

Locating Environmental Narratives in Water Security Discourse

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Abstract: - Language related to water security is used to convey a lack of water. It is employed strategically to create urgency over water resources. The security narrative has been reframed to include new actors in the field of water security. Water security is becoming a dominant paradigm, and this has all the makings of a new type of environmental governmentality. Therefore, three intriguing environmental narratives have been used in the literature to form the discourse on water security. Romantic environmentalism sees environmental problems as a symptom of a wider social, moral, and personal arrogance dilemma in today's technical, rationalized society. Environmental management narratives focus on the environment's sustainability, with Sustainable development being the most frequently utilized idea. Environmental justice narratives oppose foreign forces' exploitation of the nation's natural resources.

This paper is an attempt to scrutinize the relationship between environment and security in traditional as well as non-traditional senses and will try to critically examine water security discourse as a matter of national security.

Key-Words: - Environment, Security, Discourse, Water

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1 Introduction

As you The word 'narrative' derives from the Latin verb *narrare* which means 'to tell', which is derived from the adjective *gnarus* meaning 'knowing' or 'skilled'. Narratives could be categorized in several thematic categories such as fiction, non-fiction, imaginary, historical, environmental, and others. (Sandberg: 2016). "Narratives in one way are connotations of human creativity, which can be traced in the form of cultural history and formation of communal identity and values among traditional indigenous people. Approaches dealing with narrative writings are not finite in nature, but dynamic in approach. They are; aesthetics, psychological, sociological and inquiry", etc. (Marshall: 1998, March and Hevern: 2004). Environmental narratives are narratives, which underline environmental issues, such as pollution,

resource scarcity, climate change, environmental security, and other co-related factors. However, "there is a disparity between environmental narratives of the affluent North and environmentalism of the South" (Schoenfeld: 2005). Discourse has been described as an entity of sequence and signs. It is an encounterments or statement in conversations (Foucault, M: 1980) among subjects. Discourse is an abstract construction that assigns meaning to a text for communication between subjects and objects. Moreover, discourse is a body of text to communicate specific knowledge or information. Likewise, in terms of power and security, "Discourse is, to a large extent realized through the production of knowledge" (Foucault, M: 1977, 1980). The notion of power is defined in terms of security. Discourse Analysis has been de-centered

and de-personalized, where it plays a key role to understand power relations in society and among the states. This study will use 'Discourse' analysis as a narrative¹ to deconstruct the idea of security and redefine security in the context of environmental resources.

The term 'water security' is a contested concept (Zeitoun et al. 2013). It has been defined as "the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks" (Grey and Sadoff: 2007). Two types of water security have been used in this study. Strategic security discourse and Tactical security discourse. Strategic security is related to the hydrology of an international river basin that links all the riparian states. "It requires all the riparian states to share a complex network of environment, economic and political interdependencies" (Fischhendler: 2015) "crafted by transboundary rivers. Strategic security associates natural resources with potential conflict and links natural processes such as water scarcity with security and welfare" (Redclift: 2001). "Tactical security happens when low politics issues such as water are linked with the high politics issues of national survival" (Fischhendler: 2015). Linkages of water resources with national survival of high politics pave the way for the securitization of water resources. Water security discourse has been created by the 'Actor'² through strategic or tactical means³.

Environmental narratives can be classified into three categories namely; Romantic Environmentalism, Environment Management narratives, and Environmental Justice narratives (Schoenfeld: 2005). "Romantic environmentalism perceives environmental issues as part of a larger crisis of community, values, and human hubris in a modern rationalized technocratic society. The romantic environmentalism portrays an urban-industrial revolution as destructive to agricultural-based communities" (ibid). Environmental management narratives are about the sustainability of the environment. Sustainable development is the most widely used notion of these narratives (Brudtland: 1987). Environmental justice narratives are known as 'environmentalism of the poor. These narratives stand against the exploitation of the national natural

resources by outside powers (Schoenfeld: 2005). These narratives help to develop nationalist feelings among the native nationals against the exploitation of their natural resources by the outside powers.

2 Literature Review

Environmental Narratives

"After the cold war, concerns for the environment have become an important aspect in security policies, debates, and research. Environmental factors are considered in stimulating international conflict and cooperation and give rise to new environmental politics" (Deudney and Mathew: 1999). "Environmental issues have influenced security discourses and have widened the security discourse by incorporating environmental security. Environmental destruction and insecurity are a product of structural inequalities inherent in the development and underdevelopment dynamics. Environmental havoc will lead to violent conflict" (Barnett: 2001). "It has imbibed itself the identity issues of human as well as non-human beings. It has been raised to conceptualize the inclusive concept of security beyond the traditional security i.e. state-centric military security" (Dalby:1992). Environmental Security is an approach to managing environmental degradation overwhelmed by the cold war era concerns. Environmental security discourse criticizes traditional security discourse. It examines traditional security consequences of environmental degradation and its impact on human security. Environmental security underpins security based on environmental justice and peaceful methods to attain it.

"There is a linkage of the environment with security and thereby to 'high politics'. It has created the political awareness and a sense of urgency required to resolve environmental problems. Environmental correlation with security has broadened the understanding of the concept of security". However, "environmental conflict perspective, focusing on the circumstances under which environmental degradation or change may lead to violent conflict represents an effort to overcome some of the methodological problems of the security-environment linkage" (Graegar: 1996). "Nina Graegar discussed how a multilevel approach to environmental security involving global, regional, national, and sub-national decision-making levels to the subsidiary principle, i.e. based on the idea that an issue should be dealt with at the appropriate level (ibid). It will provide a more dynamic framework for action than the state-centered approach which

¹ Discourse and Narratives have been used interchangeably throughout this study.

² Nation-states in the context of transboundary Rivers.

³ Water security as a national security issue has been attained through the securitization process.

still dominates security thinking and policy-making" (Westing: 1989).

"Copenhagen school of critical Security studies take up environmental narratives through securitization process and re-examined state security through the process of de-securitization. Copenhagen School conceptualizes the concept of environmental security and enables the moral evaluation of securitization and de-securitization" (Buzan et. al.: 1998). "Security has been defined as a referential object by Buzan (ibid), which has limitations and needs to be revisited" (Floyd: 2010). Environmental narratives adopted for this study are Romantic Environmentalism, Environment Management, and Environmental Justice narratives. Relating these narratives to 'Security', the conventional assertion that the state should be fully secured needs to be re-examined.

Romantic Environmental Narratives

"Romanticism was a nineteenth-century movement of reaction against the values, tastes, and ideas of the preceding century of Age of Enlightenment". Enlightenment was the age when secular human values triumphed over the ecclesiastical and divine". "The nexus between political power and religious authority was broken. The age of enlightenment fomented the scientific, philosophical and technological innovation which launched industrial revolution towards the end of the century" (Hay: 2002). "Romantic environmental movement was a reaction against a particular science, where technologically applied science of human stood above and apart from nature and manipulating nature for its interest". Based upon ecological insights, romanticism asserts that living nature is unity from which humankind cannot be separated. In other words, "romantic view of nature has become an ecological perspective in the search for a holistic or integrated perception with its emphasis on interdependence and relatedness in nature" (Worster: 1985).

"Ecological view sees nature as humankind's all-encompassing home and nature as a vast community of equals. It favors a simple life over a complex one and a rural setting over urban life. Wordsworth transmits love and nature together". "He links nature as an integral part of defining a nation. He asserts moral basis of nationalism with nature and propagates ideas of a return to nature" (Somervell: 1965). "Modern environmental movements like romantic environmentalism are overtly eco-centric, yet unlike romantic environmentalism, most current environmental movements are firmly future-oriented" (Hay: 2002).

Romantic environmentalism wrought by the urban industrial revolution varies in its emphases. For instance, romantic environmentalism incorporates nationalist movements in environmental concerns, in projects for social reconstruction, which include living in harmony with nature. Further, nationalist movements emphasized romantic environmentalism by celebrating people's traditional agricultural way of life close to their native soils and the natural wonders of their native land. Nationalist movements always aim for economic development through the intensive exploitation of national resources and building industrial capacity. Paradoxically, nationalist movements celebrate the agrarian past, but at the same time, they promote migration from the countryside to city life. And therefore, "nationalist environmentalism becomes nostalgic and talks more about symbols as substance, a pleasing image of majestic landscape and of a people in harmony with its land that obscures and distorts reality" (Schoenfeld: 2005).

Romantic environmental narratives demand a need to rebuild community and humanity to see its story as one of many and to cultivate respect for nature regardless of its utility to the people. Romantic environmentalism also reconciles religious narratives with environmentalism. It claims a social relationship to spiritual traditions that emphasize the sacredness of the web of life. "While the religious text may place humanity above nature and given dominion over it, they also include text expressing the awesome wonder of the word, divine love of all creation and human responsibility of stewardship" (the University of Harvard, Forum for Religion and Ecology: 2017).

Managerial Environmental Narratives

"Managerial environmental narratives are imprecision. Barrow acknowledges that managerial narratives can refer to a goal or vision, and steer a process for environmental sustainability. They are also a philosophical exercise seeking to establish new perspectives towards the environment and human societies and much more besides" (Guha: 2000). It is in this context that managerial environmental narratives lead to movements to preserve natural resources. Environmental managerial narratives stress imprudent practices and go on to call for environmental regulation and resource management.

Managerial environmental narratives generally demonstrate a relationship between humans and the environment. They address environmental changes in a way to maximize benefits and minimize environmental degradation. However, environmental degradation as asserted by

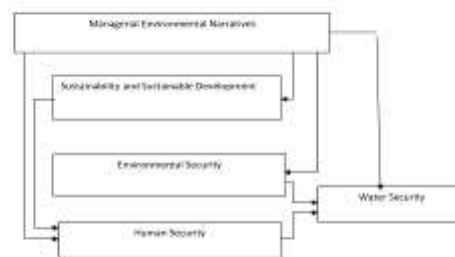
managerial narratives is mainly due to human's thoughtless activities against the environment. Nation-states as a larger human entity play an active participatory role to exploit natural resources. Managerial narratives are especially connected with the process of decision-making concerning the use of natural resources. Therefore, the "managerial environment became a political activity. Decisions to exploit the natural resources by the political actors are never neutral favoring human activities over the natural environment" (SAOS University of London, Environmental Science, and Management: 2017).

At the same time, "they are value-laden and reflect the exercise of the power of particular groups over the others. Managerial environment clearly distinguishes between the management of environment and management of human activities on the environment, where the managerial environment is more concerned with the management of human activities and their impact on the environment than with the management of the natural environment per se". In this process, "environmental management narratives are an attempt to ensure that critical environmental limits, such as water scarcity in the arid and semi-arid region should not exceed. In arid regions, these narratives are linked with environmental justice and even with survival" (ibid).

Managerial narratives deal with the conservation and management of natural resources. They bolster the 'Gaia Hypothesis. According to Gaia Hypothesis, "human needs must be weighed against maintaining critical natural resources" (Barrow: 2005). More specifically, managerial narratives prompt us to 'act locally and think globally' whenever international agreements and transboundary problems have to be considered. However, a criticism of this idea lies with its emphasis on the anthropocentric view of the environment, which places human needs and often profit before the protection of the environment. In the last fifty years or so, the main goal of environmental management narratives is on development with the intent to ensure environmental sustainability. Equally, environmental management narratives vouch for sustainable development, where environmental security and consequently human security is a priority. Sustainable development associated with human security is imperative for water security as well. It has been observed through managerial narratives that human security is inconceivable without water security. Therefore, managerial narratives have been affiliated with

environmental and human security, which consequently leads to Water Security.

Figure 1.1: Relationship between Managerial Environmental Narratives and Water Security:



It is evident that environmental managerial narratives vary and are broadly associated with sustainable development, environmental security, and more importantly human security. Managerial narratives invariably become an integral part of water security, whether within the nation or between the nations. Environmental security in this sense has become an obligation to manage finite resources and the growing demand for these resources. "Environmental security embeds environmental resource scarcity in the discourse about how resource shortages and production of waste are connected to conflict, conflict resolutions, and international regulatory regimes" (Schoenfeld: 2005).

Environmental Justice Narratives

The concept of environmental justice has been a central concern in a range of disciplines and has expanded substantially in the past two decades or so. "The idea of environmental justice examined the construction of environmental injustice and illustrates the pluralistic concept of social justice" (Schlosberg: 2013) including "just and equal use of environmental resources". Similarly, "the sphere of the environmental justice discourse has been

extended further with the application of the structure to climate change and climate justice, as well as growing concern and movements around local food and energy that has become the center of environmental justice organizations" (ibid). Environmental justice discussions now take a wider view of the environment and justice as a result of climate change. Additionally, both broaden the concept of environmental justice into a new area where nature and the environment are seen as fostering social justice.

The focus of environmental justice has expanded to include the unequal distribution of natural resources from earlier writings on the inequality of distribution of environmental beds. "David Schlosberg theorized and applied pluralistic conception of justice on environmental justice narratives" (Schlosberg: 2013). Environmentalism, ecological unity, and the interdependence of all species are all affirmed in environmental justice narratives, which draw attention to the environmental situations that go unnoticed by individuals because they are too busy living their daily lives.

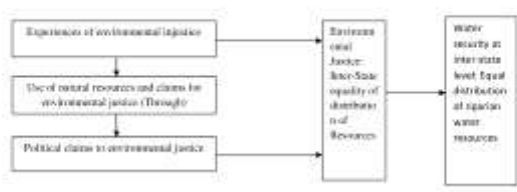
Inequality and injustice are the major focus of environmental justice narratives. Sze and Londont argue in the context of justice that "environmental justice theory has been redefining the understanding of the various mechanisms and processes of environmental injustices" (Sze and Londont:2008). Environmental justice narratives lay out three main inter-related factors (Mohai, Pellow, and Roberts: 2009). First, "environmental injustice occurs due to environmental cost of industrialization, second, industry and government seek the path of least resistance to development and poor and racial minority communities, which become easier targets. Third, a distinct form of racism associates communities of the race with pollution". These underlying causes help to create the injustice, exclusion, and generalized inequality that communities must deal with. In general, environmental justice stories discuss equity, acknowledgment, involvement, and the fundamental need for people and communities. "A capability approach in this context covers a series of basic needs, social recognition, and economic and political rights, which has offered a broad framework to understand the assortment of demands of environmental justice" (Holland: 2008).

Environmental justice narratives broadly focus on a range of justice aspects, though more specifically their focus is on the issues of social cohesion and functioning of the community. Moreover, in this context, environmental justice narratives are closer

to the communitarian conception of justice. For instance, "community-based enunciation for environmental justice emphasizes and defend the basic needs and very functioning of indigenous communities" (Schlosberg and Carutthers: 2010). Along with, environmental justice reactions to equity, it also proposes sustainable practices of everyday life and sustainable relationship with the natural world. However, the concept of environmental injustice is not restricted to human being only, but include the non-human realm as well. "Agyeman insists on the conception of environmental justice that goes beyond socio-cultural impacts of human beings and accentuates the interaction between social and environmental communities". Therefore, "Agyeman links environmental justice with the environmental communities for just sustainability" (Agyeman: 2005 and Schlosberg: 2013) and "expanded the discourse of justice across disciplines and boundaries".

Considering all the aspects of environmental justice, the first generation of environmental justice literature focused on the history of the United States' experience and its social movement against environmental injustice. Further, it has expanded from toxic waste and hazards to local people sharing the environmental resources. Climate justice along with environmental justice engages the state's policies and its decision-making body with the predicament of marginalized communities. Figure 1.2 reflects the conceptual understanding of environmental justice narratives, where experiences of environmental injustice by the marginalized communities make claims for environmental justice.

Figure 1.2: Environmental Justice as key for Water Security:



As a concept, environmental justice has been defined as 'inter-state equality of distribution of resources. Experiences of environmental injustice assert NGOs, civil society, and nation-states to make a lead for environmental justice. Role of NGOs, state and environmental movements to achieve environmental justice go-between environmental justice and environmental injustice to assert environmental justice.

3. Material and Method

Water Security Discourse

Security Discourse

Security in generic terms means safety 'from' and protection against 'damage' or 'attack'. Hans Baruch defines "security as a feeling of freedom from sorrow" (Brauch: 2005) and "absence of anxiety". P.H Liotta defines security as "the state of being secure or as a freedom from danger or fear" (Liotta: 2002). "Security is an essentially a contested concept for which all security definitions are temptation and do a disservice by giving the concept an appearance of firmness, which it does not merit" (Buzan: 1991). Moreover, security discourse apparently, incorporates almost any aspect of

political, social, environmental and international dimensions. The traditional security discourse has been largely covered by dominant state security discourse. Environmental Justice: Inter-State equality of distribution of riparian water resources. Water security at the inter-state level: Equal distribution of riparian water resources.

It broadly covers environmental security, food security, human security, water security, etc. Likewise, non-traditional security is broadly non-military security. "Along with traditional and non-traditional security discourse, Ronald Paris includes common security, global security, cooperative security and comprehensive security in the line of security discourse" (Paris: 2001).

Security as a concept was excusably defined in military terms after World War-I. The concept broadened after World War II. With the onset of the Cold War excessive stress was given to the military to define security. Arnold Wolfers take on security as 'National Security as an 'Ambiguous Symbol' in 1952 did not dismiss the contested notion of security. Defining national security, he writes "it would be an exaggeration to claim that the symbol of national security is nothing but a stimulus to semantic confusion, though closer analysis will show that if used without specification it leaves room for more confusion than sound political counsel or scientific usage can afford" (ibid). "Wolfers did not explicitly define the term security in military terms, implicitly national security is exclusively related to the state security or with the traditional notion of security". However, lacking a comprehensive definition of security, the connotation of the term security has been contested further in the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, in 1975, "Richard Smoke claimed that academia had paid quite inadequate attention to the range of meaning of security" (Smoke: 1975). In 1991, "Barry Buzan described 'Security' as an underdeveloped concept and points to the lack of conceptual literature on security before the 1980s" (Buzan: 1991).

There have been a plethora of attempts to redefine security after the Cold War (Rochtschild: 1995). "Much attention has been given to the traditional security discourse in the exercise of security while justifying the suspension of civil liberties, making wars, and massively relocating resources. Though,

the concept did not receive attention as was accorded to the concept of justice, freedom, power, etc" (Digeser: 1994). "Buzan suggests five possible explanations for the negation of security as a concept. First is the difficulty of the concept, as it is more difficult than the other concepts. Second, the overlap between the concept of security and power makes it be defined more accurately. Third, there is a lack of interest in security discourse by various critics of Realism. Fourth, security scholars are too busy keeping up with new developments in technology and policy. And lastly, the policy makers find the ambiguity of 'national security' useful, which does not explain why scholars have neglected the concept" (Buzan: 1991). "In a traditional school of thought, security has been linked with military statecraft. If military force was relevant to an issue, it was considered a security issue and if military force was not relevant, that issue was consigned to the category of low politics" (Baldwin: 1997). Therefore, for the traditional school of security studies, it was the military force that occupied the central place of what constitutes security instead of security as a concept per se (ibid).

4 Discussion

Locating Water in Security Discourse

"Water is essential for life. If handled properly, it provides the basis for economic growth, improves living standards, and brings socio-political stability" (Thapliyal: 2011). Water has been seen as a resource where 'abundance and scarcity logic does not apply. It creates sprains among the riparian states or within the state. Riparian rights become crucial for creating conflict for the usage of water among the upstream and downstream shareholders. Studies on water security entered the security domain with the inclusion of non-military threats affecting human collectivities, such as societal, economic, political, and environmental concerns (ibid). The increasing requirements for water resources will amplify and exert pressure on usable water resources. The scarcity of water resources thus would make it synonymous with the problem. Likewise, scarcity of water resources creates a sense of 'fear' amongst the state.

Most of the studies on water resources relate the sacred resource with conflict (Frey: 1993, Gleick: 1993, Grey and Sadoff: 2003, Homer-Dixon: 1999, Starr: 1991, Wolf: 1998 and Zeitoun: 2008). Using an empirical method for case studies, in the Middle East, Selby, Mostafa Dolatyar, and Tim Gray concentrated on water resources as a flash point of

conflict (Thapliyal: 2011). "Jan Selby has identified three discourses on the water crisis. Ecological discourse takes into consideration populations increase, Resources Constraints equation, that is constrained of limited water resources due to ever-increasing population, Technical discourse deals with technological, economic and policy management and inefficiency related to water resources" (Selby: 2003). Political analysis of water resources could be understood through the Bary Buzan theory of security that deals with audience perception towards security regime. At the same time, "political discourse of water resources analyzes water crisis as a result of resource control, inequalities among countries on water sharing and distribution, nationalist and international discourse" (Thapliyal: 2011).

Water-conflict debates are largely focused on the perils of the states. They come from the distribution of water over the transboundary Rivers. Such cases are the Jordan River Basin in the Middle East and Indus and Brahmaputra Rivers in South Asia. Crisis over water resources often occurs for the just distribution of transboundary water resources. This crisis of water distribution leads to violent conflict (Dixon-Homer: 1999), "first at the local level and later at the global level. Ralph Salmi directly linked political crisis with water crisis and proposes that unless the political conflict is resolved the water crisis would continue to exist" (Ralph: 1997). Relating water security in the South Asian region, problems over water resources do not arise only from the unequal distribution of water resources, but from the politics of the region, which is often influenced by nationalistic tendencies (Lama: 1997). Other factors such as population, economic development, power asymmetry, and involvement of social organizations often influence politics on water resources. Sundeep Waslekar predicted that the next war between India and Pakistan would be on Water resources (Waslekar: 2005).

With the increased usage of water (putting population growth and economic development in the background), states become responsible for water availability, sharing, and procuring. Stipulation for water security induces states to negotiate to get an adequate quantity of water resources. Climate change is another factor affecting the water resources and therefore a question of security for those states which face resource scarcity. Moreover, the transboundary nature of resources enters into the domain of foreign policy. Water resources have become a dominant factor regulating bilateral relations among the nations. Water security, therefore, has become an essential part of states'

national security policy. "Helsinki rules adopted by the International Law Association in 1966 are crucial in this regard. The rules specified apportionments of water from the international river basin based on geography, hydrology, size of drainage area, climate, past utilization, economic needs of riparian states, population, and availability of alternative sources. Helsinki rules rule out the just distribution of water resources among the riparian states to avoid conflict for attaining water security" (The Helsinki Rules: 1966).

The scarcity thesis of water resources presents a conflictual understanding of water resources (Homer-Dixon: 1999). "Peter Gleick puts water in terms of to be a subject for military action, an instrument of war and salient element of inter-state politics" (Gleick: 1993). Along with Peter Gleick, "there are common agreements on relating water with war thesis that many wars of this century were about oil, but wars of the next century will be over water" (Serageldin: 1995). Homer-Dixon though not advocates the possibility of war that would take place because of a lack of water resources, but in his acclaimed work on 'environment, resources and violence', he puts forward the idea of conflict with water resources (Dixon-Homer: 1999). He argued that sharing transboundary rivers can be a causal factor in strained relations, however, it is not the factor inducing war (Thapliyal: 2011). Similarly, "Aaron Wolf argued that water scarcity at the most can lead to political instability then a full fledged war" (Wolf: 1995).

5 Conclusion

Since water is essential for human survival and affects an individual's everyday life, security studies deal with it from an individual, group, or state perspective. "The concept of security would apply to water when, it is perceived by the people as an existential threat in terms of societal, ecological and political concerns" (Thapliyal: 2011). Water develops into security when it affects state security. Paul Smith and Charles Gross argued that water can pose wide-range threats to regional security (Smith, Paul, and Gross H. Charles: 2000). They identified three levels of water security. Firstly "Water as human security problem human security cannot be achieved without achieving water security". Secondly, "Internal security and governance, anxiety over the water insecurity affect economic development leading to social tension which in turn can produce violence in society". And finally, "International Security, a state affected by the

internal tension will lose the ability to deal with other effects, more in the case of riparian states; it can threat regional and consequently international security" (ibid).

Water is state property, and therefore the security of this resource is the state's responsibility. Water security thus became a notion of state-centric security. Insecurity and instability within the state and among the state arise due to water insecurity. States use water resources as a military tool during military action. At the same time, it is also being used as a political tool to get political legitimacy. Myers holds water security discourse within the fold of human security (Myers: 1993). Therefore, in the discourse on security studies, water security is considered as part of state security, where the state offers its protection to secure larger issues of state or human security.

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