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India WASH Forum news

Proceedings of the Right to Water and Sanitation Workshop Report of 5th Aug 2009, are now ready. Soft copies of the report and a limited number of hard copies are available on request by the members.

We would like to know if there is a bibliography of important studies and reports on the water-sanitation-hygiene issues for India? If you know of a network or a source where these are available then please let us know.

A workshop on Pre-SACOSAN 4(Colombo 2010) was organised by Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) in Bangalore on the 9th October, to track progress by India.

We invite readers of our monthly update to send in their comments and any original material for the Updates. We will give priority to good quality people centered analytical commentaries for inclusion in our Update. Please send in your commentaries in a max of 100 words if possible.

Commentary - Book Review

Resisting Reform? Water Profits and Democracy Sage Publications, 2009

Kshitij Urs and Richard Whittell

"Resisting reform?" a book by Kshitij Urs and Richard Whittell subtitled "Water Profits and Democracy" gives a disconcerting account of the coming together of powerful interests to profit out of a situation of water crisis by means of influencing state- furthered institutions (new institutions spawned by the state?) wherein decision making has increasingly come to rest, and which are unaccountable to the people they are meant to serve.

The book takes the wraps off the terms and phrases employed to justify and execute the water 'reform' policy and practices. The three purposes of writing the book as stated by authors are (a) to debunk the arguments that are used to justify water 'reforms' (b) to describe how these 'reforms' have entered government policy in Karnataka (c) to shed light on how these have been resisted. The book, though about attempts to 'reform' water supply specifically in Bangalore, provides insights into the current general policy formulation environment. It describes how a few government officials (politicians and senior bureaucrats) who share the same ideas as development agencies like the World Bank work through parastatal agencies formed especially to further their ideas, and in the process keep not only concerned citizens and their elected representatives but also relevant departments away from decision making.

Book Review (contd.)

Efforts are made to legitimize policies by attempting to make non-participatory policies look participatory through having officials excluded from actual decision making on Steering Committees where they have nothing to do once decisions on policy matters have been made by others, and by making citizens participate in implementation of given 'no-alternative' programmes. Non-compliant officials are transferred and non-participating citizens are left without services.

The book locates water 'reform' in the context of Bangalore city's broader development. The city with its rapid growth has extended into adjoining rural areas. It hosts businesses and residential accommodations ranging from those of the very rich to tarpaulin tents of the homeless. The extension has occurred without much needed corresponding infrastructure. Till the creation of 'Greater Bangalore' in 2006 under the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the main city was administered by Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) and the rest of the extended area was divided into eight Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) governed by their corresponding City Municipal Councils (CMCs). The CMCs did not have the same administrative powers as the BMP and had little revenue base, as their tax collections were very low. There is a marked difference between BMP and CMC areas in terms of roads and other basic services. In response to the situation a World Bank supported Karnataka Municipal Reform Project came up that aimed at changes in Bangalore's governance systems through establishing improved institutional and financial frameworks at the urban local body and State levels. Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation (KUIDFC), a parastatal body, set up in 1993 to assist urban agencies in the State in planning, financing and providing expertise to develop urban infrastructure became a nodal agency overseeing the implementation of many of the major infrastructure projects that ideally should have been with government departments.

All kinds of urban projects - roads, water, slums and governing institutions like local municipalities came under its supervision. KUIDFC, an unelected nodal agency, controls central government grants provided under Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and also grants and loans from the central and state governments under Greater Bangalore Water and Sanitation Project (GBWSP) that are meant for ULBs. The ULBs get grants on condition of accepting mandatory 'reforms' (what are they?) and are supposed to raise additional loans required for the projects. Thus decision making and dispersal of funds is centralized while repayment of loans is decentralized. In this way 'reforms' are pushed in a manner that opens up new avenue for finance and business and create conditions that would keep elected bodies moving on the 'reform' path.

What does 'reform' mean? The authors have put it succinctly thus "In a perfect situation where water supply is based on the 'reform' view, costs are covered so that the service can run as an autonomously financing unit and does not have to be subsidized by other government funds, which could be used for other purposes. A big, subsidizing government is bad, while small, efficient government is good (and privatized government is even better). The state is a collection of autonomous independent organizations that run themselves without political involvement (or interference as it is called). One propitious consequence of this is that less tax needs to be collected." Thus in the 'reform' view, water is a commodity and economic efficiency should determine its provision. People should get water as consumers and not as citizens. In view of that "Six thousand public taps in Bangalore have been shut since 1997 (Connors 2007), as the government has refused to pay for them, since it wants the water board to become financially self-sufficient.

Book Review (contd.)

This--- shows the consequences of treating water as a commodity, and running a supply on cost-based principles---." This view does not take into consideration the people who cannot afford to pay. The authors challenge not only the privatization aspect of water 'reform', which is most controversial, but also, and more fundamentally, a cost-based water service. As they put it "Water, being fundamental to life and it being an obligatory duty of the government to supply water to all citizens (both of which are specified in the Indian Constitution), should be an automatic assumption. The choice then is not between 'no supply to the poor' or a 'cost-based supply', it is between a cost-based supply or a rights-based supply (a supply in which the foundation principle is that water is a fundamental right)." This is a very important point as many well-meaning people get carried away by an argument that 'water supply costs money', to which the authors' response is "Of course, it costs money to supply water---and of course, these costs have to be covered, but putting the stress on recovering costs directly from all 'consumers', can easily lead to inequities in the supply---where many people cannot afford to pay the amount it costs the service to supply water to them." The authors also oppose a suggestion of following the principle of 'full cost recovery' with subsidies for those who could not afford to pay enough to cover the costs as this would end up serving first and foremost those who can help recover cost. The authors have made a case for a formal, comprehensive water supply that serves all citizens equally.

On privatization, the authors maintain that private companies cannot make big profits by supplying water to the poor. ". the same companies that have to justify investors' confidence by making as much money as possible are touted as the solution to the world's water crisis - a crisis that is felt most severely by people who do not have enough money to ensure returns for those investors." The authors cite examples from different parts of the world to present the ill effects of privatization like severe price rise, increased disconnections for people who cannot pay and a decrease in water quality. Many of the privatization projects have been terminated because of public protest and many water companies are decreasing their activities in developing countries as the risks involved cannot be easily justified to shareholders. In the given situation, instead of focusing on reforming public provisioning what is suggested is Public Private Partnership (PPP) whereby the state would bear all the risks. Two different types of systems - private company managed for elites and community managed 'new approach' for the poor have been suggested. The authors raise a point that "If the goal is piped water supply to every household then how would it work if the 'elites' had their water managed by a private company and the poor by a 'new approach', considering that they are all getting water from the same source, and that water is sharing the same pipes for much of its journey from the river to the tap?

The companies selling to the 'elites' would therefore be charging a higher price for providing the same service as the 'new approaches'. This would not be even to subsidize it for the poor as the higher prices would be going straight back to the company." Only five percent of the world's population is served by private companies; most of the people in the developed world are served through public services. There are many successful, comprehensive systems of public provision around the world that follow different models in accordance with local circumstances without relying on cost based principles. The authors accept all the ills associated with states and governments but maintain that "if we accept that there has to be a formal, overall supply, to which everybody should have access, the question becomes how to reform the state, not how to bypass it."

The book looks at 'reform' from a human right perspective and makes a strong case for human rights oriented redistributive governance practices.

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Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development

Programme Experience Sharing

1. Wise Water Management

Action for Food Production (AFPRO) is partnering with Unicef on a project for promotion of Wise Water Management (WWM) in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh. WWM is defined as equitable use, management and allocation of water for domestic purposes.

One of the model set up in a hostel Aron consists of a rooftop harvesting system linked with a play pump (jhula pump). Water from the roof collects in a 50,000 litre surface tank. This is connected to the roundabout play pump, which when rotated by children, lifts water to a rooftop tank for distribution. Also, grey water from the bathrooms is collected and filtered through a specially constructed filtration. This unit comprises a system of horizontal roughing filtration followed by inclined fine filtration. This filtered water is lifted to the roof by a pump which is then supplied for flushing toilets.



2. Nirmal Gram Puraskar verification: useful learning's

AFPRO supported the Ministry of Rural Development, GoI for verification of applications of Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) from 20 districts of Madhya Pradesh. This exercise helped in drawing learning's on the rural sanitation programme. These include:

- An effective district level mechanism is vital for the success of the programme with better coordination amongst district, block officials and elected representatives;
- NGP has helped in creating the demand for better sanitation but there is a need to introduce credit facilities for poor families;
- Lack of adequate water facilities at schools leads to the non-usage of sanitary blocks;
- There is a need to focus on solid and liquid waste management and disposal of animal wastes for preventing the pollution of water sources; and
- Kitchen gardens and soak pits can be used for liquid waste disposal. Also, importance should be given treatment of wastewater collected through the network of drains.

Source: Action for Food Production (AFPRO), New Delhi

For details visit- www.afpro.org

3. Water Purification System: MECKOW Aquapur

MECKOW Aquapur is a water purification system which treats contaminated water. It requires no electricity for the filtration process and produces clean drinking water for up to 2000 people per day.

Read about the product at : <http://www.meckow-international.com/water>

Source: Meckow International

News and information update

1. **A report by UNICEF–WHO ‘Diarrhoea: Why Children Are Still Dying and What Can Be Done’** was released on October 14. The report highlights the proven diarrhoeal disease prevention and treatment solutions already available today. Private Sector & Development features 8 articles and discussions, by donor agencies and private sector operatives, addressing the question “How can the private sector help provide access to drinking water in developing countries”. Read the report - http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241598415_eng.pdf
2. **Human Development Report, 2009** is out. This report breaks new ground in applying a human development approach to the study of migration. Read the full report at - <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/>
3. Chetan Pandit, water resource engineer analyses civil society reactions in the media to flood events like the Bihar floods of 2008 and finds them wanting. Read the article -**Understanding flood events -- a critique of civil society responses** - <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/sites/indiawaterportal.org/files/991.pdf> (Source IWP)
4. Climate change: high adaptation costs for water sector, says World Bank study: Global adaptation costs for water supply and sanitation infrastructure were estimated to be US\$ 700 million (€ 475 million) per year. Average annual adaptation costs in the health sector for diarrhoea and malaria prevention and treatment lie in a narrow range of US\$ 1.3–1.6 billion (€ 0.88-1.1 billion) a year over the 40-year period 2010–50. Read the report at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCC/Resources/EACCReport0928Final.pdf>

Media Alerts

A government committee on land reforms has described the industrialisation drive in Chhattisgarh's iron-ore rich Bastar, Dantewada and Bijapur districts as the **“biggest grab of tribal lands after Columbus.”**

The committee's observations are based on the move to displace 350,000 tribals from these districts for setting up steel and power plants with a total investment of Rs 20,000 crore. The committee on State Agrarian Relations and Unfinished Task of Land Reforms said, “This open declared war will go down as the biggest land grab ever... the drama being scripted by Tata Steel and Essar Steel who wanted 7 villages or thereabouts, each to mine the richest lode of iron ore available in India.” They were referring to the clashes between Salwa Judum, a state sponsored anti-naxal movement and the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The 15-member committee was constituted in January 2008 to examine issues relating to alienation of tribal lands including traditional rights of the forest-dependant tribals and to suggest realistic measures. It said private companies were encouraging Salwa Judum to gain control over these areas. “The traders, contractors and miners waiting for a successful result of their strategy are behind the Salwa Judum. The first financiers of the Salwa Judum were Tata and Essar in the quest for peace,” it said. The panel said a “civil war like situation” prevailed in these districts. “Villages sitting on tons of iron ore are effectively de-peopled and available for the highest bidder... Both Essar Steel and Tata Steel are willing to take over the empty landscape and manage the mines,” the committee said in its report. The report was submitted to Rural Development Minister C.P. Joshi, who then referred it to the National Land Reform Council, headed by the Prime Minister.

Hindustan Times 31st October 2009 <http://www.hindustantimes.com/rssfeed/chhattisgarh/Govt-panel-dubs-Chhattisgarh-industrial-push-as-land-grab/Article1-471123.aspx>

Media Alerts

- *Municipal Corporation in Delhi will upgrade 1000 of its urinals into waterless urinals by 2010 as a run up for the Commonwealth Games 2010 – <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Coming-soon-Loos-sans-water-and-stink/H1-Article1-465876.aspx>*
- *Municipal Corporation of Delhi plans to generate power from waterless urinals in Delhi - <http://www.kseboa.org/news/806-municipal-corporation-of-delhi-mcd-plans-to-generate-power-from-waterless-urinals.html>*
- *Delhi to have 100 energy efficient buildings in three years - <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/pollution/Delhi-to-have-100-energy-efficient-buildings-in-three-years-/articleshow/5117375.cms>*
- *Despite High Court ban, mining in river beds continues in Uttarakhand - <http://www.dailypioneer.com/209971/Despite-HC-ban-mining-in-river-beds-continues.html>*
- *BJP asks Prime Minister to convene Chief Ministers meet on river linking - <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=oct0809/at06>*
- *Water scarcity will create global security concerns: Pachauri - <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/global-warming/Water-scarcity-will-create-global-security-concerns-Pachauri-/articleshow/5097048.cms>*
- *North India's groundwater use raising sea levels by 5 per cent - <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/the-good-earth/North-Indias-groundwater-use-raising-sea-levels-by-5/articleshow/5087912.cms>*
- *80 per cent of carbon emissions from solid wastes : reveals a study - <http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/09/stories/2009100959510600.htm>*

Upcoming Events

The Department of Drinking Water Supply is organizing a **Round Table on Strategies for Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation** on October 21, 2009 at Scope Complex, New Delhi. The roundtable will be attended by the Union Minister for Rural Development, Sh. CP Joshi.

4th International Conference on Water Resources and Arid Environments (ICWRAE): December – 5-8, 2010. Deadline for applying and sending abstracts is 30 October 2009. For details visit - <http://www.emwis.net/thematicdirs/news/call-papers-4thinternational-conference-water>.

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi is organizing an '**Advanced course for working professionals on Urban Rainwater Harvesting**' from November 3-7, 2009. This course is open to civil engineers, architects, urban planners, environment consultants, municipal water managers, policy makers, government officials and NGOs interested in learning more about the theory, practice and policies of urban water harvesting. For details and applying visit - <http://www.cseindia.org/aagc/rwh-professionals.asp> (Source: CSE)

Upcoming Events

Summer Congress 2010 - **International Conference on Sustainable Social and Human Development** being organized by: Ontario International Development Agency and International Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Law – Laurentian University, Sudbury, Canada from June 22-25, 2010 at Sudbury, Canada. This is an inter-disciplinary forum on global sustainable and human development for practitioners and academics. The deadline for sending abstracts is 30 April, 2010. For details visit the web-site - <http://www.ontariointernational.org/IDCHome.htm> (Source: conference alerts)

The Solution Exchange - Water Community is organizing its **third Annual Forum** from October 28-30 at Hotel Hindustan International, 235/1 A J C Bose Road, Kolkata. The details of the programme can be downloaded at http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/af_2009/programme.doc

The civil society coalition on ethics in climate change is holding a series of public hearings on the **climate crisis and the national action plan on climate change** from Nov 11-13 at the Constitution Club, New Delhi. There is considerable regional ecosystem build up to the national summit in Delhi. For details contact- ineccindia@gmail.com; attn. manisha. ph: #91 891 2548071; C/o Laya, 501, Kurupam Castle, East Point Colony, Visakhapatnam-530 017, Andhra Pradesh.

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India WASH Forum

India WASH Forum is a registered India WASH Forum is a Registered Indian Trust. It is affiliated to the WSSCC Geneva and is a membership based coalition of Indian organizations and individuals working on water, sanitation and hygiene.

A unique feature of IWF is its non-hierarchical set up. The organisation is a coalition and its Trustees are on the IWF as individuals and not representing the organisations they are associated with. The agenda and activities that India WASH Forum are determined at the initiative of the Trustees and Members and support from organisations and individuals. We receive a very small operations grant from WSSCC.

Our Charter includes the following commitments;

- ❑ **Promoting knowledge generation** through research and documentation which is linked to and supported grassroots action in the water-sanitation-hygiene sectors. Special emphasis is given to **sector-specific and cross-cutting thematic learnings**.
- ❑ **Supporting field-based NGOs and networks in their technical and programmatic work.** The IWF would also consistently highlight gender and pro-poor considerations, and provide a national platform for interest groups working in the sector to come together.
- ❑ **Undertaking policy advocacy and influence** work through
 - Monitoring and evaluations
 - Media advocacy and campaigns, and
 - Fact finding missions
- ❑ **Undertaking lobbying and networking to promote common objectives** in the sector.

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