

Ministry of Jal Shakti



Restoring the divine Glory of River Ganga: Namami Gange Programme achieves significant milestones

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The Namami Gange Programme, launched in 2014 by the Government of India, stands as one of the most ambitious and holistic initiatives ever undertaken to restore the health of the River Ganga. Its multifaceted approach integrates pollution abatement, ecological restoration, capacity building, and community engagement, with a focus on both the river's environmental integrity and the livelihoods of millions who depend on it.

In Namami Gange Programme, the implementation of the projects picked up pace after completion of preparatory activities which included robust monitoring & financial approval mechanism. Against available resources of Rs. 20,424.82 Crore for the period 2014-15 to 2023-24, NMCG has disbursed Rs. 16,648.49 Crore, which is 82% of the budgetary provisions.

It is worth noting that the programme's financial outlay of Rs. 42,500 Crore is not to be treated as immediate expenditure target (cash outgo), but rather a sanctioning space that includes present expenditure and future commitments (annuity payment / O&M expense) for pollution abatement infrastructure with a lifecycle of 17 years (2 years of construction phase and 15 years of operation and maintenance phase). Hybrid Annuity Model was taken as an innovative approach to ensure responsible operation and maintenance of the constructed STPs which has resulted into spread of capital expenditure over 15 years of O&M phase.

The Namami Gange Programme has made significant strides in pollution abatement, creating 3,446 MLD of sewage treatment capacity, surpassing the pre-2014 capacity by over 30 times. NMCG has completed 127 projects and 152 Sewage Treatment Plants within 7-8 years, demonstrating notable progress in restoring the River Ganga's pristine glory.

The objective of CGF is to mobilize contributions from all sections of the civil society, including residents of the country, NRIs and corporates. 95% of the contributors to the CGF are individual citizens and balance 5% is private corporates and public sector companies. The utilization of funds under CGF undergoes through a rigorous sanctioning process as with budgetary expenditure under NGP with utmost financial prudence. CGF is mainly used for unique and signature projects having significant contribution to the achievement of the National Mission for Clean Ganga objectives.

As per the CPCB's periodic report on polluted river stretches for restoration of water quality; in Uttar Pradesh in 2015 the stretch from Kannauj to Varanasi was in PRS III (BOD 10-20 mg/l) category whereas in 2022 the river quality witnessed an improvement due to continuous efforts and the

improved polluted river stretch falls in PRS V (BOD 3-6 mg/l). In UP, out of 135 operational STPs 118 STPs (more than 90% are compliant) achieving norms.

In Bihar, in 2015 the stretch from Buxar to Bhagalpur was in PRS II (BOD 20-30 mg/l) category whereas in 2022 the river quality witnessed an improvement due to continuous efforts and the improved polluted river stretch falls in PRS IV (BOD 6-10 mg/l). In Bihar, out of 14 STPs 13 are operational.

In West Bengal, in 2018 the stretch from Triveni to Diamond Harbour was in PRS III (BOD 10-20 mg/l) category whereas in 2022 the river quality witnessed an improvement due to continuous efforts and the improved polluted river stretch falls in PRS IV (BOD 6-10 mg/l). In West Bengal, out of 55 existing STPs 53 of them were functional.

To summarize there has been a significant improvement in the water quality in all the states including the above referred states.

In Prayagraj, it would be pertinent to mention that from 2017 to 2024, the treatment capacity has increased from 268 MLD to 348 MLD. Also, the river water quality has improved from PRS IV to PRS V. Further, out of 60 untapped drains in 2017 now there is no untapped drains. Similarly, for Varanasi, treatment capacity has increased from 100 MLD to 420 MLD, number of untapped drains has reduced from 8 to one partially tapped drain and PRS has improved from IV to V.

The improvement in riverine ecosystem is substantiated by the increase in population of Gangetic Dolphin. The comparison of baseline (2018) and current study of WII indicates increase in the population of Gangetic Dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) from 3,330 (+/-) 630 to 3,936 (+/-) 763. Now dolphins are recorded from the previously unreported stretches of the Ganga River, such as the stretch between Bithura to Rasula Ghat (Prayagraj). The dolphins were also reported for the first time from the Babai and Bagmati rivers in India.

The success of the Namami Gange Programme in rejuvenating the Ganga is being recognized on the global stage. In December 2022, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration acknowledged it as one of the Top 10 World Restoration Flagship Initiatives. Furthermore, the International Water Association awarded the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) the title of Climate Smart Utility, further cementing the programme's commitment to sustainable water management.

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