



জলজ | JALAJ

CONNECTING RIVER AND PEOPLE
TO REALIZE ARTH GANGA



AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY OF THE GANGA RIVER

Apart from the Ganga River's cultural significance, few know about the biodiversity that thrives in its water. The Ganga River and its basin are home to a thriving population of diverse and unique wildlife, including the Gangetic river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), the critically endangered gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), various species of freshwater turtles, and a multitude of waterbirds. The occurrence of such species in the river indicates a healthy river ecosystem. However, the complexities arising from the interaction of nature's functioning and human activities are endangering species survival, thus necessitating significant biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Connecting community with conservation through sustainable livelihoods

The Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India through the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has entrusted the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), a project entitled "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation" for developing a science-based aquatic species restoration plan for Ganga River by involving multiple stakeholders.

As a part of this project the WII has developed a trained cadre of volunteers known as Ganga Praharis from the local communities residing in the Ganga basin. "Prahari" is a Sanskrit word that means guardians. The Ganga Praharis safeguard the biodiversity along the Ganga River and practice sustainable livelihoods contributing to the success of Ganga rejuvenation at the grassroots level. Jalaj - an initiative depicting symbiotic linkages between the river and its people, is established on the banks of Ganga River and its tributaries in the entire Ganga basin. Jalaj models enhance the linkages of livelihood with sustainable resource use where the Ganga Praharis learn the sustainable skills, produce goods and services and eventually sell these goods and services to earn livelihoods. Ganga Praharis are trained in livelihood options including value addition of local produce. Ganga Praharis are also trained in financing, accounting and management of Jalaj.



The Jalaj established at different locations in the Ganga basin represent the culture and communities indigenous to that area. The Jalaj establishments are holistic Centres of overall community well being, conservation education and livelihood trainings where people can visit from all over the world and can have an immersive experience of life along the Ganga with Ganga Praharis. As the Jalaj are managed by Ganga Praharis, visitors can also take this opportunity to interact with them to learn more about their experiences regarding community-based conservation and practicing sustainable livelihood.

Every Jalaj establishment prominently represents the significance of aquatic species at their respective locations and provides facilities for the effective dissemination of knowledge about these remarkable species. The Ganga Praharis ensure conservation of biodiversity and Ganga cleanliness along the Ganga by creating awareness, and motivating others to join in this initiative is a significant part of our initiative. The Indian nationals visiting these Jalaj can join this cadre by registering at Jalaj centres as Ganga Praharis or Ganga Prahari mentors. International visitors can also join in the conservation efforts of one of the world's most revered river system by registering as Pravasi Ganga Prahari and be a part of Ganga conservation.



Catch glimpses of Ganga & its people through Jalaj

Adding value to your visit, the Ganga Praharis at the Jalaj sites present products and services prepared using locally sourced materials. Ganga Praharis instil local pride and sense of belongingness towards the Ganga River by adopting sustainable livelihood options. All Jalaj centres have sale points for various products and services made by Ganga Praharis across the Ganga basin that provide them livelihoods. In addition to buying the local produce, the Jalaj also provides a host of experiences some of which are



Experience the rhythmic mystics of mesmerizing **Ganga Aarti** on Jalaj and explore the way of life of local communities through informative and interactive village visits along the Ganga River with the Ganga Praharis

Watch the **frolicking** of Gangetic river dolphins, leisurely turtles and chirping birds along the Ganga River in Jalaj boat safari



Enlighten yourself with the tales of Indian culture and history together with exploring biodiversity along the banks of the Ganga River with the Ganga Praharis trained as **tourist guides**

Carry home saplings raised in the nurseries managed by the Ganga Praharis along the banks of Ganga. **Medicinal plants** such as aloe vera, neem, tulsi, turmeric and fruits bearing tree species such as banana, papaya are grown by Ganga Praharis in their home gardens



The visitors can take home the **Millet** cultivated through natural farming and **Bio-Compost** prepared by the Ganga Praharis using bio-degradable waste





Take home the **Agarbatti** (Incense sticks) and **Dhoopbatti** (Incense cones) prepared from the dried floral offerings at the Ghats. Lantana, a tropical evergreen shrub considered as invasive in India is used for making these incense sticks



Experience rural Indian hospitality and the sustainable way of living at the **Jalaj homestays** along the Ganga River. At these homestays guests will be hosted by the Ganga Praharis and get a chance to fully immerse themselves in the culture and life along the Ganga River

Savour the locally served **Sweets** and **Delicacies** hygienically prepared by Ganga Praharis made from homegrown cereals, millets, maize, chickpea and dry fruits using local traditional skills and knowledge



Relax and rejuvenate yourself by healing power of ganga with the **Ayurvedic health** and **Wellness services** such as face massage, head massage, manicure, pedicure and mehendi from professionally trained Ganga Praharis. These wellness services use all natural ingredients such as Multani Mitti (Fuller's earth), Chandan (sandalwood powder), Besan (gram flour), Haldi (turmeric powder), milk, curd, beetroot and sugar, for a holistic natural experience



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Wildlife Institute of India

