

**GANGA YATRA: A NEW VAGUE TOWARDS THE ECONOMY,
ENVIRONMENT, AND AFFLIANCE**

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Abstract

River Ganga is a sacred river of India. River Ganga has been given the status of the mother in Hindu mythological literature. According to mythological literature, Ganga was descended from the Jatas of Lord Shiva. To bring Ganga to this Earth, King Bhagiratha performed austerities. Ganga is also called Mokshadayini, but in today's time, this stream of salvation is a victim of pollution. To make the River Ganga pollution-free Namami Gange scheme was launched in June 2014 by the Government of India under the guidance of the Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. Under the Namami Gange scheme, Ganga Yatra was organized by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on January 27, 2020, in which the participation of people was ensured. This Yatra is divided into two parts: one started from Bijnor to Kanpur and the other started from Ballia to Kanpur. For the first time in the history of Uttar Pradesh, Ganga Yatra was organized. This effort of the government was appreciated by the people of Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords

River Ganga, Ganga Yatra, Uttar Pradesh, Hastinapur

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Introduction

Patient Pavni, Bhagirathi, Mokshadayani, River Ganga descended on this earth for human welfare. River Ganga came to this earth due to the vigorous tenacity of King Bhagiratha. It was descended from the *Jata* (hairs) of Lord Shiva. Ganga is a center of faith as well as a center for tourism, trade, and aquatic animals. This river originates from a height of 3900 meters from the Gangotri glacier near Gomukh (in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand). At this place, it is known as Bhagirathi. Alaknanda joins Bhagirathi in Devprayag and is called Ganga after it. The length of this river is 2525 km. It covers 110 kilometers in Uttarakhand, 1450 kilometers in Uttar Pradesh, 445 kilometers in Bihar, and 520 kilometers in West Bengal. The Ganges basin is only about 8.6 lakh square kilometers in India. It eventually merges in the Bay of Bengal after coming out of the Himalayas. It has been known from various researches that Bacteriophage is found in the Ganges water, due to which the water of the Ganges is full of medicinal properties.

Routes Covered by River Ganga

It originates from the Himalayan tubers and reaches Rishikesh, Haridwar. From Haridwar, it enters in Uttar Pradesh via Roorkee. River Ganga covers its maximum area in Uttar Pradesh, starting from Bijnor, Hastinapur (Meerut), Garhmukteshwar (Hapur), Amroha, Bulandshahr, Kasganj, Farrukhabad, Shajanpur, Kanoj, Hardcore, Kanpur, Kaushambi, Praygraj (Allahabad), Varanasi, and finally reaches to Ballia. From Ballia it enters into Bihar afterward reaches to Haldia (West Bengal) and then pours it into the Bay of Bengal.



Map 1: Route map of River Ganga in Uttar Pradesh [courtesy: www.mapofindia.com]



Map 2 : Ganga River Route [Courtesy: www.prokerala.com]

Ganga Yatra

On January 27, 2020, the Government of Uttar Pradesh take the initiative and first time in the Indian history such a type of Yatra is started for River Ganga. The government of Uttar Pradesh started this Yatra from two points i.e. Bijnor and the other one is Ballia. As per the records of the Uttar Pradesh Government, this Yatra covers 27 districts, 21 Nagar *Nikaya*, 1038 Gram Panchayat and the total distance covered by this Yatra is 1358 in 5 days (i.e. 27-31 January 2020). The first team of Ganga Yatra will complete the journey of Bijnor to Kanpur by road for 655 km and 108 by water route in five days and reach Kanpur Barrage on January 31, 2020, and the second team will take 624 km by road from Ballia to Kanpur and 52 km by Water route.. The Yatra will reach Kanpur Barrage on January 31, 2020, in five days. Perhaps, for the first time, any Government has embraced Maa Ganga in this way.



Image 1: Inauguration of Ganga Yatra at Ganga Beraj, Bijnor [Photo Courtesy: Hindustan Newspaper, Meerut]



Image 1a: Inauguration of Ganga Yatra at Ballia by Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh Smt. Anandi Ben Patel.



Image 2: Route map of Ganga Yatra [Courtesy: Government of Uttar Pradesh]

Shri Yogi Adityanath, Honorable Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh flagged off Ganga Yatra from Bijnor, on the other hand, Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh Smt. Anandi Ben Patel in Ballia proceeded to carry on the Yatra. The Yatra was proceeded with Pujan and Ganga Aarti. In Bijnor, the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath first paid obeisance to Maharaja Dushyant, Samrat Bharat, Maharishi Kanva, and *Sadhnabhoomi* and *Janmbhoomi* of the country first engineer Raja Jwala Prasad and Maa Ganga's arrival land in Uttar Pradesh, Bijnor district. For planting fruitful trees on the ridges of the fields along the banks of the Ganges, a free Ganga *Narasari* will be established in every district. Every village should have Ganga *Maidan*, Ganga *Talab*, and Ganga Park. The Chief Minister told to gathering that no one can

get salvation from shedding the dead body of an animal or a person in the Ganges. He called upon the general public that bodies should not be flown in Ganga to ensure the cleanliness and clean environment of Ganga. He said that it is the responsibility of everyone to keep Ganga clean, along with the government, the society also has a full responsibility to keep Ganga clean and immaculate. The Chief Minister and the Governor of Uttar Pradesh called upon Ganga to save them from pollution.

The choice of fruit trees offered to the villagers along the banks of the Ganges.

In his speech during the Ganga Yatra that began on January 27, 2020, Yogi Adityanath stated that villagers of the Ganges to do organic farming, on the other hand, gave farmers the option to plant fruit trees in their fields and on the meads. The Uttar Pradesh Government will also provide grant money to such farmers for 3 years and will also provide the facility to sell these fruits to the market. By adopting natural farming, Uttar Pradesh can show a new path to the whole country and the world. Due to this, people will be able to get chemical-free food. Stressing the need to encourage cultivation along the banks of Ganga, beneficial marketing of agriculture, and export of agricultural products, the Chief Minister said that a plan has been started to set up Ganga Nursery in every district. Free fruit trees will be provided to the farmers. When fruits come on these trees, they will be made available as organic products in the market and they will also be exported [1].

Maa Ganga was at the door of her son Bhishma in the month of Magha.

On the first day of the Ganga Yatra, the journey started from Bijnor and reached Hastinapur. via Ramraj (Muzaffarnagar), Bahsuma (Meerut). Bahsuma, the glorious city of Mahabharata personage *Pitamah* Bhishma [2], welcomed Ganga Yatra. This day is most important in history when the union of mother Ganga and son occurred. Once again the Bahsuma remembered Bhishma and Ganga. According to Mahabharata, Bhishma gave up his life on the *Shukla PakshaAshtami* of Magha Month [3]. On the 10th day of the war of Mahabharata, Arjuna, with the help of Shikhandi, laid Bhishma on the bed of arrows. At that time Maa Ganga met her son Bhishma in battleground Kurukshetra (Haryana). In Hastinapur also, When the mother Ganga stood on the call of Pitamah Bhishma, such an impression came when the Ganga Yatra passed through Bahsuma Bhishma's birthplace [2]. At that time (Mahabharata Time), it seemed as if Bhishma was calling to mother Ganga was running with simplicity to meet the son.



Image 3: Welcome of Ganga Yatra at Bahsuma. The glorious city of Pitamah Bhishma.



Image 4: Students holding the images of Maa Ganga in their hands

Hastinapur once again remembered the victorious journey of *Pandavas* in Ganga Yatra.

The Ganga Yatra at Hastinapur is a reminder of the victorious journey of the *Pandavas*. When the war of Mahabharata ended several thousand years ago, the victorious journey of the *Pandavas* also came out in a similar fashion. Before entering into the Hastinapur, 10 Lakh people [4] stood on the streets to welcome him and Hastinapur was adorned with flowers. Not only this, the road was decorated by placing the urns. Something similar has happened to during the Ganga Yatra. Not only this, if we look at that period and the present time, then the soul feels as if that phase is going to start again.

The victorious journey came out after 18 days of war [5][6]

The victorious journey of the *Pandavas* came after the 18-day war of the

Mahabharata. The *Pandavas* carried out the victorious journey from Kurukshetra to Hastinapur with pageantry. Lord Sri Krishna was also involved in this journey and at that time the victorious journey was welcomed by the peoples of Hastinapur. According to Mahabharata, Yudhishtira entered the chariot with a white bull. At the same time, during the Yudhishtira Yatra, the townspeople had decorated the entire city and its roads well. The city land was adorned with white garlands. The high rise was cleaned and sprinkled with water. Different types of incense were used for perfumery [5]. In Ganga Yatra also Rath was decorated with white flowers and marigolds.

Giant gates were built at the time of *YudhishtiraVijay Yatra* as well as in Ganga Yatra

For welcome giant, gates are built in Ganga Yatra. At the time of *YudhishtiraVijay Yatra* huge gates were built. The urns were laid at the entrance of the city with new and beautiful decorations filled with water. Flakes of white flowers were also planted at the place. There was a huge crowd, when the Kunti's sons entered Hastinapur, a large number of townspeople started gathering on the routes. Amidst the rain of flowers, the sons of Kunti were welcomed and proceeded towards their court[4].

A Splendid View During the Ganga Aarti in Hastinapur

There was a panoramic view at night during Ganga Aarti in Hastinapur. Just as the stars twinkle in the sky on the night of *Amavasya*, in the same way, electric lights were shining in the night on the banks of the Ganges in Hastinapur. Perhaps such a view would be of the assembly of deities. It seemed that the galaxy had landed on the Earth.



Image 5: panoramic view at night during Ganga Aarti in Hastinapur



Image 6: Ganga Aarti at Hastinapur



Image 7: A view of bank of River Ganga during Aarti at Hastinapur.

Hastinapur has also been known for the Patriotism

During the Mahabharata period, Hastinapur has been known for its superior politics and love of the country. *Praja Prem* was considered supreme at that time and the same view appeared during the Ganga Yatra. During the Ganga Yatra, where the worship of Mother Ganga was performed, the mind of everyone also changed in calm and love. A view emerged where the love of the people also appeared and a high level of statesmanship was also seen with the love of religion and heritage. Not only this, the entire Hastinapur echoed with cheers. It seemed as if the victorious journey of the *Pandavas* was just passing. The waving of Tiranga in the lap of Maa Ganga [Refer Image 8] proved that only the era has changed, the feeling of patriotism is still there in Hastinapur.



Image 8: Waving Tiranga in the lap of Maa Ganga. [Photo Courtesy: Sachin Goel, Hastinapur]

The Message of Balancing Ecology from Hastinapur

Dr. Dinesh Sharma, Honorable Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh with District Magistrate Mr. Anil Dhingra, Chief Development Officer Ms. Isha Duhan, District Forest Officer Mrs. Aditi Sharma, and Ministers of Uttar Pradesh Government released 301 turtles into the Ganges from the historic land of Hastinapur [Refer Image 9]. The turtle proves to be helpful in making Ganga pollution-free.

In Hastinapur, the joint efforts of WWF and the Forest Department conduct the Turtle Conservation Project. Every year turtles are released into the Ganges under the aegis of WWF and Forest Department, Uttar Pradesh Government.



Image 9: Honorable Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Releasing Turtles in River Ganga at Hastinapur [Photo Courtesy: Sachin Goel, Hastinapur]

Dawn of New Hopes for Hastinapur through Ganga Yatra

The Ganga Yatra also arouses the hope of the development of Hastinapur. On one side there is a preparation to make the Ganges pollution-free. At the same time, the people of this journey have also raised hopes of development. This *yatra* is also a symbol of faith. In many places, the strong foundation of the development on the banks of the Ganges is seen. The one who will go to Hastinapur and the importance of Mahabharata places will be shown, on the same day people will also wake up for their old culture and heritage. Today, the foundation of the same faith has been laid by the Ganga Yatra, but this hope and belief need to be given a facelift. In Hastinapur, the Mahabharata fame temples should be constructed with betterment, encroachment ceased and *tantra* operations terminated, and the protected mound of Mahabharata period dedicated to the *Pandavas*. This is the voice of the people of Hastinapur. If this whole research paper is read from the soul of the mind, then in the victorious journey of the *Pandavas* in the Mahabharata period, the subjects were hopeful of similar development. The time was different, so the need was also different, but the sentiment is the same as today's people.

Conclusion

Ganga Yatra has been a successful experiment of the Uttar Pradesh Government towards Narmada Ganga Yojna of the Government of India. Even the weather did not support during the journey, yet the chariot of the journey continued from January 27 to January 31, 2020. Wherever the trend of this journey was, the developmental galaxy started flowing from the same place. The main aim of this Yatra are:

- To make Ganga free from pollution.
- Ganga-based sustainable economic development or *Arth Ganga*.
- To develop public faith towards Ganga
- To ensure the smoothness and cleanliness of the Ganges.
- Confluence of spirituality and public participation for Ganga conservation.



Image 10: Aarti by Chief Minister Uttar Pradesh at Prayagraj.



Image 11: Ganga Aarti by C.M., UP with Deputy CM, UP at Kanpur



Image 12: Gathering at Ganga Ghat at Kanpur[Courtesy: Government of Uttar Pradesh]

The record that the government has made by conducting this journey in two parts from Bijnor to Kanpur and Ballia to Kanpur, is outlandish. On one side of the journey, where the faith was redefined in a new way, on the other hand, the message of new employment was given to the people living on the banks of the Ganges.

The people may have been politicized about the Ganga Yatra, but the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh also gave a new definition to the politics and economy by hitting many targets with one stone.

The people of Hastinapur saw this journey as the victory journey of Pandavas and the development journey of Hastinapur. The view of Hastinapur during the Ganga Yatra felt that it is now a new dawn for Hastinapur. Ganga Aarti was performed

at main places and talks were held with the residents. The declaration of *Vasudev Kutumbakam*, given by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh in Ballia, is true to a great extent the relationship between Ganga and humans is centuries old. The descent of the Ganga was for human welfare but we polluted it.

In order to keep Ganga clean, this kind of organization of the Government was appropriate with public participation. The government has completed its work but we also have to fulfill our responsibility towards River Ganga, only then River Ganga can be clean.

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