Water Rights: A Case Study of Rural Areas of Allahabad

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HPI Measures poverty in three dimensions-

- Longevity- not surviving to age 40
- Knowledge- as adult literacy rate
- Economic provisioning- as percentage of people not using improved water sources and percentage of children under five years who are under weight.

Human Poverty Index-1

- India rank 55
- 31% have adequate sanitation and 88% have improved water sources (HDR 2001).
- Percentage have fallen down to 28% having adequate sanitation and 84% having improved water sources (HDR 2004).

Drinking Water Rights (DWRs)

- Fundamental Rights in Article 21 and 39 (a) and (b) of the constitution of India
- National Water Policy gives first priority to DWRs
- Goal of NWP are efficiency, equity and sustainability to promote livelihood of the poor
- Its 40 lpcd for rural areas and a handpump for 250 persons.
- New liberal norms approved 55 lpcd towards drinking water for rural habitations.
- NCIWRDP has modified the norms for water supply as 150 lpcd for rural areas.

Rural SC/ST Payjal Yojana

- The scheme implemented in U.P from the year 1971-72
- The scheme provided potable water in SC/ST dominated areas.
- Implemented under Minimum Needs Program.
- Under this scheme, Jal Nigam installs India Mark II handpumps in plain areas and diggies in Hill areas.

Water Supply System in District Allahabad

- The total availability of water is 200 lpcd to the city.
- Each village has the facility of piped water supply or India Mark II handpumps facilities for domestic purposes.
- District Allahabad has 48 rural piped water supply system in 1680 villages.
- These systems have 111 handpumps, 90 overhead tanks, 6 groundwater tanks and plateau region has 4 water purifying system, 6 zonal pumping stations and nearly 4000 km. long piped water supply system.
- Jal Nigam look after about rural water supply and Jal Sansthan after urban water supply.

Water Supply System in Study Area

- U.P Jal Nigam 6th Construction Division supplies drinking water to villages of Phulpur Tehsil in Allahabad District.
- The sources of water are tubewells, overhead tanks and handpumps.
- Phulpur Block consist of four water supply schemes.
- Mailahan water supply scheme covers the study area.
- The scheme was started in 1975 and covered 51 villages but the real benefited villages were only 40.
- The water supply scheme projected to provide 70 lpcd to rural people.
- Mailahan Water supply system has a pipeline of 48 kms.
- Timings for water supply are- morning 5-8 am, noon 12-1 pm and evening 4-6 pm.





Extent of Waterlogging









Unique Features of the Study Area

- The villages are in extreme condition of waterlogging
- The reasons behind waterlogging are-
- Rainwater- ineffective drainage system
- Canal Irrigation- Coming up of Sharda Sahayak Canal into the region since 1990s
- River Varuna- Impeded drainage of the river due to callous dumping and river flowing below its capacity.
- Karanja Road Construction- hinders the natural drainage

Drinking Water Scenario: Main Source of Drinking Water



- Almost 76 percent depend on traditional sources of water like open wells (58%) and handpump (18%) considered to be unsafe.
- Only 24 percent getting safe water that include taps (18.7%), closed wells (3.3%), India Mark II (2.0%).
- The distribution of tap connections were found low among SC and OBC.
- General Caste (58%) and Muslims (50%) in rural areas have the privileged of water provided by civic bodies.





- 160-200 persons are dependent on open wells and handpumps for drinking and domestic purposes.
- It means that particular source is unable to cater the needs of the larger society, thus the availability of water becomes low.
- Higher dependence on a single source directly relates to low water consumption accruing to water shortages and frequent breakdown of handpumps and India Mark II.

Distance of Main Drinking Water Sources



Sources of Drinking Water in Sample Villages



Per Capita Water Consumption



Contamination of Drinking Water

- Contamination of drinking water is a severe problem
- 80% hhs stated that problem aggravates more when well water rose upto the ground level during rainy season
- Occurrence of sand, mud and worms with foul smell with drinking water are common phenomenon
- 54% hhs noted sand and mud, 15% had bad smell and worms with drinking water.
- 37% faced sand and mud and 9% experienced bad smell and worms through open wells during peak waterlogging days.
- About 7% and 5% opined the same through handpumps respectively
- Even 6% hhs noticed sand and mud through tap water
- Hardly 3% and 0.67% hhs had this problem when accessed to closed wells and India Mark II respectively

Policy Implication

- Draining of River Varuna is required so that it can flow in its normal capacity.
- There is a need for an effective drainage system.
- Defunct sources is a matter of deep concern- It involves the issues of management, rejuvenation and re-evaluation of water supply schemes
- Nodal agencies should provide mechanics at village and panchayat level for easy resumption of water supply
- Potential people should be imparted training to repair their own defunct sources in their respective areas
- Panchayat and Corporators should be made aware of government allocations and schemes
- Panchayat members, Corporators and Ward members should identify the causes for unequal water distribution so that weaker section of society are able to access this facility
- Local people should be sensitized so that they may become aware of every loophole in the Govt body, fight for the opportunities and welfare. They should initiate local movements to tackle water problems.

- To revive the decaying traditional water harvesting structure.
- Water harvesting should be made a national movement.
- Planners and policy makers can club the institutions and individuals for revival of traditional resources
- New paradigm is needed to manage water that can be built on past and current practices in India and abroad that remains outside the fold of the state managed water supply systems
- Restore a balance between the role of state and that of communities and individuals.
- Water literacy is must to generate awareness among the society-NGOs, Govt, Professionals, educatational institutions and other representative bodies interaction with local bodies would generate awareness among society.
- Made people aware of Conservation programs like Ek Panch Ek Talab concept, Pani Roko Abhiyan, Gaon ka pani gaon mein khet ka pani khet mein, and Jal Mahotsavas

Conclusion

- Under the Human Rights manifestos and fundamental rights, the right to access to safe water is one of the rights. But for many, it is still inaccessible.
- Despite several Drinking Water Supply Schemes and approved liberal norms, there are several households showing insufficiency of drinking water
- There is a bias among the caste and income groups.
- The worst victims are people BPL dependent on traditional sources.
- There is a need for an equitable water distribution in every human settlement.
- The externalities like pollution, contamination should be removed
- Pricing policy should be devised for better augmentation of water supply
- Integrated Approach to Water Resource Management (Consumers, political support, communities and local participation) that would help in universal access and clean water as every body's right and business.

Some unaswered questions- legal issues

- How the people should be stopped from dumping the river?
- River falls in 3 district units- how will the draining work if there are district boundaries?
- Role of PRI- water remains the subject to them, how far it is dealing with water rights- rights related to per capita consumption, safe sources, distances, inequality, distribution of water sources, higher dependence etc.
- Inequality among the low caste society (caste discrimination)?
- State should act as a protector, not only as provider? Can the State be sued for unsafe, contaminated water provisions leading to water borne diseases?
- MLA who was responsible for encroaching the river land- What should be done?
- Canal system is not taking into water requirements- who is responsible?

Therefore a law is needed for overall efficiency of water

Thanks