
Awareness Campaign: 'Save the Kapotaksha', a case study

1.0 Background:

'Save the Kapotaksha' movement to save the dying river Kapotaksha is a glaring case of the public awareness on water resources management in Bangladesh. The Kapotaksha River originates from the Mathabhanga River, the later is a distributory of the Ganges and flows along the Indo-Bangladesh border .The River supplied fresh water throughout the year to the Kapotaksha for centuries. The commissioning of Farakka barrage across the Ganges in India aggravated the flow condition of the Mathabhanga, and in turn the Kapotaksha could no longer be fed from it. During the last few years, the Kapotaksha River has been silted up throughout its length and experiencing widespread drainage congestion. This awakens the sentiment of the local people and developed 'save the Kapotaksha' Movement.

In response to the persistent demand of the People of the area to undertake re-excavation of the river to stop the drainage congestion the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), formed a technical committee consisting of representatives from BWDB, CEGIS and IWM to find an appropriate solution for immediate relief.

2.0 Follow up Action:

The committee carried out a field investigation, interviewed a number of people and analyzed the survey data. Based on the report of the committee, dredging of the river was recommended as a short-term solution. The committee also suggested conducting environmental and social baseline surveys and monitoring surveys to capture the environmental and social response to the dredging activities, and to conduct information campaign among the local stakeholders to draw effective participation of the people in the dredging activities. BWDB proactively responded to the people's demand for dredging the Kapotaksha and other activities according to the recommendations of the said committee.

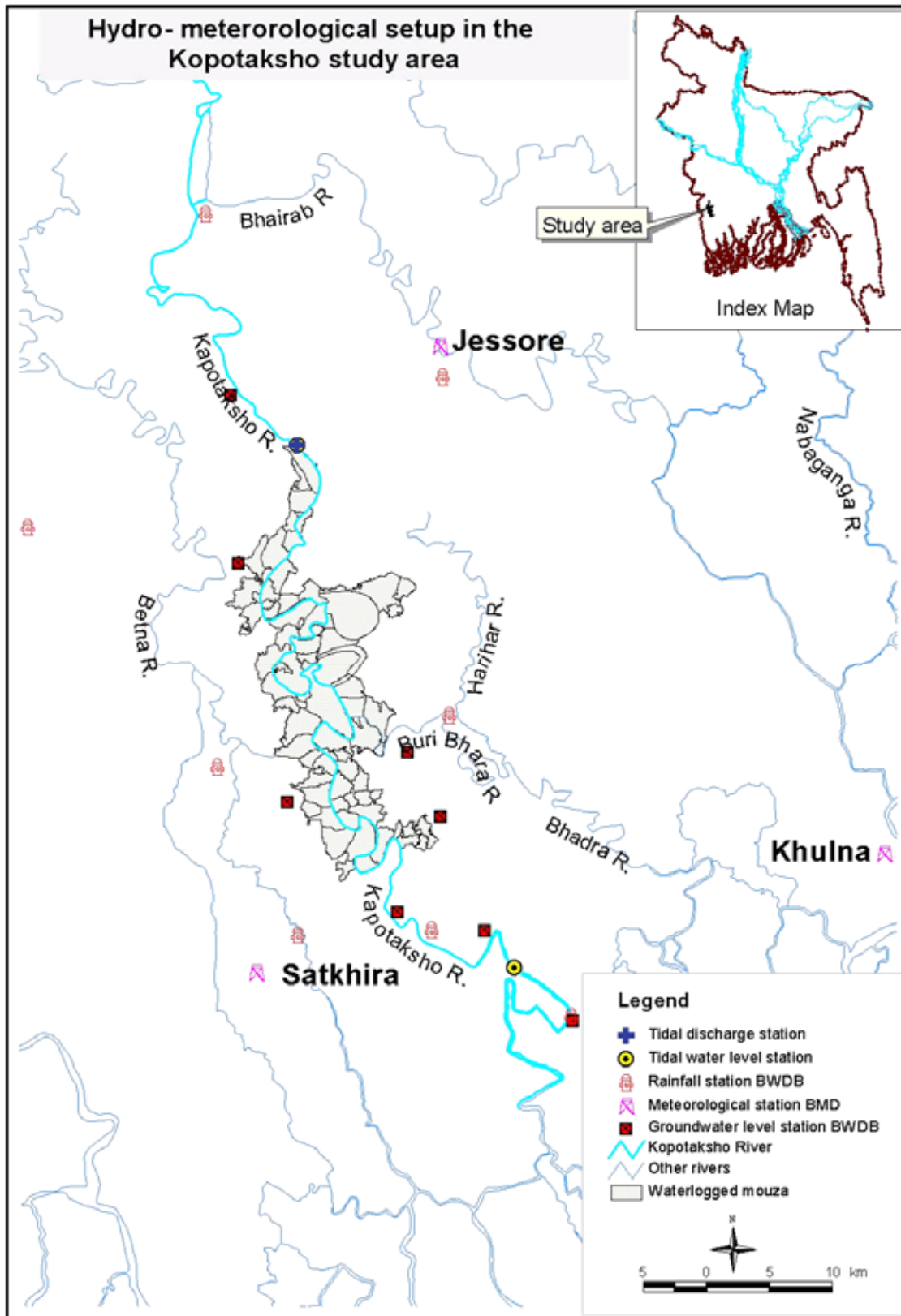
3.0 Outcome

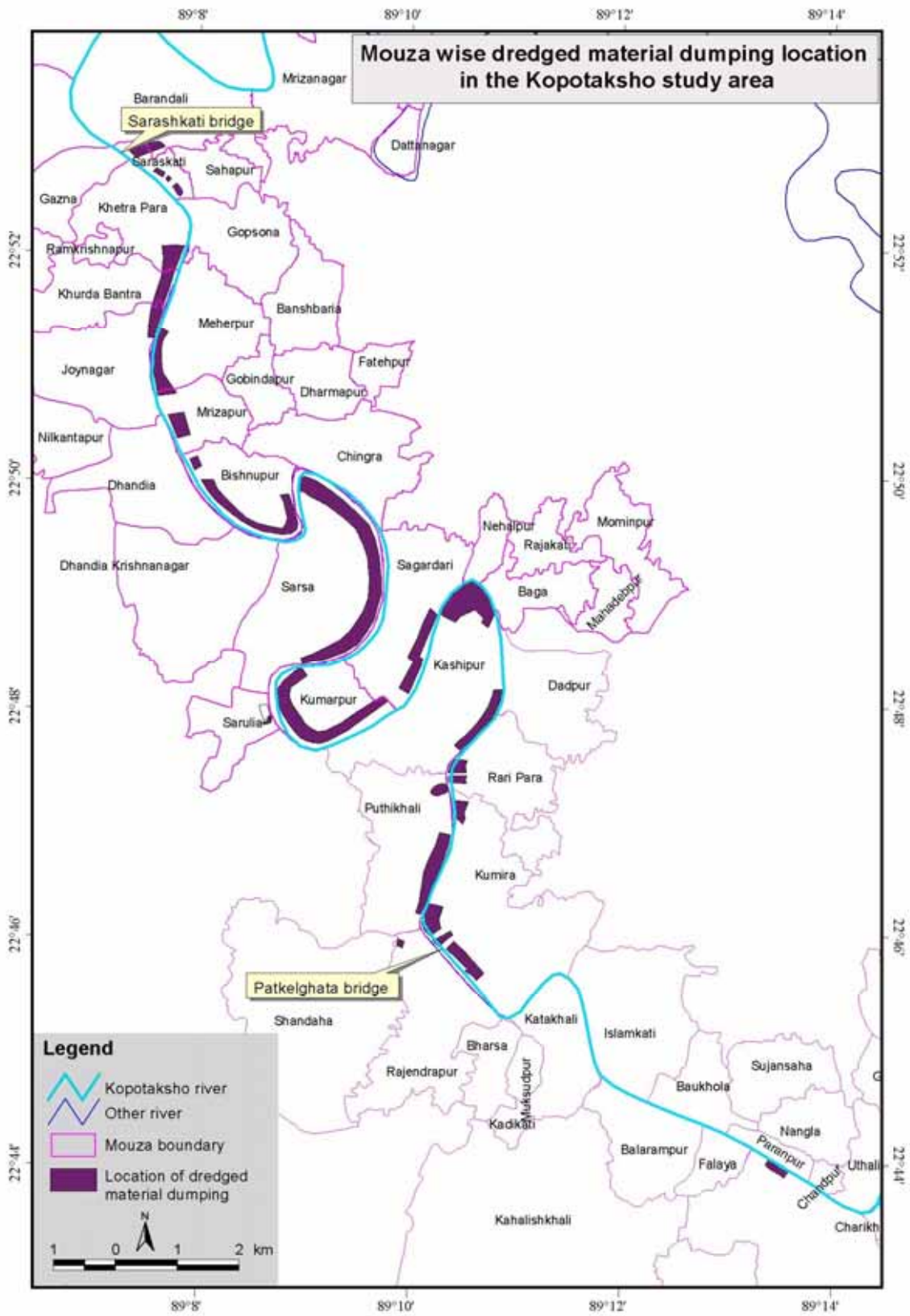
The ecosystem of the study area that lost due to high siltation on the river during the last few years at present responds very slowly to the changes due to the dredging intervention, accumulation of dredged materials, and changed water regime including tidal extent. Changes have occurred in both the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Most of these changes are beneficial but have occurred in low magnitude. The sustainability of these changes cannot be addressed right away, as monitoring needs to be continued for one full hydrological cycle to achieve it.

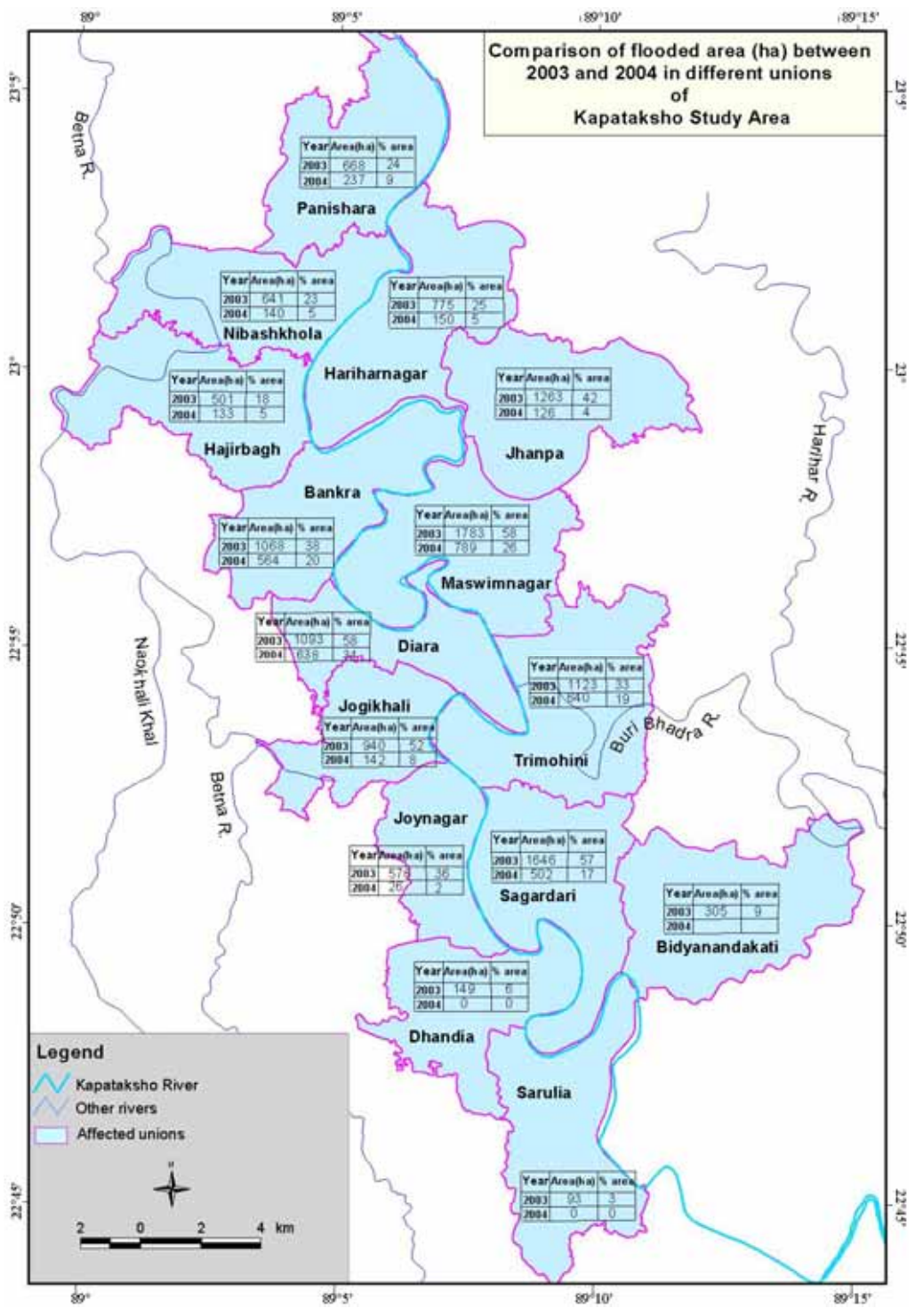
4.0 Policy on Awareness Programme

The Govt. has prepared the Guidelines for Participatory Water Management (GPWM) within the framework of National Water Policy (NWPo) involving the stakeholders in every sphere of project activities, viz. survey investigation, planning, design to project operation and maintenance. The previous 'top down' approach has been replaced by 'bottom up' approach and in the recent past any project being taken up on water resources need consultation with the stakeholders' and project beneficiaries.

Hydro-meteorological setup in the Kopotaksho study area



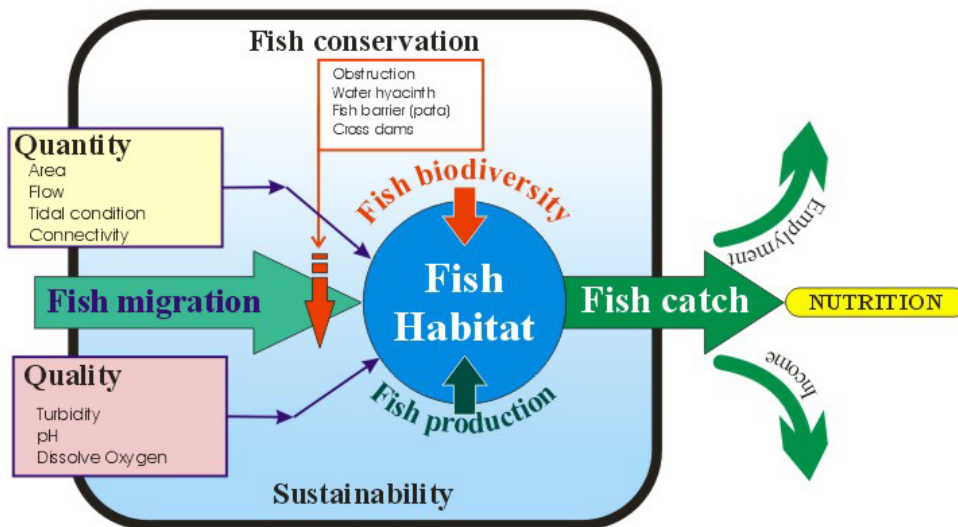




Baors in the project area



Sustainable cycle of fisheries in the project area



Changes in ecosystem between pre and post dredging where water hyacinth removed



Hydrophytic habitate of the Jhapa Baor



Fish catch by public causes depletion of the various species in the Kapotaksha



Public motivation campaign

