

The role of epic “*Rakṣata Gaṅgām*” in saving the Gangā

Dr. Firoze^{1*}

^{1*} Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, India

Abstract:

As we know that we get drinking water mostly from rivers. The culture of all the great nations of the world originated, nurtured and nourished by these rivers. Just as ancient Egyptian culture has been sustained by the Nile river, Mesopotamia (Syria) by Tigris-Euphrates and China's ancient culture by Huangho-Yangtze, similarly the rich Indian culture emerged from the Ganges along with Indus and Saraswati. Indian culture derives its basics from sacrifice, austerity, knowledge, work, perseverance, yajña and charity, etc. Holy Gaṅgā has been continuously imbibing these elements in culture of India since time immemorial. Since the beginning of the creation, *Gaṅgā* has been providing the boon of its medicated nectar water to the land of India. Man considers himself blessed and fortunate just by seeing, touching, bathing, drinking and chanting in the water of the Ganges. In Sanskrit literature many poems are composed taking the concern of pollution of the rivers in India out of which the epic “*Rakṣata Gaṅgām*” is significant and dedicated to the holy river *Gaṅgā*. This epic was composed by *Kamalā Pāṇḍeya* and translated into English by *Anurādhā Banerje*. It consists of 11 cantos. The concern of environmental pollution has been depicted in its 10th canto followed by its prevention in the next canto. Through this epic, the poetess tries to awaken the motherly feelings of the people towards the holy *Gaṅgā*.

Keywords: Rakṣata Gaṅgām, Protection of Gaṅgā, environment, water pollution.

Introduction:

The word “environment” is taken from French terms “*virer*” meaning “to turn” or “*in/viron*” meaning to “encircle”. In simple words, environment can be explained as the natural world in which plants, animals and people live. The environment describes the interaction between organisms including human beings and their natural surroundings. Hence environment is the surrounding in which living beings and non living beings live, grow, interact and perish.

Environment is the basic life support system of the universe. Prosperous environment ensures a prosperous and healthy surroundings. All the elements, variable, or constant, living or non living and whole of our environment, are the gifts of our mother earth to us.

Many western scholars have given different definitions of the environment. Some of those are given here- In the words of *CC Park*: “*Environment refers to the sum total of all conditions which surround man at a given point in space and time*”.

According to *Douglas and Holland*- “*The term environment is used to describe, in the aggregate, all the external forces, influences and conditions, which affect the life, nature, behavior and the growth, development and maturity of living organisms*’. Generally, our surroundings are called environment.”

According to *R.M. MacIver*, “*The earth’s surface and all its natural conditions natural resources, land, water, mountains, plains, minerals, plants, animals etc. and they are natural resources. The forces that affect human life by being present on the earth, the environment comes under.*”

According to *Boring* – “*A person’s environment consists of the sum total of the stimulation which he receives from his conception until his death. Indicating that environment comprises various types of forces such as physical, intellectual, mental, economical, political, cultural, social, moral and emotional.*”

According to the *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1952)*- “*Environment may be defined as all external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of organisms.*”

As we know that environment is an integral part of our rich Sanskrit literature. We get the very first information about our environment in the Vedas itself. Rivers, trees, earth, water, fire etc. are depicted as deities there.

Paryāvaraṇkāvyam defined the environment like this:

*“pṛthivīm parito vyāpya tāmācchādyā sthitam ca yat
jagadādhārarūpeṇa paryāvaraṇamucyate”¹*

About one third of our earth’s surface is covered with water out of which the freshwater is as less as 3 percent. Also, most of these freshwater rivers are inaccessible to human and this freshwater is locked up in polar ice caps or stored too

far underneath the earth's surface to be extracted. Moreover, much of the freshwater that is accessible has become highly polluted.

There are many rivers in India giving freshwater and serving as a lifeline to millions of Indians. Among all the rivers The **Ganges** is the most sacred one. Various poetries have been composed in its devotion.

This leaves us with less than 0.4 percent of the earth's water found in rivers, lakes etc. which is usable and drinkable and to be shared among the large number of inhabitants of the whole world.

There are a number of texts devoted to mother **Gaṅgā** in the modern Sanskrit literature. Some of them are—

Gaṅgāśatakam written by **Maheśacandra Tarkacūḍāmaṇi**, **Gaṅgālaharī** written by **Bābū Revārāma**, **Ṭyūṣalaharī** (on the imitation of **Gaṅgālaharī**) written by **Cirañjīva Lāla**, **Gaṅgāṣṭakam** written by **Ravirāja Ajita Siṃha**, **Gaṅgāṣṭapadī** written by **Nityānanda Śāstri**, **Gaṅgāstotram** written by **Rāmcandra Vidyārthi**, **Gaṅgāsagarīyam** written by **Vishṇudatta Śukla**, **Gaṅgāmāhātmya** written by **Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Pt. Guruprasāda**, **Śrī Gaṅgādandakam** written by **Dr. Kamalā Pāṇḍeya**, **Bhāgirathidarśanam** written by **Goswāmi Balabhadra Prasād Śāstri**, **Gaṅgātaraṅgiṇī** written by **Manatīṭṭha Kuñju Nambūdarī Śāstri Śarmā**, **Bhāgirathicampu** written by **Acyuta Śarmā**, **Gaṅgāguṇādarśacampu** written by **Dattātraya Vāsudeva Nigudakara**, **Gaṅgāvatarāṇacampu** written by **Śankar Dikṣita**, **Gaṅgāsurataraṅgiṇī** written by **Viśveśwara Vidyābhuṣanam** etc.

Short introduction of epic:-

Rakṣata Gaṅgām is one of the epic devoted to mother **Gaṅgā**. This is an epic of 11 cantos. Its first canto is named as '**Paurāṇīkamataṁ**', which contains 102 verses. The second canto, entitled '**Ādhunikamataṁ**', contains 30 verses. The third canto, entitled '**Himālaya-Devaprayāgavarṇanam**', contains 74 verses. The fourth canto, entitled '**Ṛṣikeśa - Karṇapuravarṇanam**', contains 40 verses. The fifth canto '**Tīrtharājaprayāga- Vindhyavarṇanam**' has 46 verses. The sixth canto '**Kāśī (Varanasi) Varṇanam**' has 139 verses. The seventh canto, '**Bihār-Pradeśa-varṇanam**', contains 70 verses. The eighth canto, '**Baṅgabhū-Gaṅgāsāgara-varṇanam**', contains 92 verses. The ninth canto, '**Ādhyātma-varṇanam**', contains 35 verses. The tenth canto, '**Pradūsaṇavarṇanam**', has 40 verses. The eleventh canto, '**Nivāraṇavarṇanam**', contains 30 verses. "**Rakṣat Gaṅgām**" is an important epic to create awareness about the environment.

The tenth and eleventh cantos of "**Rakṣata Gaṅgām**" describe the pollution of the Ganges and its prevention respectively. It also consists of a map which outlines the positions of the rivers in the Himalayan region. The Hindi translation of this epic was published in the year 1999 along with its English translation written by **Dr. Anuradha Banerjee**. The publisher of this book is—**Shreemata Publications Hanumānghāt, Varanasi**.

About the composer of epic:

Dr. Kamalā Pāṇḍeya was born on 28 March, 1950 in the holy land of Kūrmāṇcala in Nainitāla district of Uttarākhaṇḍa. Her ancestors originally resided in village Patiala of Almoḍā district.

As mentioned in the '**Maṅglācaraṇam**' of her epic "**Rakṣata Gaṅgām**" her parents are late Shri **Nilāmbara**

Datta Pāṇḍeya and Smt. **Pañcānanī Devī Pāṇḍeya**.
“**pāṣāṇamaṅkurīkrtya siñcanāṁ snehadhārāyā**
vatsalāṁ janānāṁ vande pañcānanāṁ saṁjñitāṁ
ambarādāśīṣaṁ jyotīrvikīrantāṁ divī sthitāṁ
nīlāmbaraṁ swapītaṁ praṇamāmi punah punah”²

That is, again I bow gratefully to my beloved mother Smt. **Pañcānanī Devī**, who nourished the roots of my creative leaning with her immense love and patience and today the sapling is eager to blossom in its own limited capacity. My salutations are to my father **Nilāmbara Datta Pāṇḍeya**, the rays of whose blessings are bestowed upon me from his heavenly abode.

Heading-

At present, to save the water from getting polluted, the 'Prevention and Control of Water Pollution' Act 1974, Cess Act-1977, Cess Rules 1978 have been made. Efforts are being made at the national and international level to solve the problem of water pollution.

The problem of water pollution in India has taken a serious space in the last few decades. Especially in the big cities and industrial places this condition is even worse.

One of the many reasons for water getting polluted is the improper use of it by humans and some of his unnatural acts.

Water pollution has reached an alarming state due to the excess of industrial areas to meet the requirement of essential items with the increasing population.

Also, along with human activities in daily life, there is a possibility of water getting polluted in one way or the other. In this way, the filth caused by the daily activities of human beings, the waste materials released from the factories,

chemicals used in agriculture, insecticides, dumping of dead bodies in the rivers, radioactive substances and many other disinfectants are the reason for the pollution of water. The major pollutants of water are fluoride, lead, mercury, phenol, sodium, zinc, nitrate and pathogenic bacteria.

Side effects of water pollution: Water pollution has a great impact on human health. Diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, cold, breathing related diseases, paralysis, cholera, cataract, skin diseases, blindness, abdominal diseases etc. arise from the consumption of polluted water. Apart from human beings it also harms aquatic organisms. At present, most of the outbreaks are due to excessive amount of fluoride in drinking water.

Water pollution as described in Rakṣata Gaṅgām:

Today our entire environment has become unbalanced due to the deepening crisis on Mother Gaṅgā. It is the source of energy which crowns India as 'Jagadguru'. Mother Gaṅgā, the fundamental nurturer of the environment, is included in the education system from beginning till research, has covered a long journey. The excellent water of the Ganges is famous in all the **Trilokā** for its wonderful qualities. Normal water washes away the excreta of the body, but the water of the Ganges, with its rare medicinal properties, cures all the diseases of the body. Many scientific experiments have also proved the life-giving power of the water of Ganges. It was descended by the grace of **Tridevas** as a result of **Bhagiratha's** harsh penance, but is being polluted today by the greedy people. They are unaware of the fact that they are going towards their own destruction. As mentioned in the epic-

*“bhārate sarvasaubhāgyasamvardhakam
suprasiddham triloke guṇairadbhutaih
jivanādhārarūpam manastriptidam
rājate gāṅgavāri prakṛṣṭam param
gomukhannirgataṁ nirmalaṁ pāwanam,
pāpam tāpam śokasamhārakam
puṣṭidam tuṣṭidam bhuktidam muktidam,
rājate gāṅgavāri prakṛṣṭam param”³*

The entire **2525 km** long waterway of **Gaṅgā** from **Gaṅgotrī** to **Gaṅgāsāgara** has become highly polluted in the present times. The water through which the pious devotees of **Gaṅgā** used to attain salvation, the same water has become mixed with soap scum and saliva.

Gaṅgā is the 'lifeline' of North India, with the help of which not only many animals thrive, but it is also the main source of drinking water for crores of people living in the **Gaṅgā** basin. Intensive agriculture and many industries in the entire valley are also based on the water of the Ganges. Despite the contribution of **Gaṅgā**, today greedy people are pouring life threatening strong chemicals into it. This is the question of great concern for all of us. As mentioned by poetess:

*“kāya-vān-mānasānām maladhvaṁsinīm
sphūrtimūrjasvitā-dāyinīmadbhutām.
yojayantyarthalubdhāh katham sāmpratam
prāṇasamhārakairugrapūtīdravaih”⁴*

The Ganges has not become impure by purifying the selfish, but it has been polluted by the polluted substances thrown by the selfish.

Gaṅgā, which cleanses the whole world with its holy water, is very holy in itself, but man has polluted it with his selfish deeds. Not only from the religious point of view, modern scientific discoveries have shown that the water of **Gaṅgā** has a certain ability to digest pollution and destroy harmful bacteria. Thus **Gaṅgā** is not only religious, spiritual and cultural but also life-saving from the physical point of view. It is an amazing river but has its limits too. Touched by the poison of the materialistic way of life the resourceful **Gaṅgā** seems to assail the fake urban life.

*“bhautiki-sampadāpadviṣavyakulā
dūṣaṇagrāhaparyākulā jarjarā
vikṣya hā nāgarisabhyatām kṛtrimām
trāsayanī bhīṣam duhkhītā cintitā”⁵*

At present many canals have been taken out for irrigating the fields from the sacred uninterrupted stream which used to flow with great speed from the Himalayas to the **Gaṅgāsāgara**. Also for many amenities, it has been fragmented. In this way, on one hand it has been made weak by making it slow and on the other hand its wonderful qualities are being

destroyed by adding many pollutants like garbage and chemicals. Oh human! How will it survive in this *Kalayuga* till eternity carrying the dead body of civilization. As mentioned in the epic-

*“ekatah kṣṇakāyābhavad mantharā
bhaṅgurā doṣajātairasāvanyatah
hā katham jīvītā syādidānīm kalau
sabhyatāyāh śavaṁ saṁvahanti ciraṁ”⁶*

The problem of the pollution of *Gaṅgā* is not only in the hilly areas but is even worse in the plains. In this materialistic era, man is exploiting the priceless treasure of nature, mother *Gaṅgā* and the places of pilgrimage situated on its banks, which used to be the centres of knowledge, spirituality, religion and meditation. They have become the centres of pollution. The pollution in the Ganges starts with its entry into *Rṣikeśa*. Thousands of devotees and tourists come to this divine pilgrimage site every day, due to which hundreds of tons of garbage, dirt from people's bath, washing clothes and excreta etc. are released daily in *Rṣikeśa*. Due to lack of proper management, pollutants are directly disposed off into the Ganges.

About 37 percent of India's population lives on the banks of the Ganges. All of them are responsible for the pollution of *Gaṅgā* in one way or the other. Most of the pollution of *Gaṅgā* is caused by industrial waste, domestic waste, garbage and excreta from the cities and towns located on its banks, and dead bodies dumped into it. As said by poetess:

*“swaṁ samuddharatumasāyāṁ samāyānti yāh
prāg malānāṁ praṇālyotitanvyah kvacit
vardhamānāḥ prakāmaṁ nadāḥ bhīṣaṇā
swardhunīm bhāvayantah sadā saṅgatāḥ”⁷*

The pollution of Ganges in Kanpur is gruesome due to leather industries. By the washing of leather and mixing of chemicals the nectar-rich *Gaṅgā* is being destroyed and filled with heaps of pollution.

*“ekataścarmaṇah kṣālanenāhatā
bhraṁśītā cāpi rāsāyanairanyatah
hanyate prāṇarūpāmbudehāmṛtā
dūṣaṇānaṁ nikāyāirbhṛśaṁ pūrītā”⁸*

The condition of *Gaṅgā* is also alarming in Allahabad and Mirzapur. At present *Bābā Viśwanātha's* beloved "*Muktidatrī Gaṅgā*", who used to recite *Tāraka* mantra to the first creature of this creation and used to be happy when she came to *Kāshi*, is always sad and worried due to being surrounded by dead bodies. Varanasi, which was earlier the centre of self-knowledge, now seems to be devoid of consciousness.

The state of Bihar, which used to be green with agricultural wealth, is currently full of factories and is polluting the Ganges. The development and pollution of Kolkata, the capital city of Bengal, have become complementary to each other. As mentioned in the epic:

*“komalāṁ gāṅgadhārāmidānīm nanu
trāsayanī daridrīyate bhuyaśah
pūrayantī sadā sarvarāsāyanair-
baṅgabhūmirmalānāṁ nikāyasthātī”⁹*

New tests of nuclear energy are being done by the scientists at the international level, indicating the progress of science, but when the entire creation will burn like moths in the heat of the fierce flames generated by their explosion, then whose progress will be done by the man aspiring to become omnipotent. The entire mental illness of human beings is reflected in their actions. That's why the external nature and environment are also seen to be suffering from pollution along with mother *Gaṅgā* which is on the verge of getting destroyed. Not only the rivers, but the greedy man hasn't left the oceans as well. They have to bear the maximum burden of pollution generated by wastes emitted by industries, vehicles, ships and satellites from all sides.

*“kṣiptairaudyogikairdravyaiḥ pārāvārah pradūṣitah
yānairupagrahaiḥ potaiḥ prakṣepāstraiḥ parīkṣaṇaiḥ”¹⁰*

In ancient times, Gods and demons together used the ocean only once for the benefit of the world, but at present all the countries are exploiting the ocean daily for their own benefit without taking measures for its safety and protection.

*“samudramanthanaṁ pūrvam vāramekaṁ suṣasurairh
samudramanthanaṁ nityam kriyate swārthahetave”¹¹*

The grief of *Maharṣi vālmīki* after seeing ‘*kroñca* bird’¹² is similar to the grief of *Kamalā Pāndeya* seeing *Mā Gaṅgā* being polluted -

*“amṛtāmbumayīm gaṅgām darśam darśam pradūṣitām
marmāntavedanobhūtaḥ śokah ślokatvamāgataḥ”¹³*

‘*Rakṣata Gaṅgām*’ has emphasized the value of cleanliness and purity. *Gaṅgā* is the priceless treasure of India. Due to our consumerist culture, we are continuously destroying our wealth today. *Gaṅgā* is not just an ordinary water stream, but a conductor of Indian unity and integrity, a stream of civilization and culture. India’s civilization and culture flourished on its banks, but in today’s polluted environment, the biggest problem is water pollution, which has become a threat to human existence. The poetess has said that conservation of the *Gaṅgā* is necessary to maintain the faith of the people of India in the *Gaṅgā*, which represents the precious water element. That’s why raising voice to make *Gaṅgā* pollution free is the demand of today’s literature.

The poetess says that fourteen things should not be done on the banks of the Ganges – defecation, rinse, combing hair, throwing excreta, getting rid of dirt, rubbing the body, laughing, taking donations, physical relations, attachment to another pilgrimage, glorification of another pilgrimage, washing clothes, splashing water and swimming. This is also the statement of *purāṇa* that the poetess includes in bibliography of *Rakṣata Gaṅgām*-

*“gaṅgām puṇyajalām prapya caturdaśa vivarjayet
śaucamacamanam keśam nirmālyamaghamarṣaṇam
gātrasaṁvāhanam krīdā pratigrahamatho ratim
anyatīrtharatim caiva anyatīrthaprasaṁsanam
vastratyāgamathāghātam santāram ca viśeṣataḥ”¹⁴*

The poetess explains the above shloka in her epic as-

*“atha caturdaśa pāpamapāwanam
tripathagā-śucirodhasi varjyatām
smarata padmapurāṇavacāṁsi bho!
vimalavārimayī kriyatām punah”¹⁵*

*“satata-dūṣaṇakārirasāyanam
vividhakutsītatailanidāhanam
api ca ‘sinthīṭike’ tyabhisamjñitām
ripudalam prakṛtervinivāryatam”¹⁶*

i.e. pollutants born out of carbonic elements must not be released into the *Gaṅgā*. The flow of dirty water into the *Devanadī* ought to be stopped. Recycling of waste matter has to be introduced by the expert engineers and technocrats.

*“ahaha! Kartita-gulma-latā-tarūh
pratidinam kriyatedya himālayah
vanavinaṣṭiraho! avarudhyatām
sukhasamṛddhiharī vipadāspadam”¹⁷*

The Himalayas are the origin of many medicines, herbs and trees, from where nectar flows in the waters of goddess like rivers. The stream of the Ganges flows mixed with minerals, sulphur, metals and life-giving chemicals produced in the Himalayas. That’s why learned people have addressed it as “*Amṛtadhārā*”.

*“himagiriḥ prabhavo bahubhāswatām
api mahauśadhimūla-mahīruham
yadamṛtatvamanuttamamāśṛjat*

*surasaritpayasāmatidurlabham
khanija-gandhaka-dhātu-rasāyanair
himagiriprabhavaśca sumiśritaih
sakalapoṣakatattvamayī hyasā-
vamṛtadharāyutābhimatā budhaiḥ*"¹⁸

The water of the Ganges does not get spoiled even after days when being kept in a clean vessel. It remains unique and pure like nectar.

*"api supātragataṁ bahukālikam
vikṛtimabhyugacchati na kwacit
anupamaṁ dhavalam vimalam jalam
tadamṛtaṁ vibhudhairabhimanyante*"¹⁹

Efforts should be made to save the Ganges from pollution today. The spiritual values are being highlighted in **Rakṣat Gaṅgām** by the poetess's boundless devotion towards the Ganges. Along with this, there is an expression of values like cleanliness and purity, emotional unity and social welfare.

Dr. Kamla Pandey who has depicted new era's life in **Rakṣat Gaṅgām**, said that in today's era, highly polluted environment is not only a matter of concern for human civilization, but it is a curse for all living beings.

Unfortunately, when India has been under foreign invaders for a long time, a process of mixing sewage and other polluted substances in this holy river has started. Moreover, it is increasing gradually. If Ganges is not saved from pollution by being conscious now, then not only India, but whole of the humanity will be destroyed. That's why the emotions of the kind hearted poetess on the crisis of **Gaṅgā** has flowed in the form of **Rakṣat Gaṅgām** epic.

The poetess is in pain that the pure water which all living beings always drink, without which life is not sustainable, the same water has become polluted today. It can no longer be drunk happily, nor can it be given up because it is necessary for life. The water which used to be the carrier of life, the destroyer of diseases and was white like the stream of nectar, has now become foul, smelling with mud.

*"yatsadā pīyate prāṇibhirnirmalam
yadvina jīvanam dhāryate vā katham?
dūṣitam tajjalam śakyate sāmpratam
naiva pātum mudā naiva hātum sadā
satsudhādhāravacchubhramāsit purā
prāṇasañcārakañcāyamayadhwaṁsakam
paṅkilaṁ hanta! Jātaṁ tadevādhunā
pīyatām vā katham hīyatām vā katham*"²⁰

The water of the **Gaṅgā**, by which the devotees used to attain heaven, has today been mixed with soap, scum and saliva.

*"divyaloko yadācamya modānvitaih
prāpyate gāṇbhāktaih pavitraścīram
phenilaih taddhi niṣṭhīvanairmiśritam
pīyatām vā katham hīyatām vā katham*"²¹

The Ganges is worthy of worship with auspicious words, praises, fragrance, **akṣata**, garland of flowers and beautiful lamps, but the people who bathe on the banks are disrespecting it by spitting.

*"stūyate yā stavaiḥ sūktibhirmaṅgalair-
rarcyate gandhamālyaiḥ pradīpaiḥ śubhaiḥ
tām taṭeṣwāgatāḥ snānapānārthino
hanta! thutkarayantastiraskurvate*"²²

Today, heavily polluted drains with urine, excreta and garbage are being mixed with the beautiful falls and clean rivers. Why people greedy for money are pouring today harmful chemicals into the Gaṅgā that destroy life? As mentioned in the epic:

*"saṅgatā yatra nadyah prapātāḥ purā
sīkaraiḥ saṁyutāḥ swacchatoyāḥ śubhāḥ*

*mūtra-viṣṭhā-malānām praṇālyah sadā
sammilantīha hā! tatra rogapradāh*"²³

In today's life, plastic is being used a lot. It increases pollution as plastic don't degrade for centuries. Today man is using synthetic material in abundance in his daily life and is inviting self-destruction.

*"jivane grhyamāṇādhunā bhūyaśah
plāṣṭiketi prasiddhā navā nirmītiḥ
dūṣaṇotpadikā yāvasāne layam
no samīyāt prthivyām śatābdīmapi
yacca 'sintheṭike'ti samākhyāyate
nūtanāviṣkṛtaḥ tailarupośuchih
ātmanāśāya kurvanti hā! mānavāḥ
tasya dainandinaḥ kuprayogaḥ haṭhāt*"²⁴

The waste of the factories is being thrown into the Ganges at an increasing rate. The oxygen present in the water is being consumed by this toxic liquid. That's why it has become impossible for the animals living in the water to survive.

*"prāṇvāyurnadīnām praṇaṣṭokhilo
hā! viṣākena gandhena sammiśritah
jīvajātā jaliyāḥ katham jīvitāḥ
syuh katham mānavāḥ swasthatāmāpnuyuh*"²⁵

Due to the rapid cutting of forests on the mountains, the snow is rapidly disappearing. It always causes landslides, which are very dangerous and cause many natural calamities.

*"parvatīyeṇcale vayanāśena hā!
naśyate śubhrakāntirhimānī bhṛśam
tena cotpādyate bhūkṣaraḥ nityaśah
sarvathāpatkaraḥ ghātakaḥ durbhagam*"²⁶

Scientists are doing new tests of nuclear energy at the world level, indicating the progress of science. But when the whole world will be destroyed like a burning kite in the heat generated by the fierce flames of their explosion, then whom can a man aspiring to become powerful be able to progress with that suicidal power? That means, no one's progress will be possible. The ill mentality of human beings is being reflected in their actions, which is making their life disorderly. That's why the external nature and the environment are also seen to be suffering from pollution and the rare radiant parts of the **Gaṅgā** are also getting destroyed-

*"vijñānonnati-sūcakaḥ nava-navaḥ yannābhikīyorjasah
viśvasmīn kriyate parīkṣaṇamidaḥ vajñānikairyanmuhuh
visphoṭe tadasahyadāvadahan loka pataṅgāyite
jāte sarga-nisarga-viplavabhare kasyonnatiḥ kāmyate
sarvaḥ mānasikaḥ hi kalmaṣamidaḥ vyaktaḥ nṛṇām bhoginām
kṛtyeṣu pratibimbitaḥ vikurute yajjivanaḥ prāṇinām
teneyam prakṛtiḥ pradūṣaṇacayaḥ trastā darīdṛśyate
gaṅgāyāḥ kamaniya-kāntibharitānyaṅgāni śirṇāni hā*"²⁷

Today we definitely call **Gaṅgā** as mother, but our behaviour is not like that of a child. Even today the poorest of the poor man comes to visit **Gaṅgā** by spending his money, but no one can see the crying and suffering of **Mā Gaṅgā**. The crying of the Ganges remains unheard. Our address to the Ganges as Mā is not real. **Har Har Gaṅge!** this very tone is pretentious and lifeless.

Today we have considered **Gaṅgā** as a means of fulfilling our greed and not our mother; just a materialistic item of enjoyment! Considering the mother as a dustbin, we are putting our excreta, urine, garbage, poison and everything in the mother's womb. For our greed, we are not even missing out on imprisoning our mother. We are tying up its speed. Settlements are being done on mother's chest. For our greed, we are determined to destroy the '**Gaṅgātva**' of Mother **Gaṅgā**. We have forgotten that a child has only as much right to take from the mother as an infant has to suck milk from the mother's breast for its need. A child's relationship with the mother is of care, affection, hospitality and sensitive

behaviour and not of business. We remember the fairs of **Gaṅgā-Milan**; bathing and lamp donation, but we have forgotten the basic purpose of these events and our interrelationship with the Ganges.

The poetess has marked the pollution of the Ganges on a very wide spectrum – “The Ganges pollution is a crisis of civilization, there is a need of public awareness on this issue to overcome this great crisis because protection of **Gaṅgā** is protection of India. Life and the world can be saved by protecting the **Gaṅgā**. **Gaṅgā-Rakṣā** is the hymn of Vishnu who gives heaven and salvation. Also the protection of **Gaṅgā** is the essence of the world.

*“gangārakṣaṇameva bhāratabuhvah saṁrakṣaṇaṁ śāśvataṁ
gangārakṣaṇameva jīvajagato saṁjivanaṁ sundaram
gangārakṣaṇameva viṣṇujananaṁ swargāpavargapradam
gangārakṣaṇameva durlabhatamaṁ saṁsārasārāyitam”²⁸*

Gaṅgā with holy water is the representative of all rivers. That's why everyone should make efforts and measures together in such a way that by being pollution free, it should serve our **Bhāratvarṣa** and be always beautiful.

*“dharmasyeyamamoghabhūtiradhunā bhasmāsuraīrmṛśyatām
mūkāndho badhiro bhaved viśamidaṁ pīṭva hi vaṁkramah
gaṅgām jīvanadāyiniṁ kathamime bhokṣyavādaīrhatā
bhogāsaktimayā narāḥ pratidinaṁ nūnaṁ tīraskriyate
śaktistoyamayi divovataritā sakṣātparā devatā sāmānyā
jalavāhinī saridīyam naiv prakalpyā kwacit
kalyāṇāya sukalpītām tribhuvane pūjyām budhairvanditām
sevantām swasukhāya kalpalatikām gaṅgām jaganmātaram
prāṇidhyam nadīnām sā kurute toyarupiṇī
nirmalāyāmatastasyām sarvāsām swacchatā bhavet
sarvāsāmāpagūnām pranidhīratulā puṇyatoyā viśālā
swacchibhūyāmṛtāgaṅgā punarapi rucirāpetadoṣa pavitrā
sevyā syajjīvajātairvimalajalamayī bhukti-mukti-pradātṛ
gaṅgākūle dukūlāyitasitalaharī bhāsātād bhārate nah”²⁹*

i.e. those Bhasmāsura who are driven toward self-destruction should ponder over the great laws of nature. By drinking the polluted and poisonous water their own successors will become crippled and deformed. People immersed in materialism are misusing **Gaṅgā**. This Devi **Gaṅgā** is a celestial power in aquatic form who descends from **Swarga** (heaven). She should never be deemed as an ordinary river. She is the one who has been worshipped by great sages. People should serve her in their own interest and for their own well being. **Gaṅgā** with Her holy water is the representative of every river. Let **Gaṅgā** who is Herself being served and worshipped by creatures, grant liberation to us. May she move with Her pure white waves and embellish **Bhārata** eternally.

There is a need to be determined for the purity of the environment and everyone should take the responsibility for the pollution of **Gaṅgā** and environmental pollution. And give up their ill mentality of polluting **Mā Gaṅgā**. The poetess says - “let us join hands at every level of our existence and enkindle the highest point of intellectual revolution, which shall enable us, O Mother, to protect and preserve you from mindless torture of human society!

*“ityeṣā navajāgrtīḥ samuditā bhūyat samāje punah
krānti syāt pariveśasodhanaparā vaicārikī pūrṇataḥ
amba! twāmamalām vidhātumadhunā saṅkalpanīyam dhruvam
twaṭputrāḥ kumatīṁ pradūṣanakarīm dūre kṣipantu drutam”³⁰*

References

1. Shukla Ashok Kumar, Paryāvaraṇakāvyam, Parimal Publication, New Delhi, 2004, pūrvapīṭhikā, p. 12
2. Pandey Kamala, Rakṣata Gaṅgām, Shreemata publication, Varanasi, 1999 p. 02
3. Ibid, p. 201
4. Ibid, p. 204
5. Ibid, p. 205
6. Ibid, p. 207-208
7. Ibid, p. 209
8. Ibid, p. 210

9. Ibid, p. 211
10. Shukla Ashok Kumar, Paryāvaraṇakāvyam, Parimal Publication New Delhi, 2004, p. 67
11. Ibid, p. 68
12. mā niṣada pratiṣṭhām twamagamah śāśwatī samāh yatkroñcamithunādekamavadhīhkāmamohitam- vālmīkirāmāy
aṇam, bālakāṇḍā, śloka- 02
13. Pandey Kamala, Rakṣata Gaṅgām, Shreemata publication, Varanasi, 1999, p. 01
14. Ibid, p. 250
15. Ibid, p. 216
16. Ibid, p. 218
17. Ibid, p. 219
18. Ibid, p. 219
19. Ibid, p. 219
20. Ibid, p. 202
21. Ibid, p. 203
22. Ibid, p. 203
23. Ibid, p. 204
24. Ibid, p. 204
25. Ibid, p. 205
26. Ibid, p. 206
27. Ibid, p. 213
28. Ibid, p. 05
29. Ibid, p. 222-223
30. Ibid, p. 05