

**31 August 2007**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi.

**10 September 2007**

Letter sent to Hon. Lt. Governor of Delhi. Studies that this river demands for its & complete understanding.

**20 September 2007**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi Report – Yamuna under siege in Delhi.

**13 November 2007**

Article published in *International Herald Tribune*.

**14 November 2007**

Letter to Sri Arjun Singh Ji.

**26 November 2007**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi. Enclosed an article about 'Earthquake Damage, Mexico City, September 19, 1985'.

**3 December 2007**

Yamuna Jiye Abhiyaan Presentation.

**13 January 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor.

**26 January 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor.

**9 March 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor.

**27 March 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor.

**6 April 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor – Reg. Draft Zonal Plan for Zone 'E' East Delhi.

**15 April 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Sports.

**28 April 2008**

Letter sent to Officer on Special Duty to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi].

**26 April 2008**

Chronology.

**8 May 2008**

YJA - Presentation.

**15 May 2008**

Letter to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi (15.5.08).

**29 May 2008**

Letter to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi (29.5.08).

**19 June 2008**

Letter to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi - Reg. Zone 'O'.

**26 June 2008**

Letter to Hon'ble Lt. Governor with DMRC letter (26.6.08).

**26 June 2008**

Letter to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi – Reg. Emaar MGF.

**2 July 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi (Reg. Encroachment).

**6 July 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi.

**16 July 2008**

Letter sent to Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi.

## PROFOUND LEARNING FROM A CHILD

**Manoj Misra\***

A fellow *yatri* recounted at one of our daily briefing sessions during the recent *Yamuna Yatra*:

"*Beta nadi kya karti hei*, we had asked of a group of giggling yet curious children, at one of our road side gatherings. One of them after some amount of persuasion had quipped much to our wonderment, *nadi behti hei.....*"

YES. *Nadi behti hei....* Could there be a better understanding of a river?

It is only a still 'unpolluted' discerning mind of a child that would retain this unique feature of a river. And yet herein lie the deepest TRUTH of a river!

If there is one single attribute that distinguishes a river from any other natural system on earth then it is its

ability to flow from origin till confluence. No other ecological system does this in the said manner. It is this unique attribute of the river which results in a sphere of influence called the riparian zone extending on either bank and carrying distinctive soil conditions and the resulting unique flora and fauna there in.

Again perhaps it is this single attribute of a river which would have attracted pre historic humans to it leading to the flourishing of all the 'great' river valley human civilizations of the past as it was the river which was the ready source of ever renewing fresh water to them, meeting their drinking, bathing, cleaning, fishing,

**\* Convenor of Yamuna Jiye Abhiyaan, a consortium of NGOs and concerned citizens for the river Yamuna.**

and transportation needs. No wonder the rivers came to occupy a role akin to a mother (*maiyya*) to them.

In other words if a river is inhibited from its free flow then it would be like a forceful change in its nature and in turn its demise as a natural system. Dams, barrages, embankments, pseudo bridges etc on rivers with admittedly their own purpose to serve for the mankind who created them, are artificial structures that inhibit the free flow of a river. Let us take the example of Delhi.

Delhi owes its existence to river Yamuna. It had only one rail cum road bridge over the river till about 1958. The river water till then was abundant, crystal clear and a joy to behold and consume. Delhites were then one with their life-line river.

A serious jaundice outbreak (claiming around 300 lives) in the city led to the formation of the Wazirabad Barrage over the river with the objective to separate the city's drinking water supplies met from the river away from the polluted/infected waters of the Najafgarh drain which had presumably infected the river and caused the jaundice outbreak. It would soon prove to be a misplaced solution much worse than the disease, since the wrong 'culprit' had been caught and harnessed. In all fairness it should have been the Najafgarh drain which should have either been taken care of in the best possible manner so that it did not infect the river waters again, rather than barraging the river and obstructing its natural flow.

Soon enough the river south of the Wazirabad Barrage started to lose all its glory so much so that by the late seventies it had turned into no more than sewage drain for almost 9 months of the year.

The city being the capital city of the country attracted people from far and wide and soon turned itself into a megapolis. But the river lost not only its pride of place in the city's life but faded away even from the public memory. Newer bridges (pseudo ones) and more barrages (to meet industrial and irrigation needs) came to be built at two more sites (ITO and Okhla) on the river. More and more drains started to bring sewage and muck of the city into the river and its banks. The river had for all practical purposes ceased to remain one. All this happened as if the river was meant just to meet Delhi's domestic and industrial water needs and to take away its refuse as its underbelly.

No wonder we heard repeatedly from the local people during the *Yatra* that it is YOU, people of Delhi, who are to blame for all the ills that the river is facing today.

*But what could have been otherwise and is that possible even now?*

Delhi would need to ensure that it remedies the situation and let the river be. To do so both the Wazirabad barrage and the Okhla barrage would need

to be decommissioned as a barrage. And the river allowed a free flow within the NCTD.

Fortunately we still have the above option available to us.

Create an interceptor drain under / alongside the outer ring road or the Mathura Road from Wazirabad till where it meets the Agra canal and allow the sewage of Delhi which is today entering the river, via at least twenty drains starting with the Najafgarh drain, to get directly through the interceptor drain into the Agra Canal and away from the river proper. This would substitute for the role today being played by the Okhla barrage. Now decommission the Okhla barrage as being unnecessary. Expensive STPs in the city would then not even be needed since raw sewage (after filtering for solid wastes like plastic and ensuring that no untreated industrial waste has contaminated it) would be fine to meet the irrigation requirements of downstream Haryana and UP, the purpose for which the Okhla barrage was created.

Now once the Najafgarh drain (including its tributaries) and all the other polluting drains falling into the river from the west of the river have been taken care of then the Wazirabad barrage can safely be decommissioned with only the bridge over it staying.

Let the Wazirabad water treatment plant (WTP) then continue to access secure (without any infection threat) free flowing river water for meeting the water needs of the city as it used to do before the Wazirabad barrage was unwisely created.

In this manner Delhi can show the way forward (in form of interceptor mechanisms that prevent the city's sewage to fall into the river) for the revival of their rivers to the rest of the country and to the other riparian states of river Yamuna. But for the scenario as visualized above to become a reality the river would still require uninterrupted flow of water downstream of the Hathnikund barrage, 250 km upstream of Delhi, where the river currently loses major portion of its non monsoonal water flow to the Western and the Eastern Yamuna canals. But that's another although perfectly doable story.

Let Delhi, as the nation's capital city state lead the way first.

