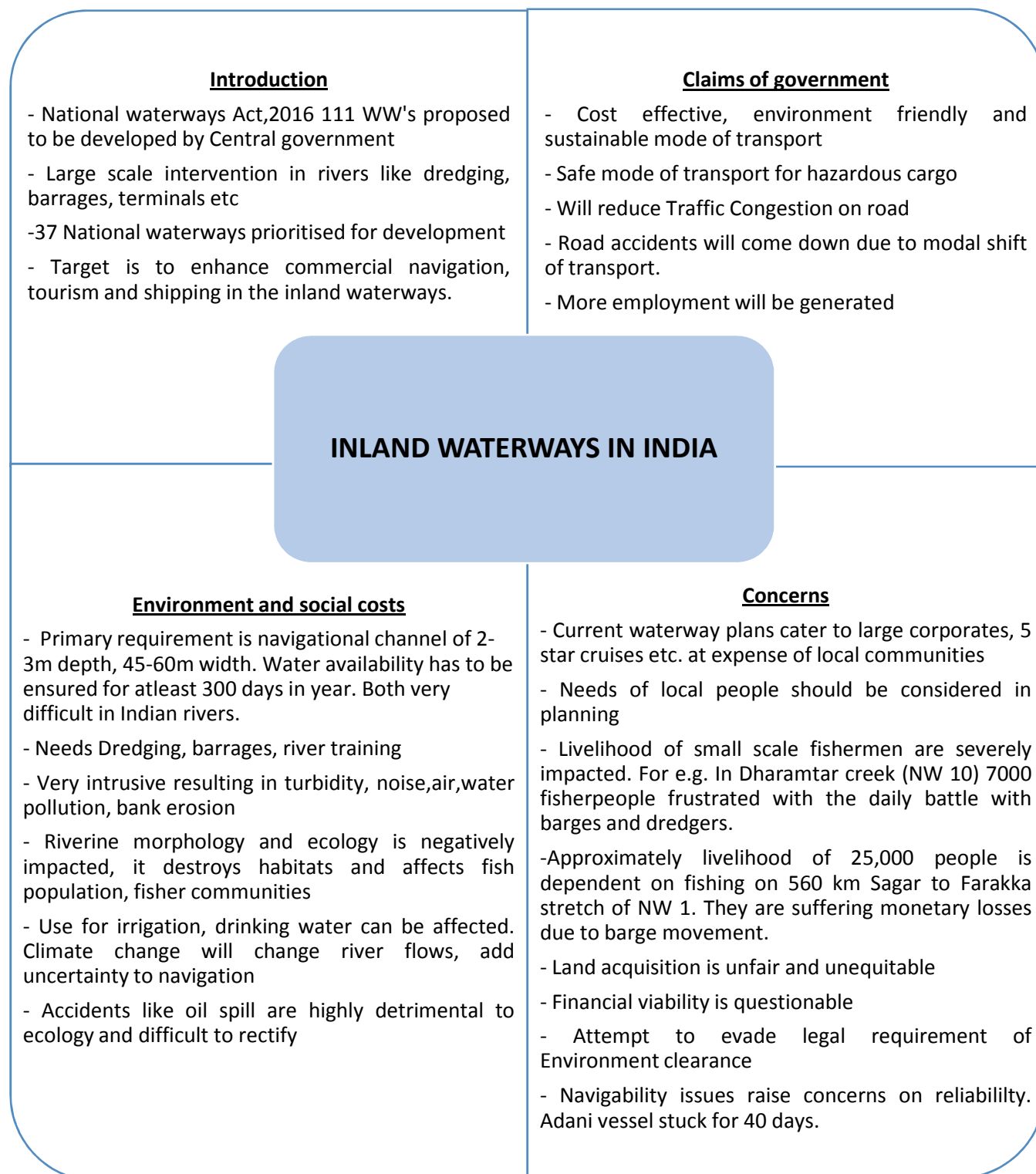


Report of Presentations and Discussion at
**Consultation and Strategic Discussion on Inland Waterways and
 Related Developments**
 21 Jan 2020, New Delhi

I. Highlights of session on overview of national inland waterways in India (Presentation by AvliVerma, Manthan Adhyayan Kendra)



Points coming up during Discussion

- What are the regulations that govern the pollution from ship movements for inland waterways?
- Cruises are not taking permission from wildlife agencies, though the movement thru protected areas would need such permission.
- There are serious differences on some of the waterways between centre and state.
- There is a need to see impact of waterways on other uses like irrigation, drinking water. Cost benefit studies that examine these aspects are needed.

II. Major points from sessions on experience sharing, key issues and larger planning context...

ISSUE	INFORMATION SHARED	SPEAKER
Awareness of waterways	Lay people don't know what is going on, what is being planned under the name of waterways	Several speakers
	We used to be dependent on boats (in Brahmaputra), over forefathers used streamers to reach Kolkata, Dhaka. But now what is happening under name of waterways is very different. World Bank is also coming in.	Keshoba Krishna Chatradhara (Bhai)
Impact on fisheries, small boatspeople	The small scale fishing communities are by far the largest primary non-consumptive stakeholders of our rivers and water bodies and their natural custodians. They are most affected by waterways. Problems faced are damage to nets and boats due to barges, sudden turbulence drives away fish, turbidity increase hampering breeding, land encroachments, loss of accessibility and habitat of fishers. Fly ash is a big problem for fish in the Sundarbans area.	Pradip Chatterjee, National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (Inland)
	What are the legal provisions used to exclude local people from access after waterways are declared? Need to examine their validity.	Siddharth Chakravarty, Independent Researcher, The Research Collective
	Gujarat Maritime Board has banned fisherpeople from access to navigational channels.	Roshni Patel, Brackish Water Research Centre
	NOC is needed from IWAI for any activity. Notices have been given at many places to fishers to clear their nets.	Pradip Chatterjee
	Around 1 lakh fisher people stay in floating houses around the Loktak lake –and are dependent on the lake for livelihood. The Loktak Inland Waterways improvement project will lead to motorised boats running in the lake which will destroy the ecosystem and impact livelihood of small scale fisher people.	RamanandaWangkheirakpam, Indigenous Perspectives
	Fisheries are worst affected due to the Sagarmala projects (ports). The rights of the fishers are undermined and not considered while drafting the policies. There is MOU signed with Madras Port, government and TATA for construction of the Subarnarekha Port in 2008. This has been protested against w.r.t land acquisition rights by many people since 2010. 80 people died, 2 severely injured and many people in prison. Due to ongoing protests, they have still not been able to acquire land.	Arun Jena, UpakulaVitamati Suraksha Committee
	Many instances take place where if the dolphins die – the fishers are blamed. Without determining the actual cause of death the small fisherman are made easy targets. The increased prices of fishes have led to malpractices like dacoits.	Rampujan, Jal ShramikSangh, Ganga MuktiAndolan
	The small boatspeople who ferry to and from diyara to the Maniharighat, will lose access to the river. (Near Sahibganj)	Nishant Singh, People's Research Centre
Land	During the construction of Sahibganj terminal on NW-1, scheduled	Nishant Singh,

ISSUE	INFORMATION SHARED	SPEAKER
acquisition issues	community lands taken over by execution of gift deeds, unequitable distributions within family led to many micro-level disputes which remain unresolved till. Promised very high compensation, got very less. (30 lakhs vs 30,000 Rs).	People's Research Centre
Ecological Impacts, Destruction of habitat	In Bhagalpur, due to the large scale interventions in the rivers in the past, the species of fishes have reduced drastically from 309 species to only 100.	Uday, Paridhi, Ganga MuktiAndolan
	River dolphin is declared as aquatic national animal and it is severely endangered due to intrusive procedures such as dredging, river embankments, noise etc. However, people are not aware of the species and the required habitat.	NachiketKelkar, ATREE
	Higher flows in rivers buffer the sound / noise of propellers for dolphins: so this aspect must be used as one of the criteria when determining the e-flows in a river	NachiketKelkar
	Turbidity and toxic metals in the water increase, which result in dolphins migrating downstream. 5PPB TO 100PPB change was noticed due to dredging activities. Need to generate systematic data on toxics released during dredging.	Sunil Chaudhary, Bhagalpur University
Water pollution, water scarcity and high siltage problems	Arsenic and fecal coliform poisoning is also on the rise due to deep excavation activities. (In NW 1)	NachiketKelkar, ATREE
	Bharuch 100 years back was a port town used for exporting. Now the Narmada river there can be crossed by foot. So where is any water available for waterways? The several projects proposed on the river are conflicting and their agendas do not coincide with each other.	Krishnakant Chauhan, PSS/NAPM
	There is high siltage in the Assam and Brahmaputra valley. It was proposed to use silt excavated from dredging for the waterway to construct express highway. However the DPR's are not yet implemented.	Keshoba Krishna Chatradhara (Bhai)
	River-bed from Buxar to Farakka is extremely silted. After the Farakka barrage project, the backwater floods in North-Bihar have become a menace and floodwater spreads in the cities on a much larger scale than before. Kosi is a shallow river so lot of digging will be needed for waterways. Even Ganga does not have water, that is why so many cases of vessels getting stuck.	RanjeevKumar, NadiVapasiAbhiyaan
	In Kosi, water logging problems have multiplied due to failed canal irrigation. Arsenic poisoning instances are on the rise due to excess of digging. Two years before, lot of dredging was undertaken and channel was constructed from Bhimnagar Barrage. However, it was not implemented properly.	Mahendra Yadav, KoshiNavNirmanManch
	NW 47 – Jalangi river water supply was adequate only till 1965. After that it has barely been navigable due to lack of water. Out of 250km, 45km is completely occupied by settlements, agricultural land and government offices as well. The waterflow in Farakka does not meet the expected requirement of 80,000 cusecs. However, Irrespective of the actual water available - As per international treaty 40,000 cusecs of water is released to Bangladesh.	SupratimKaramakar, NadiBachaoJibanBachao
	Water Taxi Project on Yamuna has been halted as dredging is prohibited. (The stretch is source of drinking water for Delhi). Much requisite permissions have not yet been taken.	Manoj Misra, Yamuna JiyeAbhiyaan

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	Fish has been badly affected due to pollution, ship movement, dredging etc in in Tapi near Magdalla port, and also in Sabarmati downstream of Ahmedabad due to pollution.	Roshni Patel, Brackish Water Research Centre
Existing constructions hindrance	In the Gujarat waterways, there are many existing constructions. Weir cum cause way constructed in 1995 in Tapi river is without ship locks. The proposed barrage at Piplod is also without shiplocks. To avoid salinity government has proposed Bhadbhut barrage project which again will not provide the navigational way in Narmada River.	Roshni Patel, Brackish Water Research Centre
Climate adversities	In the last 200 years, 75 major cyclones taken place near the Paradip port. The EIA has not addressed this issue at all. The government has not cleared the issue of how they plan to tackle the issue of cyclones interfering with the waterway development activities.	Sandeep Patnaik, National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS)
	Water Taxi Project on Yamuna: In this area there is no consumers/industries which will utilize this project. Also, the extreme weather conditions such as High floods (monsoon), dust storms (summer) and low temp & high ammonia (winter) will desist potential users.	Manoj Misra, Yamuna Jiye Abhiyaan
Financial matters	Most of the funds for the development of waterways are from the budgetary allocations. Certain funds have come in from bonds Rs. 340 and 660cr (EBR's). This will be entirely used for capital expenditure. In 2017, for JMVP Project– 375 million USD from World Bank. They want to push private sector participation and banking finance in this sector. To motivate participation in the WW they will provide several incentives like vessel building subsidy, viability gap funding, custom duty concession etc.	Gaurav Dwivedi, Centre for Financial Accountability
	Why such host of unviable projects come into existence? They create viability gaps and create fertile ground for the private sector to jump in and create opportunities. Investment is slow in the market right now, but once funds are available they will come in to make profits from these projects.	Himanshu Damle, Public Finance Public Accountability Collective (PFAC)
Legal Issues	The NW-1 JMVP project circumvented the requirement for environmental clearance. The IWAI claimed that maintenance dredging is exempt and hence no prior Environmental Clearance required. Case is ongoing since 2015 in NGT के स्वरूप में .	Shibani Ghosh, Public Interest Lawyer, fellow at Centre for Policy Research
	The case in NGT now is at a stage where NGT has asked MoEF to consult experts and give a response on the applicability of environmental clearance for waterways. We have been allowed to make submissions to the committee. Biodiversity act in 2002 is not implemented by the Central Government (Impact on the biological diversity has to be assessed). Their essential powers are they have to prepare a peoples biodiversity register (PBR) to compile the information about the biodiversity. This can be used to challenge the EIA report. In Bihar there is zero compliance. PBR is also not yet implemented.	Meera Gopal, Environmental Lawyer, LIFE

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Issues from wider resource planning context	Value of goods manufactured in India is captured elsewhere due to heavy exports. There is race of nations where everyone is trying to make the same product at cheaper cost. Growth in fish production coming from culture fisheries. Logistics, culture fisheries and capture fisheries interconnection needs to be studied in detail. Culture fisheries make standardisation possible.	Siddharth Chakravarty, Independent Researcher, The Research Collective
	Sahibgunj and other multi-modal terminals are where rail, road and waterways come together. There is a link to the freight and other corridors. Water for Adani's Godda thermal power plant will also go from here.	Nishant Singh, People's Research Centre
	In Loktak, we can see the politics of conservation, of tourism and of technology. Motorised boats will allow authorities to gain control of the lake.	RamanandaWangkheirakpam, Indigenous Perspectives
International Connections	The Kaladan project is planned from Kolkata to Myanmar thru inland waterways, sea and land. Plans also to link Aizawl (Mizoram) with Myanmar.	RamanandaWangkheirakpam, Indigenous Perspectives
	There is no MoU as yet between Nepal and India on the Kosi or Gandak waterways which are planned to be international waterways between Nepal and India. The DPRs are also only for the Indian part. But some teams have come from Nepal to India to see the area, and talks are ongoing. Kalughat terminal near Patna is being exclusively developed for waterways connection with Nepal.	Shripad Dharmadhikary, Manthan

III. Suggestions for the strategic way forward and discussion points in closing session...

Awareness generation

- Need to address the awareness gap by creating awareness about the waterways program and its impacts at various levels
- Awareness creation is needed in areas where waterways are being planned, among potentially affected communities like fisherpeople, among civil society and social and environmental action groups, in media etc
- Regional meetings should be planned, especially in southern parts of the country
- Campaigns should be held in society at large for the affected fishing people and other communities bringing together environmentalists, academicians, scientists also.
- Employ citizenship science to highlight and bring all evidence to a common platform. Use of visuals – Photographs, audio testimonials and videos can help highlight the gravity of underlying issues.
- Media exposure should be increased to highlight studies and scientific evidence Channel needs to be found to be disseminated to larger population.
- Mobilising of local media is very important

Mobilisation, Campaigns, Advocacy

- Movements and organisations of fishing communities, other riverine communities, and other mass organisations should take up the issues of waterways and their impacts.
- Mobilisation, campaigns and advocacy in collaboration with fishworkers groups, coastal and inland, as well as other research groups working on Blue economy issues
- Push for fishers to have first rights to rivers
- Exchange visits to better share and understand experience of different places
- Lobby state and central governments
- Address MoEFCC to ensure that legally binding environmental clearance process is mandatory for waterways and all their related activities

Research, analysis, preparation of resource material

river etc.

- Awareness material should be in easy to understand language, in local languages and in forms like brochures, pamphlets
- Need to put together robust scientific evidence and data collection to back up our cause.
- We should make full use of existing scientific literature, for e.g. IPCC report and its mention of waterways
- Key inputs are missing such as impact of dredging on the water quality, adequacy of water flow in different rivers.
- Studies that profile livelihoods based on free flowing rivers are needed.
- Document and highlight the ecological services rendered by rivers with importance of riverine fisheries in food security, nutrition and employment.
- Data repository on all rivers, their biodiversity, geography, waterflow patterns should be created. Specific format for information collection can be devised.
- Studies should be high quality, but need to be done speedily
- It is important to verify how the financial figures like cost estimates, benefits anticipated etc are arrived at and counter it. There is gap in the financial study. National sources of funds to be identified and elaborated.
- Awareness on the global financial instruments in Blue Economy and Inland waterways
- Studies to highlight financial (non) viability of waterways, and issues regarding their reliability need to be undertaken.
- Locate waterways in the larger economy, in context of other interventions like river linking, economic corridors, Sagarmala etc.
- Shipping incidents like accidents, vessels getting stuck etc, which have taken place in the past to be studied – their causes and consequences and how it will be catered in the inland waterways context. Whether proper regulations are in place by IWAI to tackle potential accidents should be studied.
- The co-ordination between different ministries involved should be studied to understand the hierarchy of authority and also the points of escalation.

Legal Actions

- Compile and file litigations for waterways issue in India at different places and on different related issues.
- Collaborate and follow up for the legal cases.
- Legal help is much required for understanding the underlying legal issue. The complex language of law is not easily understandable by layman.

Other Interventions

- Push IWAI and other implementing agencies to undertake thorough environmental and social cost/benefit analysis prior to starting developmental activities.
- Under the sustainable development goals, freshwater preservation is an important goal. On global level, this is not given that much importance. There is goal for marine life and terrestrial like but not for freshwater life. Uplifting the status of rivers and their conservation should be brought into light through more activism.
- Sustainable use of free flowing rivers should be structured properly to consider the needs and limitations of all communities.
- To obtain the complete picture, international experience with respect to inland waterways needs to be understood. Especially rollbacks of rivers developed in international countries should also be analysed. This will help to forecast any problems that may arise.
- Tools such as Environmental justice atlas EJATLAS can be used to inventorise the ecological conflicts, data mapping, key issues and steps taken for reformation.
- To locate these interventions a part of the land and water grab, as part of justice movements
- To understand and highlights the impacts from the caste/ class / gender axis

IV: Some Event and Programs that would be important to highlight issues of inland waterways

Date	Event / Program	Contact
22 Feb 2020	MachhuaraSammelan (Fisherpeople Convention) at Kahalgoan, Bhagalpur, organised by Ganga MuktiAndolan	Rampujan
23 Feb 2020	Kosi Mahapanchayat (Convention on Kosi river) at Supaul organised by KoshiNavNirmanManch	Mahendra Yadav,
September 2020	People's Tribunal on Blue Economy	Coastal Action Network

V. Some thoughts from the organisers

A number of suggestions have been made by various participants on way forward, actions that can be taken and so on. Many of the participants will be taking up some or the other action points in their own work and activity. However, as was also articulated in the consultation, there is a need for some collective actions also. We feel it would be good for a group from those who were at the consultation (and even some who were not able to participate) to brainstorm on possible collective actions and evolve some suggestions and initiatives. Those who are interested in being part of this brainstorming please do let us know and we will try and initiate the process.

Another suggestion which has come is of holding regional meetings on the issue of waterways. Please let us also know if you would like to participate in such regional meetings or host such a meeting.