

WATER IN NEWS

(A compilation of news and issues covered in media)

Date: 05.05.2014

Dear readers,

Water is the most important ingredient to stay alive, grow and live well. As we attempt to develop economically, we put a lot of demand on water. Thus water becomes a very important issue. There are too many issues around water. There are regular management issues and there are seasonal issues of access and availability.

Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC) is extremely happy to present you the first copy of bulletin 'Water in News'. This bulletin will capture water issues covered by media. We will strive to produce daily bulletins. We hope that the bulletin will be useful for policy makers, administrators, service providers, researchers, development practitioners and other interested people and institutions.

Bimal Prasad Pandia
RCDC

Today's bulletin covers water news and issues featured in newspapers and web portals published on 05.05.2014. We have covered print or epaper editions of the following newspapers: (a) Sambad (all editions), (b) Dharitri (Bhubaneswar), (c) Prameya (all editions), (d) Pragativadi (Bhubaneswar), (e) Samaj (Bhubaneswar), (f) Samay (Bhubaneswar), (g) Times of India (Bhubaneswar), (h) Pioneer (Bhubaneswar), (i) Indian Express (Bhubaneswar). Besides we have covered web portals of (a) The Hindu, (b) The Telegraph, (c) Orissadiary, and (d) Odisha Sun Times.

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Policy/Programme Watch

- 1. In a disaster year Odisha spent only 39% of fund under 'natural calamity' head of NRDWP:** Prameya and the Pioneer have covered Regional Centre for Development Cooperation's concern on gross under utilisation of fund under 'natural calamity' head of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). The reports say that Odisha had spent less than 39 percent of fund under natural calamity head - in year 2013-14, in a year in which the state faced multiple major disasters. Prameya also adds that government is yet to provide drinking water to 40 percent of habitations in Odisha.
- 2. State pulled up for not providing quality water:** The Hindu has reported that Central government has pulled up the Odisha government for failing to provide water in quality-affected habitations. (<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/state-pulled-up-for-not-providing-quality-water/article5977457.ece>). The newspaper has quoted records of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, "The achievement in 2013-14 as far as quality-affected habitations, rural population covered with piped water supply, number of tests done in laboratories, number of sustainability structure constructed is very poor."
- 3. Collectors told to ensure Water and Sanitation facilities in schools and AWCs:** The Indian Express reports about state government's directive to the District Collectors regarding drinking water and toilet facilities in all rural schools and anganwadi centres. The report refers to the Supreme Court

judgment dated October 18, 2011 and says that 'even after more than 30 months of the order a large number of schools does not have drinking water facility.

Water Dispute

- 1. Pollaran Tribunal decision is politically motivated, state interest will be protected:**

Central government's decision to form Pollavaram tribunal and reactions from different quarters has been prominently carried by almost all newspapers. Most newspapers have quoted Chief Minister's assurances that state's interest will be protected. Most newspapers have blamed electoral politics and eye of seats in Andhra for the Central Government's decision to form the Tribunal.

Dharitri editorial 'Neerabatar Phala Pollavaram' says lack of proactiveness from people Odisha has led to renewed developments with regard to Pollavaram. It says that notification on formation of Pollavaram tribunal on May 1, 2014 has been made with an eye on Andhra Pradesh election. When the matter is at the Supreme Court Central government should not have rushed through with this, the editorial says. The editorial goes on to justify relevance of regional parties to secure regional interests.

Civil society voice their anger: Times of India, Orissadiary and Odisha Sun Times have carried concern of Water Initiatives Odisha and other civil society organisations regarding Cabinet decision on Pollavaram Tribunal.

Drinking Water Woes

- 1. Water stressed villagers quit home:** The Pioneer has covered an alarming report, with photograph, that 61 families of Maliara village of Ukhura Panchayat under Gumma block have fled their homes because of acute water scarcity. The village has two tubewells. One is completely defunct the other has very high iron contamination. The two open wells are dry. The villagers had to depend on stream water of another village for which they had to walk a long distance.
- 2. Private telecom company lays cable, damages water pipeline:** Times of India reports Sambalpur town that private company reliance telecom has punctured pipeline at many places, including main pipeline at Budharaja, in Sambalpur while laying its cable. The PHED Executive Engineer says that water supply has been disrupted in major parts of the town. A police case has been registered under Section 427 (damage to public property) against the erring private company.
- 3. Drinking unsafe water as government sources are defunct:** Dharitri reports at page 7 with a photo that most of drinking water sources established by government in tribal dominated ***Bandhamunda Panchayat of Ranapur block in Nayagarh district*** are defunct. The report titled 'Dushita Paai Piuchhanti Loke' says that people are forced to use contaminated water from *Chua* and river. It says that there are 48 tubewells in the Panchayats. Most of those are not working. People Khanana, Lakhamunduli, Suanda, Tikiraipada are using water from a small pond. Many cases of gastro problems are surfacing, says the report.
- 4. 4000 villagers of Deogarh district in acute water crisis as Swajaldhara remains elusive, villagers trek to the river to fetch water:** The Times of India reports from Nuapada and Auli villages of Reamal block in Deogarh district. Only three tubewells are working in Auli village where as Nuapada depends on two tubewells. Nuapada has two other tubewells in the school and Anganwadi compound. These spot sources are too inadequate for 4000 people residing in the villages. The villagers walk one kilometre to Auli river to fetch drinking water. Adding woes, the river is drying up very rapidly. The newspaper further reports that a project under Swajaldhara scheme had been commissioned in year 2008-09. The project is ready but power could not be supplied as one land owner objected to laying power supply over his land. Without any progress, the project continues to lie unutilised. The report informs that many power supply projects in the district are lying defunct because of such silly reasons. Out of 129 pipe water supply projects in Deogarh district, 15 are awaiting commissioning due to delay in power supply.
- 5. Jalachhatra (drinking water shed) have not opened:** Dharitri at page 10 of its Bhubaneswar edition reports that *Jalachhatras* have not yet been opened in ***8 Panchayats of Cuttack Sadar block. The Panchayats are Barada, Jashapada, sompur, Kishorenagar, Dharina, Bodhpur, Praharajpur and Arilo.*** The report says that most of *Gaan Kalyan Samiti* do have fund in their account, hence the delay. The administration is trying to use emergency fund with AASHA worker to open *Jalachhatra*.
- 6. Water scarcity as Prachi river and canal have gone dry:** Dharitri reports that most of the water bodies in Niali area

have gone dry and people and livestock are facing serious water scarcity. As ground water level have decreases tubewell outputs have become considerably less. The report blames a number of reasons for the woes. It says that in the name of cleaning of Prachi river all the 'gandas' have been filled up with soil. As a result the river has lost its natural water retention points. The report also blames dry canal. The canal that links with Prachi river as well as Niali distributaries is dry.

7. **Groundwater level depleting fast in Sakhigopal, serious water woes, demand for canal water supply:** A report in Dharitri captures water woes in Sakhigopal as well as villages under Sakhigopal block. It says, as the groundwater levels have gone down, water supply in Sakhigopal have reduced from the normal three hours to one hour now. The news also report acute drinking water woes in Raipali, Dakshinakera, Dokhandapur, Gualipari, Markandapada, Churali, Alisa, Shankhapura, Totasahi, BanBarada, Bhabanipur, Chaudaguntha, Narendrapur, Benakera, Badheisahi, Sethisahi and other villages. Though water is being supplied through tankers to these villages they are found quite inadequate. The pipe water supply project at Alaguma is still incomplete. Sebaksahi pump house is working but it is not able to cater to people of 20 villages in three Panchayats of Satyavadi block. The RWSS Junior Engineer says that 25 of a total of 1295 tubewells are defunct. Three mobile teams are constantly working to restore the water sources. But fast depletion of groundwater levels is enhancing problems. The news report concludes

that water should be released to Sukala and Bruttanga canal and Ratnachira and Bhargavi rivers to mitigate the problem.

8. **Chief Minister inaugurated water supply project in February, it has not provided water since that day:** The Samaj has carried an interesting angle of water woes in old town areas of Bhubaneswar. It says that Chief Minister inaugurated the project to provide water - to residents of Sundarapada, Kapileswar and Kapilaprasad of Bhubaneswar – on February 15, 2014. But no water has been supplied from that project yet. The report has a very interesting title, 'Jalakasta tharu badhuchhi pratarana kasta'. It says that government is doing deception. The same has another report, with photo, of defunct standpost in Palashuni Bhoisahi of Bhubaneswar.
9. **45 lakh rupees spent for Drinking water supply project but no water supply:** Prameya has covered issue of defunct pipe water supply project in Rajpur village of Aankorada Panchayat of Digapahandi block Ganjam district. A pipe water supply project with expenditure of 45 lakh rupees had been built in year 2011-12. But even after three years of its completion water supply has not begun. As it is not being used the infrastructures are decaying rapidly. The villagers had submitted a memorandum. But no action has been taken. Villagers are facing a lot of problem. The 800 households big village has 7 tubewells but only three are used for drinking water.
10. **Private pumps draw water from pipe, serious water supply problem in Balasore:** Balasore edition of Sambad says that rampant use of pumps by individual households to water directly from the pipe network has seriously

affected water supply in Barabati, Ranipatana and Chunabhati area of Balasore town. Gosalapada area of the town is not having serious problem. The only tap isn't working. As per 2011, population of Balasore is 1.44 lakh. The town has 106 kilometer long pipe network having 631 taps. The town has 331 tubewells and 67 pump house. The town has a demand of 20.2 million liter while supply is 19.19 MLD. Long queue at tubewell has become a feature. The report shows a photo of a tubewell.

11. **Sijua in Bhubaneswar is in deep thirst:** Sijua is a village in the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. The Sambad report under title 'Shosare Sijua' informs that all five tubewells of the village are almost defunct. People complain of insects in one tubewell. Some are fully defunct some are working partially. A pipe water supply project lies half complete.
12. **Water supply in Berhampur disrupted for two days:** Times of India reports that water supply to most parts of Berhampur has been disrupted because of pipeline, that collects water from Rushikulya river, rupture near Sara village. The report complains that 'the pipeline should be replaced every 15 years. But due to callous attitude of the officials, water continues to be supplied through old pipeline with leakages at many places'. Many people also deliberately puncture the pipeline to irrigate their fields and fetch water. The PHED spends 40 lakh rupees every year on pipeline repair. A 59 crore project to replace the pipe is already sanctioned but callous officials failed to finalise the tender. Now the cost has escalated to 99 Crore rupees. While the pipeline is being repaired PHED has engaged tankers to supply emergency water, says PHED Executive Engineer.
13. **2500 people of Krushnanagar village of Bhogarai block depend on four tubewells:** Balasore edition of Sambad files an agonising report from Krushnanagar village of Huguli Panchayat in Bhogarai block of Balasore district. 2500 people of the village depend on just four tubewells for their drinking water needs as well as other needs like bathing and other needs. The village is just one kilometre from coast and all surface water sources have gone dry. The village has nine government tubewells but only four are working. Foundation stone has been laid for one pipe water supply project but work has not started.
14. **Tourists being charged exorbitant price for water:** Dharitri in its metro page says that tourists are being forced to buy water at exorbitant rate in tourist places. Even the small water pouches are being sold at two rupees.
15. **Water scarcity takes heavy toll on animals:** The Times of India reports acute shortage of drinking water for animals of Rahunathpur, Erasama and Balikuda region of Kendrapada district. Many spotted deer died in recent days. All ponds and water bodies including Hansua river have completely dried up says the report.
16. **Water supply project defunct in Balakati hospital:** Sambad reports that the water supply project in Balakati hospital is lying defunct. Patients and attendants are facing a lot of hardship. The report rues that *Rogi Kalyan Samiti* fund is lying unutilised. It could have been spent to restore the project.

Water Related Illness

1. **Diarrhoea death in Balangir:** The Pioneer, Times of India have reported frightening incidence of two deaths to diarrhoea in Balangir. This incidence happened in Chermara village under Jhankarpali Panchayat. The report attributes the reason to bad quality water. The villagers are sourcing their water from the pond.

Degradation/Restoration of water sources/bodies

1. Dharitri carries news on attempt to restore 'Badanala' in Ghatagaon block of Kendujhar district. The forest department has drawn up a 8 crore rupees watershed based project to restore the 15 kilometre long stream. The report says that because of extensive mining in the area most of the streams and rivulets are getting silted. Water is getting polluted. The report is hopeful of the project but is also apprehensive of its success in the face of large scale mining.
2. **Sand Mining:** Bhubaneswar edition of Samaj in its front page has covered Green Tribunal's order seeking report of sand mining from various rivers in Odisha. The Tribunal, in its order on March 19, has sought report from the State Government on seven issues including information on number of leases granted and their status. Jeypore edition of Sambad reports from Rayagada about largescale illegal sand mining from Nagabali river. Sambalpur edition of Prameya reports, with photo, of illegal sand mining from Ib river near Jharsuguda and Brajarajnagar.
3. **Padagaya kunda neglected:** Sambad in its Mahanagar pager carries a report,

with photograph, under title 'Padagaya Kunda Abahelita'. People give 'pinda' in this historic pond in Samantarapur of Bhubaneswar. The saying goes that when Lord Bishun killed Gayasura, Gayasura's chopped off feet had fallen here. The pond now is full of garbage and stinking badly.

Irrigation

1. **Bruttanga irrigation project mirage:** Prameya has carried a news under title 'Brutanga Jalasechana Prakalpa Dhuanbana'. The report gives a history of the project in Nayagarh district. The idea was first accepted by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964. Survey work started in 1976. Separate division started in 1980. The project has a budget of 300 Crore rupees. The news report rues that in spite of getting most clearances the project is still lying in cold storage as it has not got the stage II clearance from MoEF.

Water Livelihoods

1. **Fisherman livelihoods under threat:** Times of India reports from Kendrapada that ban on fishing has resulted in skyrocketing of fish price. Balasore edition of Sambad also reports from Bhadrak about unavailability of fish, skyrocketing prices. It says that livelihoods of fisherman is in danger. The Prameya, in its Berhampur edition, has carried a very exhaustive feature under title 'Sankatare Sagara Soudagara', It refers to statistics and opinion of various people relating marine fish production. It says that marine fish catch is dwindling leading to serious threat to fishermen livelihoods.

Water Disaster

1. **Drowning cases:** Prameya and Sambad have reported three tragic incidences of drowning in Jajpur and Keonjhar districts where three boys have died and one is missing. Angul and Jeypore edition of Sambad report of drowning death of two students in Patali river of Koraput district.
2. **Boat safety:** Indian Express reports about Jajpur district administration's effort to curb violation of safety measures in boats. The district Collector has orders BDOs to enumerate boats and identify illegal boats. All boats will prominently show registration number along with maximum passenger capacity. The administration is also planning insurance cover for all boats and tourists. According to official sources there are 300 boats in the district.
3. **Coastal erosion:** Balasore edition of Sambad in its fourth page reports about coastal erosion near Panchupada and Dubdubi river mouth near Sartha village of Basta block in Balasore. It fears that coastal erosion if not mitigated will gobble up Sartha village very soon. The sea has encroached one kilometre in the last five years the report informs.

Sanitation

1. **No end to Brahmapur's shameful sanitation status:** The Times of India and Hindu have elaborate reported from Berhampur about pathetic sanitation status there.
(<http://www.thehindu.com/todays->

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REGIONAL CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
Plot No: HIG-26, K-6
Housing Scheme, Phase-II,
Kalinga Vihar, Bhubaneswar - 751 019
Odisha, India.

[paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/over-59-of-berhampur-residents-do-not-use-toilets/article5977465.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/tp-national/tp-otherstates/over-59-of-berhampur-residents-do-not-use-toilets/article5977465.ece)) Only three percent of about 1.17 lakh slum dwellers have access to toilet. The BMC is constrained by fund to improve toilet facilities in the city. The BMC gets only 37 lakh for the purpose. Sulabh International was paid 98.44 lakh for maintenance of 18 public toilets during 2000-2014. Apart from maintenance of existing public toilets, BMC did not allocate any budget for construction of new toilets from 2000 to 2012. In 2012-13 and 2013-14 BMC has sanctioned 10 lakh and 30 lakh rupees respectively for construction of toilets, which many experts believe as too insufficient.

Initiatives

1. **80 women clean pond in Sambalpur:** Sambalpur edition of Prameya has carried a news, with photo, of 80 women cleaning a pond at the centre of Sambalpur city. The pond was not being cleaned since last 10 years and numerous please to the Municipality went unheeded. The local women took the matter to themselves and cleaned the pond within three hours.

Innovation

Sambad carries a small feature on innovation by Israel company 'watergen' to extract water from air. One machine can produce 230 to 800 liters of water a day. The cost of producing water will be about 1.50 rupees per one litre of water.