

BAL GANGA PRAHARI

Little Hands for River Conservation





"Catch them Young"

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Ganga River basin, covering nearly 26% of India's landmass, is one of Asia's largest river systems. Flowing about 2,500 km from Gomukh in Uttarakhand to Ganga Sagar at the Bay of Bengal, it supports remarkable aquatic biodiversity. Key species include the Gangetic dolphin, Gharial, Smooth-coated otter, Eurasian otter, and Asian small-clawed otter, along with numerous crocodilians, turtles and birds. The basin also harbours over 143 freshwater fish species such as Golden mahseer and Hilsa.

Spread across 11 states and nearly one million km², the basin is among the most densely populated regions in the world. Rapid urbanization, untreated sewage, industrial pollution, and excessive water abstraction have degraded water quality and river health. Habitat fragmentation due to dams and barrages has further threatened aquatic biodiversity.

To address these challenges, the Government of India established the National Ganga River Basin Authority with the National Mission for Clean Ganga as its implementing arm under the Namami Gange Programme. The Wildlife Institute of India serves as the knowledge partner for biodiversity conservation. Under its project "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation," WII conducted the first basin-wide ecological survey and established the Ganga Aqua-life Conservation Monitoring Centre. The study revealed that nearly 49% of the river still supports significant biodiversity and identified twelve priority conservation zones.

The second phase (2019 onwards) of the project, "Planning and Management for the Aquatic Species Conservation and Maintenance of Ecosystem Services in Ganga River Basin for a Clean Ganga", focuses on strengthening conservation efforts at the priority sites identified along the mainstem of the Ganga River while expanding these initiatives to the basin level to ensure long-term sustainability of river conservation. In addition to the mainstem of the Ganga River, the project will also extend its activities to major north and south bank tributaries as well as associated wetlands across the basin, thereby adopting a more comprehensive and integrated approach to aquatic biodiversity conservation and river ecosystem management.

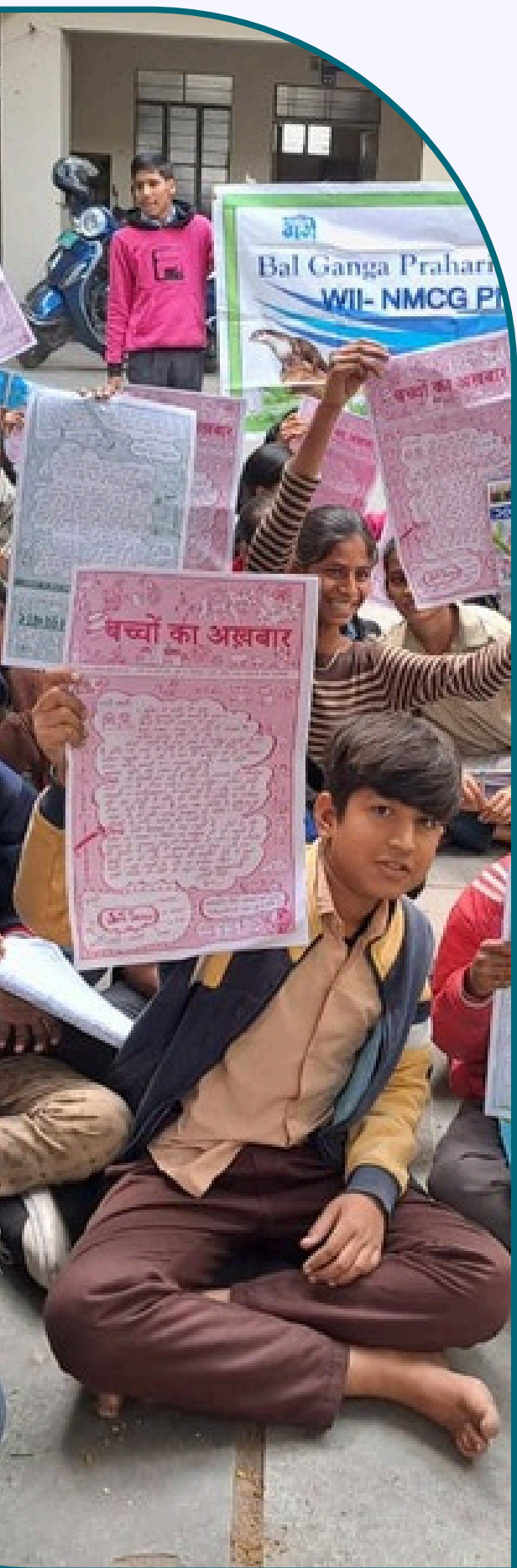
BAL GANGA PRAHARI PROGRAMME

The Bal Ganga Prahari (BGP) Programme is a conservation education and youth engagement initiative implemented by the Wildlife Institute of India under the WII-NMCG project. The programme has been conceptualized as an extension of the Ganga Prahari Programme, which focuses on mobilizing local community volunteers for the conservation of the Ganga River and its biodiversity.

While the Ganga Prahari Programme primarily engages community members as conservation volunteers, the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme extends this initiative to school students, recognizing the critical role of youth in shaping long-term environmental stewardship. The programme aims to cultivate awareness, responsibility, and active participation among young learners in protecting the Ganga River ecosystem and its biodiversity.

Under this programme, students from Class 1 to Class 12 studying in schools located in the Ganga basin are enrolled as Bal Ganga Praharis. Through structured environment education, interactive learning, and conservation-oriented activities, the programme seeks to build knowledge and positive attitudes towards river conservation among students from an early age. Bal Ganga Praharis are introduced to key aspects of river ecology, aquatic biodiversity, pollution issues, and sustainable environmental practices. The programme highlights the importance of conserving flagship and endangered species of the Ganga ecosystem such as the Ganges River Dolphin, Gharial, Indian Skimmer, and Smooth-coated Otter.

The initiative adopts an activity-based and participatory learning approach that includes biodiversity awareness programmes, riverbank cleanliness drives, celebration of environmental days, nature and river walks, and community outreach activities. Educational resources such as posters, booklets, and interpretive materials are also used to enhance students' understanding of the ecological and cultural significance of the Ganga. Schools participating in the programme are encouraged to establish Bal Ganga Prahari Corners, which serve as dedicated spaces for displaying educational materials and promoting conservation messages related to the Ganga ecosystem.



Objectives



Awareness Outreach



Awareness Outreach for School children and Teachers

Conduct awareness activities such as campaigns, street plays, exhibitions, river festivals, special day celebrations, and exposure visits to educate students and teachers about Ganga conservation and freshwater biodiversity.

Development of the Bal Ganga Prahari Network

Establish and strengthen a network of students, teachers, and stakeholders to actively participate in protecting freshwater biodiversity and promoting river conservation.

Capacity Building of Teachers for Aquatic Conservation Education

Train and empower teachers with science-based knowledge and tools to effectively educate students about aquatic ecosystems and species conservation.

Establishment of Knowledge Corners for Youth Engagement

Set up Knowledge Corners in schools and colleges with interactive materials, displays, films, and activities to engage youth in learning about Ganga biodiversity.

Development of Curriculum-Based Educational Resources

Develop curriculum-based educational materials for different learning levels to integrate freshwater biodiversity and conservation into education.

BAL GANGA PRAHARI PROGRAMME & NEP 2020



The BGP programme structure aligns with the developmental stages outlined in the National Education Policy 2020. Activities are categorized according to school standards and age groups to ensure age-appropriate learning. Younger students participate in creative and play-based activities, while middle-level students engage in exploration activities such as nature walks and biodiversity games. Senior students undertake projects and community awareness initiatives. This structured approach gradually builds students' environmental knowledge, responsibility, and leadership for the conservation of rivers and aquatic biodiversity.



FOUNDATIONAL STAGE

(Pre-school + Class 1–2, Age 3–8 years)

Focus: Play-based learning, curiosity, sensory exploration

Activities

- Nature walks.
- Storytelling sessions on aquatic animals and rivers.
- Drawing and colouring (trees, fish, birds, turtles, gharial, etc.)
- Songs/rhymes about nature and water conservation.

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MIDDLE STAGE

(Class 6–8, Age 11–14 years)

Focus: Exploration, teamwork, critical thinking

Activities

- River walk and biodiversity observation
- Games on the food chain or food web, freshwater biodiversity.
- School biodiversity mapping activity
- Short documentary screening on freshwater biodiversity
- Water quality testing demonstration

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PREPARATORY STAGE

(Class 3–5, Age 8–11 years)

Focus: Discovery, observation, creativity

Activities

- Tree identification in the school campus
- Story writing/Storytelling sessions (Biodiversity/Mythology)
- Simple biodiversity games (indoor/outdoor)
- Educational visit to a nearby wetland, or riverbank
- Waste segregation activity in school

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SECONDARY STAGE

(Class 9–12, Age 14–18 years)

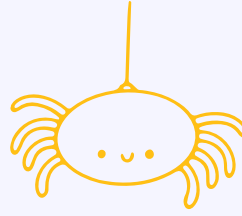
Focus: Analytical thinking, research, leadership

Activities

- Projects on local biodiversity
- Community awareness campaigns/rallies on river conservation
- Climate change discussions and presentations
- Essay writing/Quizzes/Debates/Cultural Programmes
- Outdoor games in important protected areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, etc.)

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FRAMEWORK TO ENROLL BAL GANGA PRAHARI SCHOOL



The framework of the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme follows a structured approach to engage schools in river conservation. It begins with the selection of schools across the Ganga River Basin and obtaining necessary permissions. This is followed by programme implementation, including enrollment of schools, teacher sensitization, and student activities. The demonstration stage involves exposure visits, field activities and skill development programmes. Finally, the Bal Ganga Footprint stage evaluates the impact of the activities and encourages schools to share their conservation initiatives and best practices.

Students further promote conservation actions in their schools and communities, creating a lasting impact and encouraging wider participation in protecting the Ganga ecosystem.



BAL GANGA PRAHARI CORNERS



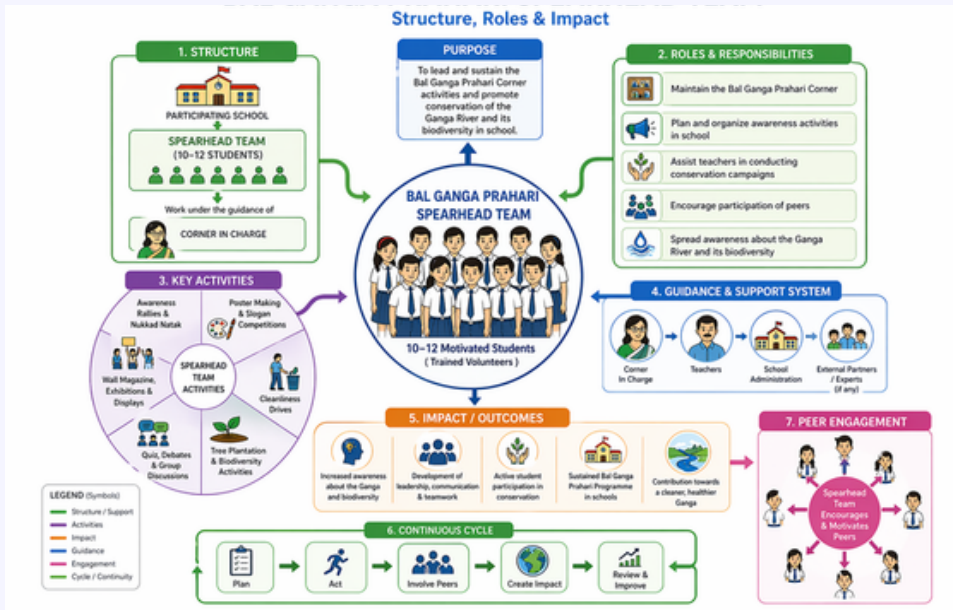
Bal Ganga Prahari Corners are dedicated learning spaces established in schools to sustain and strengthen the activities of the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme. These corners function as knowledge hubs where students can regularly engage with themes related to river conservation. The corners include creative wall panels, posters, charts, and other interactive displays designed to make learning visually engaging and informative. Publications, species models, wall paintings, and student-made exhibits highlight the rich biodiversity of the Ganga River and its tributaries, including key aquatic and riparian species. In addition to ecological aspects, the displays also present the cultural and mythological importance of the River Ganga in Indian society.



By integrating scientific knowledge with cultural understanding, these corners create a continuous learning environment within schools and encourage students to develop a deeper understanding of river ecosystems and the need for their conservation. The cost of developing and establishing these Bal Ganga Prahari Corners is borne by the Wildlife Institute of India under the WII-NMCG project.

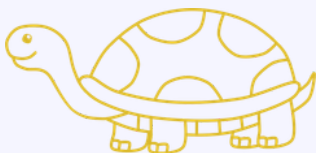


BAL GANGA PRAHARI SPEARHEAD TEAM



To effectively manage and sustain activities at the Bal Ganga Prahari Corner, a Bal Ganga Prahari Spearhead Team is established in each participating school. This team usually consists of 10–12 motivated students who act as trained volunteers under the programme. The members take responsibility for maintaining the corner and organizing awareness activities within the school under the guidance of the corner in charge. They also assist teachers in conducting conservation campaigns.

Spearhead team encourages participation among their peers and helps spread awareness about the importance of conserving the Ganga River and its biodiversity. Through this leadership role, students develop communication and teamwork, while actively contributing to the sustainability of the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme within their schools.



Special Campaigns/Events



Special campaigns and events organized under the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme are aligned with the key environmental initiatives of the Government of India. Activities under the Mission LiFE, Ganga Utsav, Nadi Utsav, and Swachhata campaigns support national efforts to promote sustainable lifestyles, river conservation, cleanliness, and public participation. Through these initiatives, students actively engage in awareness and action-oriented programmes.



Ganga Biodiversity Calendar



The BGP Programme actively engages students through a series of activities, events, and awareness campaigns organized throughout the year under the Ganga Biodiversity Calendar. This calendar highlights important environmental and biodiversity-related days, providing opportunities for schools to celebrate and promote conservation awareness in a structured manner. Key occasions such as World Wildlife Day, World Environment Day, World Water Day, and other significant environmental observances are marked through interactive activities, including drawing competitions, storytelling, quizzes, exhibitions, and experiential learning sessions.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT



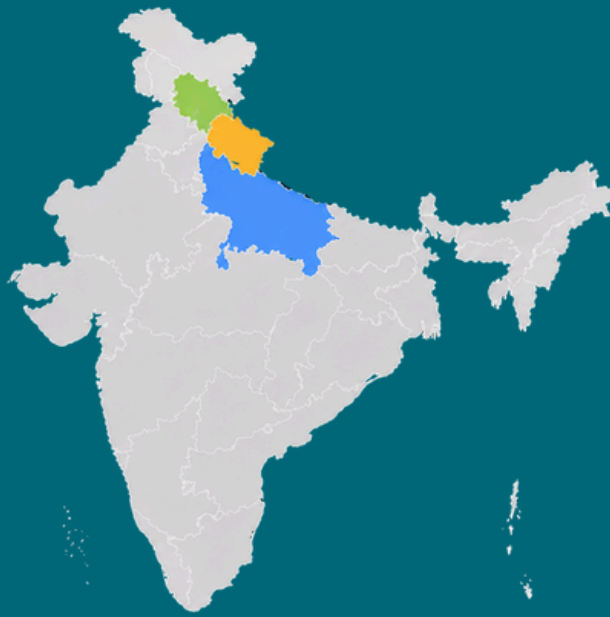
under the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme aim to enhance students' creativity, skills, and environmental awareness through engaging and hands-on activities. These programmes include creative exercises such as paper quilling, decoupage, card making, hand and face painting, and stone painting, creating best out of waste, pistachio art, origami, calligraphy, block printing, and wildlife mask walk through which student express themes related to aquatic biodiversity and river conservation. Along with artistic development, the activities promote critical thinking, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility toward the environment. By participating in such initiatives, students develop a deeper understanding of the Ganga River ecosystem and are encouraged to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors in their daily lives.



Name of the workshops

- Paper quilling
- Stone painting
- Card Making
- Decoupage Painting Art
- Grow Your Own Microgreens
- Seed Paper Making
- Eco Art Project
- Nukkad Natak
- Poster Making Competition
- Yoga
- Best Out of Waste
- Block Painting
- Origami
- Puppet Show
- Wildlife mask walk
- Calligraphy

Educational Visits conducted under Bal Ganga Prahari Programme



Educational visits under the Bal Ganga Prahari Programme help promote environmental awareness and develop young conservation ambassadors. Students visit the Wildlife Institute of India, where they explore the Nature Trail and learn about biodiversity, ecological balance, and river health.



Key experiences include sessions at the Forensic Laboratory and Herbarium Gallery, introducing them to wildlife protection and plant diversity. So far, 21 schools from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have participated, reaching 1,233 students. These visits inspire students to respect nature and actively contribute to conservation.



PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT FOR AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN THE GANGA RIVER BASIN FOR A CLEAN GANGA

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