



ANJU AND THE STREAM

Anju loved the merry little Stream
 Rippling and flowing like a blue-green dream!
 Fish leapt and danced in its waters clear
 To fish for fish came birds – from far and near...

Every day Anju walked this way from school
 In April's heat and October's cool
 Sometimes wide, sometimes lean
 Her dear Stream always ran sparkling clean



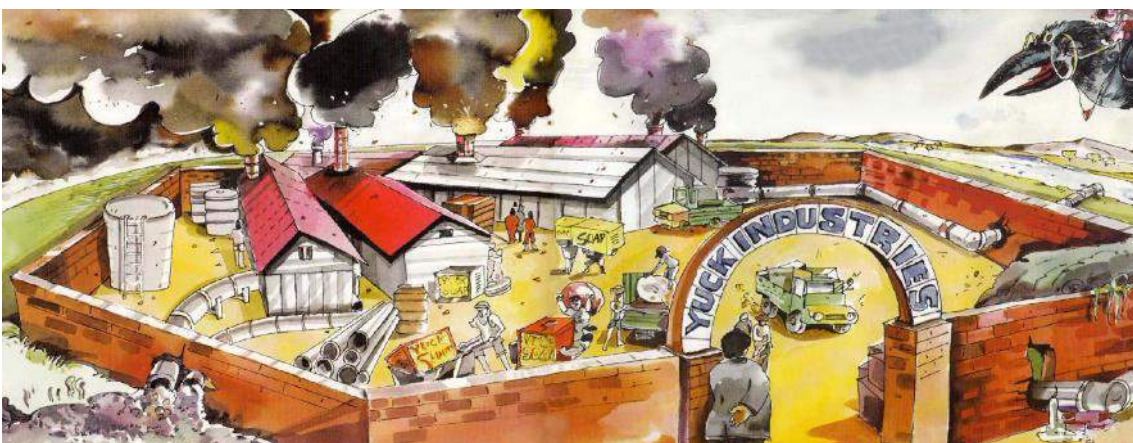
But one hot summer, the Stream fell sick
 Weaker and thinner, while weeds grew thick...
 Where clear waters once flowed, refreshing to drink
 Were smelly puddles and pools, dark as ink

When Anju came by, everything was wrong!
Not a squirrel's chatter, not even a birdsong...
Her Stream had vanished! The fish were gone!
Only an old Crow sat around, her face forlorn

"What's happened to dear Stream?" Anju cried
"Why does it stink, why's it all dried?"
The Crow looked at Anju, scratched her beak
Coughed twice, and began to speak...

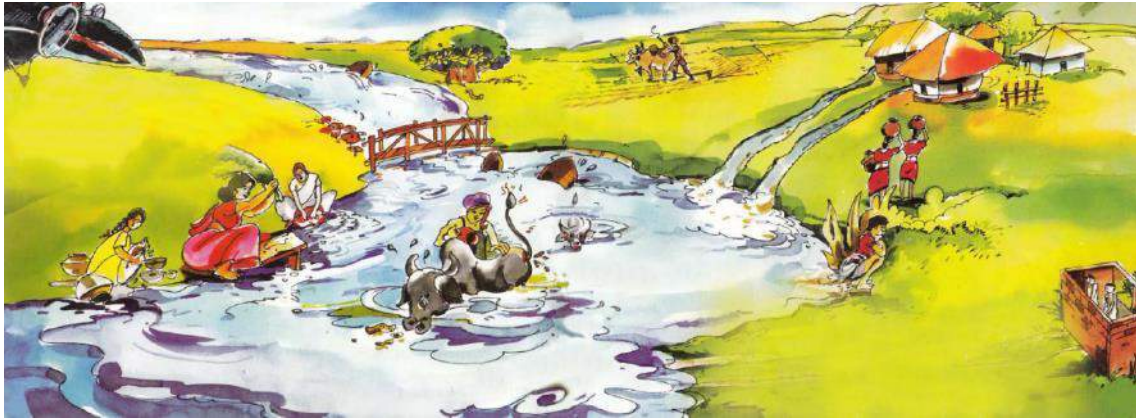


"Alas! There's a new Factory upstream
It belches black smoke and dirty steam
It came in your summer holidays
And now, it refuses to go away!"



"Each day, the Factory workers toil
Making soap and shampoo from vegetable oil!
The Factory gulps down Stream's waters cool
And throws out filth – Oh! Isn't that cruel?"

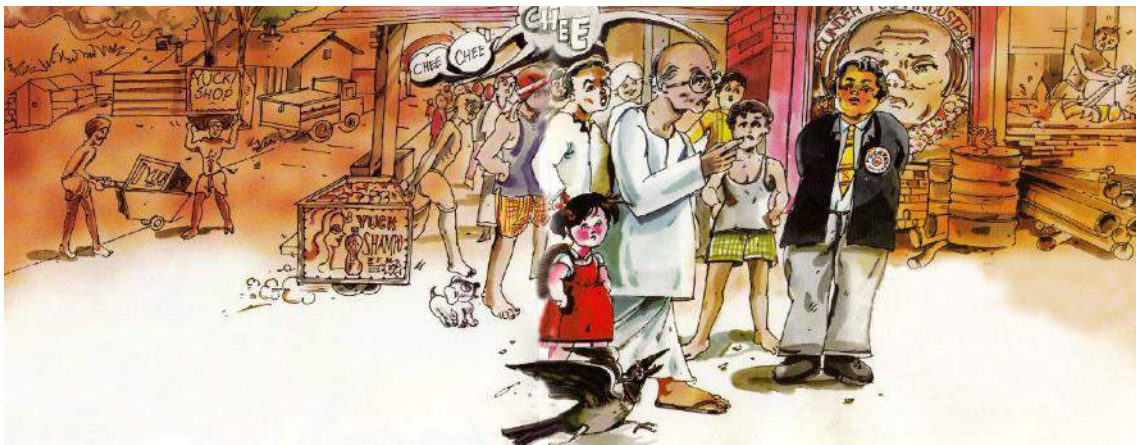
“But if dirtying clear Stream is a shame
You village folk must share the blame!
You pump away Stream’s water for your use...
But your drains bring back loads of refuse!”



“That’s why poor Stream has shriveled and shrunk
That’s why its waters can no longer be drunk
That’s why the fish no longer swim here
That’s why the birds fled...Help, Anju, dear!”

Anju ran home and told the sad tale
To all the villagers, who turned quite pale
“Our Stream’s dirty?” cried the Elder. “Going dry? Oh my!
We must save it! We really must try!

“Soap won’t clean up Stream’s water back
Shampoo will not bring its fish back
There’s only one thing to do – ah yes!
We must ask the Factory to clean up this mess!”



The villagers marched up to the Factory
Met the owner and cried "Chee! Chee!
It's a shame that our dear Stream's waters blue
Are dirtied by you for soap and shampoo!"

The Factory owner's face turned small and sad
"I'm sorry!" he sobbed. "I feel very bad!
I'll return dear Stream to its merry, clean state
I promise I'll do it at an early date!"

"We'll help you!" replied the Elder, "For, in fact
We villagers too need to clean up our act!
Many villagers work here – your wages are fair
So we too have a role in this affair!"



"We need soap and shampoo, that's for sure!
But we must make sure our Stream stays pure
So let's put together all our brains
And find ways to clean up our awful drains!"

So the Factory owner cleaned up his act
(He was really a nice man!)
The villagers, too, worked hard to make sure
That their wastes didn't make Stream's water impure

Together they worked out a nice new scheme
To manage with less water from the Stream
They saved water and reused it where they could
And that did dear Stream a lot of good!



And because they all did what they said they would do
Dear Stream flows as before – smiling, sparkling blue...
Its fish dart about, the birds sing clear and true
It's Nature's way of saying "THANK YOU, ANJU!"

Anju and the stream
R.P. Subramanian, Tamal Basu
The Energy and Resources Group, New Delhi, 2004