

## **Consciousness and sensitivity in decision making process of Distribution of Natural Resources**

**(Photo)**

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This paper discusses some related views and concerns on the natural resources and conflicts which has high sensitivity in the process of its distribution. Out of many, 13 major natural resources that have available in high quantity have high potential in Nepal. But still, the exploration of many other natural resources is yet to be done. For instance, it is said that there is a gold mine in Kaligandaki and few people have excavated as well. However, the quantity of gold is still unknown at that place including the benefits that the country can take from it from an economic point of view. World's third-largest and finest magnetite is found in Dolakha and Jhapa. Similarly, copper and limestone are also found in huge quantities in many other districts. It will be earth womb if not excavated. At some places, minerals like uranium have also been found. There is petroleum in some districts of Terai while there is the possibility of natural gas in some districts of the hilly region too. However, the volume of the natural resources and cost to extraction is still unknown. The current price of petroleum gas now is NRs. 75-80. However, the extraction charge of the petroleum gas if cost higher, like NRs. 500, than the current market price then the extraction is not economically feasible. Thought, the prices of excavation of mines have been decreasing due to the invention of new technologies and equipment, while the cost of natural resources has been increasing up because of continuous extraction of the fixed natural

reserve. The cost of natural resources, after reaching a peak point, will attract international and national investors which ultimately benefit the country.

So, it has become vital to find the areas and quantity of natural resources. The government should be ready to spend 2-4 billion on research if needed. Natural resources available in most of the hilly areas have already been registered by different companies. Most of these companies wanted to just capture the license but not investing in the areas. The intention of these companies is wrong. If the companies do not start extracting within 6 months to 1 year then the registration of such companies needs to be cancelled and license should be open to others so that exploration and excavation can be done efficiently and honestly. This decision should be taken before the state restructuring and transformation so that the future conflicts between states and communities could be managed.

After extraction, the fruits of natural resources should be distributed properly among states, districts, and communities. For the proper and honest distribution and redistribution of the fruits (taxes and fees) and benefits from natural resources, a powerful commission needs to be formed to manage the conflicts regarding the utilization and distribution of natural resources among various provinces and affected communities. A natural resource commission is needed for fast decision making for any conflict if arise among provinces or communities. In some cases, if the provinces do not agree with the decision of the commission then they can appeal to the constitutional court. However, the court process might be extremely lengthy and the verdict may take years and years. For instance, the Kaberi conflict in India has been happening for more than 30<sup>th</sup> years and has not been settled yet.

Though most of the domestic wars that has happening in various part of the world are for caste identity, language, civilization, and cultural issues in most of the instances however, if we go in depth of the conflicts, the major root cause of the conflicts are rights and ownership over the natural resources. Most of the issues related to language, identity, and culture can be solved at once providing them the cultural and language rights for their own community. However, the necessity of people does not stop on fulfillment of their cultural rights; they need development and material support which can be only achieved from the extraction and distribution/use of natural resources. In general, the interests over the natural resource are the beginning of the conflicts if not managed in time. The different domestic war that took place in Afghanistan, Angola to Burma and Indonesia happened for the rights and ownership over natural resources.

Though it is said that the government of Burma did not provide democracy to avoid infiltration of international culture to their community but it was their elephant teeth the real intention was in interests on natural resources. It is interesting to know that 99 percent of natural resources are under army authority in the country in Myanmar. Their interests are not for the conservation of culture rather it is for natural resources income. Similarly, Aceh province of Indonesia is also suffered from internal conflict as it carried a huge possibility of natural gas income. If the country lost this province from their central authority then it will be one of the poorest countries in the world. This fact has been understood by the authority of the country and therefore state and rebel both are fighting for that.

Natural resources need to be utilized properly and it should not be provided only in the hand of a particular community based on their proximity, saying that it's their inborn rights over property. If it is given then the existence of the country will fall in trouble. The utilization of natural

resources should be done for the betterment of human beings and it should be environment friendly as well as sustainable and should be distributed genuinely.

Any Nepali residing at any geographic region needs to have the equal right to natural resources in all over the country. The nearby people might get more percent which might be justifiable but absolute right on natural resources, often demanded by local nearby community or the district, is unjust for other needy people and community. Though, it is also right to provide employment to people living around the resources. Natural resources are the prosperity of the country and needs to be utilized in the benefit of the country and people.

There are examples of the country that went through domestic war after not being able to manage natural resources while there are some poor countries that became rich for being able to manage properly the natural resources. Kuwait, which was a poor country, is now one of the richest countries as crude oil is the only reason that brought prosperity. Many countries from Gulf areas such as Riyadh, Qatar, Dubai, Bahrain, etc. have reinvested their natural resources income into infrastructures and tourism sectors and now their dependency on natural resources income is rapidly reducing and replacing into tourism industries. Because of this diversity, if one day in future the crude oil natural reserve ends then also these countries will not have any economic problem. But there is no such situation in Iraq or Iran. Nepal should learn a lesson from these examples.

It is said that there is sufficient stone and sand in Terai. What will happen to Terai's income from sand and stone if the people of hilly region start extracting it in their vicinities. Similarly, there are surplus of agro products in Terai but scarcity in hill and mountain. There have huge surplus of water resources in hill and mountain whereas Terai sector are suffering from scarcity of

energy which can be produced from hydropower and water for irrigation. Does anyone have think about it? While there is scarcity of natural resources in one place and is being wasted and another place and similarly food surplus in one place and scarcity in other. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that a proper and impartial distribution, equal opportunity, and access over natural resource can manage future conflicts which may emerge due to the dispute over natural resources. By managing natural resource rights and distribution mechanism, country develop in peaceful environment.

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