

5th Nadi Utsav Seminar

Concept Note

Rivers in Reverse: Making of a Lifeline

“Rivers are the lifeblood of India, nourishing its land, enriching its culture, and sustaining its people through the ebb and flow of time.”

Rivers played a crucial role in the beginnings and advancement of human civilisation. Their significance stems from the fact that they supply necessities like drinking water, irrigation for farming, and trade and transit routes. Some of the earliest and most significant civilisations in history were able to flourish on the fertile banks of rivers like the Nile in Egypt, the Indus in the Indian subcontinent, and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia. Because of the rivers, there were agricultural surpluses that facilitated population expansion, urbanisation, and the emergence of sophisticated communities. Moreover, rivers are strongly ingrained in the customs, legends, and day-to-day existence of the people who depend on them as cultural and spiritual icons. Because rivers are inextricably linked to civilisation, protecting these essential streams is essential to maintaining not only our natural environment but also the cultural legacy and economic health of all societies.

The development of rivers in India has had a significant impact on the topography, culture, and economy of the nation. Not only have great rivers like the Ganges, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, and Indus supplied vital water resources, but they have also helped ancient civilisations like the Indus Valley Civilisation flourish. These rivers flow across large plains, nourishing the land and sustaining a variety of habitats as they do so and due to their great spiritual significance, they have been held in high regard in Indian culture, where they are frequently regarded as sacred and venerated as deities. Indian rivers have a multifarious function that highlights their importance to the country's ecosystem, heritage, and socio-economic development. Here, millions of pilgrims visit the *sangam*, a confluence of rivers, which has special religious significance. However, issues like pollution, over-exploitation, and ecological deterioration also pose a threat to the life of rivers in India. In spite of these problems, work is being done to preserve and repair these essential rivers.

In India, the life of a river begins in the pristine glaciers of the Himalayas or monsoon-fed hills, flowing through diverse terrains and enriching ecosystems. Communities along the riverbanks depend on these waterways for livelihoods, with villages and cities thriving on their fertile lands, creating a deep symbiotic relationship. Rivers are immortalised in folklore, poetry, and music, with tales of divine origins and epic journeys. Beyond the banks, rivers influence distant regions through irrigation and water supply, affecting climate and groundwater levels. Despite facing obstacles like pollution and damming, collective efforts in sustainable management and policy reforms can ensure the free flow of these rivers, sustaining life and culture for generations.

Rivers are not just bodies of water; they are powerful symbols of life's journey, constantly flowing, changing courses, and carving new paths. “Rivers in Reverse: Making of a Lifeline” explores the profound parallels between the natural flow of rivers and the human experience. This seminar encapsulates a profound exploration of the parallels between rivers and the human experience. It also explores themes of reflection, resiliency, and connectivity, equating the periods of human existence with the stages of a river's flow. It invites

participants to reflect on personal growth, societal responsibility, and environmental stewardship, highlighting the importance of adaptation and renewal in navigating life's challenges. Through discussions on cultural significance, ecological impact, and artistic expression inspired by rivers, the seminar aims to foster a deeper understanding of our relationship with nature and society. Ultimately, "Rivers in Reverse: Making of a Lifeline" encourages participants to embrace change, advocate for sustainable practices, and contribute to a more harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

IMPORTANT

- Word Limit for Abstract: 200 -300
- Last date for submission of abstracts: 31st July, 2024
- Communication for selected abstracts: 9th August, 2024
- Contact person: Mr. Abhay Mishra
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THEMES

1. The Life of a River

- i. Overcoming Obstacles: Reviving Damaged River Ecosystems
- ii. Notes from River Restoration Initiatives: Combating River Pollutants
- iii. The River and Life: Restoring River Floodplains

2. Lives Around the River

- i. The Children of Rivers: Aspirations and Struggles of Riverine Communities
- ii. Rivers as Means of Livelihood: A Socio-Economic Perspective
- iii. Leaving the Rivers: Dilemmas and Revelations

3. Tales and Songs of the River

- i. Rivers as Symbols in Folklore and Cultural Narratives
- ii. Rivers in Cultural Expressions and Memories
- iii. Rivers as Divine Entities and Sacred Spaces

4. The Riverine Tiger

- i. The Gangetic Dolphin: Tiger of Riverine Ecosystem
- ii. Conservation of the Gangetic Dolphin: Challenges and Solutions
- iii. Gangetic Dolphin in (un)Usual Times: Reminiscences from the Covid Period

5. Lives Beyond the River

- i. The Significance of Rivers to the Communities Living around Them
- ii. River Tourism: From Survival to Sustainability
- iii. Rivers Connecting Cultures: From Local to Global

6. Let the River Flow: Obstacles & Way-Outs

- i. Riverine Biodiversity: From Degradation to Regeneration
- ii. Ripples in the River: Impacts of Community Resilience
- iii. And Flows the River: Success Stories of River Restoration