

“Conserving Nepalese Wetlands: Sharing Experiences and Building Partnership”

Selected success models from Nepal... (1)  
**Bagmati River Festival**

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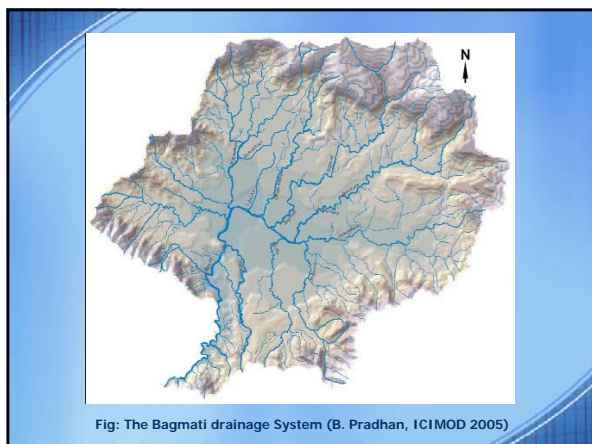


### Presentation Outline

- Background of the Bagmati River
- Drivers of “Degradation of the Bagmati River”
- Birth of the Bagmati River Festival (BRF)
- BRF - Diversity in Programmes and stakeholders
- Achievements...so far...
- Lessons Learned
- Further Challenges and Opportunities

### Background of the Bagmati River

- Principal and Sacred river in town
- Originates on Shivapuri lekh (ridge) at an elevation of about 2,650 metres and drops to 1,340m over a distance of about 8 km. The length of the Bagmati river from its origin Shivapuri ridge to the Chobhar gorge is about 35 km (ICIMOD, 2007).
- A river system of 20 tributaries within the valley
- Important source for drinking water and irrigation
- Flows through the heart of the valley on the bank of the holy temples Pashupatinath, Guheswori... and is a religious symbol.

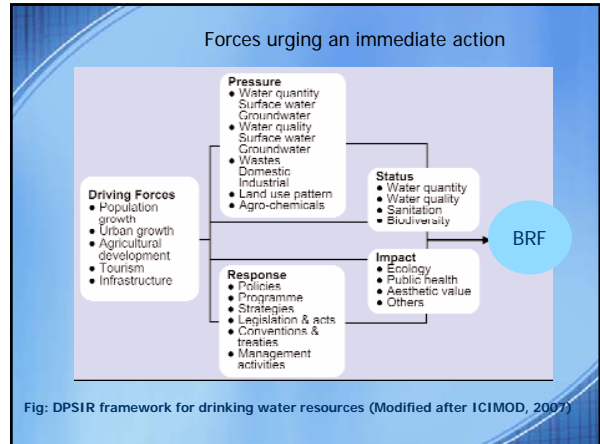
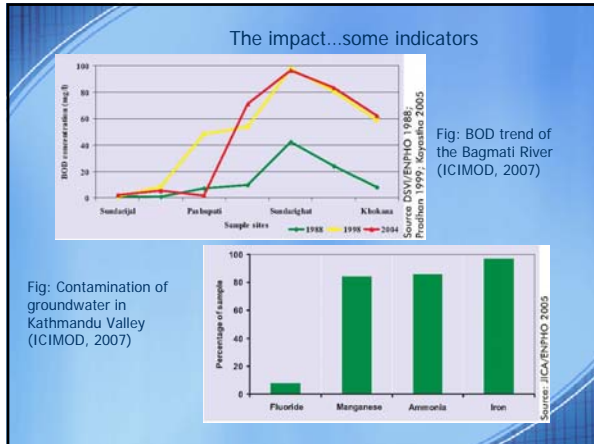


### Drivers of Bagmati degradation (data after ICIMOD, 2007)

Indicators	1950s	2001
Population in the valley	410,995	1,645,091 (quadrupled)
Population Density (ind./km <sup>2</sup> )	1830	457 (quadrupled)
Urban population in valley	181,082	995,966 (>5.5 times)

-The valley with its five municipal towns has an urban population of nearly 1 million, constituting slightly over 60% of its total population, accounting for nearly 31% of the country's total urban population.

- Agricultural development
- Tourism
- Infrastructure development



### Birth of the Bagmati River Festival – The concept

- Brain-child of NRCT Founder/President Mr. Megh Ale
- First launched in 2001 as a one-day event till 2003
- In 2004, extended to a program of two and half months starting from June 5 to August 20
- NRCT named it as a **Festival of 21<sup>st</sup> Century**
- Aims to develop a common platform of individuals and organisations working in various issues of Bagmati
- Partners with over 150 dozen organisations (active), over 150 Organisations ( )
- Receives partial funding from NTB, STN, other business houses, line ministries and some environmental organisations

### BRF - Diversity in programmes and stakeholders...I

Events	Sites	Major Co-organizers and participants (NRCT participate as a main Organizer in all the events)
Clean-up campaigns	Pashupati, Tilganga area, Thapathali, Kupondole, Teku, Chovar...	Partner I/NGOs, community organisations, clubs, Aama Samuha, media, corporate houses, schools and universities, student societies...
Heritage Walk	Teku-Thapathali...	Locals, Expatriates, students, media, I/NGO representatives...
School art, essay and poetry competitions, stage drama, amateur photography,	Schools and the closing venue, usually Thapathali	School children
Tree Plantation	Kupondole, Thapathali...	students, media, I/NGO representatives, corporate houses, local clubs, aama samuha...



**BRF - Diversity in programmes and stakeholders...II**

Events	Sites	Major Co-organizers and participants (NRCT participate as a main Organizer in all the events)
Anti-plastic campaigns	Simultaneously at various sites (SVS)	Partner I/NGOs, youth initiatives, community organisations, clubs, schools and universities, student societies...
Waste management training (mainly composting)	Teku, Thapathali...	Locals, clubs, aama samuha and partner NGOs
Cycle rallies for women and men	SVS	Partner I/NGOs, clubs, corporate houses, universities...
Technical workshop on Bagmati River	NTB hall	students, media, I/NGO representatives, universities, student societies...
Bagmati Kayak Clinic	Taudaha	School children and interested others

**BRF - Diversity in programmes and stakeholders...III**

Events	Sites	Major Co-organizers and participants (NRCT participate as a main Organizer in all the events)
Media Dunda Daud	Sundarijal-Jorpati	Partner media houses
Corporate Dunda Daud	Sundarijal-Jorpati	Partner corporate houses
Bagmati Friendship Float	Sundarijal-Jorpati, Tilganga-Thapathali... SVS	Open to all
Public Rafting	Sundarijal-Jorpati, Tilganga-Thapathali... SVS	Open to all
Concert, Food Festivals, Work and Photo Exhibition, Workshops,	SVS	students, media, music professionals, I/NGO, representatives, universities, student societies...

**BRF - Diversity in programmes and stakeholders...IV**

Events	Sites	Major Co-organizers and participants (NRCT participate as a main Organizer in all the events)
Dunda Daud School Challenge	Sundarijal-Jorpati, Tilganga-Thapathali... SVS	School students
Down River Kayak Race	Sundarijal-Jorpati, Tilganga-Thapathali... SVS	NARA, ANRGA and partner corporate houses
Blood Donation	SVS	Youth and Lion clubs, partner I/NGOs
Nature Hike	SVS	Different societies and clubs, expatriates, students, media, music professionals, I/NGO, representatives, universities, student societies...

**BRF - Diversity in programmes and stakeholders...V**

Events	Sites	Major Co-organizers and participants (NRCT participate as a main Organizer in all the events)
Bird Watching	Sundarijal, ...SVS	Partner I/NGOs, different societies and clubs, expatriates, students, media, music professionals, representatives, universities, student societies...
Eco-Challenge (Marathon, Cycling and Rafting)	Chovar-Balaju-Sundarijal-Jorpati	Partner I/NGOs, different societies and clubs, expatriates, students, media, music professionals, representatives, universities, student societies...
Let's Walk with Bagmati	Bank of the Bagmati River	Partner NGOs, clubs, local societies, expatriates, students, media, music professionals, representatives, universities, student societies...

**Major Achievements...**

- Established as a convenient and most effective platform to exercise different approaches to promote sustainability of Bagmati. (a network of networks)
- A festival of all religions, age groups, professions, communities... (image of a "common")
- A festival of all I/NGOs, I/GOs, CBOs, clubs, initiatives etc. working in Bagmati.
- Grew conservation awareness at all levels of a society. (an open school)
- An extensive media coverage (Radio, TV, Print & Electronic) (sensitization & Institutionalization of the agenda)



**Major Achievements...**

- A place where a wide range of issues can interplay;
  - Tourism: Heritage walk, Rafting, Cycling etc.
  - Sports: Cycling, Rafting, Kayaking, Marathon etc.
  - Capacity Building: Training to the river bank communities and competitions among the school children.
  - Conservation activities: Bird watching Clean-up, Tree plantation
  - Entertainment: Food festivals, concerts etc.
  - Demonstration: Workshops, Exhibitions,
  - Religious aspects: Gathered a wide range of people from different religions to a same place and promoting Bagmati River Festival as a festival of 21st century.
  - Promoting interactive society: Facilitate to interact among a different classes of a society
  - Strengthening Social bond: Blood donation

### Major Achievements...

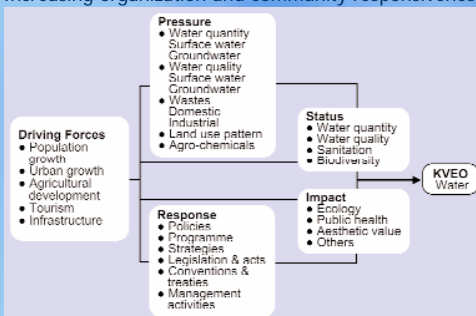
- Common platform to share ideas and to show how one can contribute to "Save the Bagmati"? (action-hub, experimentation and demonstration site)
- Slow down the rate of degradation of the Bagmati river with respect to other factors influencing in (in parts)
- A big push to conservation and environmental movement in Nepal, particularly in case of rivers.
- ...
- ...
- ...

### Lessons learned/findings

- Shifting (more inclusive) from conservation in isolation to conservation through participation
- Gap in coordination
- Lack of clear vision from government side
- Needs to enforce strong legal instruments to save Bagmati being a safe waste disposal site (soft and hard laws, as appropriate)
- Sustainability of the measures: Needs to think more on long-term solutions rather than short-term actions...
- Redistributing responsibilities among the participating organisations based on their strengths
- Harmonising science with the available knowledge producing synergy
- Synchronising all the activities through a central system

### Further challenges

- Financial sustainability
- Leadership transfer
- Increasing organization and community responsiveness



### The next step...

- Cash the lessons learned...
- Focus on 2<sup>nd</sup> generation problems
- Prevent nation's over 6000 river from being just another Bagmati
- Replicate the idea of BRF to save other rivers which are turning in to Bagmati...
- ...and finally...
- Lets make "Bagmati River Festival", a national festival and urge all to join BRF and work together to restore the sacredness of Bagmati river, where our offspring and our offspring's offspring can take a holy dip...
- Formation of a consortium of like minded organisations, development of an annual calendar of events and internalisation social, environmental, religious... issues make enable the system responsiveness

Thank you very much for Joining us

See you in the Bagmati River Festival