

Ganga Action Plan

The Ganga rises in the Garhwal Himalaya from the Gangotri Glacier, some 4100 meters above the sea level under the name of Bhagirathi. The river flows through the Himalayas till another two streams, the Mandakani and the Alakhnanda join it at Devprayag. It is below this confluence that the river is known as the Ganga proper. The Ganga Basin which is the largest river basin of the country houses about 40% population of India. The river after traversing a distance of 2525 kms. from its source, meets the Bay of Bengal at Ganga Sagar in West Bengal. During the course of its journey from the hills to the sea, municipal sewage from large urban centres, trade effluents from industries and polluting waste from several other non-point sources are discharged into the river resulting in its pollution.

At the time of launching, the main objective of GAP was to improve the water quality of Ganga to acceptable standards by preventing the pollution load reaching the river. However, as decided in a meeting of the Monitoring Committee in June, 1987 under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. G. K. Menon, then Member, Planning Commission, the objective of GAP was recast as restoring the river water quality to the 'Bathing Class' standard which is as follows:

(BOD)	3 mg/l maximum
Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	5 mg/l minimum
Total Coliform	10,000 per 100 ml
Faecal Coliform	25,00 per 100 ml