

Project Update: June 2009

The children of Shuvatara International School and Shringery Community High School jointly did scientific tests of the stream flowing in the locality on 23rd May 2009. There were about 25 children altogether and six teachers from both the schools.

The investigation on speed, presence of aquatic insects, temperature, width and pH of the water were done at two points, Point 1 at the main bridge where there is a cluster of houses and shops. Point 2 was done above the village, about 0.5 km upstream. The children did the mapping of the area, noted all the parameters tested, and also observed the stream.

A few local community members also were the onlookers when the children did the investigation. The pH at Point 1 and 2 differed by 0.1 and the water was found to be more acidic. The garbage at Point 1 was massive and almost nil at Point 2. Similarly, many aquatic insects were found in Point 2 with much lesser numbers at Point 1.

Water samples from both the points are collected for a coliform test which needs 48 hours of incubation, to see if it was fit for human consumption. However, the overall observation showed that the water was not at all fit for drinking. The coliform tests confirmed that the water was totally unfit for human consumption.

The second round of investigations was to test for the presence of ammonia, phosphates and nitrates and the water hardness; this was carried on 30th May. The children also identified worms, blackfly larva, meniscus midge larva, swimming mayfly nymph, burrowing mayfly nymph, water beetles and wriggling beetle living in the water. This indicated that the river was partially polluted. The readings of ammonia, phosphates and nitrates indicated that the river was facing organic pollution. While doing the tests, the local people from the surrounding houses observed and listened to the reading and their causes, and also the negative impact it can make on the health of the people and aquatic animals.

The investigation was led by Parshuram S Niraula, Vice Principal of Shuvatara School, and also the Project Director of this particular project (CEEN).

A meeting in the afternoon of 30th May was organised with the Community Forestry Members, representative of Shuvatara School and local people and schools, in order to discuss the ways of cleaning the stream on the forthcoming World Environment Day. Every one felt that massive clean up was required along with instructions to people living adjacent to the stream to dispose of their waste in a more eco-friendly manner, avoiding further pollution. It was also agreed that the Pateley Community Forestry Group will monitor pollution and also from time to time. It was agreed that the local community, school children and teachers from Shuvatara and Shringery would participate in the stream clean-up, and logistics are being arranged for it.

On 4th June, the students of Shuvatara, Shringery, along with the members from the community participated in the cleaning up of the Shringery stream. They also cleaned up the surrounding area. A large pile of heap was collected at a point for it to be disposed off after

it becomes dry. This was organized to celebrate the World Environment Day. The stream looked much cleaner than before.

