



Water Feeder

A Monthly Dose of Odia Water News

An Initiative of **Odisha State Center, FPWCI, Baitarani Initiative, Shristi & Odisha Water Forum**

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 welcome your suggestions and feedbacks for its improvement and effectiveness!

Past Issues of Water Feeder

1. [May 2009](#)
2. [June 2009](#)
3. [July 2009](#)
4. [Aug 2009](#)

This Fifth issue presents water 'News Analysis' from 5 major Odia Dailies and one English daily for the month of January-Feb2010. 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).

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Water is essential for life. It is a prerequisite for human health and also for the preservation of the environment. All the living organisms required specific amount of water. No life can be possible without the water. In the month of January and February, with the hydrological year-end still quite far, problems around drinking and irrigation water was noticed in plenty in most parts of Odisha. The poor and vulnerable in these tracts of Odisha suffered a lot due to the scarcity of water. The culture and livelihood of the people also got affected. Water conflicts were conspicuous around drinking water and irrigation, with threats to survival and livelihoods intensifying around water indifferent parts of the state.

1 Water Issues & Conflicts

1.1 *Drinking water: Conflicts over availability, maintenance and access*

The scarcity of drinking water was viewed as a serious problem of the state by *The Khabara* (13.01.2010). In most parts of Odisha in the months of January and February, surprisingly the conflict around drinking water looms large. In western Odisha, public outrage for drinking water and demonstration like situation was reported in the month of February. In areas like Choudwar, Kaptipada, Bhadrak, Bisoi, Begunia, Cuttack, Dera of Talcher etc. the public outrage for drinking water have also been noticed in the month of February.

The scarcity of drinking water was found to be a major problem of the Kanasa of Puri district. Twenty two villages of this block were facing the problem of drinking water as reported in *The Khabara*. Khariguda is a village of Koraput district was in news for water shortage in the month of February. In the Tamando area irregularity in the supply lead to scarcity of drinking water, reported by *The Samaja*-15.02.2010. *The Pragatibadi* carried the news on lack of access to safe drinking water in the Cuttack district. Drinking water problem was considered as the major problem of the Runupur area but no steps seems to have been taken to improve the situation as reported *The Samaja*- 18.02.2010

News highlighting inadequacy, irregularity, inefficiency and poor quality of water supplied through piped water schemes both in urban and rural Odisha, dotted state media in these two months. The Swajaladhara scheme was found by media not to be properly implemented in the Kantamala block. The piped water supply also found to be wanting in Kendrapara, Khurda and Anugul districts by the media. The piped water supply of Boudh district was reported to be highly polluted and the cause of poor health and quality of life of the people. 'The Health department of Odisha is not concerned about the scarcity of drinking water as well as the pollution of the water' reported *The Sambad* (16.01.2010) as a hot news. Media also highlighted the inadequate quantity, irregular supply and poor quality of water supplied in the capital city of Bhubaneswar. *The Indian Express* reported, quoting a study (28.01.2010) that half of the Bhubaneswarites have no access to pipe water. Poor quality of drinking water supply in Odisha without required treatment, as compared to other states was attributed as the main reason for the state topping in the prevalence water borne diseases among all state of India.

While people in some areas like Nimapada found to be forthcoming to set up tubewells for solving the problem of drinking water, the state government was reported asking for enhanced funding from the 13th finance commission for strengthening infrastructure for basic services including drinking water as reported In *The Indian Express* (25.01.2010).

There was also a civil society workshop on drinking water organized by Regional Centre for Development Corporation at Bhubaneswar in this month.

1.2 Water Pollution –Concerns around hazards of industrialization

Discharge of effluents from smelter plants cause fluoride pollution in drinking water of wells and tanks as well as pollute the rivers. The Baitarini river has become heavily polluted due to these industrial effluents reported *The Dharitri* (05.01.2010). The Suna river of Champua block is also heavily polluted due to the industrial effluents containing high amount of carbonate, bi-carbonates and untreated municipal sewage (*The Khabara* dated 25.01.2010. News in *The Dharitri* underlined the threats to ground water from pollution by the rapid growth of industries. The water of the Belapahada area is now heavily polluted due to the coal industry of that area and this has started affecting the health of local population. In the Bhoi sahi area of Khurdha district the water is heavily polluted but no steps taken for its improvement, this was reported by *The Sambad*. The Cuttack Development Authority has been reported to be taking steps for checking the pollution of the Taladanda canal, reported *The Samaja* dated 27.02.2010.

1.3 Inter-state water disputes: Conflicts galore

The “Jala Yagnam” irrigation project recently launched by Andhra Pradesh government without any prior information to the Odisha government is becoming a major interstate dispute between both the states as Odisha perceives to be affected badly by this, reported *The Sambad* (18.01.2010). *The Sambad* also reported by ongoing and unresolved conflicts between Odisha, Andhrapradesh, and Chhatisgarh over water sharing of different rivers. (02.02.2010)

Chhatisgarh Govt has started construction activities near the place of intersection Indravati and Bhaskel Rivers posing a threat of submergence to 22 villages of the Nawarangpur district in Odisha. This has led to a massive social unrest in the area, reported *The Dharitri*.

The Sambad reported the Central Govt's decision to declare Polavaram as a national project in spite of Odisha's continued objection to this controversial project.

1.4 Dams & Projects:

The hydroelectricity project of Balimela is in danger due to the Maoists attack. The Maoists attack on the Balimela hydel project in Malkanigiri district revealed the gapping loopholes in the security of hydroelectric projects in Odisha. This was the news of *The Sambad* dated 06.01.2010. *The Samaja* reported that the Dam construction work on the Tanal river of Niali is going on now for last 7 years.

Demand of Rajagangpur MLA for construction of a new dam on Brahamani near Rourkela was highlighted *The Khabara* (08.01.2010) and *The Pragatibadi* (11.01.2010).

Vedanta's plan to construct a check dam on the Kharakai nala, a tributary of the Bheden for promoting water conservation was reported by *The Sambad* (12.01.2010). The Chitrotapala river valley project at Nemala is yet to take off reported *The Samaja*. Due to flood, the Taladanda canal bridge of Tirtol is now in danger, but no steps being taken for its repair, reported *The Khabara*.

1.5 Biodiversity, Culture & Livelihoods:

As per the news in *The Dharitri* increased movements of trawlers near Gahiramatha, rookery has put the Olive Ridley turtles in danger. It also reported lack of Govt efforts towards saving the lives of the tortoise.

The Dokari water fall of Kalahandi district is now heavily polluted while Government is yet to take any step to maintain its pristine natural beauty, also reported *The Dharitri*. In the Phulbani district, many such water falls are also gradually losing their natural beauty day by day.

1.6 Water to Industry: Concerns on way to Conflicts

Allotment of water to industries in Odisha has become a controversial issue with farmers expressing concern about the threat of deprivation of their farm land of adequate water in coming years. But in case of industries also, there seem to be inadequate water available to meet their demand, reported by *The Samaja*. This raises question over whether the state will be able to meet future industrial demand of water.

As per the news in *The Dharitri* (01.02.2010), most of the industries of Odisha using the river water for industrial purposes. They are also extracting the ground water heavily for their use which is making the ground water depleted slowly and steadily day by day. The Chief Minister has been reported to decide in a meeting about the use of river water only for agriculture not for industry, this was reported by *The Dharitri*.

1.7 Irrigation & Agriculture: Farmers' frustrations lead to protests

Odisha is primarily an agrarian economy. Agriculture is still the main stay of Odisha. January and February forms part of the important rabi season, and the highlights of water news in these months were around improper functioning of irrigation projects, plans of Govt to enhance irrigated area and irrigation efficiency and the conflicts between competing water uses for industry and irrigation.

As per the news in *The Indian Express*, Koraput district administration would now directly monitor the irrigation system of Upper Kolab Project in the interest of the farmers during ensuring rabi season. It was for the first time the district administration convened a meeting of pani panchayatas under the project.

Most of the agricultural land of Pattamundai block in Kendrapara was reported to be heavily affected by increase in water level of the Brahmani as reported in *the Pragatibadi*. As per news in *The Sambad* the lift irrigation facility of the Champua block of Keonjhar district has been defunct for long time without any initiative by Govt to repair that. Similarly, the Deras irrigation project near Bhubaneswar is also not adequately serving its command due to want of repairs reported the *Sambad*. The Brutanga irrigation system of Daspala was reported to be in very bad shape, reported *The Pragatibadi*. Due to improper functioning of

the irrigation facilities in the Dhenkanal district, agriculture has hampered a lot as per *The Pragatibadi*. *The Sambad* also reported disruption in irrigation the Marsaghai block of Kendrapara district due to irresponsibility of the irrigation department. Improper functioning of the Lower Indra Irrigation project was also in news along with protests of the project affected people, reported *The Sambad*. *The Pragatibadi* carried a news item on the status of the pani pachayats in the Kakatapur who seem to be struggling to meet their target irrigated area.

The senior BJP leader Bijaya Mohapatra said that the Jobra water (Jobra barrage on the Mahanadi in Cuttack) is meant for irrigation not for Posco. The government should look for alternative sources as supply from the barrage in pipelines is not feasible. This was reported in *The Indian Express*, *Pragatibadi*, and *Dharitri*.

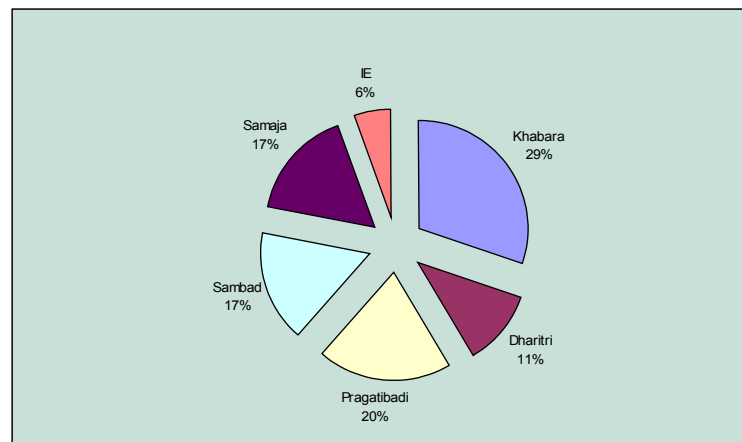
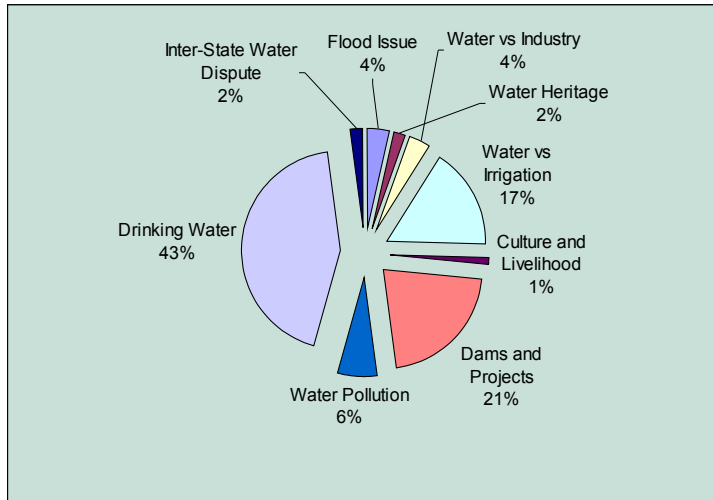
For the improvement of the agricultural output more water is required for irrigation and in that direction Government is laying stress on lift irrigation reported *The Khabara*. As per a news in *The Pragatibadi*, the government of Odisha has decided to provide irrigation facilities in every block for agricultural activities. *The Pragatibadi* also reported decision of the chief minister regarding provision of water to 5 lakh 60 thousand ha of lands for agricultural purposes in the coming 5 years.

There is a workshop on agriculture and irrigation in Cuttack, news was published in *The Dharitri*-19.02.2010.

1.8 Flood

There is no proper plan of flood control in the river Brahmani reported *The Pragatibadi* -This has lead to many areas of Bari, Jajpur, Ali, and Pattamundai area living under constant threat of flood. Due to the flood in the Baitarani river the Paltapur village of Bhadrak has been affected a lot, reported *The Dharitri*. Flood of Luna and Chitrotapala river has been affecting severely the agriculture in Chandabali area. The farmers of the Niali block of Cuttack district has not yet received the flood-relief for the flood of 2008, reported *The Pragatibadi*. The flood of the river Baitarani has been affecting the Bhadrak district the most but no proper initiative are being taken for its abatement.

2 Coverage by News Papers & of Issues



News	Khabara	Dharitri	Pragatibadi	Sambad	Samaja	IE	Total
Flood Issue		1	2		1		4
Water Heritage		2					2
Water for Industry		2	1		1		4
Irrigation	2	2	7	5	1	1	18
Culture and Livelihood	1						1
Dams and Projects	7	2	5	3	5	1	23
Water Pollution	2	2		1	2		7
Drinking Water	21	1	7	7	8	4	48
Inter-State Water Dispute				2			2

TOTAL	33	12	22	18	18	6	109
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