



National Mission for Clean Ganga

For Prelims: [National Mission for Clean Ganga](#), [Sustainable Development](#), [Namami Gange Programme](#), [Ganga Action Plan](#), [National River Ganga Basin Authority \(NRGBA\)](#).

For Mains: National Mission for Clean Ganga, and Related Challenges.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

In the last seven years, while some progress has been made by India's [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#), there are still significant challenges ahead in achieving the mission's goals.

What is the Progress of Sewage Treatment under the NMCG?

- The NMCG has **installed treatment plants capable of treating just 20%** of the sewage estimated to be generated in the five major States that lie along the Ganga River.
 - These states are Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.
- The NMCG has projected that the treatment capacity for sewage will increase to **33% of the estimated amount generated by 2024**, and further increase to **60% by 2026**.
- The NMCG plans to set up **Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)** capable of treating about **7,000 MLD of sewage by 2026**.
- As of **July 2023**, **STPs with a total capacity of 2,665 MLD have been commissioned and are operational**. The progress has picked up significantly in recent years, with 1,455 MLD capacity completed in the last financial year (2022-23).
- **STPs and sewerage networks** are at the heart of the [Namami Ganga Mission](#) and account for about 80% of the overall project outlay.

What is the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)?

- **About:**
 - On 12th August 2011, the NMCG was listed **as a society** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
 - It acted as the implementation arm of the **National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)** which was constituted under the provisions of the [Environment \(Protection\) Act \(EPA\), 1986](#).
 - **NGRBA** was dissolved in 2016 and **replaced by the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection, and Management of River Ganga**.
- **Objective:**
 - The objective of the NMCG is to **reduce pollution and ensure the rejuvenation** of the Ganga River.
 - [Namami Gange](#) is one of the Coveted Programmes of NMCG to clean Ganga.
 - This can be achieved by promoting intersectoral coordination for comprehensive planning & management and maintaining minimum ecological flow in the river, with the aim of

ensuring water quality and environmentally **sustainable development.**

▪ **Organization Structure:**

- The Act envisages a five-tier structure at the national, state, and district levels to take measures for prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga as below:
 - **National Ganga Council under** the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
 - Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation).
 - National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
 - State Ganga Committees
 - District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

What are the Challenges Faced by NMCG?

▪ **Land Acquisition:**

- Several plants took time to be commissioned as **there were problems with land acquisition.**
- In many instances, the Detailed Project Reports (which prescribe all the steps necessary to execute a project, and the roles of agencies) needed revision.

▪ **Lack of Local Initiatives:**

- State Governments are under the impression that **building treatment plants was entirely the Centre's responsibility.**
- Waste management, especially MSW segregation and recycling, is most effective when handled at the source.
- While there were plans to create a cadre of village and town-level volunteers to monitor water quality and support local bodies, the mission has faced challenges in effectively implementing these initiatives.

▪ **Improper Funding:**

- Though NMCG is a ₹20,000 crore mission, the government has so far given in-principle approval for projects worth ₹37,396 crore, of which only ₹14,745 crore has been released to States for infrastructure work, as of June 2023.

▪ **Municipal Solid Waste Management:**

- The mission faced criticism for not adequately addressing the problem of municipal solid waste flowing into the Ganga.
- Many towns and cities along the river lack proper waste treatment infrastructure, allowing untreated waste to enter the river.

▪ **Inadequate Sewerage Coverage:**

- Much of India's urban population resides outside sewerage networks, resulting in a substantial portion of waste not reaching STPs.

▪ **Improper Waste Disposal:**

- The study by the Quality Council of India revealed that rubbish heaps are found near ghats in numerous towns along the river, indicating improper waste disposal practices. This poses a threat to the cleanliness of the Ganga.

What are the Effects of the NMCG?

- The river's water quality is now within prescribed limits of notified primary bathing water quality.
- There is a conspicuous sign of the improvement in water quality along the Ganga was a rise in the dolphin population — both adult and juvenile — from 2,000 to about 4,000.
 - Dolphins can be seen in new stretches of the river as well as in tributaries.
- Fishermen are also reporting the increased presence of Indian carp (a fish species) that only thrives in clean water. So we have nature's verdict on river improvement.
- The typical parameters used by the Central Pollution Control Board (such as the levels of dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, and faecal coliform) vary widely along various stretches of the river.
- The NMCG is now working to develop a **water quality index**, on the lines of the air quality index,

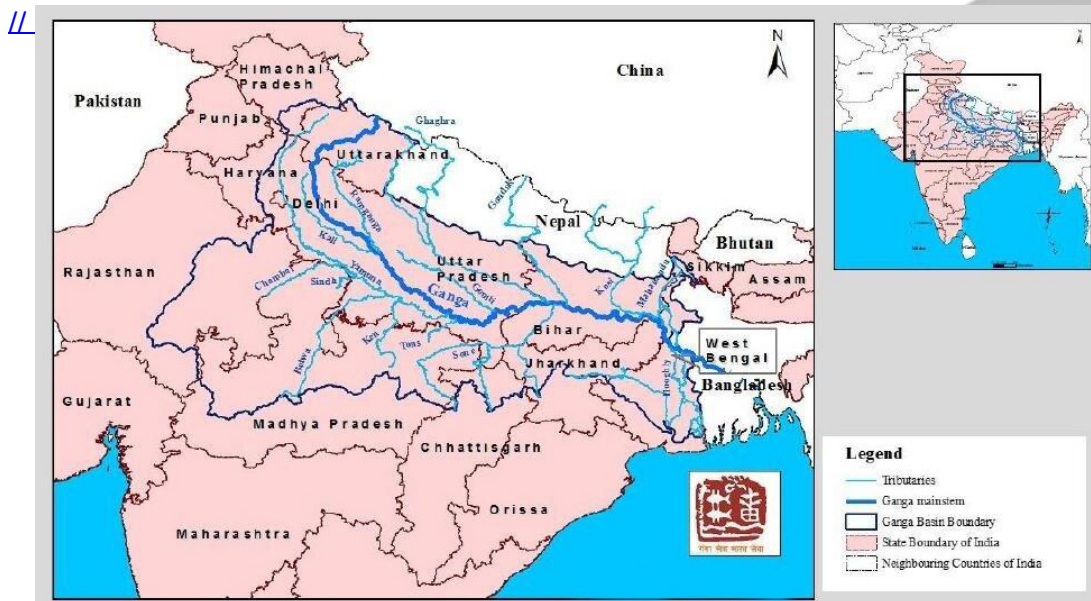
to be able to better communicate about river-water quality.

What are the Initiatives Related to Ganga?

- [Namami Gange Programme](#)
- [Ganga Action Plan](#)
- [National River Ganga Basin Authority \(NRGBA\)](#)
- **Clean Ganga Fund**
- **Bhuvan-Ganga Web App**
- **Ban on Waste Disposal**

What is the Ganga River System?

- The headwaters of the Ganga called the **'Bhagirathi'** are fed by the **Gangotri Glacier** and joined by the Alaknanda at Devprayag in Uttarakhand.
- At Haridwar, **Ganga emerges from the mountains** to the plains.
- The Ganga is joined by many tributaries from the Himalayas, a few of them being major rivers such as the Yamuna, the Ghaghara, the Gandak, and the Kosi.



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