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Statement of Interest for Weather and Society Integrated Studies WAS\*IS Workshop

**Sudha Arlikatti**

My training as an architect and planner in India and subsequent work experiences in international settings (in the Sultanate of Oman and India) sparked my interest in environmental planning and disaster management. Additionally, the ever increasing death toll and property losses from natural disasters in India due to lack of disaster education, limited resources, and a strong emphasis on disaster response and recovery inspired me to search for sustainable land use planning solutions that were interwoven with disaster mitigation strategies. Thus began my journey from a small coastal city in India to a college town in Texas (College Station) home to Texas A&M University. In 2006 I obtained my doctoral degree in Urban and Regional Science with an emphasis in environmental hazards management and subsequently took up a faculty position in the Department of Public Administration at the University of North Texas in Denton.

My research to date includes studies on the use of Geographic Information Systems to map environmental disputes; a study of the Texas Gulf coast residents and their accuracy in using hurricane risk area maps to evacuate; households decision to take protective actions against seismic risks in southern California and western Washington; the recovery and rebuilding of tsunami affected rural households in coastal India; and mapping recurring unmet needs of evacuating populations using United Way's 2-1-1 information and referral database. My work is important to academic researchers, emergency managers, policy makers, and citizens at large as it provides consensus building alternatives and detailed personalized risk information and helps expand the body of disaster knowledge through comparative cross-cultural, longitudinal case studies in national and international settings for multiple disasters.

I anticipate that through my involvement with WAS\*IS I will be able to network, learn, and share my research experiences and challenges with a cohort of esteemed practitioners and community stakeholders from interdisciplinary fields. The spate of natural disasters in recent years have consistently pointed to the break down in/ or lack of effective disaster warning systems leading to accelerated losses to lives and property. I firmly believe that there is an urgent need to understand and address the breakdown in communication between multiple societal stakeholders. The WAS\*IS workshop would afford me such a platform as it encourages dialogues between the selected cohort of expert participants. It is my hope to work on projects that address creating effective grassroots warning education protocols targeting special populations in disaster prone regions.

The extended beneficiaries of this workshop would be the 150-175 graduate and undergraduate students I teach and mentor every semester. It is my hope to act as a catalyst in inspiring the next generation to think about issues of climate change, environmental sustainability, and disaster resiliency in the light of integrated weather and social science research.