

NAMAMI GANGE: FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME FOR CLEANING GANGA

A GLOBAL REPLICABLE MODEL

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“India is now on the moon” exclaimed an elated PM Modi on August 23, 2023, when Vikram- India’s lunar module landed at “Shivshakti” in the South-pole of the moon. Considered “mission- impossible” by many, India did it. After many unsuccessful and repeated attempts since 1985, cleaning of River Ganga was also considered as a “Mission-impossible”, till PM Modi in 2014-15 launched “Namami-Gange”- A holistic scientific river basin based mission to rejuvenation River Ganga and its tributaries, with approximately Rs. 42500 crores (4.5 Billion USD) committed budget, and an innovative implementation setup in place. Though it had a slow-start and teething troubles, Namami-Gange has now delivered to ensure bathing standards water in nearly all along Main

stem Ganga’s 2525 Km stretch and many of its tributaries, in a period of last 9 years, when achievements of similar nature took decades in other parts of the world.

Namami-Gange’s success is testified not only by its recognition as “one of the top 10 World Eco restoration Flagships” to revive the natural world by UNEP-FAO led UN Decade at the COP20 meeting in Montreal in December 2022, but also by the increased number of Dolphins, Otters and other micro/macro biodiversity species in the river, which were under threat to be wiped off due to increasing sewage and industrial pollution load, over the last few decades. There are more encomiums: Mr. Csaba Korosi, UNGA President praised India’s “tremendous progress” in water sector in his interaction during the World Water Conference at the

UN headquarters in New York in March 2023. In the conference, the Special Envoy for Water, Netherlands, Mr. Henry Ovink called Namami-Gange “a beacon of hope”. Global Head of Water Practices, World Bank, Mr. Saroj Jha opined that India provides a comprehensive institutional framework for river rejuvenation, from which the world can benefit. In a meeting held on August 5th, 2023 in Agra, 9 Executive Directors of the World Bank (representing over a 100 countries) appreciated the innovative contract management models of Namami-Gange, viz the Hybrid Annuity and One-City-One-Operator Models, which ensured enhanced accountability and sustained optimal performance of the sewerage infrastructure created under the program. They also appreciated the public participation efforts under Namami-Gange that have created a dedicated self-motivated cadre of volunteers like Ganga Praharis, Ganga Doots, Ganga-Mitras for river rejuvenation and biodiversity conservation. Involvement of schools, universities to “ignite young minds” to conserve water and rejuvenate rivers is Namai-Gange’s way to connect to the youth. “River City Alliance” - Namami-Gange’s latest initiative to form alliances of cities/towns on the banks of (any) rivers to provide a platform to ideate, share knowledge and experiences to prepare “Urban river Management Plans” to transform rivers flowing by as engines of growth and not as mere channels for waste disposal also found resonance with them.

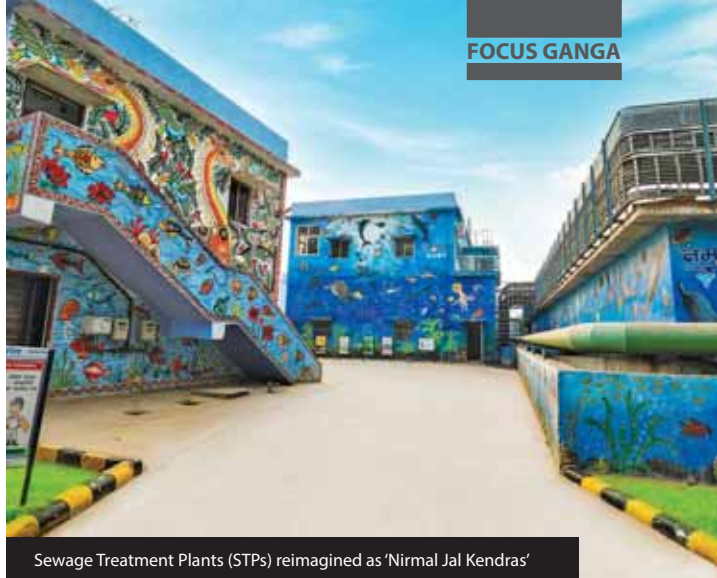
These panegyrics are for the visionary leadership provided by Hon’ble PM in the much neglected water sector (other than irrigation) and a reflection of what has been achieved in it in the past 9 years. Knowing well the importance of water as a vital resource for economic growth and health of people, Hon’ble PM started pioneering and innovative initiatives like “Swachh Bharat Mission” (SBM) to make India “Open Defecation Free”(ODF) (constructed over 100 million toilets during 2014-2019); “Jal Jeevan Mission” to provide functional water tap connection to all rural households by 2024; “Namami-Gange” for rejuvenating River Ganga; people centric campaigns like “Jal-Shakti-Abhiyan: Catch-The-Rain” to conserve rainwater; “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle water” to promote the concepts of circular economy and to



The Hon'ble Prime Minister chairs the meetings of the National Ganga Council, the apex body of Namami Gange Programme.



Dev Deepawali, Varanasi



Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) reimagined as 'Nirmal Jal Kendras'

increase water use efficiency; "National Aquifer mapping" to assess the ground water availability etc – all meant to address the quality and quantity related issues to ensure water security . In 2019 PM Modi formed Ministry of Jal Shakti, merging different departments in government dealing with water management and bringing them under one Ministry for efficient decision making. Fixation on water may also made our scientists to land Vikram at the south pole of the Moon, where water is believed to be available!

At the core of these is PM Modi's 5P ideology -Political Will, Public Finances, Partnership, Public Participation and Persuasion. Blending "the whole of government approach" and "Jal Adolan-a Jan Adolan" ie "decentralized and people's participation" concepts, have yielded results. SBM metamorphosed to become "world's largest behavior change programme". India is well on its way to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals 6, ahead of the target of 2030.

Namami-Gange is a holistic and integrated river rejuvenation program not only to clean River Ganga but also to restore its entire riverine ecosystem. Namami-Gange is premised on the 5 important pillars of – Nirmal-Ganga (unpolluted river), Aviral-Ganga (unrestricted flow), Jan-Ganga (People's Participation), Gyan-Ganga (knowledge and research based interventions) and Arth-Ganga (people-river connect through the bridge of economy).

Since its launch in 2015, under Namami-Gange 442 projects worth USD 4.4 billion (Rs. 37396 crore) has been sanctioned under various components, out of which

254 projects are completed. Bulk of these is for pollution abatement through sewerage management (Nirmalata). 193 projects worth USD 3.7 Billion (Rs 30797crore) are sanctioned to create a cumulative sewerage treatment capacity of 6039 Million Liters Daily (MLD) and lay 5251 km sewer network. These are to ensure that no untreated sewage goes into River Ganga and the water flowing will be of approved bathing standards. Since biodiversity conservation is also an important objective, 30K hectares land has been afforested. 9.3 Million native IMC fishes and 90,000 Hilsa fishes have been reared in River Ganga.

– are proving beneficial for river rejuvenation

Namami Gange also has many international partnerships. NMCG has MoUs with Germany, Denmark, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Scotland, United Kingdom and European Union. NMCG is also associated with World Bank, JICA, GIZ, PTB and UN organizations issues such as safe reuse of water, river water quality, sustainable management of water resources, e-flows assessment, decentralized wastewater management etc. There are also around 170 donors from foreign countries to NMCG's Clean Ganga Fund, to which the proceeds from

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Arth-Ganga initiative is to boost economy and livelihood in river basin and promotes the symbiotic nature-society relationship. Focused interventions on 6 key components of Arth-Ganga – Zero Budget Natural Farming, Monetization and Reuse of Wastewater & Sludge, Livelihood Generation Opportunities, Culture Heritage & Tourism, Public Participation and Institutional Building

the e-auction of the gifts given to the Prime Minister are also donated.

The world can learn a lot from each other. As the theme of India's G20 Presidency – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – suggest, the world is one family inhabiting the one Earth with a common future. We all need to work together to combat climate change issues which affect us all and manifests in water sector very patently.