

Water Feeder

A Monthly Dose of Odia Water News

(An Initiative of Odisha State Center, FPWCI, Baitarani Initiative, Shristi))

This is an attempt to compile and analyze water-related news published in Odia dailies with an objective to help water professionals and enthusiasts to capture and comprehend issues and conflicts around water (through eyes of media). It is also going to provide a geographical, seasonal and media perspective of water issues and conflicts in Odisha to stimulate thoughts and actions.

We are beginning this initiative with a Monthly 'News Analysis' covering 5 major Odia Dailies¹. An odia version is also on its way. Each news item have been tagged and put in a searchable database, which will be shortly uploaded in the net along with scanned copy of each news item.

We look forward to your comments and Feedbacks *(Pl send your response to baitarani@gmail.com)*

News in this month of May was reiterations of Odisha's continuing tryst with water-absences and excesses. This month in Odisha witnessed water-sufferings from continuing month long scarcity as well as water-apprehensions of excesses during coming monsoon. While, the first half of May was dotted with instances and consequences of 2009 summer heat waves, scattered pre-monsoon and cyclonic storm events during mid and second-half of the month raised the public concerns over upcoming flood-damages with most of the previous year's flood hit river embankments still waiting repairs. Reflecting the public feelings, most of the odia dailies covered widely the acute drinking water issue of the state while also putting priority to news on the future possibility of floods during the upcoming monsoon.

Among other water related issues and conflicts, water pollution, tension among mines, industries and local public for water sharing, decrease in ground water level, man-animal conflicts etc was also covered by these dailies.

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¹ The Samaj, The Dharitri, The Sambad, The Khabar and The Pragatibadi
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1. Water Issues & Conflicts

a. Drinking Water Crisis

In Coastal Odisha, the drinking water issues and conflicts in Puri, Gopa, Baranga, Jatani, Khurda, Bhubaneswar, Soro, Cuttack, Naugaon etc areas were most highlighted and followed-up in different news papers. Fighting and prevalence of tensions between different groups and communities in places like Khurdha and Puri also got prominence in Print Media in this month.

Serious drinking water crises and the resulting diseases due to drinking of polluted and contaminated water in Chandaka, Gopa, Puri, and Jatani areas were reported by most of the Odia Dailies. Similarly different problems related to pouched water in Cuttack, Balipatana areas were also covered. On the other hand, the acute drinking water scarcity in Koraput of Southern Odisha and many places in North and Western Odisha like, Baripada, Kaptipada, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Vatli, Rourkela, Kendujhar, Baragarh, Sonapur, Rairangpur, Karanjia etc were also widely highlighted in these dailies. Besides this, the water crises and the related issues and conflicts from other part of Odisha like Ranapur, Ghasipura, Athagarh etc were also found to be covered by some news papers in this month.

Particularly the news in 'The Sambad' reported from Berhampur titled "**Murder... Suicide... and Burning...For the sake of water only**" was worth thought provoking. As per the report about 725 out of 1311 lift irrigation projects are defunct and most of the panchayats of the district are suffering from water scarcity. Public outbursts like mass demonstration and road obstruction with burning tyres had become everyday show. Similarly public demonstration in front of district administration for ensuring minimum supply of drinking water at Rourkela and the gherao of Village Panchayat Office by the women for proper arrangement of drinking water in Udaypur Panchayat of Saharapada Block, Keonjhar was the direct reflection of the simmering local water tensions in this month. Photos of women with contaminated coloured water are other eye catching news on water scarcity.

b. Threat of Floods & blocked Drainage

With rainy season on the corner, the weak and un-repaired river embankments were causes of the concerns and reminders of scary memories for the river bank

communities not only in the flood-affected delta, but also in the newly flood-prone upper catchment regions.

The bandhs and embankments of different rivers like River Daya near Bhubaneswar, River Hati near Kalam Pur, River Kuakhai near Baliana, Mahanadi near Cuttack, River Indrabati near Kalahandi, Kundei Canal in Balipatana, River Kochila near Dhamnagar, river Rusikulya near Ganjam and Chhatrapur, River Luna near Mahakalpada are specifically in critical conditions and need immediate attention. All such news, as previously stated, are the second most prioritised ones in the news in the month of May.

Govt of Odisha has also identified about 584 weak places on different river bandhs and embankments throughout Odisha.

“The blockage due to siltation and deposition in more than 15 natural canals connecting Chilka with other natural water reservoirs is leading to decrease in inflow and storage in the lake and thus negatively influencing the floral and faunal biodiversity” reported the leading Odia daily ‘The Sambad’.

A news reporting, “illegal brick kiln industries on the bank of River Kuakhai at Baliana and Taladanda Canal in Jagatsinghpur are serious threat to the concerned river and canal” was seen in The Khabar’

c. Escalating Water Pollution

Water pollution is snowballing to be a big problem in Odisha. Direct discharge of polluted and contaminated water by different industries to common water distribution systems like canals and rivers has been highlighted as the main cause of water pollution in the headlines of most of the news media in the month of May. Particularly the pollution of Angul main canal due to Angul industrial excreta, Taladanda canal in Cuttack, the nearby rivers and canals of Paradip due to PPL, the farmlands in Koraput due to the local Paper mill etc have been clearly presented by different news agencies in this month.

d. Deepening Ground Water Crisis

The deepening ground water level in different areas is being realized as a serious cause of water scarcity in Odisha. The status of this problem in different areas has been covered for last many days. But the after effects of the problem has led to dysfunction of hundreds of wells and tube wells in Khurdha, Puri, Nimapara, Bhubaneswar, Gopa, Subarnapur areas.

e. Water scarcity adding to Man-animal Conflict

The water scarcity has not only affected the human life but also the wild life to a great extent. The water scarcity in different sanctuaries and forest ranges (like

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Astaranga in Puri, Chandaka near Khurdha) has led the wild animals to enter the human settlements and being victimized.

f. Cultural Concerns

“Along with the unresolved resettlement of many displaced people in Hirakud Dam project, around 80 Gods and Goddesses who have lost their temples are waiting for their resettlement” has come out as a cultural and religious issue in Odia Daily ‘The Khabar’.

g. Hydropower worries

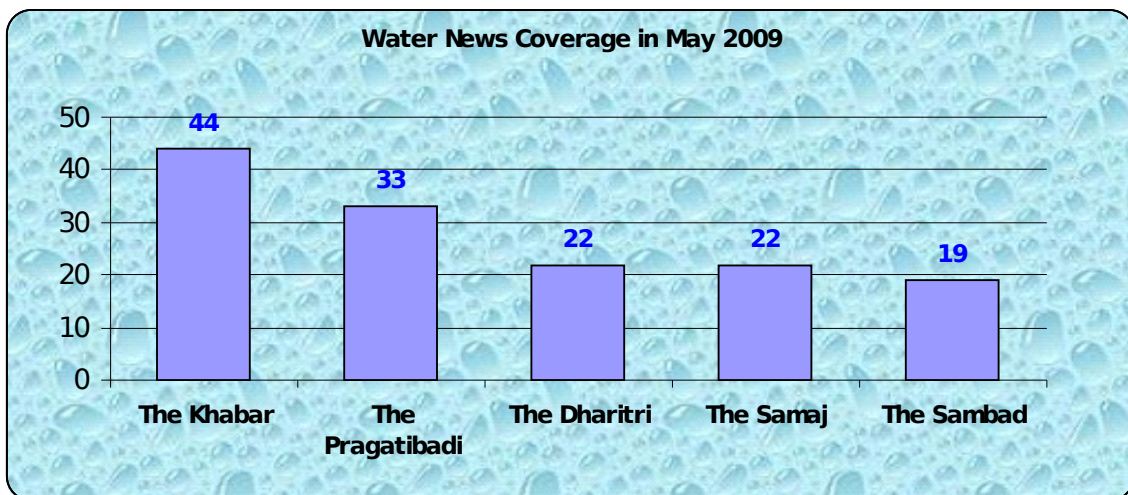
The dangerously decreasing water level in most of the reservoirs and the resulting acute hydro-power scarcity in state have been covered as the headline news in leading Odia dailies.

h. Govt Plans and Programs

The state govt’s plans and programs for the month of May and onwards to control the water scarcity problem in the state also got wide coverage in the media. This year the governmental targets towards providing irrigation facility to 1, 88,000 hectares of farmlands by building 1845 irrigation points, development of watersheds and, small irrigation points. Under Bharat Nirman Yojana budgetary allocation of Rs 700 Crores has been made for pipe drinking water supply.

2. Dailies’ Water Level in May 09

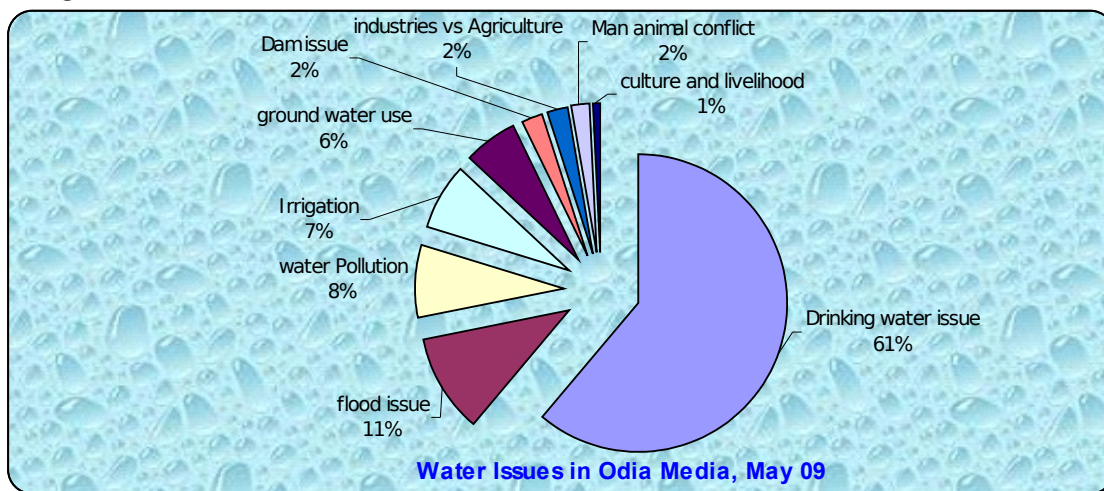
Around 140 numbers of news around water conflicts and conflicting situations have been covered by **5 Odia** news papers in the Month of May. Among the news papers, ‘The Khabar’ has covered the highest numbers of water-news (44) followed by The Pragatibadi(33), The Dharitri (22), The Samaj (22), and The Sambad(19).



3. Coverage of Issues and Geographies

As per our analysis about geographical coverage of water conflict news it has been found that news from Costal Odisha have remained most covered with 78 reports along with Western Odisha (22), Southern Odisha (16), Northern Odisha (9), and Central Odisha (15).

Taking into account the various water issues, their coverage in the newspapers is as following:



Drinking water issues: Highest numbers of news articles i.e. 85 have been covered on drinking water issues out of which The Khabar has reported 29 with The Pragatibadi (24), The Samaj (15), The Sambad(12), and The Dharitri (5).

Flood Issues: Reporting on flood issues, a total number of 15 pieces of news have been there in different news papers. Among them The Samaj, The Khabar as well as The Sambad have reported 3 numbers of news each along with The Dharitri of 5 numbers and The Pragatibadi one news.

Water pollution: About 11 pieces of news have been reported in different news papers on water pollution in the month of May. Out of that The Dharitri, The Pragatibadi and The Samaj have reported 3 articles each followed by 2 articles of The Khabar.

Irrigation issues: In the month of May there are 11 reported news on irrigation issues in which The Samaj has covered one news, The Dharitri two news, The Sambad One, The Pragatibadi two and the Khabar five.

Industries Vs Agriculture for water and the issues: Reporting on Industries Vs Agriculture for water and the issues there are only thee pieces of news which have been covered by The Dharitri (2) and The The Khabar(1).

Ground water issues: Similarly 8 numbers of conflicting issues around ground water have been there in the media out of which The Pragatibadi has reported 3 pieces of news with The Dharitri and The Sambad each two numbers.

Dam issues: reporting on water conflicts around dams three news have come out in the month of May out of which The Khabar has covered two pieces of news and The Dharitri one.

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Man and Animal conflict issues around water: the month of May has witnessed three instances of reported news on man animal conflict around water which have been covered by The Khabar(2) and The Dharitri (1).

Culture and livelihood issues around water: there is only one report on issue around water relating culture and livelihood in The Dharitri.

From another point of view *The Khabar* has reported most of the non-coastal area water conflict news under drinking water, irrigation and flood related issues.

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