

Documentation of Conflicts around Drinking Water and Sanitation in India

Invitation for Abstracts

The context and the case study

The Forum (Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India) is an effort to bring together all those interested in working on issues related to water conflicts in India into a loose network for action and interaction. (For details on the work of the Forum visit <http://conflicts.indiawaterportal.org>)

The Forum is inviting case studies as part of its effort to document and understand the different types of conflicts taking place around drinking water and sanitation as part of Forum's newly initiated work on Right to Water and Sanitation in India (RTWS), primarily supported by WaterAid India. The primary objective of this effort is to understand the conditions that give rise to conflicts around drinking water and sanitation and what could be done to engage with them. Some of the important situations and conditions under which these conflicts manifest, which could be captured through these case studies, include: conflicts within rural areas, conflicts within the urban space, conflicts between urban-peri-urban-rural areas, conflicts due to water quality and pollution, conflicts due to contending water uses and competing water demands (drinking water versus agriculture, industry and so on), conflicts due to structural reasons like caste, class, patriarchy and so on resulting in inclusion-exclusion issues), conflicts arising out of sectoral reform initiatives especially privatisation of service delivery, conflicts arising out of mere lack of access to drinking water and sanitation (including cases of violence on women in the absence of secure sanitation facilities), conflicts and discontent over caste-based sanitation work (especially manual scavenging), etc. Thus you could capture any one of the above situations (or even outside this list) in your case study.

Conflict is seen here in a broad sense and we are not restricting it to any one term like dispute, contestation, conflict, etc; it covers a range of meaning starting from dispute right up to conflicts ending up in violence. The minimum common denominator is that there should be contestation involving two or more parties. The contestation may be expressed in different forms, at different scales and intensity.

Broad structure of the case study

On the minimum, the author/s should include the following:

1. A brief profile of the site/location of the conflict – The brief description can include geographical and bio-physical details of the area including the political-administrative and hydrological boundaries), details of demography, socio-economic-cultural-political context, etc. and also some details of the water situation (including rainfall, irrigated agriculture [if it is a rural area], drinking water situation, etc.). The author also needs to provide a good map of the area indicating the location of the conflict.

2. Detailed description of the conflict/contestation – The description of the conflict needs to be detailed taking a historical account starting with the underlying reasons for the conflict, how it manifested (or is still manifesting), the various actions of different parties involved, attempts at mitigating/resolving the conflict, ending with the narration with the present status. It would be good to provide a chronology of important or significant events/actions/milestones with dates. The description should be simple and direct. Care should be taken to be as objective as possible and not to exaggerate. As much as possible the effort should be to state the facts as clearly as possible and let the readers draw their conclusions. Some visuals should also be provided.
3. Description of the conflicting parties and their viewpoints concerning the conflict –Who are the parties in the conflict? What are their interests and stakes? What are their viewpoints regarding the conflict? What do they want?
4. Impact of the conflict – What is the actual or likely impact on the ecology, economy and society (in terms of different social section) in the affected areas. If there are damages to life and property that also could be captured here.
5. Assessment of the case and way forward -- The author should also attempt to assess the conflict and state her own view of the conflict separately. The author should give his/her suggestions how a process can be initiated to resolve or engage with the conflict. Will an informed dialogue amongst the conflicting parties work? Is it even possible? If yes, then what are the pre-conditions for such a dialogue? If the conflict cannot be resolved through existing institutional and legal set ups, what are the possible new legal, institutional and social instruments that can resolve them?

Of course the author/s is free to go beyond these points. But of the above constitutes the minimum that is expected.

Process

Those who are interested should send us an abstract of the proposed cases study. The abstract should include, on the minimum, the location of the case, the nature of the conflict, conflicting parties, present status and also the significance of the case. The length of the abstract should be about 400 to 500 words. The abstract should be accompanied by a brief CV/bio note of the author/s (not more than 200 words).

The abstracts would be reviewed and a selection would be made by a panel and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be signed with the authors of the selected case studies.

The authors would then have to submit the full case study draft within the specified time limit (see time line below). The drafts would be peer reviewed and the peer review comments would be communicated to the authors. The authors are expected to engage with the comments and suggestions of the reviewer in the final version that they submit.

The final version would be published by the Forum in the form of a compendium of case studies. The Forum would also explore the possibility of getting it published by a reputed publisher. Hence the authors should refrain from reproducing or publishing the case study elsewhere until further notice.

If the Forum is unable to publish the Compendium or include a particular case study/studies in it, the authors would be informed accordingly and then they would be free to publish it/them elsewhere.

The length of the case study should be around 7000 to 8000 words. Forum would circulate a style sheet to the commissioned authors and the authors should adhere to the style sheet both for the first draft as well as the final version.

The authors should get the necessary permissions in case of use of already published material (both text and visuals).

Timeline

Submission of abstract: 31 August 2012

Commissioning of studies: 15 September 2012

Submission of first drafts: 30 November 2012

Communication for view comments to authors: 15 December 2012

Submission of final version: 15 January 2013

Remuneration

Each case study would be paid a lump sum of Rs. 20,000. Out of this Rs. 10,000 would be paid as first instalment at the time of signing of the MoU and the remaining Rs. 10,000 would be paid after the submission of the final version and its approval.

Submission of the abstract

Kindly send the abstract to: righttewaterandsanitation@gmail.com

K. J. Joy and Suhas Paranjape
Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India