

PROCESS OF FORMATION OF JAJMAU AREA WATER PARTNERSHIP IN KANPUR (UTTAR PRADESH) – PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Background

Industrial effluents and sewage water are being diverted to the river Ganga by the cities and towns through which it passes. Nestled on the banks of Ganga, Kanpur, a highly urbanized and industrial city is polluting it most. Apart from the Government of India's recently constituted National Ganga River Basin Authority, civil societies and NGOs too are putting rigorous efforts to make Ganga pollution free. Though the city has several big and small industries, the leather industries located in Jajmau, the oldest part of the city add to the problem of pollution in the river to a large extent.

India Water Partnership (GWP-India) Initiative for formation of Area Water Partnership

From February, 2012, India Water Partnership (GWP-India) with the support of its network partner - Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) started the process of formation of Jajmau Area Water Partnership in Zone-2 Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) to help abate pollution and take-up the issues of water, health & hygiene and sanitation with the local level authorities. Jajmau located in the South East of Kanpur in the immediate vicinity of Ganga river, falls under Zone 2 of KNN. Ground work is being undertaken by SPWD's sub partners - Society for Action in Community Health (SACH) with support from Shramik Bharti, Kanpur and other local civil society organizations under the overall supervision of SPWD.

Objectives of the AWP

Objectives of the Jajmau AWP is to (i) Develop a Joint Stakeholder Forum in the Zone -2 of Kanpur Nagar Nigam to discuss the pollution issues, possible strategies and actions to find solutions; and (ii) Develop a plan to prevent the pollution of river Ganga arising due to industrial and domestic activities in the area.

Activities undertaken

To start with, field visits by SPWD team were made to nine villages of the project area in **February, 2012** to assess: (i) Prevalence of water borne and water related diseases in the population; (ii) Perceptions of the respective role of residents and KNN Zone-2 for improving the access to water and sanitation in the area; and, (iii) Perceptions on the role of residents in preserving the purity of river Ganga. The other work taken-up was identification of possible stakeholders in the AWP. Discussions were held on 7th and 8th **April, 2012** in two wards of the project area namely ward number 10 (rural) and ward number 86 (urban).

Separate discussions were also held with the tannery owners associations. The main issues that emerged out of the discussions were - (i) Non-availability of potable drinking water both in the urban and rural wards; (ii) Lack of proper sanitation facilities; (iii) Piling up of garbage in the area; (iv) Health related issues due to use of polluted water; and; (v) How to prevent pollution of river Ganga and provide an effective solution to water and sanitation problems of these wards and the zone as a whole.

In the rural ward, the main issue was that the polluted water is severely affecting the agricultural land, agriculture production and health of the people. The President and the General Secretary of the Small Tannery Association also participated in the meeting. They said that the Jal Nigam is responsible for treating the city sewage including the tannery waste water. The Tannery Associations were paying the waste water treatment charges to the Jal Board. However, there were shortcomings in effective treatment of the city sewage, which was polluting the rural area as well as the Ganges river.

The other notable points that emerged in the discussions were - (i) The city sewage is made to pass through Ward 10 (rural) for irrigation purpose, before discharging into Ganga. Since Jajmau is located downstream of Ganga, the sewage water of the entire city flows through Jajmau, particularly the rural ward; (ii) The city domestic sewage, and industrial sewage including those of tanneries is treated in a common treatment plant. Since the tanneries are situated downstream in

the Jajmau area, they have achieved the ill reputation of being responsible for Ganga pollution in Kanpur; (iii) It was also felt that the tannery owners were one of the key stakeholders both as contributors to the problems and also solution makers. Hence it was decided to have more direct interactions with them in the next few months.

In **May, 2012** the activities taken up were - awareness generation; follow-up visits to the residents of both the wards; micro-planning; establishment of contacts with citizen representatives and tanneries associations; follow up discussions with Area Volunteers and other residents on the formation of Ward Committees in two wards, as a part of formation of AWP; Developing solutions for industrial and other pollution in Ganga River in Kanpur by involving stakeholders for implementing solutions; Discussions with partners and stakeholders on a planning framework for Zone 2.

On July 22, 2012 a conference was organized on "Safe Drinking Water and Pollution Free Ganga" which was attended by nearly 70 participants from the various wards of Zone-2 of KNN. A highlight of the conference was the participation by three Councilors of the KNN from Zone 2. The key issues discussed at the conference were - (i) The Kanpur city today has acquired ill reputation of being the city where Ganga is most polluted. Traditionally, utmost importance was given to water quality and Ganga water was rated the highest in this. It is unfortunate that today, it has become absolutely polluted and is not even fit for bathing; (ii) The proposal to supply treated water for agriculture purpose has been a complete failure. Rose cultivation has failed in these areas. Large numbers of people are suffering from skin diseases owing to contaminated water from the Sewerage Treatment Plants; (iii) The state of access to water and sanitation in the city is pathetic. There is a general crisis as regards availability of water. The streets are full of garbage dumps and the sewerage water is flowing on the roads. There is no confidence in quality of drinking water supplied by the Jal Board and common people cannot afford to install ROs in their homes. People are getting hard water through piped water supply from Chakeri plant and depend on tanker water for drinking purposes; (iv) The current plans developed for Kanpur and other cities for prevention of pollution of Ganga are inherently faulty; (v) The process of commercialization of water has affected the civil society consciousness also. Today, there is a competition to have deeper borings and extract more water for one's household and the commitment to share water with one's neighbor is missing. This is bound to have very bad consequences. The ponds in the area have been encroached by the vested interests; and (vi) The micro-planning process has been taken up by Shramik Bharti in selected area of the zone. But the initiative rests with KNN and Jal Board to find solutions to some of the most difficult problems. At the same time, there is a need to bring about a change in people's awareness and consciousness. The use of street plays can be a very good medium for this. This should be coupled with formation of local people committees who are motivated not to pollute Ganga by any means. The ward committees could advise the ward councilors and their federation at the zonal level on these aspects. The AWP Jajmau should take a lead in this process.

The conference was able to consolidate the process of developing contacts with people, NGOs, industrialists, officials and people's representatives. There is greater realization of the grimness of the situation as far as access to water and sanitation is concerned and its link to macro issues of river flow as well as pollution. In 2013, the scope of work of Jajmau AWP has been expanded. **It is expected that the Jajmau AWP will play a greater role in finding solutions to the problems in Zone-2 of KNN.**

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