Water Conflicts in the Context of Increasing Urbanisation and Industrialisation

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Anil Agarwal Dialogues
Excreta Does Matter

4-5 March 2013; New Delhi
Pimpri-Chinchwad: Conflict over Pavana waters

Three killed in police firing on farmer stir on E-way

By: Kaumudi Gurjar  Date: 2011-08-10  Place: Pune

Cops among over 20 injured as 500 farmers protesting against government's pipeline plan hold up Expressway traffic for over near Talegaon

Police firing on some 500 farmers agitating on the Expressway at Talegaon yesterday claimed
Ganga canal: Conflict over water for Delhi
Hirakud dam (Odisha): Conflict over increasing urban and industrial use
Mansi Wakal Dam and Udaipur city: Conflict over water transfers and PPP
Khandwa (MP): Conflict over PPP

अनुबंध ही निरस्त हो
Bhopal: Conflict over safe water, environment & justice
Chennai: Urban-peri-urban conflicts over groundwater
Delhi:
Privatised service delivery and inequity
Khari river (Gujarat): Dumping of municipal wastes & industrial effluents in and around Ahmedabad
Conflicts mainly relate to:

- Sourcing of water
- Inter-sectoral allocation
- Inequitable access
- Pollution and water quality problems: dumping of untreated urban sewage and industrial wastes
  - The quality of return flows
- Reform process: Privatisation, mode of delivery, pricing
- Resource colonisation: a case of unequal relationship between the periphery and the core
- Class, caste, patriarchy, ethnicity, rural-urban divides, geo-politics all map on to water
Increasing urban and industrial demand

- Increasing importance of urbanisation
  - Growth in urban population
  - Increasing urbanisation of rural aspirations and lifestyles

- Domestic and industrial water use:
  - In 2000: about 8% of total water use
  - Projected for 2050: about 20% of total water use
The issue of justice is central in all types of water conflicts:
- Equity within a particular water use or sector
- Allocation of water across different sectors

Water justice issues are different in both these scenarios
- Equity within a particular sector shows how egalitarian the water distribution norms and practices are
- Allocation of water across different sectors is related to the developmental pathway
Increasing diversions of water from agriculture to industries and urban use

Maharashtra experience:
- In 2003 the government limited the powers of the Irrigation Department to reserve water for non-agricultural use to 25% of the storage in the dams
- Set up a High Power Committee with the powers to sanction demands for reservations for more than 25% for non-agricultural uses
- About 1500 Mm$^3$ of water has been diverted from agricultural use to urban and industrial use from 2003 to 2011
  - Affecting about 250,000 ha of irrigated agriculture
Way forward

- Access to exogenous water to cities should carry conditionalities:
  - The conjoint use of local and exogenous water in a definite proportion
  - Equitable distribution and access: assurance of ‘lifeline’ water to all
  - Efficiency in use
  - Treatment of effluents, recycling and re-use
  - Part of the water tariff to be earmarked for protection of local water bodies, the exogenous sources and their catchments
Way forward

- Water for industries
  - The nature of the industrial entity like size, ownership structure, products, pollution impact and extent of reuse/recycling of water should be considered in deciding allocations to industries.
  - Industries should show that all other measures like recycling and re-use, efficiency measures in processes, local water harvesting are all exhausted.
  - Water for industries should not be at the expense of livelihoods of the peasantry.
Way forward

- The issue of privatisation
  - Privatisation of water sources and entitlements
  - Privatisation of service delivery

- Whatever be the mode of provision, there should be certain non-negotiables:
  - Meeting of basic (lifeline water) of all and the water supply conditions to be included in the legal instruments
  - Clear institutional and legal mechanisms for redressal
Way forward

- Knowledge based dialogues for negotiated settlements
  - Flexibility and periodic consensus process
  - Need for institutional space
  - Science-policy-stakeholder interaction (SPSI)
  - Need for public hearings prior to diversions and re-allocations
  - Access to reliable data

- Need for piloting in an action research mode
Websites:

- URL://waterconflictforum.org
- URL://conflicts.indiawaterportal.org