



**NAMAMI
GANGE**



Ganga Awareness & Aarti Workshop at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh

16-18th June, 2023

A unique and transformative Three-Day Ganga Awareness and Aarti Workshop was hosted and organised at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, in partnership with the National Mission for Clean Ganga and Arth Ganga Initiative. Enthusiastic participants from various ghats across Northern India, representing more than a dozen cities in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, came together for this exceptional training program. With the collaborative efforts of Ganga Action Parivar, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Namami Gange, the workshop aimed to ignite inspiration, motivation, and activation among these dedicated individuals, who lead Aartis in their respective regions. The workshop emphasized the immense potential of these sacred rituals as catalysts for social transformation, behavioral change, and forging a profound connection with the divine essence of Mother Ganga.



In an innovative and one of its kind collaboration between Parmarth Niketan, Namami Gange, in association with the Ganga Action Parivar, and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, a captivating Three-Day Ganga Awareness and Aarti Workshop was organized



at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh. The workshop aimed to deepen participants' connection with Mother Ganga, inspire behavioral change, and foster a sense of responsibility towards environmental conservation.

The workshop took place from June 16th to June 18th, with participants arriving on June 15th. A total of 31 participants from four states—Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar—represented 11 Ghats and numerous cities. Notable participants included individuals from Haridwar, Farrukhabad, Roorkee, Bijnor, Bhojpur, Bokaro, and others (please refer to the attached list of participants)

DAY 1: TRIBUTE TO UTTARAKHAND FLOODS OF 2013 & REMINDER FOR RIVER CONSERVATION

The training program commenced on June 16th, coinciding with the anniversary of the devastating 2013 floods in Uttarakhand, which had a profound impact on areas along the National River Ganga, including Kedarnath Ghatti. The day began with a special dedication to honor the lives lost during the floods, featuring an offering, a Shradhanjali (memorial service), and a moment of silence in the evening. In addition, the Ganga Aarti Training was conducted during this occasion to raise awareness, promote behavior change, and inspire action toward environmentally sustainable practices that would help protect the National River and her tributaries.





The first day of the workshop started with morning Yoga practice, followed by a sacred Yagya ritual and a light sattvic breakfast. The three-day event was inaugurated with the blessings of Param Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, along with the presence of Puran Kapri, Nodal Office, SPMG, Durga Prasad, Team Assistant, Ganga Nandini, Director of Projects, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and many others.



Pujya Swamiji's Inspiring Inaugural

Speech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIjpl_7aWy8



The workshop commenced on June 16th, with participants arriving on June 15th, bringing with them a palpable sense of anticipation. Prior to the start of the workshop orientation immediately after the inaugural session, participants were invited to share their pre-feedback, detailing their experience in conducting Aarti in their respective regions and expressing their expectations for the workshop. This pre-



feedback served as a valuable foundation for tailoring the program to their needs and aspirations.

The first day began with a warm welcome, introductions, and orientation sessions, allowing participants to connect with one another and the workshop facilitators. The vibrant atmosphere was filled with stories of participants' Aarti experiences, highlighting the diversity and richness of their practices. The participants, filled with eagerness and curiosity shared that many of them were already leading Aarti ceremonies in their respective regions.



Shri Puran ji shared about the various initiatives, programmes and schemes being undertaken by the Namami Gange and Arth Ganga initiative. Sushri Ganga Nandini ji led a thought-provoking session on the profound meaning of Aarti, delving into its spiritual significance and the transformative power it holds. This was followed by a captivating presentation on the purpose, history, and vision behind the

Parmarth Ganga Aarti, intertwining teachings and verses from the Bhagavad Gita. Participants were enlightened about the significance of Dharma in protecting and preserving Mother Ganga as a spiritual and cultural heritage.



The workshop emphasized the potential of Ganga Aarti as a platform for social change,

urging participants to utilize this sacred space for sankalp (pledges) towards environmental conservation and river rejuvenation. This resonated





deeply with the participants, who eagerly embraced the idea of Aarti as a catalyst for both personal and societal transformation.

After a short break for lunch everyone came together again for discussion of the format of the Ganga Aarti as well as practice of the flow of the Aarti. The session ended with participants coming together for their collective experience of the Parmarth Ganga Aarti in which they were welcomed and the objective and purpose of the three day training was shared with all.



First Day LIVEstream of the Parmarth Ganga Aarti-

<https://www.youtube.com/live/LBIbTE65PIU?feature=share>



DAY 2: GANGA AARTI AS POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL AWARENESS

The second day of the Workshop began with invigorating morning Yoga practice, setting a positive and energizing tone for the day. Participants joined hands with Parmarth sevaks and Rishikumars to clean the Ashram premises, embodying the principle of seva (selfless service) and Karma Yoga. The clean up was followed by a Ganga Snana thereafter participants joined for the sacred Yagya ritual and enjoyed a light saatvic breakfast.



An interactive session led by Smt Vandana Sharmaji, one of Parmarth's lead trainers, focused on Ganga Aarti as a space for social awareness and a medium for social impact and change. Through dynamic activities such as drama and songs, participants



showcased the importance of keeping Mother Ganga clean and highlighted the urgency of collective action.



After a fulfilling lunch, participants gathered in the Ashram's serene Satsang Hall, where Acharya Dileep Chhetryji and Rishikumars led them in a session on mantra chanting and the practice of Ganga Aarti. The rhythmic chanting and the powerful vibrations created an uplifting and purifying atmosphere, instilling a deep sense of devotion and connection.



The culmination of the day was an extraordinary live Ganga Aarti experience. Participants joined Param Pujya Swamiji and the Parmarth Rishikumars on the Shankar Bhagawan Ghat to perform the sacred Ganga Aarti. The collective energy and devotion was palpable as participants reflected on their personal connections with Mother Ganga and expressed their aspirations for making their Aarti experiences more divine and beautiful, akin to the one at Parmarth.



Second Day LIVEstream of Parmarth Ganga Aarti -
https://www.youtube.com/live/1f_nM2wFR0k?feature=share



Day two concluded with a meeting with Pujya Swamiji as participants had another divine opportunity to interact with him and join him in a water blessing ceremony, a symbolic pledge to work for clean water, sanitation and hygiene for all.



DAY 3 - FINAL DAY

The third and final day began with morning Yoga practice in the format of the Common Yoga Protocol ahead of International Day of Yoga preparations and also illustrated to participants how the banks of Mother Ganga can be space for regular yoga, meditation and wellness practices.



Building upon the momentum from the previous days, participants embarked on a cleaning initiative along a stretch of Maa Ganga's banks. This act of seva further solidified



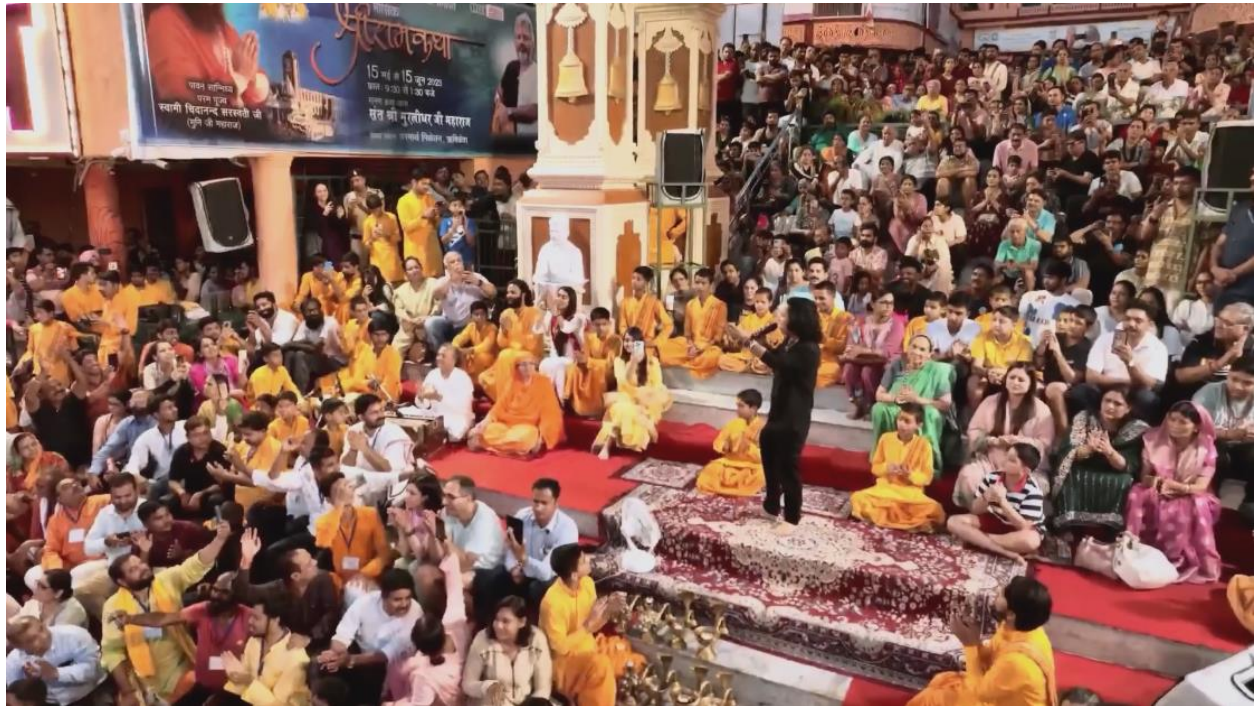
their commitment to the cause of environmental stewardship and was blessed by the presence and active participation of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji.



The third day included a valuable post-feedback session, where participants shared their reflections, takeaways, and suggestions, enriching the workshop's outcomes and fostering a strong sense of community. This was followed by an engaging small group activity, where participants representing their respective ghats collaborated, shared insights, and brainstormed ideas to leverage their newfound knowledge for creating awareness and driving positive change in their own ghats.



As a token of appreciation and a reminder of their transformative journey they received sacred Rudraksha Malas and Rudraksh sapling. They were also provided with an audio pen drive containing sacred Ganga Aarti chants, bhajans, and videos, serving as valuable resources and guides to support them on their continued path of devotion and environmental activism.



The evening Ganga Aarti was attended by all with great joy as Padamshri Kailash Kherji and the Honble Chief Minister's wife Smt Geeta Dhamiji joined the Aarti to share messages of river rejuvenation and a pledge for rivers. It concluded with divine music and songs of Kailash Kherji uplifting the participants and filling them with great energy to go back from the training to bring about great mass transformation.

Picture Highlights of the three day Workshop:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/Z95xLjVVBEbfgB419>

Highlights Video of the three day Workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yi29BzILk58>