

## Democratising Rivers: Local River Conflicts in Rajasthan

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**Abstract :** This paper attempted to explore and explain the local level river water conflicts in the larger context of state - society relations. This study also covered causes of local level river water conflicts in the catchment area of Bandi and Arvari river of Rajasthan. The focus of the study was on the emergence of community driven, decentralised management of river water bodies and strategies used by local communities to protect and manage river water conflicts. The research is conducted through the process of designing a framework based on essential theoretical and practical findings supported by primary and secondary data. Two in depth case study is conducted to understand the phenomenon in depth. The first field site is Bandi River of Pali district, which is about the struggle between textile industries, community and the State government in which water pollution is said to be one of the driving force of the conflict. Finding shows that the state is supporting textile industries in Pali district have not been adherent to the environmental ethics. Present legal infrastructure and local institutions fail to resolve the serious problem of water pollution in Bandi River and its adverse impact on the local community as a result local community resistance against the local administration and the state government. The second case illustrates the plight of Arvari River in Alwar district. Tussle for the ownership of fisheries between local community, the private fish contractor and State government has been the main bone of contestation. To resolve this conflict local community formed conflict management mechanism named as Arvari Parliament. Arvari Parliament has its own principle and rules to resolve water conflicts related to ownership of the river and use of the river water. The research findings also highlight the co-existence between conventional and modern practices in resolving conflicts.

**Keywords :** water, water pollution, water conflicts, water scarcity, conflict resolution, local community

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