

# **Role of Women in management of Water and Sanitation: A case of Chadeni VDC of Kavre district**

## **1. Background Information:**

Nepal has just come over of a decade long bloody conflict and due to it, the country's economy declined immensely. This has affected all sectors, especially in the area of poverty, which has been increased much as compare to earlier period. Rural migration to urban and semi-urban areas, is one of the major cause of the conflict. This has emerged small towns in Kathmandu and its periphery areas, resulting concentration of un-planned houses without any basic services such as water supply and sanitation. This has resulted depletion of natural resources such as water table in well has gone down below the critical level and also supply of tap water has become inadequate to meet the demand of community. Apart from the accessibility of water supply, quality is another issue. Due to the haphazard water supply system along with improper settlement, there is mix up of sewage with drinking water supply. As a result the water is no longer safe to drink without treatment. However, community of sub-urban area are not aware of safe use of water at their household, particularly drinking purpose. This all has adversely affected the quality of life of people, especially deteriorate the health condition of people living in such locality.

Because of the poor drinking water, in Nepal it has been estimated that every year about 45,000 children below the age of five years die from sanitation related problems, which are attributed to inadequate supplies of water and/ or its poor quality (Devkota 2007). Recently case of Cholerias, Diarrhea, and Dysentery around western hilly districts of Nepal has been in epidemics due to water infectious diseases. It has been estimated that there has been already loss of more than 500 lives in these areas.

Adequate water supply nearby to the community is another issue. Women in particular are often deprived of opportunities to engage in income generating activities because of the need to spend hours in fetching water. A study conducted by ADB, revealed that each female water carrier must reserve 1 1/3 hours per day during the monsoon season and an average of 2-3 hours per day in the dry season to meet their daily household supply (ADB, 2000). Women compose 70% of the labor force in the water management schemes (Pandey 2004). A minimum of 30 per cent of the total time saved could be used for other economically productive activities if there is an access of water supply in community premises. Inadequate water supplies nearby can also have a significant impact on sanitation (Devkota 2007).

Government of Nepal has also realized that providing drinking water and sanitation facilities is an essential needs for improving livelihood of people. Therefore, it has given high priority for the development of water and sanitation sector in its 10<sup>th</sup> plan period (2003-2007) and accordingly it has targeted to supply water to 85% of rural population. However this cannot be accomplished by government efforts alone. Thus, it has adopted the policy of promoting people's participation for making water and sanitation systems sustainable, reliable and cost effective, through the mobilization of community based organizations (CBOs), Water Users Groups (WUCs) etc. (Devkota 2007).

## **2. Geographical Area:**

The proposed project is planned to conduct in Chandeni VDC of Kabhrepalanchok District, 32 Kilometer away from the Kathmandu, in the mid-hills of Nepal. The VDC serves as the economic link between rural migrants and urban economy. The VDC comprises poor ethnic minorities and deprived of access of development benefits. People of these households do not have enough land for subsistence. They have to depend on labor work at Urban areas of their locality or in Kathmandu city. Basic needs such as water supply is one of the high demand in the areas, especially safe drinking water is a major problem. People have mythological belief that river water is pure water. In the area there are not pipeline supply of drinking water, people use to fetch the water from natural sources of water, (kunwa, pandhera, and river). The river system has been crossed from the settlement area, therefore the quality of water is very poor due to contamination with their daily activities such as cleaning of dishes, washing of clothes, bathing and showering of livestock. In addition to this, women and girls spent much of their time in fetching water, which limits them from other opportunities such as education and income generation. Therefore development of the VDC will help to absorb rural migrants and reduce pressure on urban environment for infrastructure, employment and other needs.

### **3. Types of Case:**

Since development activities have not been reached to the area, the physio-geographical infrastructure is weak. In addition to this due to the poor ethnic and marginalized community, social structure is in meager condition. As most of the populace in the area are illiterate, no community development activities are initiated in the proposed study site. Therefore, WPLUS propose the case can be considered as a 0 phase. A number of development activities concerned with water and sanitation can be initiated in this area for improvement of livelihood of people, especially women and children of this community. Because women have accumulated Considerable knowledge about water resources, including location, quality, and storage methods. They are often the most motivated to ensure that water supply and sanitation facilities are in good order, as they know from experience the vital contribution that both water and sanitation make to their well-being (Pandey 2004).

## **4. Objectives:**

General objective of the project will be to improve the quality of life and health of people by raising awareness and supporting technical know how about sustainable water supply through empowerment of women and girls of the community. Specific objectives will be:

- i) To encourage women participation in Local Water Users Group (LWUG) by building their capacity through water literacy and impart training on sustainable water use and management of waste water
- ii) To empower LWUG for advocacy and lobbying for allocation of government resources in constructing water supply system in the community.
- iii) To create feeling of ownership in community through local contribution in management of water supply system

## **5. Strategies proposed:**

The proposed project will be implemented in three phases:

i) First Phase or Short run: Various study reveal accessibility and quality of water are the major problem in the area, it is essential to understand the feasible water system in the area. On the top of that, need assessment of the community should always give first priority before making any decision in the project. This cannot be done without taking a preliminary survey at the study site and involvement of rural communities, especially women who are much concerned with water related activities. Therefore WPLUs proposed for a social mapping and need assessment of access of water. After the preliminary survey, local water users groups (LWUG) which encompass women involving disadvantaged minorities will be formed. The group will be imparted training on software (awareness and training) on water literacy especially importance of water, waste water management, harvesting of rainwater and water use and quality.

2) Second Phase or medium run: In this phase, the identified possible ways of accessibility and sustainable use of water will be implemented. For accessibility, the local water users groups will be encouraged to harvest rainwater and its safe storage. In addition to this, community will start to reuse of waste water through local technology, this will help in recharging ground water and it helps in raising water table. Natural purification of water will be attained through this method.

3) Third Phase or long run: In this period, initiative will be taken for allocating government resources in development of water supply system. The LWUG will lead the program for advocacy and lobby to meet the demand of the community. Emphasis will be given for equity and equality of water use and need of the community. Community will recommend the type of water supply system (pipeline or other methods) and distribution pattern of water. In order to make participatory and creating ownership feeling, community will contribute the expenses in terms of kind (labor work). The financial expenses will be generated from government agencies such as Village Development Fund and also other local stakeholders.

## **References:**

ADB 2000: Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project: Gender and Development, Asian Development Bank, loan 1755-Nep.

Devkota Dinesh C 2007: Drinking Water Policies and Quality issues in Nepal.

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