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Q15

Discuss the Namami Gange and National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) programmes and causes of mixed results from the previous schemes. What quantum leaps can help preserve the river Ganga better than incremental inputs?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS III · 12 marks · Indian Economy

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss **Namami Gange** and the National Mission for Clean Ganga, and why older Ganga schemes gave mixed results
- Say what quantum leaps, not small extra spends, would preserve the river better

Revision summary

Namami Gange is the integrated Ganga flagship; **NMCG** is the body that funds and monitors the works.

Ganga Action Plan mixed results because treatment plants lacked sewers, operations money, industrial enforcement, and lean-season flow.

Tributaries, solid waste, and split accountability also beat the old schemes.

Quantum leaps are full drain interception, legal **environmental flow**, zero liquid discharge, and a basin authority with power.

Success is bathing quality and living tributaries, not rupees spent on ghats alone.

Flow diagram

GAP mixed results -> Plants without sewers flow

Namami Gange NMCG -> Integrated projects

Quantum leaps -> E-flow full interception ZLD

Quantum leaps -> Basin authority dashboards

E-flow full interception ZLD -> Aviral Nirmal Ganga

Basin authority dashboards -> Aviral Nirmal Ganga

Conclusion

- Fund **operations and electricity** as seriously as new plants.
- Treat Yamuna and other tributaries as Ganga, or the main stem will always look "mixed".
- Measure success as **bathing-quality stretches and fish return**, not as rupees sanctioned.

- **Namami Gange and NMCG try to unify what GAP scattered:** sewage, industry, ghats, and people. Old schemes mixed results because plants without sewers, flow, enforcement, or operators cannot clean a basin. Quantum leaps are full drain interception, legal e-flow, industrial zero discharge, a powerful basin authority, and tributary-plus-wetland restoration - not another small scheme on the same broken pipe.

Facts & figures

Ganga Action Plan, 1985

First large Union attempt to treat sewage and industrial waste on the Ganga; results stayed mixed for decades.

Namami Gange

Integrated Ganga conservation flagship announced in 2014-15, covering sewerage, industry, biodiversity, and public participation.

NMCG

National Mission for Clean Ganga, the implementation and monitoring vehicle for the clean-Ganga programme.

Aviral and Nirmal

Unbroken flow and unpolluted water - the two outcomes without which ghat beautification is cosmetic.

Environmental flow

Water that must remain in the river after irrigation and barrage use so dilution and ecology can work.

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