

Documentation of Sector Reform Experiences 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 of sector reform experiences as part of its effort to contribute to the process of working towards building a campaign for the right to water and sanitation in India. Water Sector Reform is a process that was ushered in with the liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) processes that began in the post 1990s. However, we mean to use the word below in its more neutral and wider sense of reforming and/or restructuring of the water sector. In this sense, it is a more inclusive term that also includes `attempts to reform the present water sector in a manner that provides for greater equity, environmental sustainability, efficiency, transparency, accountability and participation. Sector reforms in the latter sense are an important and essential component of a campaign for the right to water and sanitation.

While the larger reform process has undoubtedly been dominated by the LPG agenda, there are indications that on the ground it has been a more complex process. There are initiatives that have concentrated on public-public partnerships rather than public-private partnerships; there are initiatives that have concentrated on community control and participation rather than on privatization. Even within the processes that have brought in privatization there have been conflicts over building institutions for the oversight of private operators. There is a need to study the entire sector reform experience in order to understand how LPG led reforms have affected the right to water and sanitation as well as to derive learnings that would contribute to initiating sector reforms aimed at greater equity, environmental sustainability, efficiency, transparency, accountability and participation.

The Forum is therefore inviting case studies of sector reform experiences around drinking water and sanitation. This is 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 these case studies is to engage with the variegated sector reform experience around drinking water and sanitation. The case study should be a specific sector reform programme in a specific locality. It should have learnings for other areas, which could be positive (what should be done) as well as negative (what should not be done). The case study could concentrate on the much vaunted 24x7 programmes, or rural schemes like the Jal-Swarajya, or efforts to build in transparency and accountability in the present system, or any other related programme that has significant learnings for the RTWS.

Broad structure of the case study

At the minimum, the author/s should cover the following:

1. A brief profile of the site/location of the case study – 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.). What were/are the major sources of drinking and domestic water in the area? What are the sanitation practices in the area? What is the present coverage? How adequate is the service – in terms of quantum, quality, frequency, timeliness, etc. The author also needs to provide a good map of the area indicating the location of the programme.
2. Detailed description of the evolution of the programme – A detailed historical account of how the programme came to be suggested; if the programme came to be suggested as part of a larger programme, there should be a section that describes the evolution of the larger programme, giving as much detail as necessary to explain the evolution of the local programme (but not as detailed as to make it a case study of the larger programme!); if there was contestation around it describe the contestation, alternatives, contending parties etc;
3. Main features of the programme as it finally evolved. The major objectives of the programme followed by its components. Sources it used, whether it introduced a change in the source, and/or its management. Similarly for the distribution and delivery of drinking and domestic water. Did it provide for changes in sanitation practices? If it did, describe the details of the sanitation component. Changes it introduced in the institutional structure around economics, costs, payments, management, transparency and accountability. Etc.
4. The implementation of the programme: Describe how the programme was implemented, how much of what was promised was implemented, which were the areas/measures that were not implemented; concluding with an evaluation of the programme against its own professed objectives.
5. An assessment/evaluation of the programme from various angles:
 - a. How did the programme affect equity? Has the overall coverage improved? Has the quality improved? Did the poor benefit? Did women? In what way? In absolute terms, in relative terms, as compared to other sections? Which castes, sections did it affect and how? Which localities? Who benefited, who lost? How did what was implemented affect different groups? How did what was not implemented affect different groups?
 - b. How did the programme affect sustainability? Has the environmental sustainability of the source been affected? How? Does the sanitation programme result in environmentally sound management of wastes? How has it affected the waste disposal system (waste water, sewage as well as domestic waste and solid waste disposal).

- c. Economic matters: How are water and sanitation services priced? How does the price affect different sections? How far does it cover costs? If there is profit/subsidy what is the extent? How is it mobilized by the service providers? Is there an exclusion effect?
 - d. Governance: Decision making within the programme. Decision making regarding the programme as a whole. Has it become more transparent? Has it become more easily or less easily influenced by the poor and the disadvantaged sections? Have the poor used the provisions supposedly meant for them? Has the service provider become more accountable? Has it brought waste disposal and sanitation under its purview? Is there a grievance redressal system in place
6. Learnings: Here the case study author/s should bring together the learnings from the study as a whole and put them in perspective of the larger water sector issues and more specifically RTWS including global level if necessary and relevant. The author can also suggest what needs to be done to take the learnings forward – in terms of policy, legal framework, institutions, resources, etc.—within the RTWS framework.

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

Process

Those who are interested should send us an abstract of the proposed case study. The abstract should include, on the minimum, the location of the case, the nature of the programme, its relevance and expected learnings. 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 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 8000 to 10000 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: 22 September 2012

Commissioning of studies: 29 September 2012

Submission of first drafts: 15 December 2012

Communication for view comments to authors: 31 December 2012

Submission of final version: 31 January 2013

Remuneration

Each case study would be paid a lump sum of Rs. 30,000. Out of this Rs. 15,000 would be paid as first instalment at the time of signing of the MoU and the remaining Rs. 15,000 would be paid after the submission of the final version and its approval.

Submission of the abstract

Kindly send the abstract to: righttowaterandsanitation@gmail.com

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Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India