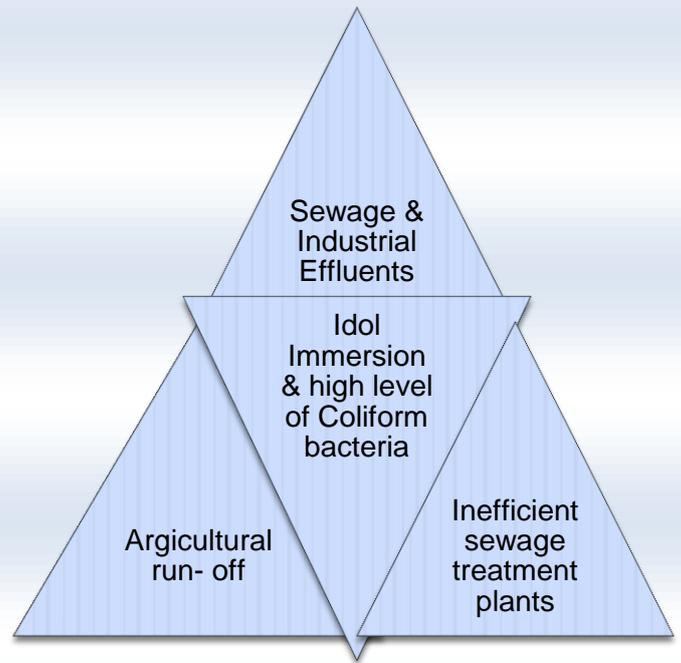


FROM HOPE TO ACTION

KOLKATA

Kolkata, the intellectual and cultural capital of India is also the commercial capital of East India, located on the east bank of the Hooghly River. The main branch of the Ganga, the Padma, passes through the Farraka Barrage, a gigantic barrier designed to divert the Ganga waters into the Hooghly branch, and away from the Padma.

The Ganga in West Bengal, often referred to as the Bhagirathi and the Hooghly, is fuller with water but due to the fresh inflow from Farakka fails to rescue the river. The direct inflow of sewage and industrial waste into the river has led to its degradation and eventually its conversion into an open sewer and has a drastic impact on its water quality. The water in Hooghly is highly intoxicated and is a constant threat to the lives of those who use it for drinking and other domestic purposes. During Durga Pooja, every year thousands of Idols continue to be immersed in Hooghly which further contaminates the water. The presence of the most common bacteria- E coli in the river, which is an indicator microorganism for other pathogens that may be present in feces, indicates that the river is being used for defecation. Agricultural runoff is also a major source of pollution in rivers. During the monsoon season due to heavy rains the water from agricultural fields containing fertilizers and pesticides flows into the rivers, contaminating the river water.



IMPACT

- Loss of livelihood of fishermen due to disappearance of fish Hilsa
- River has turned cancerous at many stretches
- Decreased biodiversity of river
- The water from Ganga used for irrigation has led to cultivation of crops unfit for consumption

SOLUTIONS

- Efficient sewage treatment plants
- Idols of clay should be used for immersion and vegetable dyes for decoration
- Problem of agricultural run-off to be dealt at grass root level
- Awareness against the excessive use of pesticides

About Bancroft Arnesen Explore (BAE): BAE has launched the 'Access Water Journey' in 2015 which is a two-month expedition along the river Ganga and is spearheaded by two powerful women explorers who hope to ignite global conversations towards a safe and abundant world, starting with clean water.

About The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI): The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is a not-for-profit institution actively engaged in a number of research and grassroots activities on environment and Sustainable Development.