

Bhagirath Prayaas Samman

Background

Rivers in India are impacted by increasing abstraction and diversion of water for consumptive uses, unsustainable water use (surface and ground), increasing water footprint of (cities, industries and agriculture) leading to pollution and degradation in aquatic biodiversity. India has 14 major rivers [>20,000 sq.km.], 42 medium rivers [2,000 – 20,000 sq.km.] and 55 minor rivers [<2,000 sq.km.] besides many other streams, perennial, seasonal and ephemeral.



Photo credit: Emmanuel Theophilus

A consortium of NGOs including INTACH, SANDRP, Toxics Link, PEACE Institute Charitable Trust and WWF-India initiated a platform titled 'India Rivers Week' in 2014, with an objective to deliberate and discuss

threats to rivers in India and draw up a plan of action to address them through policy and practical action. IRW is designed as an annual get-together of individuals, organisations and communities who have worked on river rejuvenation in different parts of the country. India Rivers Week is the only National level platform in India which focuses on the issue of Rivers. The platform also aims to recognise local movements and initiatives which have made remarkable on ground impact.

The first ever India Rivers Week, held in November 2014 brought together over 150 river experts, planners, researchers, artists, enthusiasts and activists from different parts of the country to discuss, deliberate and exchange their experiences and ideas aimed at the rejuvenation of rivers in the country. The closing ceremony witnessed the submission of Delhi Declaration on Rivers to the Minister of Water Resources & Ganga Rejuvenation, which captured the group's recommendations on rejuvenating rivers in India.

This year India Rivers Week will be held from November 28th to 30th 2016.

India Rivers Week- The first ever conclave



Bhagirath Prayaas Samman

Bhagirath Prayaas Samman was constituted in 2014 as an award to recognize efforts and initiatives for river conservation, in the first India Rivers Week jointly organized by Peace Institute, INTACH, Toxics Link SANDRP and WWF-India. In India, numerous awards are given for excellent initiatives around water conservation, but none on rivers. Also, often awards look at quantifiable impacts (in terms of physical or ecological improvement) on the water systems. Processes are not recognised. In an attempt to address this, Bhagirath Prayaas Samman is positioned as the first ever recognition/award on initiatives on river conservation in India which will recognise efforts/prayaas/initiatives (campaigns, advocacy, legal discourse) to conserve rivers. In this regard, Bhagirath Prayaas Samman aims

- To recognise outstanding, sustained efforts/contributions (prayaas/ tapasya) of river warriors/champions towards protection and conservation of rivers
- To identify and recognise grassroots initiatives around rivers which are lesser known and inspirational

2014 Awardees so far



Dr Latha Anantha



Shri Akhil Gogoi



Koel Karo Jan Sansthan

2015



Sambhaav Trust



Shri Sachidanand Bharati



Emmanuel Theophilus



Sav Mon Region Federation



Categories of awardees (2014 & 2015)	Thematic category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Activists • Researchers • Professionals • Organisations • Media • NGOs • Community Based Organisations • Government • Others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Campaigns, advocacy and legal discourse: Saving a river/river stretch from degradation or to mitigate a potential threat to the river or to initiate positive action through innovative campaigns, advocacy and proactive legal discourse 2. Collective Stakeholder action: Addressing threats through better management leading to rejuvenation of rivers/river stretches. This will recognize grassroots action (implementation) related to implementing innovative approaches to rejuvenation of rivers
Total number of awards	2 (1 individual; 1 organisation)

Bhagirath Prayaas Samman Call for Nominations 2016

Categories

Category 1: Policy influencers [Campaigns, advocacy and legal discourse Saving a river/river stretch from degradation or to mitigate a potential threat to the river or to initiate positive action through innovative campaigns, advocacy and proactive legal discourse]

Category 2: Practical action [Collective Stakeholder action: addressing threats through better management leading to rejuvenation of rivers/river stretches. This will recognize grassroots action (implementation) related to implementing innovative approaches to rejuvenation of rivers]

Total number of awards: 3 (not more than two from one category). This could be all institutions; all individuals or a combination of individuals and organisations

Selection Criteria

- Nominator is expected to have a sound understanding/knowledge about the initiative/individual nominated.
- Self nominations are not eligible: Nominator cannot be a relative or supervisor/superior/colleague of the nominee.
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- Individuals and organizations who have received honours and awards for their work and needing no further recognition from BPS and posthumous nominations will not be considered.
- Samman will be a motivation for continuing and future work and not merely a recognition of past work. Initiatives less than three years will not be considered.

- Samman will account the nature, length and persistence of the effort, the results achieved, the impact on society, etc. Samman will be given for

- Significance of Issue addressed and the process adopted
- Field Action leading to results on the ground, policy
- Stakeholder perceptions (during field trip by Jury)
- Inspirational value (for eg; working with limited resources, working against all odds), sustainability (durability of the initiative beyond project life span) & replicability
- Unsung initiatives

Selection Procedure

Stage 1:	Nominations
Stage 2:	Review by the Organizing Committee July 2016
Stage 3:	First Jury Meeting August 2016
Stage 4:	Final Jury meeting September 2016
Stage 5:	Award Ceremony

Jury

- Shri Anupam Mishra, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Chairman
- Mr. Samar Singh, Vice Chairman
- Dr. Amita Bhaviskar, IEG
- Mr. Ravi Singh, WWF- India
- Dr. Latha Anantha, RRC
- Dr. S. Janakarajan , Professorial Consultant, MIDS, Chennai
- Mr. Himanshu Thakkar , SANDRP on behalf of the Organising Committee

Closing Date: 15th July, 2016

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