

Does attributing legal rights to rivers facilitate rejuvenation of water bodies in India? Critically analyse

Rivers are lifeline of a country. Various civilisations that came about rivers, have imparted cultural identity to such water bodies. Indian civilisation is no exception to this, where they are treated as 'MOTHER GODDES'. But this esteemed river personification has not prevented from pollution.

Thus, the judicial intervention of environmental personhood was awarded to River Ganga and Yamuna by Uttarakhand Highcourt to exacerbate protection measures.

- 1) Legal rights to rivers designated Local Parentia - Director of Narmada Ganga project, Chief Justice and Chief secretary of Uttarakhand, enforcing Article 48A of Indian constitution
- 2) Judicial redressal in case of violation, of misuse, misappropriation of rivers
- 3) 'Legal status' provides a deterrent for reckless development. It awards punishments and finer in case of violation of its legal status
- 4) Appointment of separate river management committee to look after cleaning, awarding environmental clearances and monitor developmental activities
- 5) Right to frame their own guidelines, taking advice of river experts for scientific management. One such example is the minimum flow levels of Ganga and Yamuna river

Despite the status, according to NITI AAYOG \Rightarrow 'Composite water Management Index Report 2018', Ganga continues to be ^{at} the most polluted levels, such that it is deemed unfit for bathing

②

responsibility to protect to Local Panchayat undermines
community Participation and GANGA GRAMS.

- 2) The ~~supra~~ High court envisaged body however has not spelt any detailed regulatory provisions. lack of legislative backup doesn't give effect to 'legal person right' enforcement
- 3) The problem of river pollution causes is widespread. Multi stakeholder approach of industries, local government, communities, sewage treatment coordination alone can re-energise river.
- 4) complete restriction of cultural activities can hinder religious sentiments.
- 5) Regional states involvement is highly reduced affecting cooperative federalism in Article 262. It further hinders interstate river links and sustainable recreation.

Ganga Action Plan 1, 2, and Plan 2, Namami Ganga Programme, Yamuna Action Plan have not yielded desired results. due to decoupled stakeholder management. The new Jal Shakti Abhiyaan calling for integrated approach can replenish the rejuvenating characteristic of rivers.