

Different Case Studies of Water Source Disputes

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Various types of water source disputes have arisen in the community for different social, political and economic reasons. In the previous articles I presented different types of water source disputes in the community. In this article, I am presenting three cases of water source disputes that I experienced during my tenure in different organizations. The first and second cases have remained unsolved for a long time whereas the third one has been solved.

Case 1 : Jagatradevi Vs Nibuwakharka VDCs

There are neighboring VDCs named Jagatradevi and Nibuwakharka VDCs in Syangja district of Western Development Region of Nepal. Jagatradevi VDC suffers great hardship for drinking water. The VDC does not have any water sources to exploit within its boundary. The neighboring VDC, Nibuwakharka has sufficient water springs and service level of which is satisfactory throughout the VDC area. There is one spring water source in Nibuwakharka, which could be used for the community in Jagatradevi. Jagatradevi asked Nibuwakharka to provide the source but the latter did not accept with the reason that the source could be used by them in future. The source is located on the private land of one Mr. Thapa who is residing outside of the VDC. Jagatradevi VDC finally purchased the land containing the water source from the owner. But the owners of the land surrounding the source are not allowing the land to be conveyed the water to Jagatradevi VDC. Jagatradevi VDC even after purchasing the source, is now unsuccessful in conveying water for their drinking water scheme. The community in Nibuwakharka VDC is urging that they will use the source in future. It is still not confirmed that whether the community of Nibuwakharka can use the source from the private land of Mr. Thapa. It will be much costlier for Jagatradevi VDC, and their project may turn out to be unfeasible if they are to pay each land owner on the conveyance path.

VDC (Village Development Committee): Nepal is divided into about 4000 VDCs with an average area of 35 sq. Km and comprising about 1000 households. The VDC is governed by Villagement Development Committee. The VDC is a local body of District Development Committee (DDC).

Case 2 : Rangkhani Vs Dhullubaskot VDCs

Two VDCs named Rankhani and Dhullubaskot in Baglung district of western development region of Nepal, are suffering from another type of water source dispute. In 1997, District Water Supply Office (DWSO) designed to implement drinking water supply project for the community in Rangkhani VDC with the water source from Dhullu river flowing in between the two VDCs. The origin of the river lies in the Dhullubaskot VDC. Dhullubaskot VDC opposed to provide water on the ground that they would use the source for future water project. The water supply project was terminated at the very initial stage of commencement of construction. All the materials came for the project were dumped in the VDC. Now the community has adopted alternative schemes of drinking water supply. After 2 or 3 years of the first dispute, recently, another development agency designed a micro hydro scheme for the Dhullubaskot VDC with the intake of scheme on the same Dhullubaskot river. Now Rangkhani VDC has opposed to provide the water use on the ground that they could utilize the half

part of flow in their future project. This also came as a revenge against Dhullubaskot VDC which had not allowed the same water for their drinking water project in Rangkhani VDC. Rangkhani VDC is saying to Dhullubaskot to use half the water. However with half the water, the micro hydro scheme becomes infeasible financially. Both VDCs are members of the same political party, and that has not helped either. Meetings at various levels have been unsuccessful to solve the dispute. The dispute has halted both the projects-- drinking water and the micro-hydro—and as a result the neighboring communities have stopped showing interest in these two important development projects.

Case 3 : Rupakot Vs Deurali VDCs

The two neighboring VDCs named Rupakot and Deurali in Kaski district also suffered from the water source disputes for a long time. One community in Deurali VDC had hardship in drinking water which could utilize the source in Rupakot VDC. Deurali VDC asked for a long time for the water source. Rupakot denied on the ground that they could use the source for their community to enhance the service level of their existing water supply project. Deurali VDC was urging that they needed the water to reach to the existing service level of Rupakot community.

In between, the VDCs prepared overall Water Use Master Plans for their respective VDCs with support from Helvetas Nepal. This enabled them to realize the amount of water required for their VDCs as well as to prepare a long term plan to utilize the available water sources for the VDC population. Rupakot VDC hence agreed to provide the water to Deurali with condition that a small part of water supply scheme should serve the community in Rupakot VDC as well. Both the VDCs have now benefited with the settlement of the dispute.

Various water source disputes arise in the community. It is the author's experience that many of them happen because of the lack of overall planning of water resources within a VDC or within a cluster of VDCs. Water Resources Management Programme of Helvetas Nepal is implementing its programme for overall water resources management which has helped reduction in conflicts associated with equitable sharing of water.