

Water Feeder

A Monthly Dose of Odia Water News

An Initiative of Odisha State Center, FPWCI, Baitarani Initiative, Shristi

Water Feeder is a compilation and analysis of water-related news published in Odia and local English dailies with an objective to help water professionals and enthusiasts to capture and comprehend issues and conflicts around water (through eyes of media). It also provides geographical, seasonal and media perspectives of water issues and conflicts with respect to Odisha.

This monthly feed of Water news is an attempt to stimulate interest, thoughts and actions on water issues in the state apart from feeding research and academic pursuits. We have had very encouraging response to the humble 1st Feeder we circulated among selected individuals and e-groups.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Water Issues & Conflicts.....](#)
 - [a. Threat of Floods & blocked Drainage.....](#)
 - [b. Drinking Water Crisis.....](#)
 - [c. Escalating Water Pollution.....](#)
 - [d. Deepening Ground Water Crisis.....](#)
 - [e. Shortage of Water to Irrigation.....](#)
 - [f. Water scarcity adding to Man-animal Conflict.....](#)
 - [g. Cultural and livelihood Concerns.....](#)
 - [h. Hydropower worries.....](#)
 - [i. Govt Plans and Programs.....](#)
 - [j. Special News: "Centre forms Tribunal on Vamsadhara".....](#)
2. [Dailies' Water Level in Jun 09.....](#)
3. [Coverage of Issues.....](#)

This second issue presents monthly 'News Analysis' from 5 major Odia Dailies and one English daily. Each of these news items have been tagged and put in a searchable database, which will be shortly uploaded in the net along with scanned copy of each news item. We look forward your comments and Feedbacks (Pl send your response to baitarani@gmail.com).


Compiled by

Subhendu, Pranab & Priyabrata


Odisha State Center, Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India, Baitarani Initiative, Shristi, Bhubaneswar



Feeder Feedbacks.....

 "Congrats! This initiative undertaken by you should be adopted as best practice in India as sustainable education initiative. Our greetings to you all" - **M. R. Mishra, Jeevanrekha, Odisha, www.jrpOdisha.org**

"Congratulations!! It is a very good initiative and will definitely serve purpose." - **Bimal Pandya, Water Initiative Odisha,**

'Thanks. I am proud of this noble endeavor' - **S. N. Patro,  Odisha Environmental Society**

'At the outset I recognize your big attempt; in fact, it needs to be appreciated. Your publication will not only make people aware of the situations of different places in Odisha, it will help researchers a lot. I congratulate you for your successful attempt' - **Sanjukta Das, Reader in Economics, Sambalpur University**

'Interesting and worthwhile initiative which we'll cover on the Portal' – **Vijaykrishna, Manager, India Water Portal, Arghyam Trust, Bangalore**

'The First issue of Water Feeder (monthly Water news round up from Odia Newspapers) has been posted on the India Water Portal Blog, access here: <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/blog/2009/06/22/odiawater-feeder/> - **Francis, Admin, India Water Portal, Arghyam Trust, Bangalore**

"Congratulations for this effort! The issue has come out really well. Can we also put this on water conflict website? – **Shruti Vispute, SOPPECOM. Pune**

..... **'Time brings issues and issues go with time'**.....

The high summer and the resulting drinking water scarcity along with falling ground water level were the major concerns of Odias in the month of May which had its clear reflection in the vernacular media in that month.

Few drops of rain¹ towards the end of May had brought some hope and happiness in the parched faces with an anticipation of a regular monsoon. However, these hopes did not last long and turned to despair when monsoon went on defaulting, leading 'power' to take breaks and schools to went on prolonging summer vacation. Through out the month of June, the hide and seek with monsoon continued with hopeful and gloomy forecasts and media chasing weather men. At last, monsoon arrived towards June end, bringing respites with cool breezes and accompanying down pours. This was like washing away of all those frustrations with renewed hopes bringing in peace and piety to the dejected souls; when drops of water flew touching thousands of lips quenching the long....long day's thirst.

However, to the sheer dismay of Odisha and Odias, this honeymoon with monsoon was also short-lived, as in-flew the following water worries concerning flood apprehensions

- **"Ten Gram Panchayats waiting for the disaster, seating on the mouth of river Budha-Kharasrota"** – *The Sambad* (2-6-09)
- **River Tel: Flood ahead- Broken embankment waits repair"**-*The Pragatibadi* (18-06-09)
- **"Weak Ring Bandh leading to flood fear in Cuttack"**-*The Pragatibadi*(14-6-09)
- **"Rainy season Ahead- repair of embankments at halfway in Nayagarh"**- *The Samaj* 917-06-09)
- **"Will NH-60 remain Balasore's sorrow?"**- *The New Indian Express* (18-06-09)
- **"Bhargavi River embankment waits for flood."** –*The Dharitri* (21-06-09)

And many more.....

Localized Conflicts also continue to erupt as-

..... **"Villagers gheraoed the village Irrigation Office"** – *The Sambad* (2-06-09) (*This time it was not for drinking water or irrigational water but for demanding repair of river embankment.*)

¹ During and after the cyclone 'aila'

.....So continued the flow... ***Water brings issues and issues change with water.***

News in June was dominated by Flood-related apprehensions. News related to weak embankments, broken embankments and uncompleted embankments dotted the dailies echoing the concerns of riparian communities. News coverage on concerns over such issues was reported from almost every part of Odisha. At the same time, drinking water woes and concerns also continue to be on focus, as Odisha's prolonged, impatient wait for monsoon got over-stretched up to almost end of this month

Two new types of water-related news emerged to draw the attention in this month; one around critical power deficit as a result of water shortage and another about the spread of Diarrhoea and other water borne diseases in different places of Odisha due to increased intake of polluted water.

The other issues like water pollution, tension among mines, industries and local public for water sharing, decrease in ground water level, man-animal conflicts etc were also found to be covered by different dailies.

In this transitional period of seasonal and weather change, there was a little fall in number of issues of conflict around water. (109 news items this month in comparison to 140 in May)

1. Water Issues & Conflicts

a. Threat of Floods & blocked Drainage

Flood has been a major worry of Odisha. However, its intensity and frequency seem to be on rise and flood-damages multiplying notwithstanding with present approaches and ongoing efforts on flood control. With memories of deaths, disasters and damages still afresh and the concerns of climate change already casting its shadow, people's apprehensions have taken an upward swing looking at the way their safety wall – the embankments are being managed and maintained. People living by the embankments have become alert over their status and have started ventilating their concerns over these embankments, particularly the weak, damaged and vulnerable ones. The more the perceived threat, the more the outcry and more the chances of erupting conflicts.

The news in the month of June highlights the public demand and the conflict situations around flood issue for weak, broken or uncompleted embankments from the areas like Nimapara for River *Bhargavi*; Jajpur for River *Budha*, *Kharasrota* and *Baitarani*; Jaleswar for River *Subarnrekha*; Gopa for River *Kushabhadra*, *Danua*, *Bharvi*, *Siar* and *Mugei*; Kantilo and Khandapada for River *Kusumi*; Tirtol for the *Mahanadi* and *Paika*; Tihidi and Chandabali for River *Mantei* and *Baitarini*; Konark for the *Bay of Bengal*; Pipili, Delanga, Kanash, Satyabadi for River *Bhargavi*; Dasarathpur for River *Baitarari*; Kani, Balipatana for River *Kusabhadra*; Nayagarh for River *Kusumi* etc.

Just with the expectation of monsoon, these instantaneous public outcries for repairs and upkeep of the embankments reflects their lack of faith over the existing paradigm of flood control and the political economy of embankment management. They also epitomize their growing fear out of their past experiences and compounding vulnerability to flood. These concerns also point towards the preparedness measures that are required not only to tackle flood-disasters, but also to prevent/address imminent frustrations and conflicts that are going to erupt at any instances of mismanagement.

Lack of holistic perspectives and casual approach in flood control is evident in the news in The New Indian Express and in The Pragatibadi (18-06-09) that NH-60 remains the sorrow of Balasore being the main cause of flood. The news shows that the faulty planning of NH-60 has resulted in blocking of drainage passages of storm water and has put the villages of North Balasore under constant threat of flood.

Another analytical news "28 flood incidents in last 53 years" by The Sambad (29-06-09) gives a very good account on causes of flood related conflicts in Odisha. The news shows that the declaration of 10 districts in 1991 as flood prone districts has been expanded to 27 districts by 2007.

Similarly "The plan of earth excavation along 27 K.M. river bed and building of 100 K.M. river embankment on river Salandi in cold storage" a news in The Pragatibadi (16-06-09) explains a good account on the demand for flood management plan in the area. The news also reports that the river encroachment along Salandi has gone to such an extent that the Rs. 4 crore budget allocation to move encroachments in this plan of Rs 100 crore now needs around Rs 20 crore for the same.

At the same time "Rain and flood ahead- River embankment of Tel waits for repair"- the news from Bolangir by The Pragatibadi (18-06-09) gives a real picture of emerging flood issue in this traditionally unaffected area.

Other important news like "Inviting disaster through disaster management fund" in The Sambad (4-06-09), "Illegal sand mining in Baitarini river bed- a danger to river embankment" by The Pragatibadi(30-06-09) etc were worth noting flood-related news analysis in this month.

On the other hand the Water Resources Department of Govt. of Odisha has declared (The Sambad-02-06-09) that 480 out of 500 broken embankments have been repaired leaving 20 in broken condition. In another declaration (The Khabar-29-06-09) the same department has said that the repairing work of 74 broken embankments on River Subarnarekha have been stated on war footing.

b. Drinking Water Crisis

In the month of June, the drinking water issue has taken a back seat to Flood-related issues. Proper drinking water rather than only drinking water was the main problem for the

people in this month. Reports from almost every part of Odisha has indicated spread of waterborne diseases due to drinking polluted and contaminated water. News of acute shortage of drinking water from certain new places like Sohela, Odapada, Jharbandha, Narasinghpur, Balasore, Begunia, Boudh, along with many previously mentioned (in May Water Feeder) places continued to be reported in most of the Odia Dailies.

Similarly different problems related to pouched water in Cuttack, Kendrapara, Balipatana areas were also covered in month of June. A news by The Khabar(25-06-09) "Drinking Water business worth 20 lakhs everyday: Who is to ensure purity?" has brought out the real risk in this activities that may take many life at any point of time.

News with photo by The Pragatibadi (10-06-09) "Water theft by digging concrete road continues in Mancheswar" shows a new dimension of water conflict in urban population. "Acute drinking water problem in Madanmohan pada(Angul): Slum dwellers will come to the road" by The Pragatibadi (21-06-09) and "People obstruct road due to drinking water problem" at Nayagarh by The Samaj (17-06-09) gives a sketch of water conflicts in Central Odisha. "Fighting for drinking water among different communities everyday in Kukudakhandi block of Berhampur" a news by The Khabar (29-06-09) opens another facet of water conflict which reports BPL families in the area which are more in number are being discriminated from other in drinking water supply. Failure in emergency water supply particularly to the hospital is also creating tension which has been covered by some news papers in the month of June.

Certain eye catching photos by different news dailies on "Water and Thirst" are also found this month.

Besides this, the water crises and the related issues and conflicts from previously mentioned few other parts of Odisha were also found to be covered by some news papers in this month.

c. Escalating Water Pollution

Pollution of bigger common and natural drainage systems like rivers and canals has grown in the month of June and expected to be more acute in coming days as the rain water will carry all the openly dispersed pollutants and wastes to these systems. The dumping of wastes and chemicals by industries to the natural drainage systems has been reported from certain places.

"Liquor wastes pollutes river water" by The Khabar(17-06-09) shows that excess demand and consumption of liquor in Sundargarh is leading to serious river water pollution as the waste and byproducts of the locally made liquor are being thrown into the rivers in huge quantity.

Similarly another news by The Pragatibadi(14-06-09) reported from Talcher about "Pollution board sympathetic towards coal ash-ponds" highlights that although the

industries are illegally acquiring public ponds and water bodies for dumping Coal ash leading to water and other types of pollution, the silence maintained by pollution board was difficult to understand.

“Taladanda canal has become a hail” news with photo by The Khabar (19-06-09) explains the really sorry picture of the canal due to pollution.

Except the above news, certain news covering the local issues of water pollution from different areas like Bhubaneswar (need of renovation of drainage system) Kendujhar (polluted drainage), Puri (drainage of polluted water into Bay Of Bengal through sea beach), Kendujhar (water pollution due to mining), Nayagarh (lack of drainage system leads polluted water to common places) were also found in this Month.

d. Deepening Ground Water Crisis

The crisis due to deepening ground water level in different areas continued in the month of June as a serious cause of water scarcity in Odisha.

There has been certain note worthy news in Odia dailies regarding this issue. “High buildings: Threat to Kanciya Lake of Nandankanan Zoological Park”, a news by The Pragatibadi (12-06-09) shows that how the urbanization is affecting the natural water resources.

The Samaj(17-06-09) reports “Ground water at lowest ever level in last 40 years”. In another news in The Khabar(10-06-09) “Kendujhar: Increasing heavy vehicles, decreasing water level”, it has been shown how excess of mining activities has lead to falling ground water levels and causing many other problems.

Except the above news, drying of bore wells and tube wells has been reported in all most all news dailies.

e. Shortage of Water to Irrigation

Water scarcity for irrigation has been another serious issue in the Month of June as the agricultural activities has got delayed due to delaying monsoon and lack of/inadequate supply of irrigation water.

News from Sambalpur by The Sambad (19-06-09) headlines “Sign of enough water in Hirakud: Only 50 cusec water released to Bargarh Canal, even after 3 days delay”. The news puts forward the public view on water level in Hirakud criticizing the state Govt. stand that there is enough water in the Reservoir.

Among other news “Scarcity of water in Salia Irrigation Project leads to farmers’ unhappy” by The Samaj(29-06-09) , “Farmers in Ersama will agitate on failure of water drainage” by The Khabar(24-06-09), “ All the rivers in Nabarangapur have dried: fear of 75%

agricultural loss” by The Khabar(6-06-09), “In spite of huge expenditure Chakratirtha Small Irrigational Project at Anandpur defunct” by The Pragatibadi(21-06-09) are the local irrigational water issues that are found in the News dailies in the month of June.

Except this the fear of *gaja Marudi* (germination drought) due to shortage of irrigational water leading to farmers’ anger has been covered by most of the dailies from many places like Banpur, Kakatpur, Dashpalla, Kujanga, Balipatana etc.

f. Water scarcity adding to Man-animal Conflict

The water scarcity has not only been affecting the human life but also the wild life to a great extent. The water scarcity in different sanctuaries and forest ranges (like Astaranga in Puri, Chandaka near Khurdha) has led the wild animals to enter the human settlements and being victimized still continued in the month of June.

g. Cultural and livelihood Concerns

In the month of June certain important news were found in the news papers around culture and livelihood. “Squeezing water spread area and increasing Mafia in Chilka leads loss of livelihoods of fishermen” by The Khabar (30-06-09) is really a serious matter to ponder.

In news, The Sambad (25-06-09) reported drowning of the bull in River for rain in Sambalpur. As per the local belief, during acute shortage of water people go for such extreme traditional practices. There were also similar examples of organizing marriage between female and male frogs from many parts of Odisha to invite rain. This reflects not only the serious concerns over delaying monsoon, but also age old cultural linkages and symbolisms of traditional societies with water.

h. Hydropower worries

The dangerously decreasing water level in most of the reservoirs and the resulting acute hydro-power scarcity in state have been continuing as the headline news in leading Odia dailies in the month of June also.

i. Govt Plans and Programs

The state govt’s had planned to control the water scarcity problem in the state for the month of May and onwards in which the government had the targets towards providing irrigation facility to 1, 88,000 hectares of farmlands by building 1845 irrigation points, development of watersheds and, small irrigation points. Under Bharat Nirman Yojana budgetary allocation of Rs 700 Crores had been made for pipe drinking water supply in the month of May.

In addition to that The Minister, State Water Resource has said that survey work will be conducted in the state to measure the ground water level (The Khabar-18-06-09).

j. Special News: “Centre forms Tribunal on Vamsadhara”

The centre on 25th June has accorded its approval to form a tribunal to help resolve the inter- state water dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Following the previous direction of Honorable Supreme Court with regards to appeal by Govt. of Odisha, this tribunal will be a three member committee nominated by the Honorable Chief Justice of India. This news had been the front line news of most of the dailies published in Odisha.

In another news by The Dharitri(17-06-09) it has been reported that Andhra Pradesh is planning to put Rubber Dam using swiss technology in Vamsadharara to lift water from it.

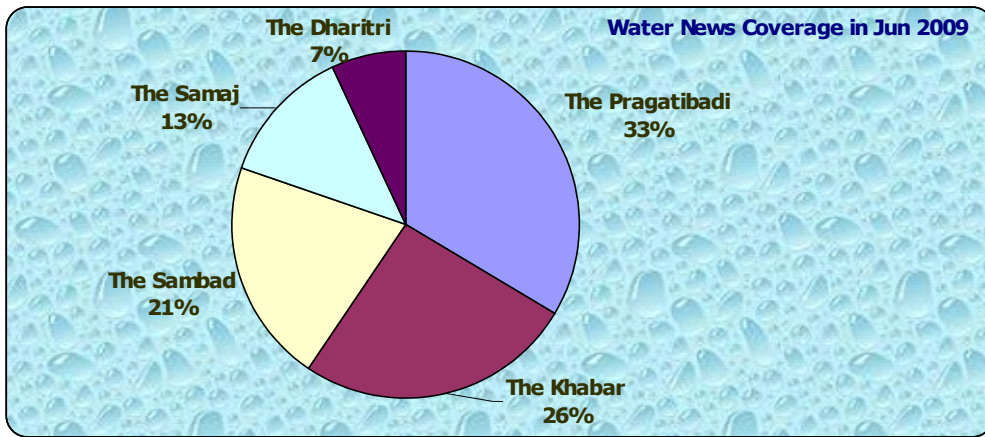
Feeder Jokes.....Mine-Common man Conflict

Coal Company to the common man: We can't tolerate apartheid in water supply, just because we are *black*. We will fight against it with our power, money and mafia!!!!

The common man barely utters: I don't have anything except a Mathia..... (Earthen pot)

2. Dailies’ Water Level in Jun 09

Around 108 numbers of news around water conflicts and conflicting situations have been covered by **5 Odia** news papers² and 1 English daily in the Month of June. Among the news papers, 'The Pragatibadi' has covered the highest numbers of water-news (34) followed by The Khabar(28), The Sambad (21), The Samaj (13), and The Dharitri(8) and The New Indian Express(4) .



² The Samaj, The Dharitri, The Sambad, The Khabar and The Pragatibadi and The New Indian Express, all Bhubaneswar Editions

3. Coverage of Issues

Taking into account the various water issues, their coverage in the newspapers is as following:

Embankment and flood issues: Highest numbers of news articles i.e. 42 have been covered on dam/embankment and flood issues out of which The Khabar has reported 15 followed by The Pragatibadi (12), The Samaj (2), The Sambad(10), The Dharitri (2) and The New Indian Express (1).

Drinking water Issues: Reporting on drinking water issues, a total number of 29 pieces of news have been there in different news papers. Among them, The Pragatibadi has reported 12 with The Khabar(7), The Samaj (5), The Sambad(3) and The Dharitri and The New Indian Express reporting one news each.

Water pollution: About 7 pieces of news have been reported in different news papers on water pollution in the month of June. Out of that The Khabar has published 3 news followed by The Pragatibadi(2), The Samaj(1) and The Indian Express(1).

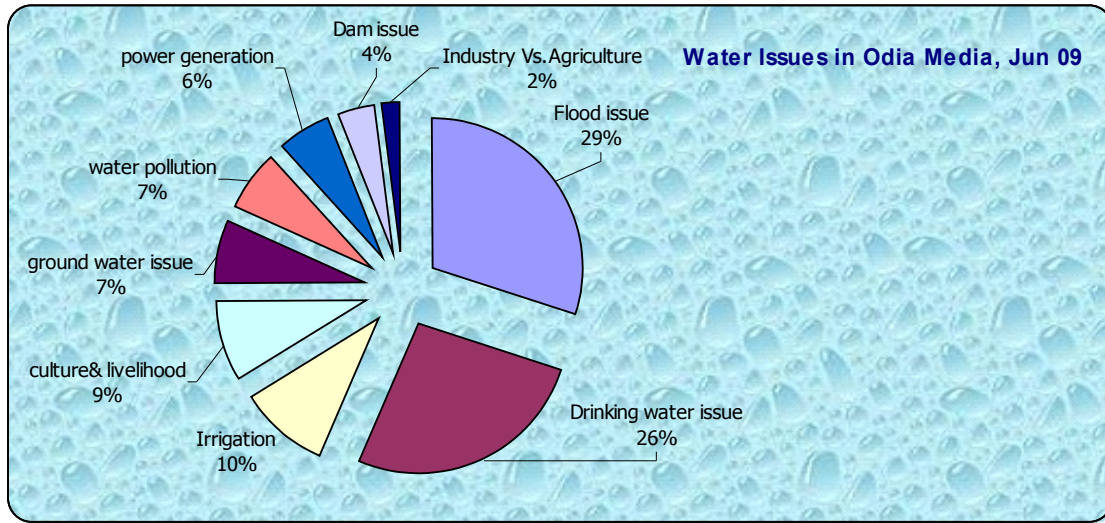
Irrigation issues; In the month of June there are 6 reported news on irrigation issues out of which The Samaj, The Sambad and The Khabar reported one each while the Pragatibadi covered three.

Ground water issues: Similarly 10 numbers of conflicting issues around ground water have been there in the media out of which The Sambad has reported 4 pieces of news with The Dharitri and The Pragatibadi and The Khabar each two numbers.

Dam issues: Reporting on water conflicts around dams five news have come out in the month of June out of which The Dharitri and The Samaj has covered two pieces of news each and The New Indian Express one.

Man and Animal conflict issues around water: The month of June has witnessed two instances of reported news on man animal conflict around water which have been covered by The Pragatibadi(1) and The Dharitri (1).

Culture and livelihood issues around water: There are two report on issue around water relating culture and livelihood in The Pragatibadi (1) and The Samaj (1).



As per the comments made by some readers, we realize that our coverage of region wise news is incomplete as we are collecting news from only Bhubaneswar Edition, while major odia news dailies publish regional editions with better coverage of region wise water issues and conflicts. Though the local news from different regions published in state edition keeps a lot of importance, we are looking for options to address this important issue.