



NAMAMIGANGE: A MISSION TO REJUVENATE THE GODDESS

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ABSTRACT

Namami Gange is an integrated mission to clean, rejuvenate and conserve river Ganga and its tributaries. The main aim of this mission is to reborn the divine of Ganga river. The main objective of this mission is to restore the Ganga wholesomeness in form of aviral dhara (countinous flow) and nirmal dhara(unpolluted flow). For rejuvenation and overall development of Ganga, the central Government allocated the large budget outlay of 20,000 crore in which 16600 crore is only for the development sewage treatment plant across the 11 states constituting 91 densely populated towns. Reviving Faith, Rejuvenating Life and Attaining Salvation are the three main goal of Namami Gange mission. Governmentim plements this mission in 3 levels i.e short term activities, medium term activities and long term activities.

The objective of this article is to focus on one of the most ambitious and flagship programme of Government“ Namami Gange”. In this article, we try to analyze the implementation of this Ganga rejuvenation mission till date.

KEYWORDS

CGA (Central Ganga Authority), MLD(Million Liters per Day), NGRBP (National Ganga River Basin Project), NRCA (National River Conservation Authority), PIL (Public Litigation Complaint), STP (Sewage Treatment Plant),

INTRODUCTION

Namami Gange is one of the most prominent and ambitious mission of Union Government of India, which was launched in June,2014^[1] to clean, purify, and rejuvenate the one of most vital and one of the largest rivers of India “The Ganga”. The river which is Ganga to the world but “MAA GANGA” to Indians is the symbol of pride and faith to Indians. Namami Gange project was approved by union cabinet as a flagship programme on 13thmay,2015^[2] with a budget allocation of 20,000 crore (100%central share).The aim of this project is to provide a NEW LIFE TO GANGA such that the water of Ganga will flow towards her true greatness and her pureform. The aim of programme can be achieved by accentuating on these 7 objectives viz deduction in pollution, bio-diversity prevention and conservation, river front and ghat renovation, river overall development (aviral dhara and nirmal dhara), capacity enhancement, research and monitoring and spreading awareness.

Why this project becomes one of most ambitious and flagship programme for the Government?

The Ganga basin covers an area of 10,86,000 sq km spread in 4 countries(India,Bangladesh, China and Nepal) in which about 79% area(8,61,404 sq km) of Ganga basin passes through India which comprising about 26 % of India’s land mass, makes its largest river basin in India and supporting more than 43% of India ‘s population covering 11 states viz Uttaranchal , Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh(UP) , Bihar , Jharkhand, West Bengal(WB) , Madhya Pradesh(MP) , Rajasthan , Haryana , Chhattisgarh , Delhi^[3].

According to Indian belief , the river Ganga has all the ability to purify itself whatever comes to its path but on the contrary note no river has sustain its purifying power in case of misuse, overuse and abuse of its water.

According to the Hindumythology, it is believed that all your sins will be washed out once you take a bath in river Ganga pure water but the concept has been reversed in today's time as several studies found that the water of Ganga was so polluted that it might trigger skin problems , cause several diseases and infections.

In recent studies it was found that more than 1.3 billion liters of waste flows into the Ganga every day.it is found that 30 polluted drains flow into the river within 7 km in Varanasi city.The river flows through the 29 densely populated cities (including Patna and Varanasi)^[3].The solid and liquid wastes and sewage wastes from the domestic use of these cities are responsible for the 80% of water pollution of river Ganga. Industrial wastes like chemicals and pollutants from several industries on the bank of river Ganga is 20% responsible for Ganga water pollution.

How does this Namami Gange programme comes to the existence?

A lawyer M.C. Mehta filed a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) in Supreme Court of India in 1985, regarding the responsibility of Government and industries for alarming rise in pollution in river Ganga. Such environmental cases lead to the severe fine and closure of several industries which were not complying with environmental legislation and rules. The Central Ganga Authority (CGA) was established under the department of environment with the objectives to control and reduce pollution in river Ganga and their tributaries. CGA was later renamed as NRCA (National River Conservation Authority) under which 18 other rivers were identified in 10 different states to control and reduce pollution of such rivers.

In November 2008 , the Ganga was declared as the national river of India by the Honorable Prime Minister of India” Manmohan Singh” and set up the new project named as National Ganga River Basin Project(NGRBP) to clean and rejuvenate the Ganga basin.In 2011,a loan of \$1 billion was approved by the World Bank for this project.

After the investment of more than 15000crore by the Government, the condition of Ganga was not improved rather than it became more severe and pollution level of Ganga was increasing day by day . A new Government under the leadership of our current Prime Minister, “Narendra Modi” in central launched this Namami Gange project in June 2014 as an integrated mission for conservation and rejuvenation of Ganga.

What is the Government initiative under this project to rejuvenate Ganga?

Under this project, Government of India established a separate ministry for the Ganga rejuvenation. An integrated approach has been taken by the Government by collaborating the various ministries and state Government under the supervision of Mr Nitin Gadkari (Honorable Minister for Ministry for River Development, Ganga Rejuvenation And Water Resources, Government of India), for effective abatement of pollution and rejuvenation of Ganga.

Namami Gange project constitutes 21 action points comprising ghat repairs, river front development, maintaining environmental flow, upgradation and development of sewerage treatment plants, rural sanitation, development of Ganga grams, abatement of industrial pollution, development of ghats, creation and modernization of crematoriums, afforestation, spreading awareness among public, abatement of water pollution, conservation of bio diversity, river surface cleaning, etc.^[4]

The implementation of Namami Gange project has been divided into 3 levels^[5] –

Short term activities (for immediate visible impact):

- River surface cleaning (cleansing of solid waste moving along the flow of water)
- Solar lighting at ghats
- Renovation and Modernization of Ghats and crematoria
- Development of water sports
- Cleansing of solid wastes from the Ghats

Medium term activities (for quantum improvement in river water quality to be implemented within 5 years of time frame):

- Municipal sewage management (construction and redevelopment of sewage canal by new techniques and proper effluent filtering techniques employed in sewage canal)
- Afforestation (planting of trees near the river front)
- Biodiversity conservation (conserve and preserve the aquatic animals found in river)
- Ganga gram (unique development of village near Ganga basin)
- Industrial pollutant abatement (reduce industrial pollution that comes in Ganga)

- Domestic pollutant abatement(reduce the domestic solid and liquid waste that comes in Ganga)
- Water quality monitoring (time to time water quality will be monitored)
- Rural sanitation(proper sanitation and effluent filtering techniques is employed in both point and non - point sources of pollution in rural areas)

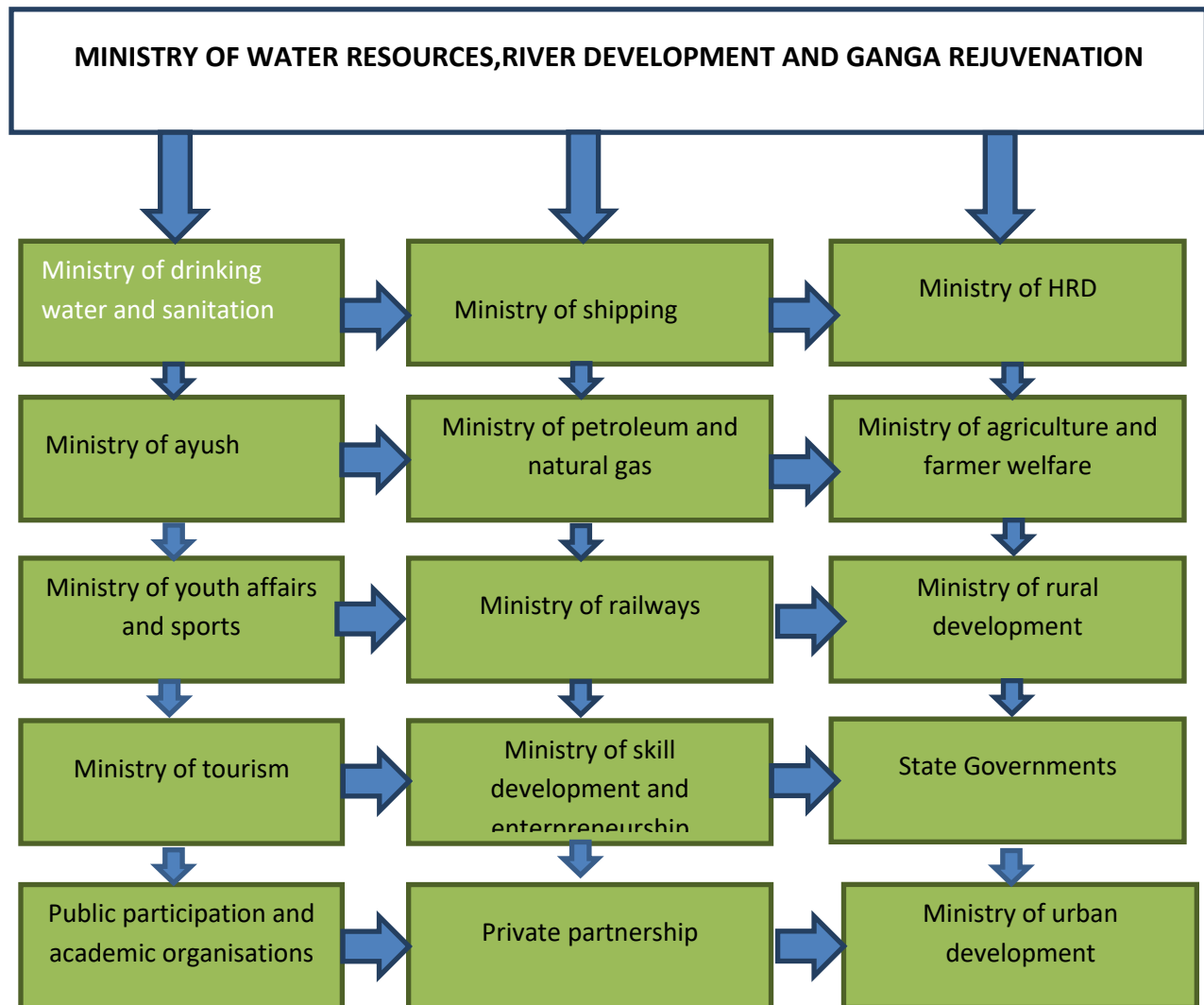


Figure 1: Integrated Approach towards Ganga Rejuvenation^[6]

Long term activities (to ensure adequate flow of water to be implemented within 10 years of time frame):

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- Adequate water flow (real or pure flow of Ganga)
- Improved efficiency of surface irrigation (water should be used efficiently for irrigation and other such applications)
- Increased water use efficiency
- Efficient Ganga dam water management
- Monitoring of the industries near the Ganga basin under the environment protection act.

What are the impacts of Namami Gange project on river Ganga?

With the budget allocation of 20000 crore ,Government of India targeted it as one of the most ambitious project .Overall the mission has 193 projects including 100 sewage treatment plants on its agenda and has completed 49 plants utilizing 21% of fund sanctioned.The total amount of 16600 crore is sanctioned only for the sewage treatment plants in 97 towns located on the main stream of the Ganga basin.According to Rajiv Kishore, ExecutiveDirector (Administration) with the NMCG (National Mission for Clean Ganga) said that it takes more than 3 years for creation and functioning of sewage treatment plants.^[7]

In Uttarakhand , 13 projects has been completed out of total 30 projects, it aimed at creating 155.45MLD STP with the sanctioned cost of 1010.72 crores. In Uttar Pradesh, 4 projects have been completed out of 25 projects with an estimated cost of 4033 crore.It aimed at creating 503.50 MLD STP in which 199 MLD STP has been created till now.In Bihar, out of 19 projects 8 projects are under progress and 8 are under bidding. It aimed at creating 526 MLD STP with an estimated cost of 4105.97 crore. In west Bengal, 1 project with 8.23 MLD STP capacity has been created out of 9 projects with an estimated 223.63 MLD STP capacity with an approximate cost of 1805.40 crore.^[8]

With an estimated cost of 455 crore, 119 Ghats are renewed and renovated and with an estimated cost of 180 crore, 53 crematoria has been modified till now. A sports center and water Sports Park is developed in Varanasi ghat to promote tourism and increase participation of public in clean Ganga project.^[8]

Till FY 2017-18,6150.3 lakh of trees were planted at around 8016 hectares of land.

National waterways are developing in India along the various rivers in India to decrease the cost of traveling and finding the other alternative of transport. As Ganga is the largest river basin of India, contributes the maximum in this new mode of transport. Government confirmed the first national waterways along the river Ganga from Allahabad to Haldia , named as national waterways no 1. This development also contributes in developing the Ganga basin as port which helps to generate funds for the cleanness of Ganga.

To increase the public participation, Government has taken several steps to increase the public participation and target the private investor to invest and participate actively in this project. Government is providing 100% tax rebate to individual under section 80(G) of IT act if individual donate fund to Namami Gange project. Various such advantages and tax rebate are also given to industrialist and private investor to increase their active participation in cleaning the Ganga and renovation of ghats. According to recent development in Ganga project, Anil Agrawal (CEO of Vedanta group) and Foresight Group's Ravi Mehrotra has taken responsibility of maintenance, operation and renovation of Patna river front and Kanpur river front for next 15 years respectively.^[9]

CONCLUSION

After all this development and investment of money in Ganga purification, the ground report of Ganga ghats and Ganga water pollution level is not so impressive. In cities like Varanasi and Patna, there are large number of non- point sources of pollution that comes to the Ganga. In such cities, Government unable to fix the problem of drainage or polluted water that comes to Ganga. Lack of public participation is one of main causes of Ganga to be still polluted. But still some of the ghats are renewed and crematoria is modified seems interactive. The awareness among the public regarding the spread of solid and unwanted particles near the ghats is increased.

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