



Documenting change in the WASPA project: Involving polluters and raising their awareness in WASPA Bangladesh



In the Rajshahi region, there are many small and cottage industries. Rajshahi city is a famous producer of silk and which requires colors and hazardous chemicals. These are discharged in the drains without any treatment.

Between September and October 2006 the WASPA team held its first meetings with the **National Association of Small and Cottage Industries in Bangladesh (NASCIB)** and **Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)**.



In these meetings they learned more about the institutional arrangements and constraints. They mentioned the hazards of heavy metals for health and the food chain. But the NASCIB and BSCIC representatives told the team that they did not know that wastewater is being used for irrigation or that the farmers in Terokhadia area often have no other source of water.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) is the government regulatory body to encourage the entrepreneurship development in the field of small and cottage industries. Provision of technical support, training, loan disbursement and land allocation are the main activities of BSCIC.

The National Association of Small and Cottage industry in Bangladesh (NASCIB) is the central body for the silk industries. Providing technical support, guidelines and indications towards the Small and Cottage industries are the mandate of NASCIB



The silk industries in Rajshahi lease the land from the government and are required by law to have a water treatment system in place. However, the implementation of this law is weak and regulation is intransparent. In the past, BSCIC had advised the factory owners to install treatment plants. But the owners have always replied that they do not have enough finances to invest in wastewater treatment plants, even jointly. They feel it is the responsibility of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) or BSCIC to invest in wastewater treatment.

While BSCIC is officially responsible for maintenance of infrastructure, it is not responsible for managing wastewater or assisting industries in managing their wastewater. Rajshahi City Corporation authorities have not yet committed to regulating the wastewater situation. RCC state that they lack manpower, monitoring systems and knowledge to take the proper steps in operation and maintenance or regulation of the drainage system.





wastewater use in agriculture and the lack of adequate treatment. They agreed to undertake combined efforts together with other Core Group members including the RCC and the Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) to reduce hazards relating to wastewater. A shared vision to improve water quality in drains through better management and treatment of wastewater of industries was agreed.



The participation of NASCIB and BSCIC, the groups representing the main polluters in the area, in the Core Group meeting, their consent in the vision and agreement to take action can all be seen a positive developments.



It is difficult for the WASPA project to change the situation and get from awareness to commitments. The Learning Alliance (LA) approach is a central feature in the process of bringing together different stakeholders involved in Wastewater, Agriculture and Sanitation.

The Participatory Action Plan sets out BSCIC and NASCIB involvement in investigation of Cleaner Production, a workshop on regulations on Cleaner Production and treatment and the implementation of pollution reduction measures.

(October 2007)

In 2007, the WASPA team held various separate meetings with the different stakeholders from Rajshahi to gather information, build rapport and gather inputs for future visions, which will lead to action plans within the WASPA project.

The WASPA team also collected data on wastewater quality and use. The assessment summaries were translated and shared with BSCIC, NASCIB and other stakeholders.

BSCIC and NASCIB officials indicated their interest in WASPA and expected that WASPA could provide more information on wastewater pollution and that they would like to know more from WASPA about cleaner production methods.

In the first LA Core Group meeting in December 2007 BSCIC and NASCIB acknowledged the issues of

(December 2007)

In June 2008, during the Core Group meeting, the BSCIC representative mentioned the linkages between sanitation, wastewater management and reuse, and stated that wastewater should be treated as it can affect farmers and agriculture, and should be taken into account in town planning (master plan). Previously, there had been no other platform or mechanism to bring the



various stakeholders together. WASPA and the LA provided BSCIC with an opportunity to meet with different stakeholders and gain knowledge.

The good relations with the chairman of NASCIB and the convincing evidence provided, helped the WASPA team in gaining contact with the silk factories. The chairman of NASCIB has become a champion for the investigation of Cleaner Production (CP) methods.



In July 2008, during the Learning Alliance meeting, both NASCIB and BSCIC representatives actively participated in identifying lessons learned from the LA and PAP process. They were interested in the presentation from Sri Lanka about the PAPs there.



(July 2008)