



*"In this land of the Ganga, there was education of culture.  
But, more importantly, there was a culture of education."*

*-PM Narendra Modi*



Indian Institute of Public Administration  
IP Estate, Ring Road, ITO, New Delhi -110002

website: [www.iipa.org.in](http://www.iipa.org.in)



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**G**NAMAMI  
**G**ANGE

# The Ganges Children Handbook

## Module 2 Cultural and Spiritual Significance



Indian Institute of Public Administration  
New Delhi

**GNAMAMI  
GANGE**



## NAME OF PROJECT

BLENDED CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM  
FOR STAKEHOLDERS OF RIVER GANGA

## PROGRAMME

NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

## PREPARED FOR

NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA

## PREPARED BY

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

## SPECIFIC FOCUS

STUDY MODULE FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

## PROJECT TEAM

PROF. V.K. SHARMA ( Project Investigator)  
DR. SHYAMLI SINGH (Project Investigator)  
Ms. CHARU BHANOT (Research officer)  
Ms. KANISHKA SHARMA (Research Assistant)  
Ms. IMRANA AKHTAR (Research Assistant)  
Ms. KANIKA GARG (Research Assistant)  
Ms. SHOBHA RATHORE (Research Assistant)

# The Ganges

## Children Handbook

### Module 2

### Cultural and Spiritual Significance



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New Delhi



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## MESSAGE

### THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

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My young Companions,

"Children are the hands by which we take hold of heaven"

The above quotation by Henry Ward Beecher has inspired me to join hands with you in rejuvenation and conservation of our holy river Ganga. I consider your role in the society and believe that your participation in this herculean task can improve the present state of our River.

To make the descent of Ganga worthwhile, you are being made a part part of the project - Blended Capacity Building Programme for Stakeholders of River Ganga under Namami Gange Programme. Ganga lies at the core of our culture and it is our firm belief that your awareness of the complex challenges faced by our national river can bring about behavioural change in the society at large.

Through this booklet, you will be taken to a journey along the Ganges and its basin. We want to create an imprint on you and mould each one of you into responsible adults. This learning process has been tailored for your effective engagement with inclusion of maps, quizzes and puzzles.

We consider the potential of a child in contributing towards a cleaner, breathable future. It is our hope and expectation to meet with your feelings, thoughts and awareness to foster a sense of belonging for River Ganga. We have faith in your tremendous curiosity and capacity & hope that together we can change mindsets and take it to practical application.

S.N. TRIPATHI  
Director General, IIPA

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## PREFACE

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Universally and religiously, water is considered a purifying natural symbol. Indian rivers, besides being the lifeline for many are considered as manifestations of the divine. They connect state to state, past to present. The Ganges is our sacred river with a culturally significant history. It is not just a river but a deity, a cleanser of sins; It is our mother.

Ganga is a part of India's rich past. It is a symbol of purity and sanctity. It occupies a central space in the collective consciousness of the country, which is why Gangajal is considered the holy water. River Ganga, not only fosters exceptionally rich biodiversity, but it also contributes heavily to the livelihood of India

It is unfortunate that despite the admiration and reverence invoked by the river, it has become a dumping junkyard at innumerable points. Human greed and misconduct have degraded the river quality. It is indeed a matter of concern that the river has altered its flow over the years; with that, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has stepped in to keep the river clean, pure and healthy for the benefit of existing and future generations. It is a matter of pride for IIPA to be entrusted by the project "Blended Capacity Building for Stakeholders of River Ganga" under the Namami Gange programme.

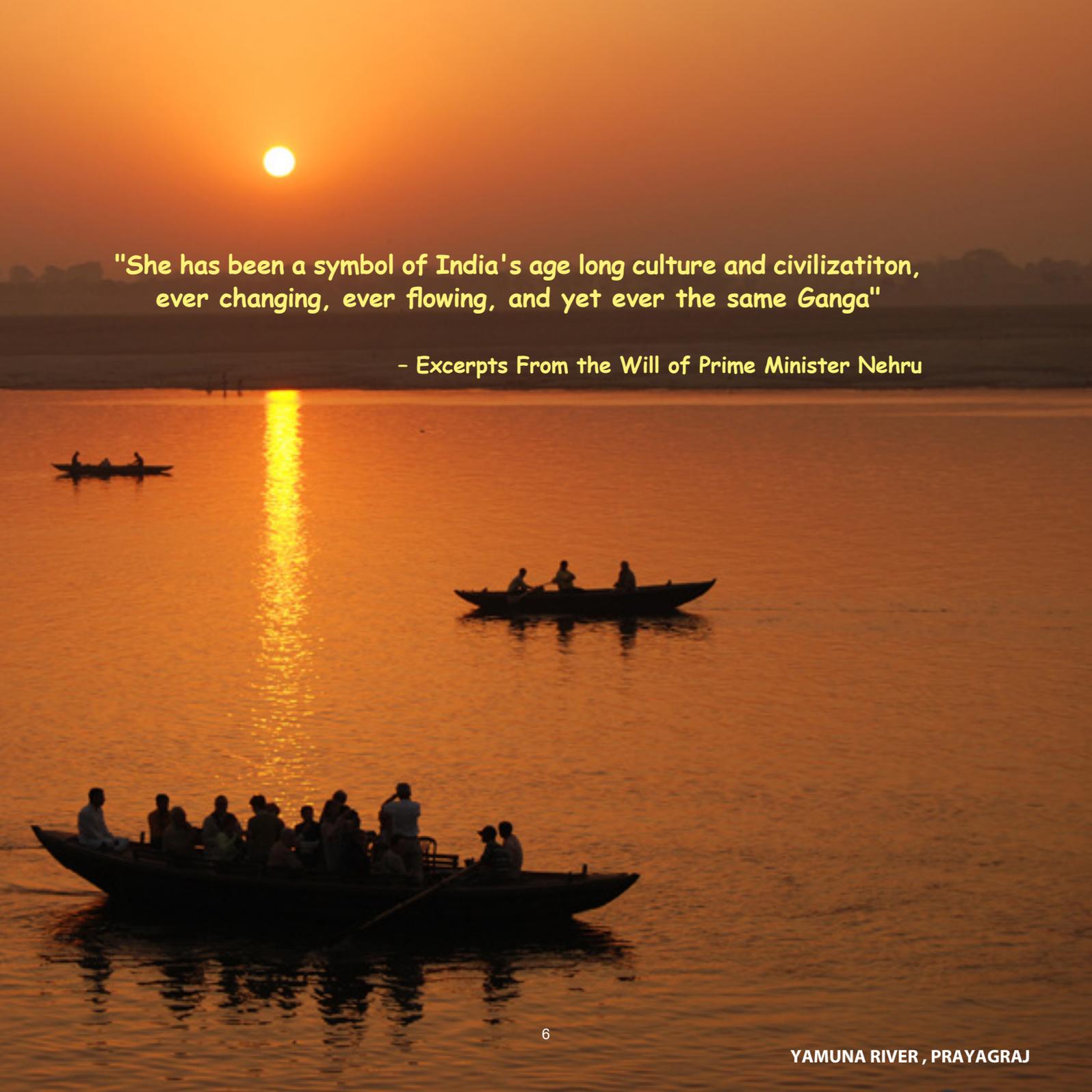
With the aim of conserving and rejuvenating River Ganga, The 'Ganges -Children Handbook' has been prepared to make children interact with our national river. The book encompasses a holistic view of the river Ganga by posing the challenges and opportunities in and around Ganga basin.



V . K . S H A R M A  
Senior Professor, IIPA



S H Y A M L I S I N G H  
Assistant Professor, IIPA



"She has been a symbol of India's age long culture and civilization,  
ever changing, ever flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga"

- Excerpts From the Will of Prime Minister Nehru



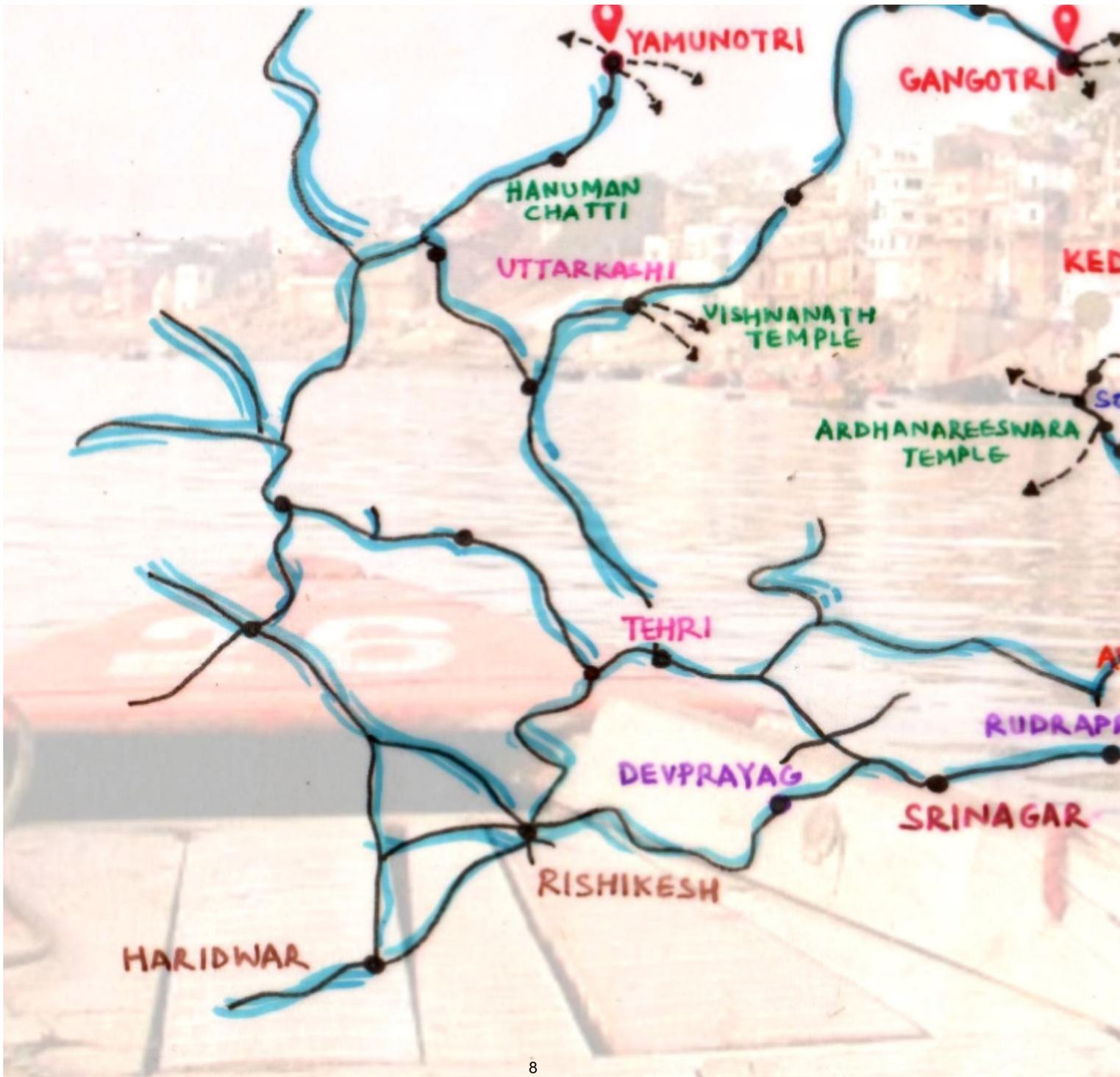
Relax! Close your eyes and chant the mantra for salvation

**Ganga basin** was fertile, so people living around it cultivated food grains to consume and earn livelihood. To give regard to the holy river, they offered some of the grain's share to it. **Rituals**, gradually, were formed in this manner. Cities nearby the river became trade centres and India celebrated and manifested these traditions in various forms.

Ganga thus became a fusion of **tradition, culture, and complexes**. Accordingly, priesthood became a famous and holy occupation around the area. This flourished several religious practices and made them an integral part of the Hindu religion. **Ganga water** is used to perform important rituals at mainly **Haridwar, Varanasi, Gaya** and **Allahabad**.

Travellers motivated by religious considerations visit Ganga...

- To perform pilgrimage as an act of worship
- To express gratitude, confess sin and to perform a vow
- To achieve salvation
- To commemorate and celebrate certain religious events



# RELIGIOUS & PILGRIMAGE SITES



# STORY TIME....



Nani, why do people visit Ganga?

Don't you remember the story I narrated to you the other day, the story of Ganga's descent?



Of course, we remember! But what do people do there?

Beta, either they go there to achieve spiritual salvation by performing pilgrimage as an act of worship or they just stroll around to express gratitude for the lovely life that has been granted to us humans.



I have seen your pictures. You too went there with Nanaji, right?



Yes, we went there for Char-Dham Yatra covering Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. We covered Panch prayag as well. The entire course of Ganga is a pilgrimage route for millions.



Then you must have performed rituals on these sites?



Yes, it was a long and tiring journey; peaceful, nonetheless.



Will we ever get a chance to witness the grandeur of Ganga maa?



Oh, yes! We were planning to go there next week to immerse your Nanaji's ashes in Maa Ganga. I pray his soul achieve salvation. You can accompany us. May God accept all our prayers and forgive our sins.



The entire life span of a Hindu is covered by 16 samskaras that takes him closer to the divine truth.

Samskaras are a set of ceremonies and values that a Hindu should live by. Since Ganga is a holy river, these samskaras, when performed on the bank of the Ganges become more favourable.

Out of 16 samskaras, 3 are directly linked with Ganga.

**1. Mundan Samskara:** the first haircut of a child in which the hair is symbolically offered to river Ganga.

**2. Vivaha Samskara-** Marriage ceremony, gangajal is used in Janeu ceremony

**3. Antim Samskara/ Antyeshti-** cremation is followed by immersion/ disposal of the ashes and the remains in river Ganga

## 16 SAMSKARAS

- 1 Garbhadana, "conception"
- 2 Pumsavana, "protection of the child in mother's womb"
- 3 Simantonnayana, "fulfilling the pregnant mother's wishes"
- 4 Jatakarman, "rituals at childbirth"
- 5 Namakarana, "naming the child"
- 6 Niskramana, "taking the child outdoors"
- 7 Annaprasana, "giving the child solid food"
- 8 Mundan, "shaving of the head"
- 9 Karnavedha, "ear piercing"
- 10 Vidyarambha, "commencement of studies"
- 11 Upanayana, "initiation into adulthood"
- 12 Samavartana, "completing education"
- 13 Vivaha, "marriage"
- 14 Sarvasamskara, "preparing for renunciation"
- 15 Samnyasa, "renunciation"
- 16 Antyesti, "last rites"

# RITUALS PERFORMED AT THE BANKS OF RIVER GANGA



## Snaan

A holy dip in the river Ganga

Prominent places-  
Haridwar, Prayag,  
Gangasagar

## Aarti

Performed daily or  
several times in a day

-Performed at three  
holy cities: Rishikesh,  
Haridwar, Varanasi



## Tarpan

To present symbolic  
offerings of water  
and flowers to the  
ancestors, sages and  
God.



## Pind Daan

To offer sacrifices  
to departed members  
of the family

Gaya: most significant  
place to perform



## Shraadh

To alleviate sufferings  
of the departed souls

performed during  
special days in a year

## Veni Daan

To be performed at  
Triveni Sangam  
women offer a part  
of their hair to the  
river for peace and  
prosperity to prevail in  
their families



# FESTIVALS



☀️ **Take a dip to celebrate ...**

## GANGA DUSSHERA

Celebrated in the first **ten days** of the month of Jyeshtha (June)

Marks the descent of Ganga from the heavens

## CHHAT PUJA

Hindu festival dedicated to honor Surya (God of the Sun)

The rituals take place over **four days**

## DEV DEEPAVALI

celebrated on **Kartik Purnima** in Varanasi to mark the descent of Gods on Earth

The Ghats completely lighted with Diyas on this day.

## GANGA MAHOTSAV

Celebrates the facets of Ganga river over a period of **five days**

Cultural festival specific to Varanasi and Uttar Pradesh

## MAKARSAKRANTI

Celebrated on **14 January** every year

Sun is worshipped after ritual bathing in Ganga or Triveni Sangam



# KUMBH MELA

It is a **major festival** in Hinduism and one of the **largest human congregations** on the Earth. It is held after a span of 12 years in **Prayag, Ujjain, Nasik and Haridwar**; every three years the location is switched between the four holy cities. By participating in this festival, Hindus liberate themselves from miseries and sufferings of life & come closer to salvation.

In 2019, Kumbh Mela was held at Triveni Sangam in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh with a footfall of 120 million devotees.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Triveni Sangam is the confluence of three rivers- Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. It is considered as a sacred place for Hindus.

# ADVENTURE AWAITS



## Camping



Mukteshwar  
Ranikhet



## Skiing



Auli



Chop



## Paragliding



Kanatal  
Dhanaulti  
Deoria Tal  
Padamapuri  
Chopta  
Corbett National  
park  
Sattal  
Pangot  
Binsar Sanctuary  
Bhimtal  
Rani Chori  
Chokuri



## Ziplining

Rishikesh  
Mussoorie  
Nainital



## Trekking

Bedni Bugyal  
Kauri Pass  
Har ki Dun  
Deoriatal-Chandrashila  
Dodital  
Roop Kund  
Hem Kund  
Chopta-Tungnath-Chandrashila

## Dolphin Watching

West Bengal  
Uttar Pradesh  
Bihar

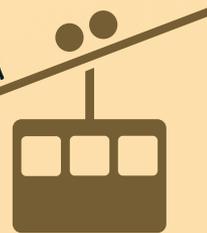


Mohan Chatti

## Bungee Jumping

## Cable car ride

Auli  
Bandar punch  
Trishul  
Om parvat



Bedni Bugyal  
Kauri Pass  
Har ki Dun  
Deoriatal-Chandrashila  
Dodital  
Roop Kund  
Hem Kund

Chopta-Tungnath-Chandrashila

## Boat Ride















