



HOLY RIVER "THE GANGA"

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MYTHOLOGY

The Ganga flows directly from the lotus feet of Lord Krishna and that's why it is the most pious river in the earth particularly in the land of India. As per mythology the Ganga was brought down to the earth by Bhagirath. The legendary is like this-- the father of mankind Manu and then his son Maharaj Ikshvaku and like in the generation king Sagar appeared. Once for the satisfaction of God and by the direction of Sage Orba, king Sagar performed horse sacrifice. When the sacrifice was going on Devaraj Indra stole the horse. Then king Sagar sent his 60 thousand son to search the horse. After a long search they saw the horse below the sea in the Ashram of Kapil Muni and thought that Kapil Muni had stolen the horse and thereby they were very angry to kill him but when Kapil Muni opened his eyes they became reduced to ashes. After a long time when Sagar's sons were not coming king sent his grandson Angshuman. After reaching in the Ashram of Kapil Muni, Angshuman saw the horse and offer his prayer to Muni . Kapil Muni told him to take away the horse. But for the penance of his father and grandfather Angshuman Then Muni told that by the be liberated. As such and in the generation his Dilip's son Bhagirath this earth through the hole then asked Bhagirath who flow. Bhagirath prayed to Lord Shiva agreed and in Dhruvalokavia Chandraloka Shiva took the flow of head of Shiva through Meru Himalaya it reached India direction and finally after Ganga liberated all the Ganga merges to the Bay of Bay of Bengal Ganga West Bengal where all by Sage Jahnu and after the cleared Ganga Devi through name of Ganga is Jahnabi.

The great sages said:

"The holy Ganga descended from the heavenly planets to deliver all the conditioned souls from the vast ocean of material existence. Ganga-devi emanated from the lotus feet of Lord Hari and so everyone happily glorifies her. The water of the Ganga is enjoyed by the demigods who reside on the peak of Mount Sumeru. By bathing in her water, all one's sinful reactions are vanquished. By pleasing Ganga-devi, one can easily gain release from the bondage of material existence."

"O Mother Bhagirathi! You give happiness to everyone. The significance of your holy waters is sung in the Vedas. I am ignorant and am not capable to comprehend your importance. O Devi! you are full of mercy. Please protect me."

asked Muni what he had to do. touch of river Ganga they would Angshuman mediated but failed son Dilip also failed and lastly succeeded to bring the Ganga in of Karansamadura. The Ganga would stop her violent Shiva to take the flow of water. this way Ganga Devi from via Swarga Loka and then Lord water on his head. Then from the Parbat and ultimately via and flows through East-South reaching the Kapil Muni Ashram forefathers of Bhagirath. Then Bengal. Before merging to the reached Nabadeep Dham of waters of Ganga were drunken request of Bhagirath the sage his right ear that's why another



The different names of Ganga as per scripture:

1	Bishnupadi	As it touches the feet of Lord Krishna
2	Mandakini	As it flows slowly
3	Bhagarati	As it brought by Bagirath
4	Patit Pabani	As it liberates all the sinful souls
5	Janhabi	As it flows through the right ear of Sage Jahnu.

In the Mahabharata we find that the mother of parental grandfather Bishma was Ganga Devi. The Ganga Devi was also the wife of king Santanu. The colour of Ganga Devi is white and she wears white dress. She has four hands. She carries Lotus and Nectar on her hand.

From time immemorial the Ganga believed to be sacred river to the Indians particularly the Hindus. The river Ganga have many pilgrim towns or places of worship and historical cities on their banks such as Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Kolkata, Nabadeep etc. Since time immemorial its water has been favour for its purity and self-clearing capacity. The rivers support livelihoods of millions in the basin and their drinking water needs. However, construction of dams and barrages storing and diverting the flows, coupled with various indisciplined anthropogenic activities have depleted and polluted its flows, have destroyed its environment and ecology, so much so that it is now listed as *one of the ten most endangered rivers of the world*. Further, climate change and global warming forebode unspecified catastrophic impacts on the river regime.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY OF GANGA BASIN

The Indian subcontinent is divided into three major physiographic subdivisions, the Himalaya, Indo-Gangetic Plain and Peninsular India. The Indo-Gangetic Plain is the extensive alluvial plan of the Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra rivers and tributaries and separates the Himalayan ranges from Peninsular India.

Formed in response to the Himalayan orogeny, the Indo-Gangetic Plains form the largest alluvial tract in the world. From west to east, it may be divided into four zones namely, Punjab-Rajasthan Alluvial Plains, Gangetic Plain, Bengal Plain and Brahmaputra Plain. Located between 77° — 88° E Longitudes and 24° – 30° N latitudes, the Gangetic Plain occupies the central position in the Indo-Gangetic Foreland Basin System. Depending upon the geographical position and geomorphology, the Ganga Plain is further subdivided into western Gangaetic Plain located in the state of Bihar. In the western sector, the Yamuna river acts as the axial river up to Allahabad, where it meets Ganga and from there in the eastern part, the Ganga is the axial river and all the rivers coming from Himalaya meet at right angles to it.

The Ganga plain extends from Aravalli-Delhi-ridge in the west to the Rajmahal hills in the east; Himalayan foothills (Siwalik Hills) in the north to the Bundelkhan-Vindhyan Plato – Hazaribag Plateau in the south, Occupying the area of about 250,000 km². The length of Ganga Plain is about 1000 km; the width is variable, ranging between 450-200 km being wider in the western part and narrower in the eastern part. The southern margin of Ganga plain is irregular, and shows at many places outcrops of rocks protruding out of the alluvium. The northern margin of the Ganga Plain is marked by the exposure of Siwalik rocks, the contact is often made marked by a thrust.

The Ganga basin, an important constituent of the Himalayan foreland, formed as a consequence of the India-Asia collusion around 55 million years ago resulting in the formation of the Himalaya. This provided a large continental mass which together with large rainfall in the catchment area and long term erosion generated /



enlarged the river valleys of the Ganga. It is established that the Ganga once has flowed longitudinally behind the Himalaya. Southern thrusting and massive frontal erosion of the Himalaya caused progressive truncation of the longitudinal courses of this river.

Geologically, the Ganga is a very interesting system as the process controlling valley formation and filling in this large river basin are extremely variable in space.

The Place Gangotri is famous because Mother Ganga is descended on earth at Gangotri.

So, the Ganga, one of the 20 largest rivers of the world, originates from the Gangotri glacier in the snow capped Himalayas of Uttarakhand and after flowing through several states debouch into the Bay of Bengal. Raising in the Gangotri glacier the Ganga follows a long course of 2525 kms. through the States of **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and West Bengal** (Fig. 1) before joining the Bay of Bengal. Out of 2525 kms. 600 km are reported to be most polluted. Joined by the mighty tributaries like Yamuna, Son, Betwa, Ghaggan. Gandak , Kosi, Gomti etc. it has a catchment of 861, 404 sq. kms.

Further, Gangetic alluvial basin occupies the crustal downwarp formed between the rising Himalayas and the Vindhya in the Peninsulas shield. The Ganga with its tributaries from one of the largest alluvial plain in the world, densely populated with intense agricultural activities, being the food basket of the country.

Fig. 1 : Location Map of Ganga Basin



CAUSES OF POLLUTION IN THE RIVER GANGA

1	Human waste
2	Industrial waste
3	Religious events
4	Dams



IMPACT OF POLLUTION ON

1	Marine Life
2	Wild Life
3	Human Beings
4	Dams

CLEARING EFFORTS OF GANGA

1	The Ganga Action Plan (GAP) to reduce pollution load on the river (launched in January 1986).
2	National River Ganga Basin Authority (NRGBA) – launched in 2009
3	Supreme Court of India – The Supreme Court of India has been working on the closure and relocation of many of the industrial plants like tulsis along the Ganges and in 2010 the government declared the stretch of river between Gaumukh and Uttarkashi as “eco-sensitive zone”.
4	Namami Ganga – Launched in July, 10, 2014

MAJOR POLLUTING INDUSTRIES

The major Ganga Water Polluting Industries include Chemicals, Pulp and Paper Board, Textiles, Pharmaceuticals, Cement, Electrical and Electronic equipment, glass and ceramics, leather tanning, food processing and petroleum refining.

CONCLUSIONS

Ganga is the holy river not only in respect of spiritual purpose but also for the general activities of the human beings. The water quality of Ganga has to be maintained. Though different projects were taken from 1986 to till date under the Modi government but unless the people are cautious we cannot save Ganga from pollution and ultimately we will become the victim. More public awareness has to be created among the mass people in order to save the mother Ganga from pollution. During different religious activities particularly in the Kumbha Mela, Sahi Snan, Makar Sankranti Snan, the throwing of different items into the water has to be restricted not only by the government but also by the NGOs of the nearby localities. More so mining of sand, quarrying of stones, burning of human beings near the Ganga, disposal of chemicals in the river Ganga and construction of dams over the river are to be looked for seriously now.

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