

About Phase II (2014-2017)

The phase I of the programme received overwhelming response from schools and other stakeholders. It was felt that it is critical to focus on the Ganga basin for conservation education programme on *Susu*. CEE, with the support from National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), as part of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), with financial assistance from World Bank is initiating next phase of the programme.

The phase II aims at reaching out to schools, riverside communities and youth. The project would be implemented along the river Ganga and its tributaries flowing through Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

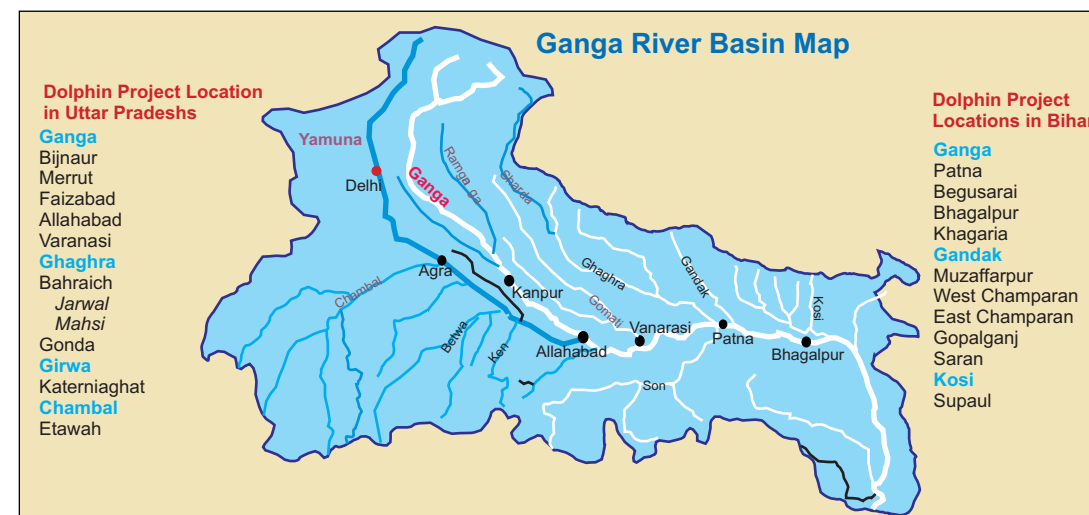
School Component

- Formation of 20 School clusters, each involving 30-35 schools, with the support from local partner NGOs.
- Orientation of partner agencies for facilitating activities at the project locations.
- Teacher training and review meetings for school teachers.
- School-level activities of students such as 'Dolphin Clubs' or 'Sons Samooh'
- Cluster-level awareness events to reach out to community.
- Formation of Ganges River Dolphin Resource Centre in one of the cluster schools.
- School and community interface melas for sharing of experiences.
- Spreading awareness about the species in non-dolphin locations.



Community Component

- Identification of two sites each in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar for community interventions.
- Selection of villages and assessment of the conservation issues and socio-economic status of communities.
- Sensitization of farmers and fishing communities about the importance of conserving Ganges river dolphin and rivers for their life and livelihood.
- Skill-based trainings, and exposure visits to help community to build capacities and for making informed decisions.
- Demonstration of sustainable and alternate livelihood options to reduce pressure from river resources.
- Involving youth volunteers to keep vigil on river bank, and also to promote eco-tourism activities.



Networking

Phase II of the project will be implemented in close collaboration with Education and Forest Department. Expert institutions working on the research and protection of the species would be also consulted for field level suggestions. The success of this programme depends on active support and cooperation of government departments, research and academic institutions, agencies working in the field of environment and development, and nodal agencies for other national programmes (Pollution Control Boards, Science Council etc.).



Government of India has given Ganga the status of a National River and has constituted the **National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)** on 20th February 2009 under section 3(3) of the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The NGRBA is a planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating body of the centre and the states. The objective of the NGRBA is to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach for comprehensive planning and management.

Monitoring of bio-indicators for successful implementation of River Cleaning efforts found prominence in the 1st meeting of NGRBA held on 5th of October 2009 under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister. Accordingly, a Working Group was constituted to prepare an action plan for conservation of Gangetic Dolphin. The working group submitted its action plan and Ministry of Environment and Forests subsequently notified the Ganges River Dolphin as the National Aquatic Animal on the 10th of May 2010.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is a registered society to co-ordinate and implement at the national level various activities of the NGRBA programme including the World Bank assisted National Ganga River Basin Projects. Ganges river dolphin conservation education programme is one of the key action areas of the NMCG.

For more information see: www.moef.nic.in/sites/default/files/ngrba/index.html

Centre for Environment Education (CEE) is a national institution engaged in developing programmes and material to increase awareness about the environment and sustainable development. CEE was established in 1984 as a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Education, supported by the MoEF, GoI. It is affiliated to the Nehru Foundation for Development.

The Northern Regional Cell of CEE was set up at Lucknow in October 1995 to coordinate and implement CEE's programmes and activities in the northern region. The Cell is engaged in organizing regional EE programmes and developing locale-specific EE materials. CEE North has been working on rivers and Ganges river dolphin conservation education since its inception.

For more information see: www.cceindia.org/cee/project_pages/ganga_dolphin.html



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Government of India
National Ganga River Basin Authority

Ganges River Dolphin Conservation Education Programme



Educating Schools and Community for sustainable actions for conserving habitat of Ganges River Dolphin along Ganga River Basin



National Mission for Clean Ganga

CEE

Centre for Environment Education

Ganga Basin

The Ganga basin is formed by the network of river Ganga and its tributaries Yamuna, Ramganga, Gomati, Ghaghara, Gandak, Kosi, Son and others. A major part of the basin falls under the Gangetic basin which is home to roughly one tenth of the world's human population. The fertile alluvial soil deposit of river Ganga sustains a wide variety of agricultural and fruit crops. The basin is also home to rich natural vegetation, considerable endemic flora, and supporting large number of wildlife species.

The basin has a vast reservoir of groundwater which replenishes every year at a very high rate. Millions of people are directly or indirectly dependent on the basin for their livelihood and various other activities such as religious rituals. The Ganga basin is nowadays facing enormous anthropogenic pressure due to development activities and pollution load.

River Ganga is considered as one of the most sacred rivers of the world and is deeply revered by the people of India, playing a vital role in religious ceremonies and rituals. Giving impetus to the conservation of river Ganga and recognizing it as country's heritage, Government of India has declared Ganga as 'National River'.

Where the mighty Ganga flows
River dolphins swim and gharials are found
Proud tigers prowl and deer abound.
The fertile plains with bounteous yields
From forests and farmlands and fields.
A plentitude of plants for food and health
And multitude of people add to the wealth.



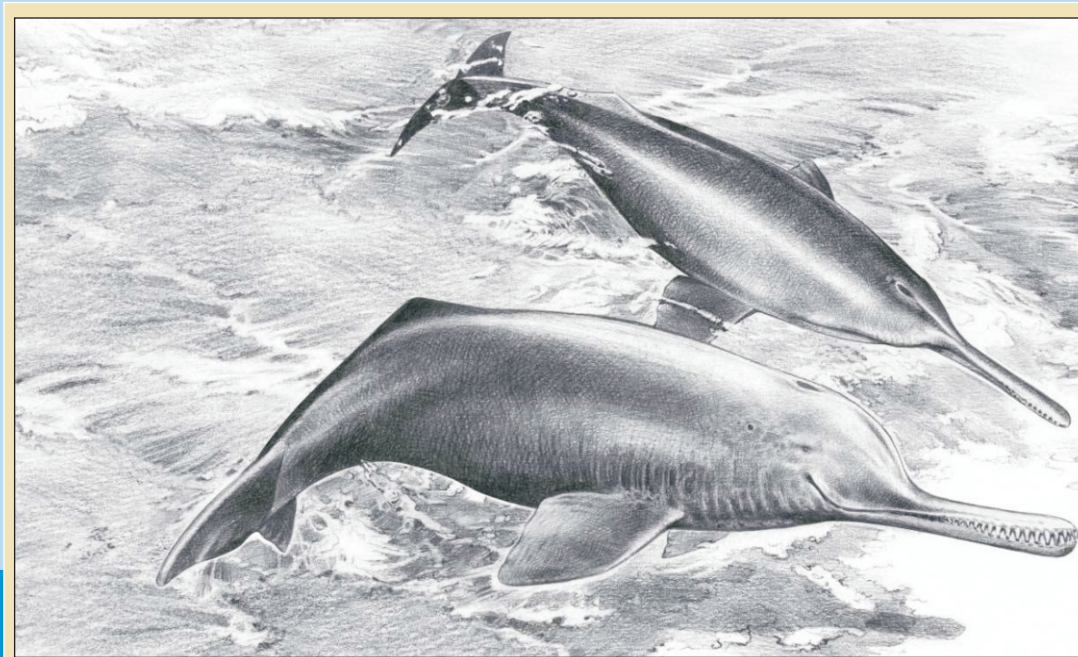
Ganges River Dolphin

Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) popularly known as *Souns* or *Susu* is an elusive aquatic mammal which represents the health of the river systems it inhabits. These dolphins were found in large numbers till a few years ago. But now their number has come down considerably. Current estimated population is approximately 1200-2000 individuals, which is found in India.

The Ganges river dolphin is distributed along the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Karnaphuli–Sangu and Meghna river systems, and their tributaries, from the foothills of the Himalayas to the limits of tidal zone in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and probably Bhutan. The existing population is in the form of small fragmented sub-populations.

The threat to this mammal is largely due to the degradation of its river habitat and poaching. A major threat to the Ganges river dolphin has been due to extensive damming of rivers for irrigation and electricity generation, oil exploration, underwater noise which isolates its populations and prevents seasonal migration. Other threats include chemical pollution, boat traffic, hunting and human disturbances. Accidental entanglement in plastic/nylon fishing nets also occurs. This species is hunted for oil, fish bait and food by local people.

Ganges river dolphin, one of the four freshwater dolphins in the world, is facing extinction, and features as Schedule-I animal in the Wildlife (Protection) Act-1972. It has been recognized as 'endangered' by IUCN Red List of threatened species and listed in Appendix I of CITES.



As Tiger is to forest, Dolphin is to river

The Ganges river dolphin occupies the apex of the food chain of the river and plays a vital role in maintaining the essential balance of its ecosystem. In spite of being a flagship species, representing an ecosystem in need of conservation, its status has become a matter of serious concern to its existence over the past few decades. It is a critical time to focus attention on improving the conservation status of this threatened species by improving the status of its habitat. To bring focus to its conservation, Ganges river dolphin has been notified as the national aquatic animal of India. Every year 5 October is also observed as Dolphin Day.

Conservation Efforts

A number of conservation projects based on research studies, capacity building, field level extension etc. are being implemented by various agencies in the country. However, it is also well accepted that regulation and efforts of the government agencies cannot, by themselves, achieve the conservation goal, unless these measures enjoy popular support. In order to conserve this species, it is important to build an understanding about the species, their life cycles, habit and habitats. Unless people understand and appreciate why Ganges river dolphins must be protected, it will be an uphill battle to protect them. Education and awareness programmes can help in developing a sensitive and informed population. School education and involving related stakeholders to protect *Susu* is a key part of public awareness and education programmes.

About Phase I

With the support from Ministry of Environment and Forests, Centre for Environment Education initiated a two - year awareness and education programme in 2010 for conservation of the *Susu* and the aquatic ecosystem of which it is a vital part. The programme was carried out as a year-long intensive conservation education programme in schools, involving primarily school teachers and students, and through them reaching out to the larger community, including the fisher folk.

To communicate about the species, CEE developed and disseminated an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) package to schools and general public.

In partnership with local partner agencies, CEE worked on 20 prominent sites of Ganges river dolphin located along the major rivers (Ganga, Ghaghra, Chambal, Gandak, Kosi, Hoogly, Brahmaputra and Kulsi) in the four states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam for the implementation of the programme. At each location, clusters of 25 schools each were formed along the river bank within a 5 km range.

Teachers were given training to work at school level with students for spreading conservation message within the school and in the community. Students showcased their work in the year-end event 'Dolphin Mela'. It was felt that engaging children in understanding the value of biodiversity and Ganges river dolphin in the entire river ecosystem would be a long term investment for making our future citizens act for conservation.

