

## **Request for Ganga River (Basin) Conservation Research Institute**

**Relevance:** The Ganges River basin needs to be studied through an interdisciplinary subject. There are different activities going on to gather data and conduct research on this subject by organizations all over India, but there is need to be do much more. One of the major problems with this basin is lack of authentic data related to its different features.

As Ganga River s facing lot of challenges all over India, so we request everyone concerned with this ecological problem to contribute in creating a research and training centre related to conservation of Ganga River. This center will train youths to work in country as messengers as well as facilitators of conserving water in different ways.

A general survey of awareness generation facilities available on this issue indicates lack of sufficient number of well equipped institutions all along the river to spread knowledge about technical and social skills required for conservation of river and to create employment by making it a distinct area of knowledge and specialization.

In order to achieve long terms sustainability in water sector, it is therefore requested to help us to start this research institute dedicated to study and conservation of the Ganges. This institute will be well equipped to conduct research on various issues envisaged in water conservation and also facilitate training programs in different cities to make youths employable in this area. The collected data and trained man power can be helpful to carry forward conservation agendas of different NGOs and Governmental bodies in a more systematic manner. As it seems a well known fact that “everyone’s responsibility is no one’s responsibility”, so we need a team of dedicated members with sound understanding of the seriousness of the issue to work together. The research institute is intended to prepare youths to work in river conservation in India in an effective way and also at a decisive level. It will enable them to work beyond mere occasional clean ups in field of river conservation.

An initial draft of proposed Institution is given below and we invite everyone interested in this humanitarian work to write their views. If you like this concept, help us to generate funds and resources required for the same. Any help to secure required things (mentioned later) will be highly appreciated.

**Introduction:** The issue of Ganga River (basin) conservation is a highly complex one. It involves in itself challenges related to governance, adequate public participation, Water Quality monitoring, technological support etc (Just to mention few of them). In order to handle this problem scientific research is required to be conducted on these issues at different locations to find environmentally and socio-economically viable solutions. This research work can help policy making related to Ganga River conservation more effective. Technological solutions alone are never sufficient to conserve river and a meaningful way of public participation needs to be find out in order to restore the ecological health of the Ganga. As time and again the need for better public participation is stressed by governments in river conservation, so the prime objective will be to work in this particular area.

### **Ganga river basin: Future Scenario development**

This research area will require a long term plan and people associated will need to work together for a long time together. The institute will engage qualified people for this work

and will create financial resources on a permanent basis. It is to be done with help of reliable software/s in collaboration with suitable organizations to understand conservation issues related to parts of Ganga basin. Research work will assess impact of demographic, political, socio-economic factors including proposed economic growth trends in basin by taking different ecological units as a spatial entity.

### **Strategic resource planning for research Institute (Per Unit) in first phase.**

1. Human Resources requirements (3-5 researchers, 2 field workers, 01 secretarial staff )
2. Office premises ( in a town located preferably along the Ganges)
3. Equipments – 03 Computers, Scanner, Fax and common office equipments.
4. Library and a public reading room-Well Stocked with related literature ,Journals, Magazines
5. IT Support-Internet connection and communication means
6. Website- A web containing general information as well as detailed information and road map of Action plan/s for selected stretch of the river in India.
7. Partnerships- State Governments, Central Government, Universities (Local and foreign specialized in landscape ecology and policy) Intergovernmental Agencies, Social help groups, spiritual organizations etc.
8. Water Quality Monitoring Lab and Portable equipments for field training.
9. Portable version of this Institute on wheels (Like a Mini Bus). Later on feasibility of creating a railway coach with similar objective will also be explored.
10. Sufficient land to show case live demonstration of water conservation techniques to students and public in general to get a first hand idea and motivation to conserve water a house hold level.

In later stage more features/facilities will be added to cope with growth of Institute in proportion to work area.

### **Initial focus (Agenda) will be on following areas.**

#### 1. Tourism/Dams

The towns located along the Ganga River due to highly fragile ecology need a careful tourism and industrial planning to maximize the benefits and at the same time also to reduce the impacts of different developmental activities. Tourism in this area need to be promoted without compromising the needs of different communities dependant on natural resources, which often are adversely effected by these activities. A detailed Project Report (DPR) along with a future road map is essential to be developed with help of field survey and literature review. Impact assessment with help of a professional Agency also needs to be carried out. After a thorough desk research data collection will be done in some of the selected towns of states located along the Ganges. Most of the dam construction activities are centered in upper (Himalayan) stretches of the Ganges and tourism is a major economic activity in many towns located all along the course of this river.

The research will concentrate on actors/organizations and Non-governmental bodies representing Intuition framework responsible for issues related to conservation of the Ganges. The power to define, prioritize different issues, execution of policies and sourcing of different expertise will be analyzed to understand process of river basin planning in context of generating wider public support. Interviews with actors will be conducted to find discourse creation process in this issue. Key actors in departments within different organizations will be identified to get a wider representation of groups involved in river planning in India.

The execution of different aspects of river planning will be identified and corresponding Institutions will be consulted to understand developmental rationale behind dam construction. The field work will be done with the purpose of understanding the discourse of environmental conservation in context of construction of dams and various other economic activities dependent on the Ganges. Different policy matters related to conservation of the river in the states through which the Ganges flows will be discussed with key actors to understand range of interpretations of policy matters/key issues envisaged in sustainable governance of basin. Issues related to ecological well being of the concerned regions will be discussed with stakeholders with a special emphasis on securing public participation in conservation. The data generated will help to understand the issue from diverse perspectives.

## **2. Water quality monitoring and awareness creation**

This research area needs a long term plan and people associated will work together for a long time. The proposed institute will engage qualified people for this work and will create financial resources on a permanent basis.

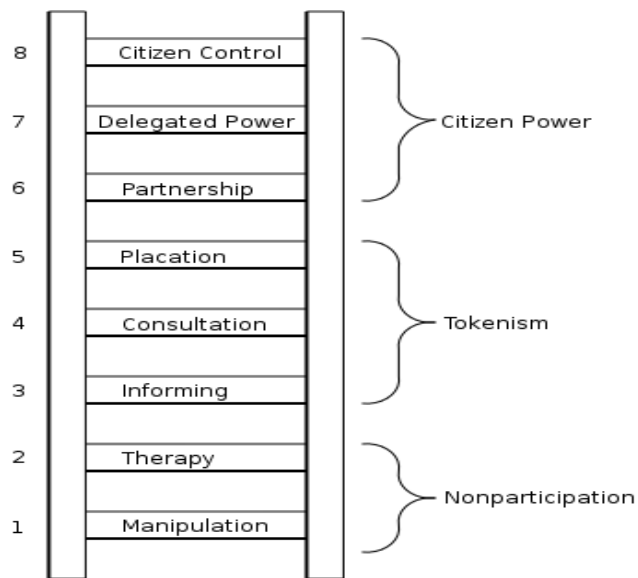
It is to be done with help of reliable methodology in collaboration with suitable organizations to understand the problems being faced by state in implementation of water quality monitoring as well as Rain Water Harvesting schemes. Projects will be designed for study of demographic, political, socio-economic factors in relation to water conservation in these areas.

The institute will emphasize on awareness creation about the linkages between safe drinking water and sanitation facilities and human health among people through a demonstrative approach. Programmes to encourage health and hygiene practices will be conducted for communities living along the Ganges to enhance understanding of impacts of water pollution. It will help in breaking disease transmission chain to facilitate good health benefits to people living along the Ganges. The Institute will help to find proper communication strategies with stakeholder consultation in this regard. As water of the river at many places is not suitable for drinking, so possibility of getting economically viable ways of purifying water for purpose of drinking will be explored with help of suitable technology providers.

The proposed research centre will find research based solutions for generating environmental consciousness through advocacy and conveying concept of water quality at community level. The technical capacity required to understand the water quality concept will be developed through formulation of easily understandable literature and animated movies in local languages.

### 3. Enhancing public participation in conservation

Plan for Public participation to be designed after baseline surveys of communities. The objective will be to bring it to higher ladders through improved institutional framework. This situation needs a careful study through empirical examples in various small, medium and large towns located along the river. The ladder below exhibits the concept and aim would be to bring participation from level 01 to at least at 05/06 or higher scales.



### Methodology

1. Making a communication strategy with help of Media representatives to generate a scientific understanding of the scenario with due emphasis on potential threats of human induced climate change.
2. Designing short term, long term courses with proper contents and affiliation for youths to become employable in water sector at community levels. This sector is very vast and apart from Engineers trained people are required to handle various socio-economic challenges within sector at different levels.
3. Designing Capacity building programmes for community levels for water conservation.
4. Collaboration with stakeholders at local, national, international levels to generate resources and skills required to keep centre progressing according to changing needs of sector.
5. Analysis of complimenting as well as contradicting visions related to river conservation within a generally agreed framework.

6. Mapping different uses of the Ganga water e.g. Agricultural, Spiritual, aesthetic, leisure etc at village, state and national level in context of its economic and cultural significance.

This proposal is a basic outline for the intended research centre dedicated to the Ganges (basin), which is home to approximately 10 percent of the population of world. It is one of the most sacred rivers of world and any single effort to conserve it will go a long way in saving our beautiful but endangered planet. The Ganga basin is relatively lacking data and public participation in its conservation. The government of India, researchers and many International organizations has advised to increase public participation in this matter. The Ganga being our National river needs active involvement of all of us to remain worthy of being used by generations to come after us. If we are not able to conserve it, then coming generations will be devoid of one of the greatest blessings of nature. This river is an integral part of our culture and can be termed as our economic and cultural back bone and we need to strengthen it in our best possible way. After starting this work soon we will try to make similar centers for other rivers in India, which are also as important and significant as the Ganges.

Please contact us for further information and project plan

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