



A Holistic Approach to River Cleanliness

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The Namami Gange Programme is a visionary initiative aimed at rejuvenating the sacred River Ganga and its tributaries. Launched in **June 2014** to address various sources of pollution and to enhance the ecological health of the river, Namami Gange encompasses a wide array of interventions and projects.¹



¹ <https://nmcg.nic.in/>

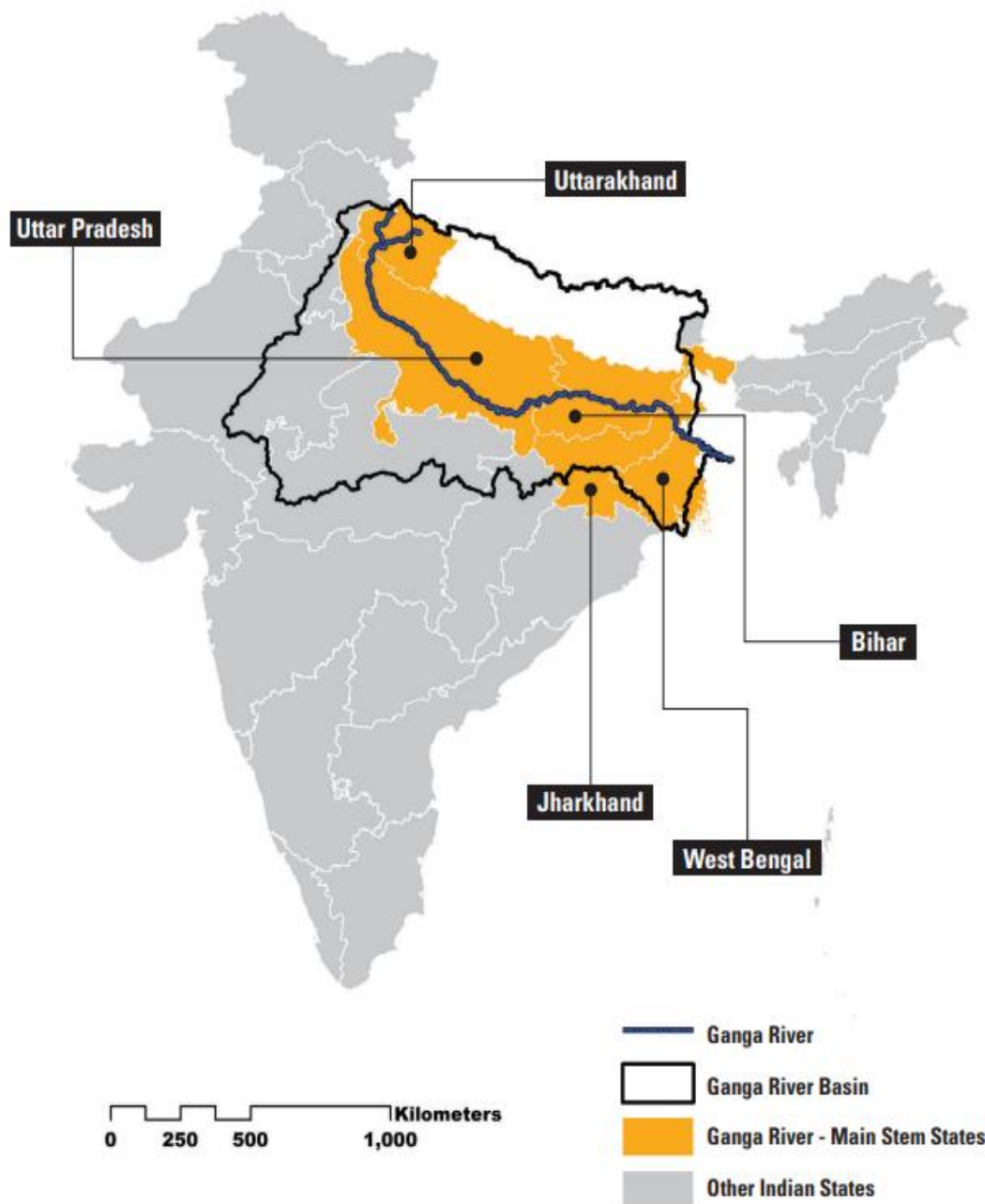
Ganga: Lifeline of India

The Ganga River, one of the most sacred rivers in the world, faces significant threats from excessive water abstraction and pollution. As a vital part of India's cultural heritage and a key resource for sustenance, the river's health is of paramount importance. To address these challenges, the Namami Ganga program was launched with the twin objectives of effectively reducing pollution and conserving and rejuvenating River Ganga.

The Ganga River Basin

The Ganga River basin is the largest in India, encompassing **27%** of the country's land mass and supporting about **47%** of its population. Spanning over **11 states**, the basin covers nearly **27% of India's total geographical area**. The majority of the basin, around **65.57%**, is used for agriculture, while water bodies cover **3.47%** of the area. Despite receiving **35.5%** of the total water input in terms of precipitation, the Ganga River Basin is the second most water-stressed basin in India, following the Sabarmati Basin, with only **39%** of the average per capita annual rainwater input among major Indian river basins.²

² Ganga Vision Document: <https://nmcg.nic.in/Disclosure.aspx>



Need for a Cleanliness Drive

Despite being revered nationally, the Ganga River has been deteriorating for a long time. This degradation directly impacts humans by diminishing the river's ecosystem services, such as:

- ❖ **Provisioning services:** Providing food, fresh water, and fibers.
- ❖ **Regulating services:** Attenuating floods, recharging groundwater, and preventing saltwater intrusion.
- ❖ **Supporting services:** Recycling nutrients, forming soil, and maintaining biodiversity.
- ❖ **Cultural services:** Offering recreation and spiritual fulfillment.

These increasing problems necessitated a focused programme for the rejuvenation of the Ganga, leading to the creation of Namami Gange.

Vision

The vision for Ganga rejuvenation revolves around restoring the river's wholesomeness, defined by ensuring "Aviral Dhara" (Continuous Flow), "Nirmal Dhara" (Unpolluted Flow), and maintaining its geological and ecological integrity. A comprehensive Ganga River Basin Management Plan (GRBMP) was developed by a consortium of seven IITs, emphasizing an Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) approach with multi-sectoral and multi-agency interventions.



Key Interventions

- ❖ **Pollution Abatement (Nirmal Ganga):** Addressing and reducing the sources of pollution in the river.
- ❖ **Improving Ecology and Flow (Aviral Ganga):** Enhancing the ecological health and continuous flow of the river.
- ❖ **Strengthening People-River Connect (Jan Ganga):** Fostering a deeper connection between the people and the river through community engagement and awareness.
- ❖ **Facilitating Research and Policy (Gyan Ganga):** Promoting diversified research, scientific mapping, studies, and evidence-based policy formulation

Over the years, concerted efforts made by NMCG are beginning to find success in restoring the pristine glory of the river.

Key Achievements

1. Creating Sewerage Treatment Capacity

The programme has made significant strides in establishing sewerage infrastructure projects across

the Ganga basin. These projects are crucial in reducing pollution levels in the river by treating sewage before it enters the waterway.

2. River-Front Development

Efforts to beautify and modernize the riverfront have transformed numerous Ghats and Crematoria along the Ganga. These riverfront projects aim to provide clean and accessible spaces for the public while preserving the cultural and spiritual significance of these areas.

3. River Surface Cleaning

Innovative river surface cleaning initiatives have been implemented to tackle the problem of floating solid waste. Specialized cleaning mechanisms are now operational in multiple locations, ensuring that the river remains free from visible pollutants.

4. Bio-Diversity Conservation

The programme aims to restore viable populations of all endemic and endangered biodiversity of the river. This includes projects awarded to the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**, Dehradun, **Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI)**, Kolkata, and the Uttar Pradesh **State Forest Department**.

5. Afforestation

Forestry interventions aim to enhance the productivity and diversity of forests in headwater areas and along the river and its tributaries. These efforts contribute to the holistic conservation of the river by improving water retention and preventing soil erosion.

6. Public Awareness

A series of activities, such as events, workshops, seminars, and numerous IEC activities, have been organized to promote public outreach and community participation in the programme. Awareness activities include rallies, campaigns, exhibitions, cleanliness drives, competitions, and the development of resource materials

7. Industrial Effluent Monitoring

The regulation and enforcement of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) are carried out through regular and surprise inspections.

8. Ganga Gram

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) identified 1674 Gram Panchayats situated on the bank of River Ganga in 5 states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal).

A total of **Rs. 578 crore** has been released for the construction of toilets in these Gram Panchayats. The construction of **8,53,397** toilets has been completed out of the targeted **15,27,105 units**.

Progress Overview(As of 30 June 2024) ⁴

- ❖ A comprehensive total of **467** projects, valued at **39080.70 Crore**, have been launched.
- ❖ Among these, **292** projects have reached completion and are now operational.
- ❖ An impressive **199** projects addressing Sewage Infrastructure have been set in motion.
- ❖ A substantial fund of **32409.23 Crore** has been sanctioned for these sewage infrastructure projects.
- ❖ Of these, **127** sewerage projects have been successfully completed, playing a pivotal role in mitigating pollution.
- ❖ Additionally, **52** projects dedicated to Biodiversity & Afforestation have been undertaken.
- ❖ These projects have received a funding commitment of over **₹ 875 Crore**.
- ❖ Notably, **39** projects focused on biodiversity and afforestation have been successfully concluded, augmenting the ecological equilibrium of the Ganga basin.

Conclusion

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) strives to deploy the best available knowledge and resources globally for Ganga rejuvenation. Countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, and Israel have shown interest in collaborating with India. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed with various Central Ministries to synergize Government schemes. The Namami Gange Programme stands as a ray of hope for the rejuvenation of the River Ganga and its tributaries. With significant progress achieved in various interventions, the programme continues to strive towards its goal of ensuring a clean and thriving Ganga for future generations.

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⁴ Monthly Progress Report: <https://nmcg.nic.in/projectsearch.aspx>

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