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*Let us all join hands in
solidarity to save the
natural heritage of India*
The Ganga River
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PRAVASI
ganga
PRAHARI





The Ganga: Heritage of India

The Ganga River is one of most revered rivers in the world. It is not just a river or a mere natural resource, but a symbol of faith, spirituality and culture. In Hindu mythology, the River is worshipped as "Goddess Ganga", believed to have been brought to earth from heaven by king Bhagirath, and its water is used in religious ceremonies, owing to its purifying properties. Since ancient times, the Ganga basin has been a cradle of human civilization, and a centre of power from the Mauryan to the Mughal era. The River has been an inspiration to various art forms, music, dance and literature. The Ganga River supports the livelihood of 500 million people across the Himalayas and Gangetic plains. It is aptly referred as the "lifeline of India" owing to the wide range of resources that it provides.

Flowing across three biogeographic zones going through the Himalaya, the Gangetic Plain and the East Coast covering five states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal), the Ganga River comprises a unique assemblage of biodiversity that includes charismatic species like the Gangetic river dolphin, gharial, crocodiles and otters and host of migratory and resident birds.



Anguish of our National River

Dependency of local communities on the Ganga River has put it under pressure. Unsustainable water extraction causing reduced flow; pollution due to industrial, agricultural and domestic run off; agriculture along riverbanks and river islands; alteration of riverbank; sand mining and unsustainable fishing are some of the factors responsible for the current state of the river. These anthropogenic factors coupled with the impacts of climate change are causing changes in the river's ecosystem, which is evident through altered species distribution in the Ganga and its catchment.

National Mission for Clean Ganga- Wildlife Institute of India (NMCG-WII): Ganga Biodiversity Conservation Project

To address the issues impacting the integrity of the Ganga River, the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India, initiated the Namami Gange Programme, and established the NMCG, to achieve "Aviral dhara"(continuous flow)and "Nirmal dhara" (unpolluted flow) of the river, using a combination of engineering and ecological interventions. NMCG identified WII as a lead partner institution for biodiversity conservation and aquatic species restoration in Ganga River through a collaborative project "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation". This project aims to prepare science-based aquatic species restoration plan for the Ganga River by engaging multiple stakeholders.

Ganga Prahari

Local communities are one of the most crucial stakeholders in river restoration projects, due to the diverse role they play in the landscape. In view of this, a cadre of self- motivated volunteers from among the local communities was created by the Wildlife Institute of India under the project "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation", through trainings and skill development in the five Ganga states. This cadre is popularly known as Ganga Prahari- "Guardians of the Ganga". Presently there are over 600 Ganga Praharis, who are actively involved in various cleanliness, awareness raising and training activities organised by the NMCG and other institutions. Few amongst them, have also been trained to assist in ecological and social surveys.



<https://nmcg.nic.in/wii/prgbggp.aspx>

Pravasi Ganga Prahari

The Indian diaspora across the globe, has always played a very important role in promoting India's wider interests, thus, they act as the ambassadors of its art, culture, tradition and natural resource. They have shown great enthusiasm and interest in activities and programmes pertaining to conservation, protection and maintenance of India's natural heritage. These sons and daughters of the Indian soil look for opportunities to serve and do their bit in ensuring these efforts. Taking this opportunity, the Wildlife Institute of India under its project "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation", has instituted the Pravasi Ganga Prahari Programme. Through this platform, the Indian diaspora will be able to contribute and actively engage themselves in programmes that may assist the Government of India in Ganga conservation.



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www.wii.gov.in/nmcg/national-mission-for-clean-ganga

<https://www.facebook.com/glimpsesofganga/>

<https://www.instagram.com/glimpsesofganga/>

Contribution by Pravasi Ganga Praharis

As Pravasi Ganga Prahari, the non-residential Indian and other global citizens can make monetary contribution or in kind towards Ganga's conservation. The members can make donations of any amount above US\$5, that shall be directed towards the Clean Ganga Fund (CGF), set up by the NMCG, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

(<https://nmcg.nic.in/cleangangafund/index.html>).

Pravasi Ganga Praharis can participate in both on-site and off-site activities for conservation of Ganga River. On-site activities include cleanliness drives organised at regular intervals, under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan; plantation drives to increase the green cover along the banks of the River; and various awareness raising and community mobilization programmes. Off-site activities include organisation of awareness raising on the importance of the Ganga River and its biodiversity; participation in formal and informal interactive sessions; provide technical support, and assist in facilitating and networking with scientific and non-scientific organisations and general public at their place of living.