



**ONE DAY RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL GROUP WORKSHOP RAJBARI, NABADWIP, WEST
BENGAL ON 24TH DECEMBER 2017**

DETAILED REPORT

A one day stakeholder training workshop was organized for Vaishnavs religious community of Rajbari residing in Nabadwip, West Bengal. The workshop was a part of the capacity building and stakeholder involvement initiative in order to acquaint the religious group with the aims and objectives of the 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation' project of *Namami Gange programme* under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and their significant role in implementing the project.

The workshop was a platform to discuss about the issues pertaining to the Ganga River and the direct and indirect impacts of religious activities on the River (Annexure I). Performing rituals and immersion of ashes in the Ganga River was the main service for which the target religious community was dependent on the Ganga River. Out of all the ghats in Nabadwip, Manipur ghat is the main ghat in which maximum tourist footfall is observed. Some of the concerns elucidated by Shri Ranjit Singh, Chairman were reduced water flow, island formation due to siltation, bank erosion, destructive fishing, reduced sighting of fishes and Gangetic dolphin in the River. Major threat to the River described by Shri. Rajkumar Tikendrajit Singh, Secretary was industrial and domestic pollution that was affecting the quality of the water thereby affecting the aqualife of the River (Annexure II). The major source of the industrial pollution was the sugar mills situated along the banks of the River wherein the industrial waste from these mills is drained directly into the River. Heavy organic load due to open defecation in the villages

situated near the banks of the river and sewage pollution from the open drains has deteriorated the water quality of the river. The main reason as told by the participants was no maintenance of the public toilets and facilities by the municipality which has increased the pollution load.

With respect to livelihood sustenance it was mainly the fisherman community who were dependent on the River for sustenance. In the discussion emphasis was laid on the crucial role of religious communities and multiple stakeholder participation in this project as well as in cleaning the Ganga River. Formation of *Ganga Prahari* and their role as *Ganga Praharis* in the conservation of the aquatic biodiversity of the Ganga River was also discussed.

The session was concluded with suggestions from all the participants on strengthening the participation of the communities in the biodiversity conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation project. Emphasis was laid on using a synergistic approach with inter departmental and cross sectoral coordination between the Municipal Corporation and Forest Department in implementing the project. Setting up of awareness camps in the local language (Bengali and English for tourists as the footfall is more in this location) in the local communities and tourists places, ghats, management of tourist activities, cleaning of the ghats, treatment of waste before releasing in the Ganga River, awareness through wall paintings and hoardings for mass awareness generation, gaining social support by involving local communities in the project activities were few suggestions given by the participants at the workshop.

Venue: Sri Sri Anumahaprabhu Mandir, Manipur Old Place, Rajbari, Nabadwip, West Bengal

Target Group: Vaishnavs Religious Group

Number of participants: 9 representative members from the organizing committee were present and a total 40 participants.

Team from Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and West Bengal Forest Department

The WII team included Dr. Sangeeta Angom, Training Coordinator, Dr. Pariva Dobriyal, Project Scientist, Dr. Niladri Dasgupta, Project Scientist, Ms. Monika Sharma, Project Fellow, Ms. Aditi Dev, Project Fellow and Ms. Sayantika Banerjee, Project Assistant and the West Bengal Forest Department Spearhead team.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

24 th Dec. 2017	Programme	Resource Person
1030 -1100	Registration	Ms. Aditi Dev and Ms. Sayantika Banerjee
1100-1130	Workshop inauguration and welcome address	Dr. Sangeeta Angom
1130-1230	Introduction to the NMCG-WII project “Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation” : Issues and Challenges in Biodiversity Conservation of Ganga River	Dr. Sangeeta Angom
1230-1300	Vibrant Ganga – Its Social, Cultural and Ecological significance – Dr. Sangeeta Angom	Dr. Sangeeta Angom
1230 -1300	Biodiversity of Ganga River and factors affecting it	Ms. Monika Sharma
1300 - 1400	Lunch	
1400 - 1430	Role of religious and cultural activities in spreading awareness among the communities in conservation of Ganga River-	Dr. Pariva Dobriyal
1430 - 1500	Documentary & films on Ganga/ Namami Gange Anthem	
1500 - 1530	Discussion & Feedback form	
1530 - 1600	Concluding Remarks and Future Actions	

PHOTO GALLERY





