

Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone

July 20, 2020

The Zonal Master Plan(ZMP) of Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone, prepared by the Government of Uttarakhand and appraised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, has been accorded approval by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change(MoEF&CC)

Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone

Bhagirathi is a river that is rich in aquatic flora and fauna including migratory species. However, as a result of **hydro power projects** being proposed or commissioned on the river and also continuous and phenomenal increase in human and cattle population; the **anthropogenic pressure** on ecosystems and environment has tremendously increased, which is causing **irreparable damage to the fragile mountain ecosystems** including flow and character of the river.

Hence, the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification from **Gaumukh to Uttarkashi covering an area of 4179.59 sq.kilometer** was issued by the MoEF&CC in 2012, keeping in view the requirements of the local people without affecting their rights and privileges and also ensuring eco-friendly development for their livelihood security. The notification was subsequently amended in 2018 in consultation with the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways; Government of Uttarakhand and Indian Road Congress.

The Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification mandated the State Government of Uttarakhand to prepare ZMP to be implemented under the supervision of the monitoring committee. The ZMP is based on **watershed approach and includes governance in the area of forest and wildlife, watershed management, irrigation, energy, tourism, public health and sanitation, road infrastructure**, etc. The approval of ZMP will give a boost to conservation and ecology of the area and also to

undertake developmental activities as permitted under ZMP.

The **tributaries of Bhagirathi** in the eco-sensitive zone are the following:

Kedar Ganga at Gangotri

Jadh Ganga at Bhaironghati

Kakora gad & Jalandharigad at Harsil

Siyar Gad near Jhala

Asi Ganga near Uttarkashi

The Bhagirathi sometimes called Jahnvi or Devnadi is the **largest tributary river of the Ganges (Ganga) in northern India**. It is perennial in nature as it **receives all the three types of water inputs i.e., snowmelt runoff, rainfall runoff and groundwater**. The river Bhagirathi has formed a **deep constricted V-shaped valley and indicates a youthful geomorphological stage** of the region. Generally, the tributary streams are at a higher elevation (about 40–100 m) than the main river (Bhagirathi). The Bhagirathi flows transverse to the structural axis of the Himalayas. It is fed mainly by small subsequent streams.