising from climate change, including extreme weather events, flooding, high temperatures, and inadequacies in solid waste management but must also ensure the territorial sovereignty of India.

Based on aforesaid challenges and possibility to re-think governance module this conference will explore the specific impacts of climate crisis on public health, green energy, drinking water, agriculture (given J & K is predominantly (about 70%) dependent on agriculture and allied activities like animal husbandry), tourism, Himalayan ecosystem, disaster management, sanitation, solid waste management, public transportation, livelihoods, and infrastructure with local governance being the focal point of discussions. The purpose is to examine solutions tailored to local circumstances and the dynamic nature of the region.

Conference Objectives:

- Facilitate a multidisciplinary dialogue on the intersection of climate change and federal governance in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh.
- Analyze the possible outcomes of the Climate Crisis and assess their implications for policy and governance.
- Explore innovative and context-specific adaptation strategies for sectors vulnerable to climate change.
- Foster collaboration ideas among government bodies, academic institutions, and civil society for effective climate governance in all the three states.

We invite scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to submit abstracts for the conference to be **held on March 6th and 7th, 2024 in Kashmir**. The conference specifically welcomes abstracts that delve into the intersection of climate change and federal governance. Submissions should focus on any of the following sub-themes but not limited to:

Conference Sub Themes

- Climate adaptation strategies in J&K, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh
- Federal governance and policy making for climate change.
- Indigenous perspectives, local governance, and climate change.
- Comparative studies on international best practices in federal governance and climate change involving northern Himalayan region.
- Digitalization, Innovation for Climate Solutions in Federal Governance
- Civic Engagement, Local Administration and Community Participation strategies for mitigating climate change.

Submission Guidelines:

Abstract consisting of 250-300 words that explicitly articulate their relevance to the conference theme and the specific region in the concept note to be emailed to climatefederalism@gmail.com by the midnight of January 31, 2024. Selected participants will receive support for travel and accommodation related expenses.

Timeline For Conference:

- Abstract Submission: 31st January 2024
- Announcement of Selected Abstract: 5th February 2024
- Final Paper of 3000-4000 words due: 23rd February 2024
- Conference Event Day: 6th – 7th, March 2024 to be held in Kashmir.