

Environmental impact of water resources projects is arguably the most contentious environmental issues of our times; particularly so in India. Whereas one set of people warmly welcome new water resources projects as vanguards of development and progress, another set of people aggressively denounce the projects as harbingers of environmental destruction and poverty. No sooner a new dam or barrage is announced, controversy erupts. As we see from the Narmada and Tehri projects, the controversy keeps snowballing. The construction work proceeds in fits and starts, taking decades and decades, because at every step it encounters protests and counter - protests, legal action and counter - action, bouquets and brickbats. There never seems to be a consensus on whether a water resource project is a net benefactor or a net destroyer.

Over the years, tussles between the governments of different states who share the water of a reservoir, are becoming increasingly more frequent and more fierce, adding yet another frightening dimension to the controversies that shroud water resources projects. . . .

From the foreword to the book "Environmental Impact of Water Resources Projects" (Abbasi, S.A., 2000; Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi)