

The Ganga Project

INTERNAL, GANG001

Collection Contents

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INTACH is undertaking a project on the **Cultural Mapping of the River Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar** for the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India. The ICH Division has been working on the intangible cultural heritage aspect of this project in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; a study of the 2019 Kumbh Mela at Prayag was also undertaken as a part of this mandate. Each documentation report contains research—primary and secondary—of the history, mythology, sacred complexes, fairs and festivals, arts and crafts, oral traditions, languages, foodways, and notable personalities of the culturally significant locations along the course of the river Ganga. The following are some of the completed reports submitted to the NMCG.

Allahabad (Prayagraj), Uttar Pradesh (38 records)

The report on Prayagraj covers the foremost topics related to intangible heritage, with the research comprising a **mythological and historical overview**, the city in antiquity, a look at Shringverpur, Pratishthanpur and Jhunsi, and the later impact of colonialism. The recognition of Prayagraj as **Tirtharaj or the 'king of pilgrimage'**, its deep connection with the philosophy of Sanatan Dharma, the history of the Kumbh Mela and it

The famous **Ganga Jamuni *tehzeeb***, and the impact of the **literature and language of the city** on the rest of the country has been documented; as also its various **communities** residing near the river. The numerous **sacred complexes and ghats**, the **fairs and festivals**, **crafts** like *moonj* basketry, **performing traditions** like the Pattharchatti Ramlila, and **foodways** unique to the region have also been recorded, along with interesting traditions like that of *gehrebazi*, a form of horse racing, and the well-known **Sufi *Daire*** of Allahabad.

- Divya Kumbh
- Traditional art of Allahabad
- Sculpting God, Allahabad
- Bhardwaj Ashram, Prayagraj
- University of Allahabad
- Kalpavaasi
- Rituals with coconut
- Vedi, a sacrificial altar, Allahabad
- Flute Sellers
- Ram Pyaari
- Nishad Boatsmen
- Street Art in Allahabad
- Swachata ki sawari
- Veni Daan
- Akhada Area
- Tools for Sculpting Idols
- Foreigners at Kumbh
- Ganga Aarti
- The Sacred Cow
- Naga
- Snacks at Kumbh
- Adi Shankaracharya
- Moonj Baskets
- Polluted Ganga
- Sunset at the Ganga
- Boat with pilgrims
- Giant ferris wheel
- A Maulvi with the holy text
- Prayagwal pandas dictating rituals
- Procession of shahi akhada
- Lending Hand
- Besan treats during Kumbh festival, Allahabad
- Street Food Vendor
- Khusro Bagh - Tomb of an almost Emperor
- A devotee blowing the Shankha



Shiva linga
A meal before the Shahi Snaan
A man after holy snaan

Balia

Ballia

Begusarai, Bihar (14 records)

The Begusarai report details the **history of the region**, the various sagas related to the epical and **mythological stories of the Ganga** and the different empires that played a crucial role in contributing to the imagery of the Ganga, both as an imperial symbol and as a sacred element. The **language and literary traditions** of Begusarai, **festivals** like the Ardh-Kumbh, Kartik Purnima Snaan, and **Simariya or Kalpvas Mela** have an interwoven narrative with the Ganga.

Along with the prevalent **Saktah traditions of Ugratara Temple** at Mahishi, the many contributions of local folk music, theatre, and art-craft traditions of this region have been highlighted in the report, especially **Mithila painting and Sujni embroidery** work. Mithila painting, depicting various milestones in people's lives, was traditionally done on freshly plastered mud walls of the hut but is today also done on cloth, handmade paper, and canvas. **Patna Kalam** art has also been documented with details of its techniques and forms.

A wall representation of Mithila painting of Sita and Ram at Darbhanga
Sujni making tradition, Samastipur
Basket Makers of Samastipur
Clay models of Sama and Chakeya, Samastipur
Depiction of Gangavataran
Devotees chanting the songs and tales of the festival
Devotees listening to the narration (Katha)
Mithila artists at work with nibs and colours
Shradhalus (devotees) cooking their meal
Swami Chidamand narrating the tales of Kalpavas to devotees
The entrance and view of the Kartik Kalpavas Mela, Simariya
The Ghats of Simariya during Ardh Kumbh
Cremation ground at Simariya
A view of Simariya Ghat

Bhagalpur, Bihar (15 records)

Manjoosha painting
A colourful Manjoosha painting
The ruin state of Kamgarh
The interiors of famous bengali author Sh. Sharat Chandra's house
A view of Ajgaivinath Temple
Devotees gathered for the Holy dip
Women performing the rituals during Chhath celebrations
A gathering of devotees for the holy dip
Vikramshila University
A view of Kuppaghat
Kanwariyas on their way to Babadham
Kali puja celebrations
Holy dip in the river Ganga
Celebrations during Durga puja
A view of Bateshwar Sthan Kahalgaon

Bhojpur, Bihar

The study on Bhojpur talks about historical, literary and oral traditions associated with the region. The Bhojpur have rich tangible and intangible heritage with it. It is a land of creative crafts like Daali, Bitha, Sikki grass craft, wood carvings, Tokri or Khanch. Bhojpur is famous for its embroidery, a skill passed down for generations. Embroidery is the primary source of income in the district. The artisans specialize in kaisda, bharat, zari, jail and sujni techniques of embroidery. It is site of many architectural marvels and sacred temples. The study also talks about the historical significance of the place as a hub of revolutionary activities during the freedom struggle. In revolt of 1857, Bhojpur was center of rebellion under the leadership of Veer Kunwar Singh. The citizens of Bhojpur took part in 1942 quit India movement. In 1942, Lashari village became the headquarters of rebel in this district. Many dignitaries from the district are Kavi Kailash, Jagjivan Ram Kashinath ji. Sachinananand Sinha is called 'architect of modern Bihar'. It has diverse cultural traditions of folklores, folksongs and legends. It is associated with tradition of Maldeo puja. Bhojpuri cuisine can be traced back to agricultural and pastoral communities. It is highly flavorful in nature. It is an exciting mix of Mughlai and Awadhi cuisine. The report at length also talks about



traditional Bhojpuri attires and highlights local practices.

Farukhabad, Uttar Pradesh (11 records)

The project looks at the intangible heritage of the district, which includes the history of the ancient Kampilya/Panchal kingdom along the Ganga. In 1714, Nawab Mohammad Khan Bangash unified 52 villages of Bisen Kshatriyas (Bumtelas) and named them as Farrukhabad. In ancient times, Kampil reached its highest glory as the capital of the Panchala Kingdom. The presence of numerous Shivalayas has given it an exalted religious status of Aparakashi. The report covers the country's freedom movement and the involvement of local freedom fighters of Farukhabad in the struggle. The report also documents other luminaries of Farukhabad which include famous poets like Mr. Mahadevi Verma and Dr. Shiv Om Ambar, and music composer mr. Anwar Farrukhabadi. The history of wooden boat-making in the district is believed to be about 250 years old.

- Yakhni Manda of Kaimganj
- A view of Vishrant Ghat
- Urmila Devi ji practicing Ayurveda
- Tree of life, traditional motif used by the Sadh community
- The ritual of Pahravan on the river Ganga
- Beautifully embellished structures of Shah ji Vishrant
- Idol depicting Ganga and Bhairav
- Aksharalok, a local publication of farukhabad
- A bust to honour Smt. Mahadevi Verma
- A boat under construction
- A bird's eye view of the amazing ghats and vishrants of Farukhabad

Garh Mukteshwar, Uttar Pradesh (42 records)

Garh Mukteshwar is an ancient place mentioned in the *Bhagwat Purana* and *Mahabharata*. The name of the town is derived from the temple of Mukteshwar Mahadeva, dedicated to the goddess Ganga who is worshipped here in four temples. Many Hindus come here (instead of Haridwar, Varanasi or Gaya) for *asthi visarjan* (immersion of ashes in the Ganga after cremation) of their deceased family members.

It was one of the main centres of trade on the Ganga water route. The place is also famous for its *Mudda* industry (which uses the locally grown grass), with exports to many countries. This collection of images provides a glimpse into the sacred complexes, shrines, rituals, ghats, and other cultural traditions associated with the place.

- Ganga Abhishek
- Donations made in the name of the Ganga
- Ghats of Garh Mukteshwar
- Sunset on the ghats of Garh Mukteshwar
- Commercialization through Ganga
- View of the Ghats of Garh Mukteshwar
- Preparing Sarkanda mats
- Dried Sarkanda grass
- Sacred Scriptures
- Mundan ritual being performed, Garh Mukteshwar, Uttar Pradesh
- Newly married woman performing ritual
- Devotees performing rituals during Ganga Dussehra
- Devotees performing Ganga Snan
- Students of Gurukul
- Doorway at Sita-Ram Temple
- Statue of Goddess Ganga
- Essential items for a ritual
- Interview with Kapil Sharma
- Hindu Genealogical Registers
- Interview with Pt. Shiv Kumar Shankar
- Devotees performing Deep Daan ritual, Garh Mukteshwar, Uttar Pradesh
- Interview with Acharya Vineet Pandey
- Temple with a statue of Vishnu's Vishwa Roop
- Students at a Gurukul
- Temple priests, Brij Ghat
- A local Mudda seller
- A shop selling Mudda
- Meera ki Reti
- Traditional Sarkanda mats
- Doorway to Ganga Temple



Ritual preparations
Ghats and the ferry rides
An appeal to make Ganga Ghat green
Diya for Ganga Aarti
Ram Parivar
An idol of Lord Brahma
Preparation of traditional food items
An idol of Goddess Ganga
Making of a Mudda
A 'figurine' of quartzite stone
Manuscript of a Hindu Genealogy Register
Interview with Pt. Santosh Kaushik

Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh (8 records)

Kannauj Archaeological Museum Building
Annapurna Devi Temple
Baba Gauri Shankar Temple
Inside view of Baba Gauri Shankar Mandir
Maa Phoolmati Devi Temple
A beautiful gate at Kannauj
Cheque of National Bank of India limited
The idol of *Ardhnareshwar* archaeological museum, Kannauj

Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh (26 records)

Blessed with a fine cultural history, the area around Mirzapur, or Vindhyachal, is a lesser known gem adjoining Varanasi and Prayagraj. The Mirzapur study delineates the history, etymology and the gradual establishment of Mirzapur as an important **trading centre of India via the river route**, long before rail and road transport became the norm. The report also looks at its **sacred complexes** including the famous Vindhyavasini temple, and the rich living tradition of **artisanship, with crafts like carpet weaving, brassware, shellac work, and Chunar pottery** carving a unique niche for the region.

Although there are many popular opinions about its genesis, it is believed that **Kajri singing emerged primarily from Mirzapur**. Birha and Laavani are also important folk song traditions here. **Lorikayan** is a popular folklore of the region and is sung with great emotion, usually in Bhojpuri. The **Bharat Milap Panchami** is also an important festival here.

Idol of Maa Vindhyavasini, Vindhyavasini Temple, Mirzapur
Murals, Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh
Kajri singers, Pukka Ghat, Mirzapur
Makkhan Vada, a local delicacy of Mirzapur
Decorative utensils from Chunar clay
Brassware workers at Mirzapur
Carpet weavers at a traditional loom
Bharat Milaap at Chaube Tola, Mirzapur
St. Joseph Church, Mirzapur
Cotton mill, British period
Temple complex, ghats of Mirzapur
Bhairon Kund, Asthbhuja hillock
Idol of Maa Saraswati, Astha Bhuja Temple
Dr. Arjun Das Kesari on Lorikayan
Warren Hastings' Bungalow, Chunar fort
Details of pillar
Pillar inscription
Lala Lajpat Rai Library, Naar Ghat
Morcha Ghar, Revolt of 1857
A priest at Bhartrihari Memorial, Chunar Fort
Idol of Bhairon
Temples near Naar Ghat, Mirzapur
Zanana or Pucca Ghat, Mirzapur
A Baoli (well) in Gothic style, at Pakki Sarai
Ojhala Ka Pul
Official farman from Aurangzeb's court

Munger, Bihar (21 records)

This report on Munger/Bhagalpur area charts the history of the region, from its ancient past to its modern avatar, highlighting



the strategic advantages of its **location on the banks of the river Ganga**.

Long-established spiritual beliefs and ritualistic traditions are seen through the documentation of the **Kanwar traditions of Bihar** which initiate from Sultanganj. The continuing **silk traditions** of Bhagalpur, with the weaving of fine *tussar*, that proclaim its own cultural importance; as well as the heritage of Angika or **Manjusha art** form that is lesser known than its famous neighbour, the Madhubani style, but equally unique.

It also delves into the references to Munger in Bengali and English literature, and details some of the **notable personalities** from this region, like Nandalal Bose, Niranjanananda Saraswati, Tilkha Majhi and Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar'.

Tomb of Pir Saheb at Pir Pahari, Munger
The temple of Baba Dham at Deoghar, Jharkhand
The sanctum of Deoghar Temple
The ghats of Munger shot at Kashtaharni Ghat
Aged long generational making of Bhagalpuri silk, Bhagalpur
One of the participant of the pilgrimage taking his early morning bathe in Ganga
Kanwarariyas resting in their tents during the Sravan Mela
Narrative scroll procedure method of Angika art
Narrative scroll procedure method of Angika art
Mulberry tree and Tussar silk
Kanwariyas early morning preparing to take a dip in the holy water of Ganga
Munger Entry Gate
A closer image of the sculptural art on the walls
A basic vegetarian thali from Munger
A distant and close image of Mir Kasim's Surang
An image of Vishnu from Kashaharni Ghat
Buddhist Sculpture of Vishnu
The carving from 13th-14th Century of Hindu gods
The entrance gate of Chandika Sthana
Female devotees in their traditional attire
Munger copper plate of Devapala

Patna, Bihar (23 records)

The river Ganga is not just a geographical entity here but inhabits many legends of its own and their deep connections with the region's history and culture are palpable. The illustrated report outlines this history of Patna District and its arcane links with the river Ganga, as witnessed in the settlement over the centuries, and of several great empires along its banks. It establishes that even when Patliputra was in ruins, Magadha was the peaceful home of Buddhism, full of great shrines and splendid monasteries, chief among them being Nalanda.

Patna represents a cultural space of much linguistic diversity. In contemporary times, a few languages like *Bhojpuri*, *Magahi*, *Maithili*, and *Angika* have been established as the vernacular majors of the region. The report looks at this linguistic plurality and complexity. It also documents boatmen communities like the *Mallah* and the *Navik*. Ritualistic fairs such as *Chhath Puja*, the famous Sonapur Cattle Fair and other important festivals which take place through the year are covered. The various *Shaktipeeths* have also been listed.

Aami Mandir
Agam Kuan
Ashoka Rock Edict
Devotees going on a boat ride on the bank of river Ganga
Devotees performing the rituals for the deity
Entrance and the main sanctum of Choti Patan Devi
Entrance gate of Ami Sidha Shakti Peeth
Entrance gate of Harihar Nath Temple
Inner Sanctum of Harihar Nath Temple
Carvings on Mahabodhi temple walls
A view of NIT Ghat
Litti Chokha
Malpua
Parwal ki Mithai and Ghugni
Ruins of Nalanda
Shitala Devi Temple
Sonapur Cattle Fair
Sonapur Cattle Fair involves various buying and selling of animals
The depiction of Ganga



Main deity in form of Shakti panda
The Navik community
The Yagna Kund
Thekua

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (45 records)

Varanasi reflects a **unique identity** that has resulted from the combined living memory of the communities settled here, and the multi-dimensional cultural influences accommodated by the city over the years. One of the most ancient cities of the world, it is a repository of heritage, with a series of invasions and inhabitations informing its secular and spiritual nature, each carrying with it a plethora of **both intangible and tangible properties**, social contracts and related norms of **knowledge, traditions and customs**.

The steadfast river Ganga, the famous **galis**, the magnificent **ghats**, the countless **temples**, the **kunds** and places of religious interest, the historic Banaras Hindu University, the **sadhus and varied cults**, the profound theories of life and death, the commerce, the **craftsmanship and culinary flavours**, and the vitality of the Banaras **gharana and its exponents** in the field of music and dance, make the intangible cultural heritage of Varanasi truly exceptional. These intangible inheritances have been listed and documented in this report. The report also highlights the **connection of the river Ganga with the city and its people**. From the daily **Ganga aarti to the last rites and rituals**, the river plays a very crucial part in the lives of its residents and the millions of tourists and pilgrims that arrive here for its *darshan*.

Ganga Aarti
Ganga performed early morning at the Assi Ghat
Rituals at the Ghats
Marriage Performed by the Ghat
Ganga Snaan
A priestess narrating the story of Tulsi Vivah, Varanasi
Ladies gathered to perform Chatth Puja at the ghats
Priests performing the Ganga Aarti on the occasion of Dev Deepawali festival, Varanasi
Aakashdeep Festival being Celebrated on the Banks of Holy Ganga in Varanasi
Hand-made altar for Chhath Puja in Varanasi
Preparation of Sesame oil diya for Aakashdeep celebrations in Varanasi
Jiutiya thread being sold for Jivitya puja in Varanasi
Characters from Krishnalila at the Tulsi Ghat
A young boy dressed as Sita for Ramlila celebrations at the Asi crossing, Varanasi
Flavoured Lassi
View of the ghats from a boat
Swimming lessons in the river
A girl selling diya and flower offerings
Ganga Snaan on Kartik Purnima
Ghats of Varanasi
Hanuman Ghat, Varanasi
Bamboo Umbrellas form an integral part of the ghat scene
Students at a Ved-Vidyalaya
Malviya Bridge, Rajghat, Varanasi
Construction of a boat at the ghat
Musicians consult the text and recite verses from it for the Ramlila at Manikarnika Ghat
Pind Daan rituals at the ghats
Flute players at the ghat
Water is offered during tarpana
Crescent formation of the flow of the river
Boats of different shapes and sizes are plied on the river
The boats and the boatmen are crucial elements of the city
Morning rituals and yoga sessions at the ghats
Varanasi Chaat is the most famous street food of the city
Morning scene at the ghats
Subah e Banaras at Asi Ghat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
Ganga Aarti at the Dashashwamedh Ghat
Tulsi Vivah ceremony in Varanasi
Kanhailal Mishra playing the Sarangi, a Traditional Musical Instrument, Varanasi
Chandrakant Mishra, A Shehnai Artist from Varanasi
Padma Vibhushan Pt. Chhannulal Mishra, renowned Hindustani classical singer from Varanasi
Bow used in Ramlila
An Akhada in Varanasi
Pehelwans wrestling in the Tulsi Akhada, Varanasi



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Pt. Puran Maharaj, a renowned Tabla player with his students