Ganga Action Parivar

Clean Ganga, Green Ganga.
Serve Ganga, Save Ganga.

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What is Ganga Action Parivar?

Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) is a family of professionals, engineers, scientists, activists, spiritual leaders, environmental specialists and dedicated sevaks (volunteers) from all across the world dedicated to serving Mother Ganga. GAP intends to restore, protect and maintain the river Ganga and Her tributaries in their aviral (free-flowing) and nirmal (unpolluted) state and to find workable solutions to the problems of pollution and obstruction.

About Us

On April 4th, 2010 by the hands of H.H. the Dalai Lama, H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, former Deputy Prime Minister Hon’ble Shri L.K. Advani, former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Major General B.C. Khanduri and many revered saints and dignitaries, Ganga Action Parivar was officially launched at Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh at a special “Sparsh Ganga” (“Divine Touch of Ganga”) function, an event to raise awareness about the need for collective and holistic, solution-based action to address the crucial issues facing the holy river. Since then, hundreds of supporters and family members have been mobilised, coming together to find solutions to the problems facing Ganga and Her tributaries. The mobilisation of this Ganga Action family was critical to filling and bridging the gaps left by previous Ganga Action Plans, after which Ganga’s dire situation has continued to deteriorate. With Ganga irrigating the fields which feed more than one-third of India’s population, with Ganga being the sole source of water for bathing, cooking and drinking for millions of people, and with Ganga symbolising the national heritage and identity of India, the situation has become truly critical.

Despite these challenges, Ganga Action Parivar knows that the power and spirit of love, unity and cooperation are the only ways to bring about true, sustainable change. GAP members have pledged to have Mother Ganga as the head of their family and are dedicated to bridging differences to work as one family, embracing all and including all.
Our Mission

- To **restore a free-flowing and pristine Ganga**, and thereby protect India’s diverse cultural heritage, traditions, spirituality, physical lives and livelihoods

- To **safeguard the river’s natural, undisturbed flow** and restore acceptable flows where obstructing structures are already present

- To make the river clean enough to safely drink by **completely separating** river water from all liquid waste, solid waste and eventually all treated wastewater

- To work from “**Grand Plan**” to “**Ground Plan**,” addressing all the broad issues that face Ganga at national and international levels, all the way down to finding local, grassroots solutions and actions

- To provide **responsible and sustainable solutions** and action-based plans that ensure our future generations inherit the best planet we can give them

- To include **all people in the common cause of restoring Ganga**, regardless of their race, gender, caste, creed, economic status or nationality

- To **work together and unite** in our diversity in order to accomplish any goal set forth
The Need to Restore Ganga

“The Ganga, especially, is the river of India, beloved of her people, round which are intertwined her memories, her hopes and fears, her songs of triumph, her victories and her defeats. She has been a symbol of India's age-long culture and civilization, ever changing, ever flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga.”
- Jawaharlal Nehru, First Prime Minister of India

Ganga is one of the oldest and largest rivers in the history of mankind and is intimately intertwined in every aspect of life for Indians. She provides water, energy and livelihood to countless millions of Indians — of every caste and creed — who reside along Her shores, irrigating the fields that feed more than one-third of India’s population. She is also a holistic ecological system and home to one of the largest and most diverse range of plants and animal species.

However, the cleanliness of Her waters and Her ability to provide for all is under serious threat.

Realising this dire need to restore Ganga, in 1979 the late Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi took an active role and directed the Central Board for the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution to perform a comprehensive survey of Ganga’s situation. From this survey the Board published two reports which later formed the basis of future efforts to clean Ganga.

“The Ganges is a symbol of our prosperity, our culture, our heritage, our civilization, our philosophies...We have to see that Ganga does not remain just a symbol, but it should be such a symbol that will become a part of our everyday life and become a part of the future of India and make India strong.” - former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi

Taking up the cause, former Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi launched India’s first massive river cleaning project, the Ganga Action Plan, in 1985. These noble and continuous efforts, first with GAP I, then followed by GAP II, have been of some benefit, easing about 39% of the pollution-load on the river through countless initiatives; however tragically the state of Ganga continues to worsen day by day.
“The sacred Ganga is the life source for crores of Indians. It is our duty to keep the river clean.” - Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh

On November 4, 2008, Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh declared Ganga to be India’s “national river,” recognising the special place Ganga holds in the hearts and minds of all Indians, and began to take steps towards a holistic and comprehensive restoration of the Ganga River Basin by establishing the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA).

Shri L.K. Advani, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, has long been a public voice of concern over the state of Ganga and Her tributaries. Shri Advani was present at the launch of Ganga Action Parivar in April 2010, and has since been at many events supporting the cause to clean and restore Ganga.

“Going forward, it is my dream to see that Ganga becomes free of pollution all along its course, right from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar, the place in West Bengal, where it merges into the ocean...I have no doubt that a combined determined and sustained effort of society and the state would restore the Holy Ganga to this pristine purity. It may take decades to fully reach this objective, but it is a maha yagya (mega mission) worth undertaking. Indeed, it should be our long term goal to make all the rivers, lakes and water bodies in India pollution free. After all, they are not only the lifeline of our country’s development, but also the symbols and sustainers of India’s ancient and proud civilization.” - Shri L.K. Advani

“It is a matter of great regret that the Ganga Action Plan, which was launched in 1985, and to which Shri Rajiv Gandhi gave such high priority, has failed to stem the growing pollution of our great life-giving river and its tributaries, which have for millenia shaped our civilization and culture, and nourished our forests, wildlife and ecology. I think by now it is clear that the government alone cannot succeed in stemming the pollution and degradation of our river system. This has to be a people’s movement and a mass action programme, for which we must draw inspiration and guidance from Mahatma Gandhi.” - Smt. Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress Party and Chairperson of the National Advisory Council
On April 4th, 2010, **His Holiness Dalai Lama** graced the “Sparsh Ganga” event at Parmarth Niketan in Rishikesh which launched Ganga Action Parivar. He moved the participants with a powerful speech about the effects of global warming he has witnessed within his own lifetime and the need to rectify and become conscious of our actions in order to live in harmony with our environment.

“We have always used the water of holy rivers like Ganga and Yamuna to purify ourselves, but today we have reached a point where we have to purify this water...It’s not only the government that can do it. We will have to come together.” - **Pujya Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**

On the banks of Mother Ganga, at the time of the Hindu New Year, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar re-emphasised that the time has arrived when we must clean Ganga.

On November 5th, 2011, **Janab Maulana Kalbe Sadiq**, Vice President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, gathered with interfaith leaders at a function in Varanasi entitled “Ek Sham Ma Ganga Ke Naam” (“A Night Dedicated to Mother Ganga”). At this event, he gave a compelling and inspiring speech highlighting the importance Ganga holds for people of all faiths and how everyone must come together to see that She remains clean and free-flowing. He emphasised that Ganga belongs to *all*.

When Pujya Swamiji shared the Ganga Action Parivar project with **Dr. Pranav Pandya**, Head of All World Gayatri Pariwar, Dr. Pandya emphasised his support for this noble and crucial project. He said that Shantikunj would absolutely be a strong and staunch part of Ganga Action Parivar and that he personally as well as on behalf of Shantikunj would help the effort in every way possible.

“The Ganga not only merges with the Yamuna and the Saraswati, but also represents the confluence of the economic well-being of the Indian people and their abiding reverence for the country’s natural resources. If we pollute the Ganga, we are polluting the very basis of all forms of life in India.”

- **Dr. R.K. Pachauri**, Nobel Laureate, Director General of TERI and renowned environmentalist

Dr. R.K. Pachauri has truly been a pillar of support for Ganga Action Parivar and has been involved greatly in developing sustainable solutions to all the issues Ganga and Her tributaries face.
At the end of 2011, His Holiness Pujya Shankaracharya Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swami came and stayed at Parmarth. During his stay, he and Pujya Swamiji had many detailed discussions regarding projects GAP is undertaking. From these meetings, Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Shankaracharyaji made concrete plans for joint programmes in animal care, tree plantations and biodiversity, sanitation and solid waste management and detailed rural development. They are also working together to help unify all saints and religious leaders at the upcoming Kumbh Mela in 2013 in Allahabad, bringing all together with the message of unity and the need to restore and protect Ganga and the environment.

“The movement to save the Ganga and its ‘nirmal’ (‘clean’) and ‘aviral’ (‘uninterrupted’) flow is not just a movement to save a river...If the Ganga lives, India lives. If the Ganga dies, India dies.”
- Dr. Vandana Shiva, Director of Navdanya and renowned environmental activist and scientist

Pujya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati of the national campaign Ganga Seva Abhiyan is working together with GAP to help restore Ganga to Her free-flowing and pristine state, where no sewage enters Ganga and no dams or other obstructions are allowed to hamper the flow or continuity of Ganga. Pujya Swamiji and he have also come together to help restore Yamuna and other tributaries of Ganga, bringing together spiritual leaders, scientists and government officials to find solutions to the issues facing these rivers.

“Mother Ganga, along with all its surroundings, is an open temple. It’s not enough for us to worship the Ganga merely through pujas and prayers: we need to also demonstrate our respect and devotion through practicing cleanliness. We should clean up what’s outside with the same intention with which we clean our altars, the ashram, as well as our hearts.” - Pujya Prem Baba

“Gangaji is the essence of Indian sanskriti (tradition), connecting all from diverse backgrounds...She is not an ordinary river, and protection of Her is of prime importance.”
- Pujya Swami Gyanswaroopanand
Ganga Action Parivar has come together in order to work alongside all these efforts to restore and protect Ganga and Her tributaries. GAP is working “from Grand Plan to Ground Plan”, undertaking numerous projects from tree plantations to building toilets to solar power projects to getting the Upper Ganga region declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and so much more.
Our Structure

- **Patrons**
  - MOTHER GANGA
  - Think Tank

- **Sponsors**
  - Social Awareness & Outreach
  - Media Partners

- **Working Groups**
  - Scientific Working Groups
  - Legal Cell
  - Financial Core Group
  - Project Committees

- **International Representatives**
  - National Representatives
  - States & Regional Representatives
  - City & Local Representatives
  - Social Groups for GAP

- **Television**
- **Mobile**
- **Online Media & Social Networking**
- **Radio**
- **Newspaper**

- **Wastewater Management**
- **Solid Waste Management**
- **Agricultural Management**
- **Alternative Energy & Hydropower Management**
- **Ecological Management**
Major Events of GAP

The issues facing Ganga today exist at many levels. Because of this complexity, Ganga Action Parivar recognises that instead of criticising and blaming others for the problems facing Ganga - whether that be administration, industries or anyone else - we should all work together at all levels to find solutions and be the change.

21 April, 2012: Pujiya Swamiji and Shri Nitin Gadkari, President of BJP, had a meeting to discuss the various problems facing the river Ganga. They discussed efforts that the government can take to address and solve all the issues facing Ganga from pollution to obstruction, and how the government can work hand-in-hand with the people to restore Ganga and Her tributaries.

6 May, 2012: Pujiya Swamiji and Shri Salman Khurshid, the Cabinet Minister of the Ministry of Law and Justice, met to discuss the many legal aspects of the issues facing Ganga, such as hydropower development, and to find how a balance can be struck between the people, the government and the industries. Shri Salman Khurshid expressed his full commitment to assisting the cause of protecting and preserving Ganga.

5 May, 2012: At a function in Delhi, Smt. Najma Heptulla, Vice President of BJP, spoke passionately and sincerely about the crucial role Ganga plays in the lives of all Indians. She deeply appreciated the work that Pujiya Swamiji and Ganga Action Parivar is doing to help clean Ganga, and she urged all the leaders present to do whatever they can to help protect and preserve this national river.

26 April, 2012: National, social, spiritual and political leader Uma Bharati came to Parmarth to meet with Pujiya Swamiji on her recent visit to Haridwar. They discussed the problems facing Ganga and how to use all networks – social, national, religious and political – to help mitigate and ultimately solve the crisis of pollution, as it will take all coming together to restore Ganga.
12 April, 2012:
While at the Guru Sangamam gathering in Delhi – a confederation of the great spiritual leaders of India’s indigenous religions and spiritual traditions for which Pujya Swamiji serves as the General Secretary – Pujya Swamiji spoke to the Gurus about the urgent need to restore, protect and maintain the river Ganga and Her tributaries to Their free-flowing and pristine state, as Ganga is both a lifeline to the millions who live along Her banks as well as representative of the spiritual and cultural heritage of India. At this event, the board members of the Guru Sangamam gathered together to officially release the Ganga Action Parivar brochure, making a powerful statement of unity amongst all – no matter what religion or denomination one follows – in this crucial cause to preserve and protect Mother Ganga.

8-10 April, 2012: Dedicated scientists, environmentalists, scholars and activists gathered together for the annual, solution-focused National Ganga-Yamuna Workshop at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh organized by Ganga Action Parivar.

The three-day workshop was chaired and led by Dr. RK Pachauri (Nobel Peace Prize recipient and Director General, TERI), Jalpurush Shri Rajendra Singh (Magsaysay Award recipient), Dr. Vandana Shiva (renowned environmental activist), Dr. Vinod Tare (Coordinator of the Ganga River Basin Ecological Management Plan) and many others. At the end of the conference a resolution was created to pave the way for the actions that Ganga Action Parivar and Yamuna Action Parivar will take to serve their common cause.
Additionally, on the morning of the 10th, all the participants of the workshop came together with local volunteers and community members in the Lakshman Jhula area of Rishikesh to clean the banks of Ganga. Thus, all the scientists, environmentalists, activists and scholars who had gathered for the workshop got to not only discuss how to find the solutions, but to actually be the solution!

Their collective presence was a testament to their commitment to work together as one global family, providing the hope and light needed to face one of the nation’s toughest challenges – the pollution and obstruction of the River Ganga.
12 March, 2012: Pujya Swamiji met with the Chief Minister of Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit and discussed with her the dire state of the river Yamuna – particularly Her state as She runs through Delhi – and what needs to be done to restore and protect Yamuna, the largest tributary of Ganga. Smt. Dikshit was very open to any suggestions in the effort to clean Yamuna, and the Government of Delhi and Yamuna Action Parivar will now work together to bring back Yamuna to Her pristine state for all.

12 March, 2012: A meeting was held in Delhi jointly organised by the Save Ganga Movement and Ganga Action Parivar to discuss the way forward to restore Ganga. This meeting brought together many of the scientists, government officials and environmentalists who are working together for Ganga, including Ganga Action Parivar, the Save Ganga Movement, and Ganga Seva Abhiyan.
11 November, 2011 (11-11-11): From the 5th - 12th November, Parmarth Niketan hosted a huge function with more than 600 people from around the world who came to celebrate 11-11-11. It was a wonderful opportunity to have so many people from all over the world gathered together in the spirit of love, peace and commitment to an age of light and love. Pujya Swamiji inspired everyone to join together to serve as one family – as Ganga Action Parivar – to protect and restore the free-flow and pristine nature of our Mother Ganga and the millions of lives that Her holy waters sustain. In that spirit, on November 11th, Pujya Swamiji led a huge Ganga clean-up programme as hundreds took to the ghats and the streets of Rishikesh to clean years of trash along Ganga’s banks. Participants took pledges to each inspire at least eleven other friends and family members to be part of the Ganga family!
5 November, 2011: A large function that drew thousands was conducted by Ganga Mahasabha in collaboration with Ganga Action Parivar on the well-known Assi Ghat in Varanasi entitled “Ek Sham Ma Ganga Ke Naam” (“A Night Dedicated to Mother Ganga”). Hindu Saints and respected Muslim leaders, including Pujya Shankaracharya Swami Jayendra Saraswati, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Pujya Sant Shri Morari Bapu, Pujya Swami Gyanswaroopanand, Janab Maulana Kalbe Sadiq and Janab Maulana Fazlur Rahman, as well as eminent Ganga sevaks such as Justice Giridhar Malaviya and Advocate Arun Kumar participated in the event. They inspired thousands to become aware of the critical state of the River Ganga, whose waters feed more than one-third of India’s population, and urged everyone to become a part of the solution. The coming together of India’s most influential spiritual and religious leaders for this vital cause sent a strong message of unity – that Ganga provides for all with no discrimination, no hesitation, no expectation and no vacation – and a message that peace comes only from living in harmony with each other and with Mother Nature.
4 November, 2011: The First National Students’ Conference on River Basin Planning was held at IIT-Kanpur in which students from all the IITs as well as other universities across India attended. Sessions were held to learn about and discuss the various aspects of river basin planning, with an emphasis on the Ganga River basin, such as geological, socio-cultural, legal, ecological and many other thematic areas of management. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati graced the conference, delivering an unforgettable speech to all about the need to restore and maintain Ganga and the important role youth play in being the change. Eminent experts and scientists shared their knowledge and motivated students to act now.

20-21 September, 2011: INTACH and GAP organised and hosted a conference focused on the ecological and cultural conservation and sustainability of the Upper Ganga region (from Gangotri to Haridwar), defining the birth place of Ganga and the sacred natural and cultural history of the river as a home to numerous revered pilgrimage sites as well as an important place for both ecological diversity and tourism. The resolutions of this seminar, such as the idea for the Government of India to create a National River Basin Act and to have UNESCO declare the Upper Ganga region as a World Heritage Site, will serve as stepping stones to many actions and projects to come towards protecting, restoring and maintaining Ganga and Her tributaries.

25-26 October, 2011: With the belief that Ganga provides for so many selflessly, and with the desire to make not only our own homes fresh and clean but the entire world, Ganga Action Parivar organised a two-day clean-up in Rishikesh during the holiday of Diwali. With a team of hundreds of volunteers, GAP cleaned not only the river ghats and banks but also all of the streets in the area of Swargashram, Rishikesh. Years’ worth of heaped garbage was swept up in a matter of a few hours by the spirited team, preventing all the waste from leaching into the soil and being washed into Ganga, and also showing local people how wonderful it would be to have a pollution-free environment.
This clean-up was the beginning of a series of long-term steps to beautify and green Rishikesh, making it a model town. These steps are the ground level ("Ground Plan"), community-based counterpart to GAP’s larger, “Grand Plan” 3G’s programme (Gau, Ganga, and Gaon).

3 June, 2011: On Pujya Swamiji’s 59th birthday, He announced that He didn’t want anything for His birthday other than toilets being built in the cities and towns along the Ganga. From that, the “3T’s Programme” – standing for toilets, taps and trees – was developed to bring proper sanitation, fresh water and tree plantation to all the villages lining Mother Ganga’s banks. In honour of His birthday, Ganga Action Parivar held a large clean-up on the banks of Mother Ganga, working together to restore and protect Her!

8-15 May, 2011: Parmarth Niketan Ashram hosted the beautiful Ganga Sanskritik Mahotsav, or Ganga Heritage Celebration, organised and sponsored by Sparsh Ganga, Paridhi and Ganga Action Parivar, in which 141 artists – musicians, dancers, poets and fine artists – came together to utilise their arts and talents in the service and devotion of Mother Ganga. The major performance was a dance ballet of the story of Mother Ganga, with the main role of Gangaji Herself performed by Arushi Pokhriyal, daughter of former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Ramesh Pokhariyal.
23-24 April, 2011:

A National Aviral Nirmal Ganga Conference was held at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, organised by Ganga Action Parivar in cooperation with numerous organisations including Parmarth Niketan Ashram, India Heritage Research Foundation, Save Ganga Movement and Sarva Dharma Sansad. Prominent experts and professionals gathered together to form a comprehensive action plan along with alternative models for making Mother Ganga and Her tributaries free-flowing, clean and natural.

27 October, 2010: An Aviral Nirmal Ganga Conference held at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, in which spiritual leaders, scientists and experts were brought together to find solutions to the problems facing Ganga. In this meeting, the aims of the newly-formed Ganga Action Parivar were discussed.
**17 May, 2010:** Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Hon’ble Shri L.K. Advani, then Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, and former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Major General B.C. Khanduri, along with thousands of attendees, launched the “Sparsh Ganga Campaign” in Gangotri, the source of the Bhagirathi/Ganga. Thousands of people pledged to help clean and restore the Ganga River and Her tributaries. A large clean-up and aarti ceremony were also held there on the banks of Bhagirathi to begin the effort.

**4 April, 2010:** Ganga Action Parivar was officially launched at Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh at a special “Sparsh Ganga” (“Divine Touch of Ganga”) function by the hands of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati and many revered saints and leaders. The Dalai Lama moved the participants with his powerful speech about the effects of global warming within his own lifetime and the need to rectify and become conscious of our actions in order to live in harmony with our environment. Hon’ble Shri L.K. Advani and then Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank also attended and presented Shri Nishank’s book about saving Ganga. Prominent leaders such as Pujya Swami Ramdev, Pujya Sant Shri Rameshbhai Oza, Pujya Sant Shri Morari Bapu and Father Dominic, as well as Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi were present to show their support and share their love and dedication towards our environment. The massive event included participants pledging to help protect and restore Ganga, thereby forming the beginning of the world family.
“The Ganga to me is the symbol of India’s memorable past which has been flowing into the present and continues to flow towards the ocean of the future.”

- Jawaharlal Nehru, First Prime Minister of India, born in Allahabad on the banks of the Ganga

Ganga is not just a river. Revered as divine, Ganga is a complete lifeline to the nearly 500 million people who live along Her banks. Ganga is inextricably intertwined with all aspects of Indian daily life, from spirituality to farming, from drinking water to moksha.

The river Ganga is highly revered in Hindu culture. Referred to as Ganga Mata or Ma Ganga (“Mother Ganga”), the Ganga is not merely a river to Hindus, but rather a Goddess whose divine purity cleanses all past sins and karma of anyone who bathes in Her waters, aiding their path towards liberation. After the intense and long prayers of King Bhagiratha, descendant of King Sagara, Goddess Ganga came down from the heavens to flow in all three worlds – the heavens, the Earth and the underworld – to purify all. Like the pilgrimage to Mecca for Muslims or Jerusalem for Jews, life is viewed as incomplete without at least one bath in Ganga.
Many Hindus keep a vial of Ganga water in their home, and the water is used in all areas of life. Ganga water is given to the sick, as it is believed to cure all illnesses. Ganga water is sprinkled as a benediction of peace. Ganga water is used to cleanse and purify any place, person or object, as it has the power to purify anything. Worshippers wash their hands and drink Her water to purify themselves before beginning any ritual, *puja* and *yagna/havan* ceremony. In fact, it is believed that when mixed with normal water, even the smallest drop of water from Ganga has the ability to turn normal water holy and give it healing powers. Every day each year, thousands of people come to bathe in Ganga’s waters, and many festivals, such as Ganga Dussehra and Kumbh Mela, are held along Ganga’s banks.

Ganga plays a very important role during the death of a Hindu. As Her water is believed to free one’s soul from all past sins and *karma*, Hindu pilgrims will travel long distances to immerse the ashes of their loved ones in Her waters to allow the deceased to move on, peacefully and smoothly, from this world. If someone is dying, Ganga water is given to them to drink, and many pilgrims will actually travel great distances to die along Her banks.

Hindus revere Ganga not just for Her ability to free them from their *karma*, but also for the lessons that She teaches. No matter what obstacle or obstruction attempts to block Her path, the river Ganga keeps flowing. Her waters are for everyone, not just one group of people, and She abundantly provides for all.
Ganga is a true lifeline to Her people. More than 500 million people depend on the waters of Ganga for every aspect of their lives.

**Lifeline of the People**

Besides being a spiritual and cultural centre for the people of India, the Ganga is a true lifeline for the people who inhabit Her banks. There are over thirty cities, seventy towns and thousands of villages along the Ganga’s banks. Within the plain of the river, more than 500 million people depend on the waters of Ganga for every aspect of their lives.

- **Agriculture**

Since ancient times, people have used the Ganga for irrigation of crops, either by using the natural flooding patterns of the river or by developing gravity irrigation canals. In fact, this use is described in Indian scriptures from more than 2,000 years ago!

The Ganga basin is a key part of agricultural industries in India and Bangladesh, and the area it covers is often referred to as the “bread basket of India.” Farmers grow crops such as rice, lentils, sugarcane, maize, sorghum, oil seeds (mustard, sesame, linseed and rapeseed, among others), potatoes, cotton and wheat. In swamps and lakes along Ganga, farmers grow legumes, chilies and jute, providing not only a source of food but also their main source of income. The Gangetic plain provides fertile ground for animal husbandry where people raise cattle, buffalo, goats and other animals.

- **Fishing**

Along the length of Ganga, but particularly in the river’s delta region, fish make up an integral part of the inhabitants’ diet. Ganga is regarded as the backbone of freshwater fishing in India, providing thousands of people in hundreds of fishing communities with both food and a source of income. Thousands of people and an entire way of life completely depend on the Ganga to survive.
• Use of Natural Flora Around Ganga

Many plants that naturally grow along the Ganga are of great economic and medicinal importance. For example, the Ganga-Shivalik region of the Ganga basin is known to as a treasure house of medicines, with approximately 450 different medicinal plants growing in the area, some of which are extremely rare. These plants have been used in Ayurvedic medicine (the ancient Indian traditional system of medicine dating back to the Vedic period) for thousands of years, and many people who live in these areas have a working knowledge of these medicinal plants.

• Tourism

A recent way that Ganga continually provides for the people of India is through tourism. Each year, millions of people – both from India and abroad – travel to the banks of Ganga as part of their pilgrimage to holy places and temples and to take sacred baths in the Ganga. This influx of tourists and pilgrims provides a valuable source of income to local people living along the river’s banks.

• Navigation

The river Ganga and some of Her tributaries (especially in the east) have been used as important navigation and transportation routes since ancient times. Before the invention of the railway system in India, the Ganga was used to transport goods from as far as Kolkata to Delhi. There is still a heavy reliance on Ganga for carrying goods in the delta regions, such as West Bengal and Bangladesh, where jute, tea, grain and other agricultural and rural products are produced.
Besides supporting hundreds of millions of people who live along Her banks and in Her basin, the entire length of Ganga is home to many diverse environments supporting a wide variety of flora and fauna. Starting high in the Himalayan deodar and fir forests near Gaumukh, Ganga begins Her descent down across the north of India, flowing through the lower sal forests near Rishikesh, entering the plains at Haridwar, travelling east into the mangrove swamps of West Bengal and finally emptying Herself into the Bay of Bengal at Gangasagar.

As Ganga flows through these environments, She provides a home, support and nourishment to millions of life forms that live along Her banks and in Her waters.
Ganga not only holds great spiritual and cultural significance, but Her unique, natural characteristics have made Her a fascinating subject of scientific study. Water from Ganga, known as Gangajal, has been observed to remain fresh for long periods of time. This observation and the many healing qualities that Ganga is believed to possess are not merely faith-based beliefs, but rather have been supported by much scientific evidence and research.

- **Anti-Septic & Anti-Bacterial Qualities**
  
  In 1896, it was observed that the bacterium which causes the deadly Cholera disease could be killed within three hours of being treated with water from Ganga, yet continued to thrive in distilled water even after forty-eight hours! This unique factor present in Gangajal was one of the first modern citations of a bacteriophage, a virus which eats and destroys disease-causing bacteria. In another study in 1927, no germs existed in a sample of Gangajal extracted from an area just a few feet below floating corpses who had died of dysentery and cholera, where one would typically predict to find millions of germs!

- **High Oxygen Retention Capacity**
  
  Ganga’s high oxygen retention capacity is another reason why Her waters don’t putrefy even after long periods of storage. It has been found that Ganga’s oxygen retention capacity is 15-25 times higher than any other river in the world. Although the massive amount of organic pollutants dumped into Ganga could have easily consumed the amount of oxygen found in the river, an unknown factor, believed to be catalyzed by unidentified microbes, is able to replenish the river’s oxygen content.
The Yamuna is the largest tributary of Ganga and is an important river Herself. Not only is She viewed as a living Goddess by Hindus, but Yamuna provides water for nearly fifty-seven million people who live in Her floodplain who rely on Her waters for every daily water need. Most importantly, 92% of Yamuna’s waters are used to irrigate the fields that feed a great percentage of India’s population, irrigating more than 12.3 million hectares of agricultural land.

However, Yamuna is under serious threat. Sadly, along much of the river, Yamuna is being used as a sewage drain. Delhi alone contributes up to 80% of the pollution load of the entire length of the river. In fact, in 2010 the Indian Supreme Court even referred to the Yamuna as a “ganda nullah” (“dirty drain”) rather than a dirty river.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, 85% of pollution in Yamuna is from domestic sources – namely, human excrement. Sewage flows freely in the Yamuna at Delhi, often untreated as the city only has the ability to treat about 48% of its waste. When this incredible amount of sewage is combined with additional pollution such as industrial effluents, the sheer volume of waste makes it impossible for current sewage treatment plants (STPs) to treat and clean the water properly. In some places like Vrindavan and Mathura, situated downstream from Delhi, STPs are now having to use more than double the amount of harmful chemicals like chlorine gas and alum in an attempt to purify the water, making the situation even worse for those trying to use the water for their daily needs.

Almost 97% of Yamuna’s original waters are diverted from the river just a few kilometres from Her source at Yamunotri. In the state of Haryana, more than 80,000 million litres of water are being held back by an irrigation dam – a highly contentious issue, as the holding of water is against federal regulations, yet thousands of people in Haryana now depend on this water – depriving the Yamuna of the water it so desperately needs to flush out pollution. Despite the fact that Delhi relies on Yamuna for 70% of its water needs, by the time Yamuna reaches Delhi, not a single drop of natural, fresh water of the river is left in Yamuna.
**Actions**

- Working to **clean existing pollution** in the Yamuna
- Working to develop waste management solutions so the **dumping of millions of litres of sewage and industrial waste** into Her waters can be **stopped**
- Working with communities and the government **to restore and maintain adequate pure, original water flow in Yamuna** in order to flush out pollution, and to **end over-harvesting** of Her waters
- Educating all through **mass awareness campaigns**, such as public service announcements and documentaries on the issues, social networking, and outreach at key events such as the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela in 2013
- **Educating and inspiring youth** to care for Yamuna by creating **environmental, value-based curricula** and organising Yamuna clean-up days in schools
- Organising local communities to become **active stewards** of their Yamuna by educating them on the issues and **training residents on how they can make a difference**
The Issues Facing Ganga

Wastewater

• Issues

Each day, more than 1.3 billion litres of wastewater from domestic and industrial sources are dumped directly into Ganga. In many places, this wastewater entering the river is completely raw, completely untreated.

This raw sewage is making Ganga dangerous for drinking or bathing, with dangerous bacteria and pathogens filling the waters at levels far exceeding that which is deemed safe or acceptable. In some places the amount of fecal coliform bacteria – which cause illnesses ranging from diarrhoea to kidney failure – is as much as 47,000 times the accepted health standard.

In some cities, some wastewater is sent through local water treatment facilities before being released into Ganga. However, many of these treatment facilities do not have sufficient capacity or ability to treat the wastewater. The amount of wastewater the cities produce often far outnumbers the amount of wastewater the treatment facilities can treat; further, these facilities are often plagued with operational problems and lie in a constant state of disrepair. Those that do operate cannot during the constant power outages or during monsoon flooding. In addition, many of these facilities do not have the ability to treat the wastewater completely. For example, the facilities in Kanpur have the ability to address biological issues with the water, such as fecal coliform, yet have no ability to address the toxic, heavy metals present in the industrial effluents.
All these pollutants entering Ganga and Her tributaries are wreaking havoc on their natural ecosystems. Fish and aquatic creatures are dying. In one stretch of the Yamuna, practically no aquatic life has been able to survive for the last decade.

This pollution from both untreated and treated wastewater is affecting millions of people who depend on Ganga for all their water needs. In Varanasi alone, 66% of people who use Ganga’s waters each year contract a waterborne illness such as typhoid, cholera and dysentery. Many people have no choice but to continue to use Ganga’s polluted waters for their very existence.

**Solutions**
- **Separating** river water from all sewage
- **Preventing** the dumping of all industrial effluents and all non-organic agricultural run-off into the river systems
- **Re-using treated wastewater** for irrigation and toilets, among other purposes

**Actions**
- Ensuring every school and community in the Ganga Basin has a **proper toilet**, so that people are not forced to use Ganga as their bathroom, and **installing “green” public toilets** for communities to use
- Ensuring every home has **access to clean running water**, so people do not have to use polluted waters for cooking, drinking, bathing, etc.
- Creation of **proper sewage treatment and wastewater management plans**, so that neither domestic waste nor industrial effluents flow into Ganga or Her tributaries
- Implementing **plant-based management plans** along Ganga and Her tributaries, using plants to effectively clean pollution that already exists in the rivers and prevent erosion
- Organising meetings between industries, government officials and environmentalists to **collectively find solutions to the issue of industrial effluents being dumped**
- **Raising awareness through education** about the effects polluted water have on people and on the environment, and the **importance of keeping our rivers free from both domestic and industrial waste**
Solid Waste

Issues

If you take a walk through almost any part in India, you are bound to see trash scattered everywhere, along all roadsides, railways and riverbanks. This problem is not only an aesthetic insult and a cause of poor reviews from international travellers, but it is also a problem that is irreparably damaging India’s environment and leading to innumerable health issues for India’s citizens.

In most places throughout India, there is no solid waste management system. Trash is inevitably thrown into the surrounding areas, where it decomposes in the open, attracting flies and rats among other creatures. Much of the trash that is dumped is made from non-biodegradable materials, such as polythene or other non-biodegradable plastics, and thus is left to exist forever in the environment, slowly leaching its toxic ingredients into the ground, contaminating the soil and the groundwater. Animals come along to pick through this trash in their search for food, and often die from ingesting such harmful materials as plastics and polythens.

This solid waste is swept into surrounding water bodies such as the Ganga and Her tributaries, either purposely by people or by heavy rains. In the waters, large amounts of biodegradable waste take a lot of oxygen from the water to decompose, leading to illness and death of fish and other aquatic creatures, such as the endangered Gangetic dolphin. Non-biodegradable materials float through the rivers, create blocks in the free flow of the water, and slowly leach their harmful chemicals into the water itself. Aquatic creatures mistakenly eat these materials and die.
Many cities along the Ganga and Her tributaries do not have any sort of solid waste management system, and if they do, they are never sufficient to handle the amount that is produced each day. Another huge problem is a lack of education and environmental awareness among the ordinary people. People have nowhere to put their garbage, so they inevitably throw it into the surrounding environment, being completely unaware of the consequences, or they burn the trash which releases harmful chemicals into the atmosphere.

**Solutions**

- **Collecting** and **disposing** solid waste at its source
- **Reducing** and **recycling** solid waste as much as possible
- Exploring **creative** and **innovative** ways in which solid waste can be used as a source of **economic growth**
- **Preventing** harmful, non-biodegradable materials, such as polythene, from entering the river and **providing alternative options** for eco-friendly packaging

**Actions**

- **Restoring** the pristine nature of Ganga and Her tributaries by **removing currently existing pollution** and effectively **curtailing future pollution** through Solid Waste Management
- Planning the **first-ever eco-friendly Green Kumbh Mela in 2013**, where no solid waste will enter Ganga or be left to pollute the environment
- **Removing wandering cows from roads** and providing them with **care and shelter**, so that they are not forced to live on the streets where they end up eating plastic and other waste
- **Educating the public** about the need to **protect** the environment, and encouraging people to **stop using harmful materials** like plastic and polythene and instead opt for **eco-friendly alternatives** like cloth and jute bags
Agriculture

The waters from Ganga and Her tributaries irrigate the fields of the millions of acres of agricultural crops which are grown along Her banks. These farms provide food for nearly one-third of the population of India, and thus their reliance on Ganga and Her tributaries is inestimable.

Protection of the waters of Mother Ganga is not only a matter of aesthetic and cultural importance. Rather, it is a life-and-death, sickness-and-health issue for nearly one-third of India’s population.

Many of these farms are involved in a mutually destructive relationship with Ganga. Their practices are harming Her waters, and Her polluted waters are harming their crops. Many of these farms use non-organic methods to grow their crops, spraying their fields with harmful, toxic chemicals, many of which have been banned in other countries around the world. These chemicals are then washed down into the rivers, filling the water with dangerous, cancer-causing chemicals such as DDT and HCH. These chemicals have been found in concentrations far exceeding international safety standards, and they affect everyone who uses Ganga or Her tributaries for drinking, bathing, or cooking as well as the crops grown in fields irrigated downstream. Further, these toxic chemicals are killing large populations of fish and other forms of aquatic life in the rivers. Thus, Ganga Action Parivar is committed to working to spread organic farming methods for the protection of Ganga, the farmers and all those who are fed and nourished by these crops.

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**Solutions**

- Promoting conscious use of water for irrigation
- Implementing policies that prevent toxic chemical run-off (e.g. pesticides) from entering Ganga
- Promoting mass education of farmers in the methods and benefits of sustainable, organic farming

**Actions**

- Creating wastewater management plans such as the installation of proper toilets and sewage systems, as well as alternative methods like plant-based management, to effectively eliminate sewage and industrial effluents from entering Ganga, and thus into the fields She irrigates
- Planting trees and other greenery to restore the land and rejuvenate the natural environment, through which the waters are purified – thus minimising pollution in irrigation – and soil erosion is mitigated
- Raising awareness and educating the public about the dangers of using harmful, toxic chemicals found in pesticides and fertilizers, and the urgent need to return to organic farming for the health of the people, the health of Ganga, and the health of the environment

The farms irrigated by Ganga provide food for nearly one-third of the population of India, thus their reliance on Her waters is inestimable.
India is one of the fastest-growing countries in the world, with a population of approximately 1.2 billion people. With this increase in the number of people living in India comes an increase in the demand for electricity, especially as more of India begins to modernise.

However, a way to meet this demand appropriately has not yet been realised. Many places, including even large, metropolitan cities such as Delhi, experience hours of power outages each and every day, and even more hours of power fluctuations. There is an urgent and critical need to provide sufficient energy to the people, especially now as many rely on electricity for everyday needs and work. One solution that was used in the past was the construction of hydro-electric projects (dams) along Ganga, designed to harness the power of the river to create electricity.

Yet, these dams have created many problems. First, despite the presence of numerous dams, they were never sufficient to produce enough electricity for those whom the dam served (most of the electricity is actually diverted away from the local communities), and they have ended up significantly harming the Ganga. Because of the dams’ check on the free flow of Ganga, portions of Ganga now experience incredibly low flows and there are even dozens of kilometres of absolutely dry riverbed. These low flows cause water shortages, destroy many aquatic creatures’ habitat, and allow pollution from solid and liquid waste to build up, affecting all who rely on Ganga for life. The Bhagirathi river is even completely dry at some points of the year due to diversion of water from the riverbed into metal pipes for kilometres at a stretch. Further, all of the villages living in these areas have no access to the most vital ingredient of life – water.
Solutions

- Creating sustainable energy sources based on each state’s needs and natural resources as viable, effective alternatives to hydropower development, which damages Ganga’s natural flow and ecosystem.

India is one of the fastest growing countries in the world with a population of 1.2 billion people. As India grows, so does the demand for electricity.

Actions

- Popularising and energising a new solar power plan that taps into India’s enormous capacity to harvest and provide solar power, meeting 100% of the nation’s future energy needs by 2050, providing a sustainable, environmentally-friendly alternative for energy rather than destructive hydropower projects or coal.

- Restoring the free-flowing nature of Ganga through work to remove unnecessary obstructions and provision of alternate visions of development.

- Raising awareness and educating the public about the need to conserve energy, taking only what we need from the earth and living in harmony with our environment.


**Issues**

Ganga supports millions of microscopic organisms, fish, amphibians, freshwater turtles, crocodiles, aquatic birds, and mammals like river otters and the well-known yet highly-endangered Ganges River dolphin. However, this entire ecosystem is in danger. There is a lack of fish in Ganga due to pollution, low-flow, and an unsustainable fishing industry. The blind Ganges River dolphins are being accidentally caught in nylon *gil*-nets with very fine threads that the dolphins cannot sense through echo-location, and the very water they swim in is decreasing as more is siphoned off to fields, canals and dams, separating and decreasing the dolphin population.

Massive deforestation is happening along the entire stretch of the Ganga and Her tributaries. Most of the forest which used to cover the entire upper plains of the Ganga basin has been cut down and heavily cultivated. At the source of the Ganga at Gaumukh, what was once land covered in birch trees and juniper bushes has now been converted into what has been called “a cold desert.” Here, an increasing local populace has had no alternative choice for energy than to cut down these trees and plants to use them as firewood, and in a matter of a few decades these forests have been almost completely denuded. This deforestation is contributing to the melting of the Gangotri glacier – which provides 70% of Ganga’s water during dry seasons. The trees that once grew along the sidewalls which contain the glacier can no longer hold the melted water in the soil and contribute the water back into the growth of the glacier. Now that the trees are gone, the water flows away, causing the glacier to shrink and recede.

Ganga is also facing exploitation of Her natural resources. For example, an illegal sand and rock mining industry has continued unabated for nearly a decade, removing ton after ton of Ganga’s riverbed and banks and causing more flooding along Ganga’s banks, further bank erosion, and deforestation, to such a large extent that the river channel has actually shifted.
Solutions

- Promoting and raising awareness of ways to live “green,” in harmony with our ecosystem
- Restoring and protecting the diverse flora and fauna that flourish along and within the Ganga River Basin

Actions

- Planting thick vegetation along the river banks and trees to rejuvenate the environment, help purify the waters, and mitigate erosion, as well as retain water in the soil
- Removing wandering cows from the roads and providing them with care and shelter
- Restoring the free flow of Ganga by removing unnecessary obstructions of the river
- Renovating and beautifying the Char Dham and other pilgrimage areas, restoring the environment to an eco-friendly “hut culture” instead of a “hotel culture”
- Tapping India’s enormous capacity to produce solar power, providing an alternative to the practice of cutting down trees, obstructing rivers, and excavating mountains for energy
- Introducing new technologies, such as “green” crematoriums, in cities and towns along Ganga, thus drastically cutting down the amount of trees needed for these rituals
- Creating effective solid waste and wastewater management systems, so that the pollution, which is killing the lifeforms who live in and around Ganga, no longer enters the river
Ganga Action Parivar is working in all areas of the issues facing Ganga, and is working both from the “Grand Plan” - programmes on the national and the international level - to “Ground Plan” - local awareness, outreach and action. Some of our exciting projects and programmes include:

- **Declaration of Upper Ganga Region as a UNESCO World Heritage Site**
  - Working with authorities to officially declare the Upper Ganga region (from the source of Ganga at Gangotri downstream to Haridwar, and inclusive of the Mandakini and Alakananda river valleys) as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognising this area as not just an area of local or national concern, but truly of global importance.
  - By declaring this stretch a World Heritage Site, this area of rich natural and cultural heritage will be better protected and conserved.

- **National River Ganga Act**
  - Comprehensive action is being taken to establish a National Ganga River Basin Act which will include provisions to control, abate, prevent and monitor the pollution, exploitation and obstruction occurring to the Ganga River Basin system.
  - Modelled after acts passed to preserve and protect other National symbols such as the National Flag and National Anthem.
Creating a partnership between all three important parts of society – the government, the public, and the private – to utilise their roles and address the concerns in each section, and seek to bring them together for the implementation of public works projects (such as STPs and Solid Waste Management Plants).

By doing so, will bring long-term, sustainable solutions to the past plans and policies and reconnect these crucial sectors of society, shifting from pieces to a collective whole to work together to restore Mother Ganga.

**GPPP (Government-Private-Public Partnership) Model**

- **Solar India Plan**
  - Popularising and energising a new plan which taps into India’s enormous capacity to harvest and provide solar power, meeting 100% of the nation’s future energy needs by 2050. Visit [www.gangaaction.org](http://www.gangaaction.org) to learn more about this project!

**Beautification of Char Dham and Other Holy Areas**

- **Renovation** and beautification plans for Gangotri, Char Dham and other sacred pilgrimage areas along Ganga and Her tributaries.
  - Includes plans to create solid waste and wastewater management systems, relocation of haphazard constructions that encroach on the rivers and the temples, and ways to reduce vehicular congestion and pollution.
Planning is underway to have the first-ever, completely environmentally-friendly Kumbh Mela in 2013 at Prayag Raj (Allahabad), which includes planning for:

- **Complete wastewater management** so no sewage enters Ganga or Yamuna
- **Complete solid waste management** so no trash enters Ganga or Yamuna or the surrounding environment
- **Providing eco-friendly alternatives** to plastics used during the mela
- **Planting trees** to “green” the area, and much more

**Uniting saints and spiritual leaders** and encouraging them to emphasise to all devotees the **importance of living “green”** and the crucial need to **restore** and **protect** Ganga and Her tributaries
“Temple to Toilets” Programme / 3 T’s Programme - Toilets, Taps & Trees

- Working to provide every school and community along the 2,500 kilometer stretch of the Ganga Basin with a proper toilet
- Working to provide access to clean water for drinking, cooking and bathing to everyone in the Ganga Basin
- Planting trees to rejuvenate the environment, mitigate erosion and provide for all

3 G’s Programme - Gau (Cows), Ganga & Gaon (Rural Development)

- Removing wandering cows from the roads and providing them with care and shelter
- Restoring the pristine nature of Ganga and Her tributaries by removing currently existing gandagi (pollution) and curtailing future pollution through Solid Waste Management & other programmes
- Restoring the free-flowing nature of Ganga through projects to remove unnecessary obstructions and provision of alternative sources of power
- Developing rural areas and villages with alternative visions of development that protect both the environment and the health of all
To learn more about the work GAP is doing and how you can get involved, visit www.gangaaction.org.

● **Conferences & Workshops**

Organising and hosting conferences and workshops throughout the year that gather together leading scientists, environmentalists, activists, government officials and spiritual leaders to find **sustainable solutions** for the various problems facing Ganga and Her tributaries.

● **Awareness & Outreach**

- **Raising awareness** and **inspiring millions** by organising sacred aarti ceremonies, Ganga festivals, dramas and school & community activities, as well as local clean-ups.
How You Can Help!

Join the movement to restore, protect and maintain our river Ganga and Her tributaries to their aviral (free-flowing) and nirmal (unpolluted) states. Be a part of the family and engage in meaningful dialogue, positive action and implement working solutions to the issues facing Mother Ganga. Environmentalists, scientists, engineers, filmmakers, web-designers, activists and dedicated people are all needed!

Become a volunteer today, and meet other inspiring members who are taking up these important initiatives in your community. Remember “each one reach ten,” so be sure to reach out to your family, friends and community members to get involved and be the change!

Volunteer & Organise Local Events and Clean-Ups

Join your community to be part of positive action. Organise or take part in a local clean-up and/or GAP event. Get connected with Ganga Action Parivar sevaks (volunteers) in your local area. Share with us your experiences, pictures, and thoughts. Each one can reach ten, so reach out to your family, friends, and community members to get involved and be the change!

To learn more about how you can help and join Ganga Action Parivar, please visit www.gangaaction.org.
Organise Your Business, School or Group to Help

All businesses, schools and organisations can play an important role in helping to restore, protect and maintain an *aviral* (free-flowing) and *nirmal* (clean) Ganga. If your business or group is already serving Ganga then we welcome you to GAP and invite you to connect with the rest of the family. Share with us what you are doing and how you envision serving as part of a world Ganga family. If you are not already involved and would like to be, please contact us!

Join Us to Create Working Solutions

Help Ganga Action Parivar find sustainable, lasting solutions for all the issues that face Ganga and Her tributaries. All skills, expertise, and professions – such as scientists, environmentalists, engineers, lawyers and more – can help.
Live Green Every Day!

- Reduce waste by using reusable products, such as reusable plates and cups, instead of items made of non-biodegradable materials like plastic.
- Recycle as much household waste as possible.
- Keep two bins or buckets in the kitchen, separating all food waste exclusively into one bin. Every morning or evening offer this food waste to the cows in your community, or learn to make compost with your kitchen waste. Don’t mix food waste with paper, plastics, or glass, as this can harm and even kill animals who eat the food scraps.

- Check and fix all water leakages in your home without delay, saving precious water!
- **Be vegetarian!** The meat industry is one of the greatest contributors to global warming, water wastage, land shortages, deforestation and environmental destruction.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Turn off all lights and fans when you leave the room, and try to use them only when necessary.
- Wash your car using a bucket of water instead of running water pipes or hoses.
- Keep one earthen pot filled with water on your roof or verandah so that birds can drink when they are thirsty.
- Try to not use personal cars or motorbikes for at least one or two days each week. Instead, try to use public transport, ride bicycles, or walk as often as possible.
- Try buying fewer clothes each year, and give old clothes to the needy for reuse.
- Don’t wear clothes made of animal furs or leather or use products made from these materials, as the dangerous, toxic chemicals that are used to produce these items are being dumped by the ton into Ganga and Her tributaries, killing all aquatic life and poisoning the millions who rely on Her water.

To learn more about how you can help and join Ganga Action Parivar, please visit www.gangaaction.org.
- **Buy local and buy organic!** Instead of buying vegetables from the malls, which ship vegetables long distances, shop at local weekly bazaars and nearby markets. Carry your own bags (*jhola*) while going to the markets instead of accepting plastic carry bags for your purchases.

- Don’t use fireworks during festivals! Fireworks create a lot of air pollution and are produced using child labour.

- Don’t engrave or paint on any monuments or heritage buildings, but instead strive to keep public places clean and green!

- Don’t spit on roads or public places, and educate others to not do so also!

- Plant trees! Try to plant one tree every year in your community park/common property land, on the occasion of your birthday or anniversary, and look after its growth.

- Copy and print on both sides of paper for all purposes, and keep used paper in a folder in order to use the reverse side for scrap work.

- At home and at work, re-use items like envelopes, folders, files, paper clips, etc.

- Try to use e-mails instead of paper correspondences.

- Educate others in your household, your workplace, and your community on how to live in a green, eco-friendly way!

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- **What To Do (Or Not Do) While At Ganga or Any Water Body**

  - Don’t throw objects from *pujas* or *havans* in the river. Instead, put biodegradable materials such as *samagri* and flowers in plant pots or composting piles, and recycle all paper and plastics.

  - When placing offerings in Ganga or any river, make sure your offerings are 100% natural and bio-degradable (no plastics!). If your offering is in a plastic bag, make sure to take the offering out of the bag before offering to Ganga, and recycle the plastic bag. Ganga is considered a great purifier, but plastics kill all the life in Her waters and along Her banks!

  - Don’t use Ganga or any river as a bathroom. Instead, use community toilets in your area.

  - If you must use Ganga or any river to do your laundry, do not use detergents.
Join Us!

Let us work together as one family
to serve Mother Ganga!

To find out more about all the ways you can help
and to register your organisation with GAP,
visit www.gangaaaction.org.

Remember, each one can reach ten, so be
sure to reach out to your family, friends
and community members so that we can
protect and restore Ganga together!
Together we can!
A World Family Dedicated to Serving

Mother Ganga

Join GAP and take the pledge
to save Ganga with us!

Visit www.gangaaction.org or email
ganga@gangaaction.org to find out more.