



GANGA IS A SYNONYM FOR CULTURE

Jayshankar Mishra 'Savyasachi'

Ganga is pure and it purifies the people. Ganga starts from 'Gangotri', travels a distance of 2525 kms and reaches the Bay of Bengal. The name 'Ganga' suggests its name. In Sanskrit it is said – 'Ganga Gamnaat', that means one who travels. Many water falls flows through Himalayas from Uttarkasi and make the Bhagirathi a capable river. It seems as if Himalayas want to give the entire heritage to Ganga.

'Ganga' is not just a river, which is denoted in the India map. It has a proud history. Many cultures and civilizations have taken shape from the banks of river Ganga. Ganga is a symbol of world unity, brotherhood and cultural unity.

Raja Bhagirath did penance made many efforts to bring Ganga down to earth. Today this river is drying up, if it happens then the identity of India will be lost. Ganga leads our nation. On the banks of this river was where the saints started their spiritual lives. If we want to safeguard the identity then we have to keep the Ganga away from pollution and stop it from degeneration. The Ganga should be kept free from pollution. Ganga is becoming one of the most polluted rivers in the world. The flow and its depth are decreasing. People who live in the deltas of river Ganga, for them Ganga is becoming a mark and identity. Ganga leads the nation.

The saints and the Ganga are the synonyms of our culture. The saints are angry over the pollution of Ganga. On 7th October 2006 the then Governor of Uttarakhand, Shri. Sudarshan Agarwal promised to start the cleaning of Ganga during the 'Ganga Mahotsav' at Gangotri. The saints and the local people took a procession from Gangotri to Delhi to protest against the Government and showed their belief towards the river.

The scientists, politicians, intellectuals and social organizations want Respected Swami Ramdev Ji to take necessary measures for Ganga. 'Save Ganga Forum' has been set up and necessary actions are being taken to restore Ganga as our heritage. The religious heads are being included under this program and the work is taken up at big scale. Kanpur, which has been black listed for polluting the river, has started the cleaning process from the Sarasaiya Ghat. Yogrishi Swami Ramdev and Swami Chidanand Saraswati Muni Ji Maharaj of the Parmarth Niketan of Hardwar, took an oath on the banks of river, when all the other people present at the occasion and thousands of religious people offered lamps to the river Ganga and promised to get back the lost identity of India. The saints and religious heads already gave their acceptance for the agitation. Swami Ramdev Ji offered milk, turmeric and honey to the river at Sarasaiya ghat and took the oath, thousands of devotees present there gave their acceptance. They offered lamps to the mother Ganga. The movement started at 5 in the morning. It was clearly observed by the determination of saving Ganga and the Yog camp held at Brijender Swaroop Park. More people take sacred bath in the river Ganga compared to any other river. In a year there are more than a dozen occasions when people take sacred bath in Ganga early in the morning. They take

Under the banner of Save Ganga Forum, memorandums were given from 550 districts to declare Ganga as Natural heritage. PM Shri Manohar Singh gave assurance of full support to the delegation led by Swami Ramdev.

bath in the river thinking that it is very pure but they are not aware of the fact that it is not worth even for performing certain rituals. Ganga is polluted 250 times its measure in the 10 km stretch.

The water should be as clean as the water of swimming pool for taking bath. The scientists are studying the pollution levels of Ganga. The Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and total coliform of the pollution is being checked. Usually the BOD per liter should be 3 ml. The total coliform level in 100 ml. should not be more than 500 MPN (most problem number). The figures clearly show that the pollution in Ganga is increasing.

India is the country where the rivers and trees are worshipped, none has dreamt of such ill fate of this great River. In the first phase the government has spent 433 crores and 919 crores, in the second phase but the pollution has considerably increased. People are also responsible for this act. Under the Ganga cleaning proposal the water from the canals and tributaries should be stopped from flowing into Ganga.

The flow of Ganga is being stopped by construction of dams in approximately 25 hundred kilometers of distance. The flow of Ganga has decreased. The environment and ecological balance is in danger. A movement has to be carried to safe guard Ganga. Ganga is the center of faith and belief of crores of people and this has hurt the sentiments of the pilgrims. The industries, cities and sub-urban areas on the banks of Ganga have also polluted the water.

The perennial Ganga is our national heritage. The central government should take necessary measures to protect the water as it has protected our national flag. The Ganga is not an ordinary river; it is the symbol of our culture and civilization. It is known in this form all over the world. The medicinal values of the Ganga have to be noted and as the wild animal protection act has been passed, measures have to be taken to protect Ganga.

Different religious, social and cultural organizations at Har Ki Paudi have challenged for the free flow of Ganga. They said that if Ganga were not declared na-

tional heritage by 2010 otherwise it would not be possible to organize Maha Kumbha Mela also.

Under the banner of 'Save Ganga Forum', many people had assembled near Har ki Paudi. Many saints from the pilgrims assembled there, president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Mr. Ashok Singhal and Acharya Balkrishna from Patanjali Yogpeeth also reached Har ki Paudi. They said that the Ganga has many barriers in the distance of 2525 km from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar. 98% of the Ganga water is stopped in the 300 km distance from Hardwar to Narora Barrage and Bulandshehar.

President and Prime Minister have accepted to help

Our forefathers have achieved salvation but if the conditions do not improve then we will not be left with in any Ganga water for our prayers and rituals. To safe guard the river many saints, social workers and politicians had gathered and took this issue with the Prime ministers office. The main demand of the people was to declare Ganga as the national heritage as we respect our national flag. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh heard the appeal of the Union Minister of state for Home Shri. Prakash Jaiswal, and Yog Guru Swami Ramdev Ji promised to help them. Many leaders of the Save Ganga forum were present for the discussions along with Swami Ramdev Ji. They also demanded to declare Ganga as our heritage and asked to make a special policy to safeguard Ganga. Respected Swamiji said that in collaboration with the Save Ganga Forum its movement has started. He also said that the government would extend its cooperation for the same.

The people of Kanpur are now hopeful with the arrival of the Hon'ble President Pratibha Patil. She also understood the people's need. She gave them assurance with a smile. The problems relating to the pollution caused by the tributaries and electricity were also raised. People said that the mother Ganga has a religious importance and the drinking water system is dependent on it. The Ganga is moving away from the banks and since year's sewage; polluted water and other sources of pollution are contaminating the water.