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**Contact**

Executive Editor  
Shrishti Eco-Research Institute, B-106, Devgiri,  
Opp. P. L. Deshpande Garden, Near Ganesh  
Mala, Pune – 411 030. India. Phone: 91-20-  
24321773 /Telefax: 91-20-66206539

Website: [www.seriecotech.com](http://www.seriecotech.com)

Email: [seri\\_news@yahoo.co.in](mailto:seri_news@yahoo.co.in)

**Point for discussion this month**

**Management of world's transboundary lake and river basins.**

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Dear Readers,

It's winter everywhere in India! Sun is trying hard to come out of dense fog!

It's 2009! Yet another year to make resolutions!! Let's make a resolution to free this mother Earth from the great giant of pollution. I know, one year is not sufficient for it. But is sufficient to step forward and to start the journey in right direction.

Rising or setting sun, free flowing rivers, merrily flying birds, flowering plants all these things are making human life sustainable on Earth.

Most of the major rivers of India have Himalayan origin. As these rivers flow, they add to the socioeconomic, cultural growth of the banks. But there is a big threat to this Nature's gift. The Himalayan states are planning to implement hydropower projects. It is said that in Uttarakhand alone, 200 new projects are planned. In most cases there will be dam after every 20 to 25 km starting near the origin. In about 173 projects, the river water will flow through constructed tunnels, which will create dry stretches downstream.

Is life on earth possible without free flowing rivers? Can we find balance between development and environment so that it should be sustainable development?

In Pune, some voluntary organisations are coming forward to find some solution on pollution of the holy Indrayani River. In this issue you can read detail report on that.

**WISH YOU HAPPY, POLLUTION FREE,  
ECO FRIENDLY AND TERRORISM FREE  
NEW YEAR, 2009!**

Thanking you,

Chief Editor

*Newsviews***Indrayani Bachav Kriti Samiti**

Indrayani is one of the holy rivers in India. It has great importance in the life of Varkaris. Thousands of people come every day to take holy bath in this river. But due to industrial, urban development on the banks and at the origin of this river, it is facing threat of pollution. Several meetings and visits of volunteers of Indrayani Bachav Kriti Samiti were organised in last month. Various organizations like Vishwasanskriti, Indian Environment Association, Indian Association of Aquatic Biologists, etc. supported the Programme.

The agenda was to discuss about Indrayani cleaning, protection and conservation. It became a major issue because Mr. Vinod Bodhankar, trusty of Jaldindi, explained necessity of cost effective measures for pollution control including ecotechnology. A renowned social worker Shri Annasaheb Hazare has conveyed his message through Shri Choudhary Maharaj that he is also taking an action on this issue.

Then awareness about "Saving the River Indrayani" spread like fire. Many individuals and organizations came forward to support the movement. Various places along the river were visited and urban drains were visited and their water quality was tested. It is found that the stream from Chikhali suburb of Pimpri Chichwad is highly polluted due to unscrupulous disposal of liquid and solid wastes which finally go to Indrayani river. Sandeep Joshi of SERI surveyed the origin of Indrayani, polluted tributaries and used portable instruments and test kits to judge the water quality.

It seems that the whole Ujjani Reservoir catchment having area 14500 sq. km has been awakened to control the demon of pollution. The movements along the rivers in Pune district are taking shape and being institutionalized with little or no support of government institutions. Though, there was no response from Planning Commission of Government of India in last one and half years after submitting the brief on "Institutionalization for control of pollution of rivers and lakes in India", it seems that peoples' movement will make it success.

- Priyamvada Joshi

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**Transboundary Water Management**

Though we have divided the surface of earth in so many countries and states, there is one major common link which is trying to dilute the tension. This role is played by transboundary fresh water reservoirs. In the world there are 263 transboundary lakes and river basins.

Over last sixty years more than 300 international water agreements have been done. Out of this in 37 cases violence between states over water has been reported. We should nurture the opportunities for co-operation provided by these water resources. Since fresh water reservoirs are limited, with growing population we share the responsibility of managing transboundary waters for current and future generations. Co-operation is the only key to manage these reservoirs.

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*Excerpts from Article*

**Harmonising Environment and Economy**

- Sandeep Joshi

In the 20th century, the environmental deterioration gradually increased with rigorous augmentation in the pace of economic development. Over the last 100 years the rate of industrial production is increased 100-fold. It was observed that increased industrial production was proportionate with consumption of resources. During the last 50 years the consumption of timber tripled, while the use of fossil fuels increased 4 times and consumption of papers augmented six fold. This unprecedented consumption pattern brought in new ways of economic growth and supremacy over the world. This consumption-market-production-growth based economy led to the entirely new kinds of pollution.

Thousands of tonnes of toxic wastes generated in the Silicon Valley are being thrown in the South Bay. These toxics have destroyed age old marine ecosystem there. The manufacturers played a different tune and avoided to cooperate with Environment Protection Agency (EPA). Even in India, the industrial belts along the water courses play the same tune. There are thousands of such industrial belts over the world which externalise the pollution cost so that there

their economic gains are safeguarded. It seems that the environmental deterioration arises from the pursuit of profit.

The exploitation of natural resources is deeply rooted in the capitalist competition. In the context of globalisation, marketisation and trading there is more pressure on the natural resources which are yet untapped. It is the fact that environmental damage occurred in diverse political and economic conditions - North and South America, Western and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia etc. It implies that different political and economical setups can generate similar environmental deterioration. It is not a surprising conclusion that the nation's industrial and economic growth promotion plans take always precedence over the protection of environment.

The environment pollution does not respect national boundaries on maps. So, the activities that harm the environment of one country may also cause harm elsewhere. This wide dimension presents challenges to politicians to reconcile the priorities and goals of different communities and cultures. Capitalism and communism have both imposed severe demands on the natural environment. Political changes in recent years suggest that neither extreme has a winning position. Here it can be noted that the Indian lifestyle of self-sufficient, self reliant villages and distribution of resources was the sustained example of sustainable growth in past.

The profit motive has compelled all the modern world businesses to pay lowest possible prices for raw materials (for which the ultimate source is environment only), to externalise the costs of production as far as possible, to operate with minimal environmental controls, to avoid pollution control expenses, to get more incentives from the governments. In this way the production costs are always transferred to the environment, thus getting the huge hidden subsidy from the nature. But then in this case society has to suffer an enormous overall loss of environmental quality and impact on health.

Technological change and economic growth have generated controversies in human life. This has grown with the recognition of the environmental degradation that is simultaneously occurred with the advance of industrial economy. Environmental problems

are predominantly associated with technical issues, and there that is notion for every economical or technical problem there is a monetary or technical solution. It is not true in case of environment where one has to deal with not only a single isolated problem but a string of consequences resulted due to a problem. To externalise the pollution control costs (to increase the profit by just 1- 2%), the wastewater is released without any treatment. This release causes pollution. There are trade-offs in terms of costs in production and costs to customers which must be balanced against environmental benefits. Environment problems are normally management problems of planning, dealing with resources and managing people who are resistant to change and may be confused about their roles in relation to what they perceive to be global problems. More difficult to resolve have been other issues known familiarly as acid deposition and global warming. These and other problems such as toxic wastes, radioactive waste and pollution of seas. The scientific uncertainties provide loopholes for avoiding issues and taking no action.

Since 1950, there has been a growing seachange in environmental concerns which led to the first UN International Conference on the Environment in 1972 in Stockholm. Twenty years latter, second UN Conference on Environment and Development known as Earth Summit took place. It set out the international framework for global partnership and for agreements that affect the environment, development and resources of the planet. For Sustainable development, Governments should lead by example through the actions such as legislating for an environmental market, setting sustainable goals and providing appropriate finance. Businesses should combine commercial and environmental objectives. Integrating environment management into the corporate culture is clearly a component part of sustainable development

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***The student of Bal Shikshan Mandir school from Pune participated in the National Children's Science Congress and represented the state at national Level. They have written to SERInews about their experience.***

### Small Contribution For Better Environment

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2008 was a very important day. On that day, our teacher, Mrs. Geetanjali Bodhankar enlightened us about the pollution in rivers and inspired us to come up with a project-“JALADHARA SHUDHDHARA – A SaFFai PROJECT”. We formed a group of six students and started working on the project. We all worked with great enthusiasm and devotion. We were shocked to hear and see the condition of the river in our own city. We decided at that very point that we could come up with a solution for our own mistake. We first thought about all the options. Then we had a brainstorming session regarding the solutions that we were able to come up with. At the end of the session, we finally came up with a name the ‘FLORA FILTER’. We took the guidance of some environmentalists, Mr. Vinod Bodhankar and Dr. Sandeep Joshi who helped us to come up with the novel idea of the biofilter.

This is an innovative and a unique idea. When sewage water is passed through the filter. The water which comes out from the filter is purified we have tested the sample in the laboratory. All our mentors were very proud of our project. We were all set and ready present our project with the written work and model.

We had our first presentation at Dnyan Prabodhini School in Sadashiv peth. We presented our project in front of the judges and answered their questions well. Our project was selected for the next level that was going to be held at Aurangabad. In Aurangabad, we had our presentation and out of all the presentations some presentations were going to be selected for state level. If we passed this level, the state level seminars were going to be held in Dimapur, Nagaland. Our project was selected for the next level because of its innovativeness and uniqueness.

Our project was one of the 30 projects selected from all over Maharashtra to present our state in the National Children’s Science Congress in Dimapur. The group leaders of the respective projects were informed regarding the schedule of the trip to Nagaland. The presentations were carried out in the host school, Livingston High school for three days. After the presentations in front of

the judges, we had to do our poster presentation. The people from other states could come and ask regarding our project. We would explain about our projects to them and they would ask us their doubts, questions regarding our projects. Out of all the projects the judges were going to select 23 projects that were going to be published together in a book and that book was going to be sent all over the world. All the participants were going to be given gold medals and certificates. All these activities were carried out from 27<sup>th</sup> December to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

In Nagaland, we got opportunity to interact with world-known scientists. We were lucky enough to hear the speeches of Dr. Abdul Kalam and Professor Yashpal Sharma. All our activities were planned by the host school. And the experience we got was one-of-a-kind. It was an honor to represent Maharashtra at the state level. We were able to interact with the students of other states and exchange ideas with them regarding science, cultural and inter-state relationships.

*Students of Bal Shikshan Mandir School visited SERI, to understand the concept*



*At National Children’s Science Congress*



By Project group of Bal Shikshan Mandir Students

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