
LIVING TRADITIONS ALONG THE RIVER PANDU IN RURAL UTTAR PRADESH

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Abstract: River Ganges or Maa Ganga is the soul and spirit of Indian traditions. Many of the living cultures of India evolve through the river and its several tributaries and sub-rivers which flow along these terrains and continue to retain the traditions through several centuries. One among these tributaries of river Ganga is river Pandav. Like the famous cities which grew along the rivers *per se* Agra, Delhi, Lucknow etc. which narrate the histories and alive rituals of India. River Pandav is also one such river in the district of Kanpur which flows along its many rural areas and exclusively narrates on its banks the evolving cultures of the rural Uttar Pradesh. With the Bithoor in its vicinity, there are many similar rivers which merge which river Ganga and river Pandav remains one of the significant one, she empowers each of the rural cultures, which thrived through centuries on its banks. In the paper attempts are made to understand as how the river evolved with its etymology, epistemology and ecological histories in the times of history and contemporary chronologies. The river has owned its ecology and human-rural-community interactions with their own historicity through material cultures which are explored through ethnographic and anthropological approaches.

Keywords: *River Ganga/Ganges, Kanpur, River Pandav, River Ecology, Rural*

I

Rivers in the rural memories: India's rural and urban cultures evolved on the banks of the river systems. Water being the essential element of life, livelihood and cultural growth remain centric to settlement patterns of the human societies. Thus, every village and urban centre has its proximity to a water system, where the river determines its settlement pattern, cultural growth and economic linearity or diversification.¹ In the article we delve into historical role of the small river systems

¹ Ahmad, Enayat. "Rural Settlement Types in the Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces of Agra and Oudh)." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1952, pp. 223–46. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2561140>

in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, as how these river systems effected the rural traditions, their livelihood patterns and how in the contemporary times, river are being affected and rural societies traditions are in threshold of collapse. PARI network recently came with a series of articles on river systems and their sustainability in India. In their series of articles with title: **The ebb and flow of rural India's rivers**² grassroot stories of rural river systems of India are shared. The one story which resonated a lot with my narrative below and also many perturbing questions which I will be asking myself is of; **And a river no longer runs through it:** The story of the slow death of the Sai River, the struggles of the villages around it, and of climate change in UP's Hardoi district. Seen through the lens of the two main persons involved in those struggles' the story is by Rana Tiwari³. In the story of a lost river where river Sai being the tributary of river Gomti being one of the most cherished for the villagers eventually died due to pollution and neglect. Stories of rivers of villages and rural India, somehow, tend to say the same story throughout India.

River Pandu, which is part of the Ganga river valley systems is river of my own nostalgia and memories of rural living. The river which continues to flow through my village yet has lost many of its traditions and ecological traits due to massive pollutants discharge and toxic waste released by the very own towns and cities which thrive on it. In the following sections of the essay, I have tried to narrate the auspicious veneration of river Ganga and her tributaries and how in the contemporary times things became vicious and almost the river came to be called as 'the death of river Pandu'⁴ to our very own river around which tales were told and livelihoods were strengthened. Interestingly, in the colonial era, River Pandu along with its neighbouring tributary river Rind was seen and examined with exclusivity. As a result, of the colonial meticulous planning from the uplands of the river Pandu, water channels and aqueducts were built to harness the water retaining capacity of the river Pandu and river Rind, which enabled the entire *khadar* and *jhabar* (the arable soil rich area) region to become arable and cultivable throughout the year. The extensive details on the pre-colonial and colonial era are in the sections below.

II

River Ganges and her tributaries: River Ganga, is the most revered river of India and undeniably her several sub-systems of rivers have immensely contributed to our natural water systems; therefore, it is said as follows:

*"गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सरस्वति।
नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरि जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधिं कुरु ॥"*
"Gange Ch Yamune Godavari Saraswati |
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jalesmin Sannidhim Kuru"

² PARI Network: Weblink-<https://wagtail.ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/the-ebb-and-flow-of-rural-indias-rivers/>

³ Rana Tiwari (2023) weblink: <https://wagtail.ruralindiaonline.org/en/articles/and-a-river-no-longer-runs-through-it/>

⁴ Jitin Rahul (2010) The Death of River Pandoo, Project Report, Department of Botany, DBS, College, Kanpur, Kanpur University, Uttar Pradesh, India

Translation: The mantra is inviting the divine presence of rivers—Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri—to purify and sanctify, embodying the profound reverence for rivers embedded in Bharata.⁵

Every Bhartiya/Indian household when begins the day, it starts with chanting and sacred devotion to rivers of our nation. Whether this devotion and respect to rivers is presented through surrendering in front of mother river goddess or through chastising our homes and sacred spaces through their holy waters. River Ganga or Mother Ganga as its known in the Indian household with reverence is one of the prime rivers of reverence for all of us. From its Puranic traditions river Ganges brought well-being, nourishment to the societies and absolution from the sins of the life and its karmic debts and gave paths of new visions for its people⁶.

The Shiv Mahapurana and Garuda Purana emphasizes the spiritual significance of the Ganges, highlighting its role in purifying the soul and granting salvation.

"यावदस्थिनी गंगायां तिष्ठन्ति पुरुषस्य तु।
तावद् वर्षसहस्राणि स्वर्गलोके महीयते॥"

Yāvadasthīnī Gaṅgāyām Tiṣṭhanti Puruṣasya Tu.
Tāvad Varṣasahasrāṇi Svargaloke Mahīyate.

English Translation:

If the name of Mother Ganga is uttered even from a distance of a hundred *yojanas*, the accumulated sins of all the three births of the soul would be destroyed.

Hindi Meaning:

मोक्ष-दायनी माँ गंगा का नाम सौ योजन दूरी से भी उच्चारण किए जाने पर जीव के तीनों जन्मों के संचित पाप नष्ट हो जाते ।

According to the text, the sight, touch, and even the mere pronunciation of the Ganges' name can cleanse one of sins and bring purity. The Garuda Purana also mentions that the Ganges is considered a divine river, with its waters having the power to wash away impurities and bestow heavenly blessings.⁷

River ganga remains in many stories and narratives of Veda, Vedanga, Upanishads, Puranas, Jain and Buddhist Texts and Smriti and Stuti Sangraha of people of India. The sanctity of the river Ganges could be understood from the fact that the river is mentioned twice in the Rig Veda and Puranas mention the Vidyaganga or heavenly river Ganga, which flows through the hairlocks of Lord Shiva via toe of Lord Vishnu with the arduous prayers of saint Bhagirathi. The flow of the

⁵ Jainmuni Shri Atmaramji (1931) *Smriti ShlokSangraha* (In Hindi) Lahore, Bhardwaj Printing Press

⁶ Bina Sengar (2025) 'River Pandav: Tracing Living Traditions Along the Tributaries of River Ganges in the Kanpur', in Kanpur through the Ages: Unveiling the Layers of History, National Seminar Proceedings. Pp. 38-41

⁷ Dowson, J. (1879). *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature*. India: Trübner & Company.

divine river purified ashes of the sixty thousand sons of King *Sagara*, who all were salvaged by the divine river Ganga from the curse of sage Kapil. From its varied names from Bhagirathi, to Ganga-Dhara, where from the edges of Lord Shiva's matted locks she enters the earthly spaces with its multifaceted streams referred as '*Sapta Sindhava*'. Personified as human goddesses River Ganga is daughter of Himavat and Mena. With her several streams Maa Ganga nourishes lands of India and its billions of living beings.⁸ The River Ganga (Ganges) is not explicitly mentioned by name in the core Upanishads, which are philosophical texts focusing on self-knowledge and liberation. While the Upanishads explore metaphysical concepts and the nature of reality, they generally do not delve into geographical or historical details like the mention of specific rivers. However, the Chandogya Upanishad does use the analogy of the river Ganga (and other rivers) to explain the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, highlighting the idea that individual identities dissolve and reform, similar to how water flows from the sea and back.⁹

इमाः सोम्य नद्यः पुरस्तात्प्राच्यः स्यन्दन्ते पश्चात्प्रतीच्यस्ताः समुद्रात्समुद्रमेवापियन्ति स समुद्र एव भवति ता यथा तत्र न
विदुरियमहमस्मीयमहमस्मीति ॥ ६.१०.१ ॥

imāḥ somya nadyaḥ purastātprācyāḥ syandante paścātpratīcyastāḥ samudrātsamudramevāpiyanti
sa samudra eva bhavati tā yathā tatra na viduriyamahamasmīyamahamasmīti ॥ 6.10.1 ॥

O Somya, those rivers belonging to the east run to the east, and those belonging to the west run to the west. Rising from the sea, they go back to it and become one with it. Just as, when they reach the sea, they do not know their separate identities—'I am this river,' or 'I am that river'—

Word-for-word explanation: *Imāḥ*, these; *somya*, O Somya; *nadyaḥ*, rivers; *purastāt*, of the east; *prācyāḥ syandante*, flow to the east; *pratīcyāḥ*, of the west; *paścāt*, to the west; *tāḥ*, they; *samudrāt*, [rising] from the sea; *samudram eva apiyanti*, go to the sea; *saḥ samudraḥ eva bhavati*, become one with that sea; *yathā*, as; *tatra*, there; *tāḥ*, they; *na viduḥ*, do not know; *iyam aham asmi iyam aham asmi iti*, I am this [river], I am this [river].

Commentary: Uddālaka gives another illustration. There are so many rivers in this country, and each originates from a different area. Ultimately, however, they all flow into the sea. They then lose their separate identities and become one with the sea. When the Ganga flows into the sea, you can no longer identify it as such. Can a drop of water in the sea say, 'I am the Ganga,' or 'I am the Sindhu'? No. So also, when we die our sense of identity disappears temporarily.¹⁰

River Pandu as a tributary of River Ganga in the Kachhar plains of Kanpur and its rural areas: The essence of river Ganga is not limited to life and livelihood it's the spiritual essence of Indian

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Swami Lokeswarananda (1903) *Chandogya Upanishad* (English Translation). Delhi, Motilal Banarasidas

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Verse 6.10.1

philosophy as explained in our sacred texts and practices of daily rituals. River Ganga remains one of the largest river networks systems in the Northern Indian plains because of which the plains itself come, to be known as ‘Ganga-Yamuna Doab’ or confluence plains zone of two rivers Ganga and Yamuna. It flows through the alluvial agrarian and abundant in fertility because of her richly endowed waters and essential strengthening potentialities. Since ages the lands of river Ganga-Yamuna and their tributaries are nourishing these lands. The terrains of these two rivers are sectionally understood with five primary sections from Himalayan terrain to Uttakhand streams, from Rushikesh to Prayagraj Sangam, From Prayagraj Sangam to flood plains of Bihar and West Bengal and from West Bengal to Gangasagar and Sundarban Delta area. Which we can further elaborate as follows: The Ganga is formed from the **6 headstreams** and their **five confluences**.

- The **Alaknanda River meets the Dhauliganga River at Vishnuprayag**, the Nandakini River at Nandprayag, the Pindar River to form the Ganga main stream.
- The **Bhagirathi, considered to be the source stream: rises at the foot of Gangotri Glacier, at Gaumukh**, at an elevation of 3892m and fanning out into the 350km wide Ganga delta, it finally empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **From Devapryag the river is called as Ganga**. River Ganga here emerge from a confined space into a wide, open area from the hills into the plain area at It is joined by the River **Yamuna and through underneath passages by River Saraswati at Sangam in Prayagraj. Haridwar, Kanpur, Soron, Kannauj, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Ghazipur, Bhagalpur, Mirzapur, Ballia, Buxar, Saidpur, and Chunar** are the important towns. On these areas of the river Ganga we come across one of the major sectional tributaries of River Ganga known as ‘River Pandu’.¹¹
- Near Rajmahal Hills it turns to the south-east. At Farraka, it bifurcates into **Bhagirathi-Hugli in West Bengal and Padma-Meghna in Bangladesh** (it ceases to be known as the Ganga after Farraka).
- **Brahmaputra (or the Jamuna as it is known here) joins Padma-Meghna** the total length of the Ganga River from its source to its mouth (measured along the Hugli) is 2,525 km.
- Before entering the Bay of Bengal, the Ganga, along with the Brahmaputra, forms the largest delta of the world between the Bhagirathi/Hugli and the Padma/Meghna covering an area of 58,752 sq km which is known as **Sundarban Delta**. The coastline of the delta is a highly indented area. The delta is made of a web of distributaries and islands and is covered by dense forests called the A major part of the delta is a low-lying swamp that is flooded by marine water during high tide.

¹¹ Wright, F. N. (1881). Statistical descriptive and historical account of the North-Western provinces of India: Ed. ... by Edwin Felix Thomas Atkinson. *India: North-Western Provinces'* Government Press.

Map-1: *The River Ganga Tributaries and River Network System*

Source: Google Maps/Images

In the complex perennial river network systems of river Ganga one of the major sections as described above is; “River Ganga here emerge from a confined space into a wide, open area from the hills into the plain area at It is joined by the River **Yamuna and through underneath passages by River Saraswati at Sangam in Prayagraj. Haridwar, Kanpur, Soron, Kannauj, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Ghazipur, Bhagalpur, Mirzapur, Ballia, Buxar, Saidpur, and Chunar** are the important towns. On these areas of the river Ganga we come across one of the **major sectional tributaries of River Ganga known as ‘River Pandu.’**”¹²

River Pandu in the ecological memories of the rural societies: As stated in the beginning river flowing through the rural terrains of India, have their unique stories to tell, as the folk tales, traditions, cultural patterns were weaved around them, Pandu too remains no exceptions, many villages around her which flourished and thrived because of her perennial waters and navigable flow, in my own childhood memories we crossed her barefoot and many a times took the *naav ghat* or boat passage when she was flowing above the normal levels and was not possible to cross her barefoot. Water was never a scarcity in our village, as all houses had their own wells, or community wells where water came hardly from 30-40 feet ground levels. Many of the villagers had professions thriving on her streams, there were fishermens ‘*kahanars*’, the village washermen’s family had their special ghat ‘*Dhobiyan ghat*’ to wash all the clothes of the villagers and where they earned well and had their own clustered settlements near the riverbanks. The village had a special textured soil which my mother told was called as *rehua*, the brackish soil available near *usar* areas was used by the washermen and their clans-people as a natural detergent

¹² Wright, F. N. (1881). Statistical descriptive and historical account of the North-Western provinces of India: Ed. ... by Edwin Felix Thomas Atkinson. *India: North-Western Provinces* Government Press.

to wash the clothes. I could still recall how the *chahchi* (aunty) of that clan brought those freshly washed and dried clothes and they were better in smell, hygiene than any laundry service we have in cities. Today, the entire cluster of washermen's family have left the village, the special riverbank used by them is abandoned and taken over by the muddy, plastic infested full of filth passage. Even the weekly ritual of all village women going for bath on the riverbank in our village is no more functional. Hardly anyone goes to bath in the river. Earlier, before, every marriage the groom and bride were made to bathe in the river and take rivers blessings, that ritual has also become a bygone fable! Why such transition occurred? How and why river became oblivious from our living traditions? Could it be because the symbols of the rural traditions, the river, the soil, the *talav* (tank), the passage towards the river, the sacred well, the old tree, all are gone, perished or abandoned? These questions do haunt us, as we carry nostalgia of our village, its rural practices and thriving cultural transactions which kept the soul of village alive.

The contemporary narratives where declare river Pandoo/Pandu/Pandav to be all dead, deserted because of pollution and high in toxicity. The colonial narratives, in contrast somehow resonate with the rural rituals and living traditions we do across the colloquial terms which were prevalent among the villagers were used to describe river and her environs, Wright, F.N.¹³ (1881) says, "As identified above this region is also known as *Kachhar* plains of river Ganges/Ganga, with a unique texture of alluvial soil identified in the colloquial terms as *dumat*, or the region with varied textures of twin layered soil textures. The rich alluvial soil and well irrigated plain lands always retained this region as one of the most densely populated regions of India and northern Indian plains along with one of the most agrarian wise productive zones of Indian sub-continent. In the nineteenth century reports of colonial times the zones of this region from areas called Jajmau to Bilhaur was swamped with *usar dumat* and was known as *Jhabargaon* or Fern villages which were all with huge grasslands, broad drainage of tributaries of river Ganga and shallow swamps. Creating unique ecologies for the villages of the area in and around the region of Kanpur division".¹⁴ Its narrated in the pre-colonial and colonial records that the region enriched with tributaries of river Ganga irrigated with their wider drainage several areas and also allowed ecological ecosystems of swamps locally known as 'Usar' or as above stated 'Jhabargaon'.

¹³ Wright, F. N.. Statistical descriptive and historical account of the North-Western provinces of India: Ed. ... by Edwin [Felix] Thomas Atkinson. India, North-Western Provinces' Government Press, 1881 Pp. 14-15

¹⁴ Buchanan, F. (1822). *An Account of the Fishes Found in the River Ganges and Its Branches: With a Volume of Plates in Royal Quarts*. United Kingdom: Archibald constable.

Image-1: On the banks of tributaries of River Ganges in Kanpur

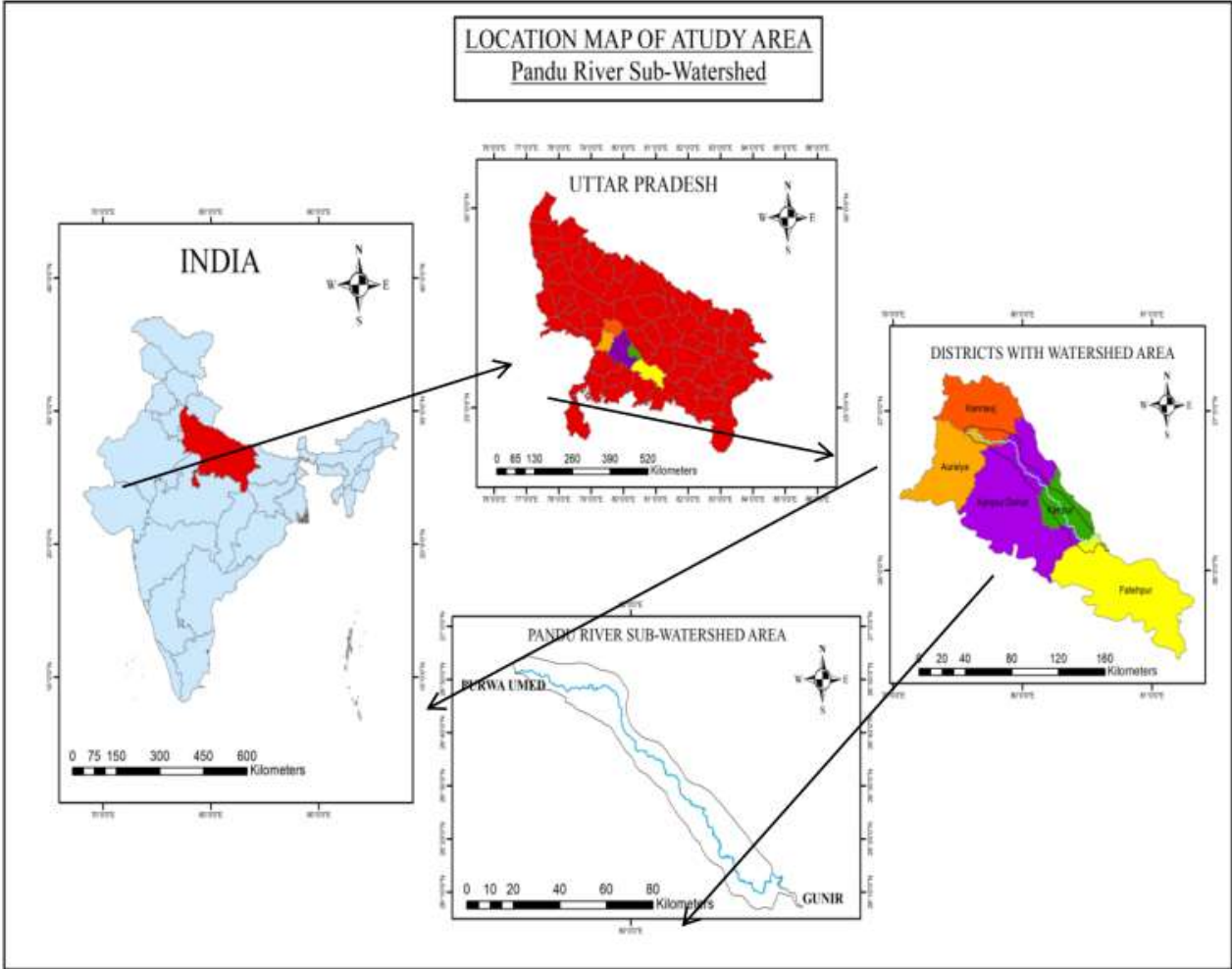


Source: Google Images 'near the banks of river Ganges and her tributaries in the Kanpur'

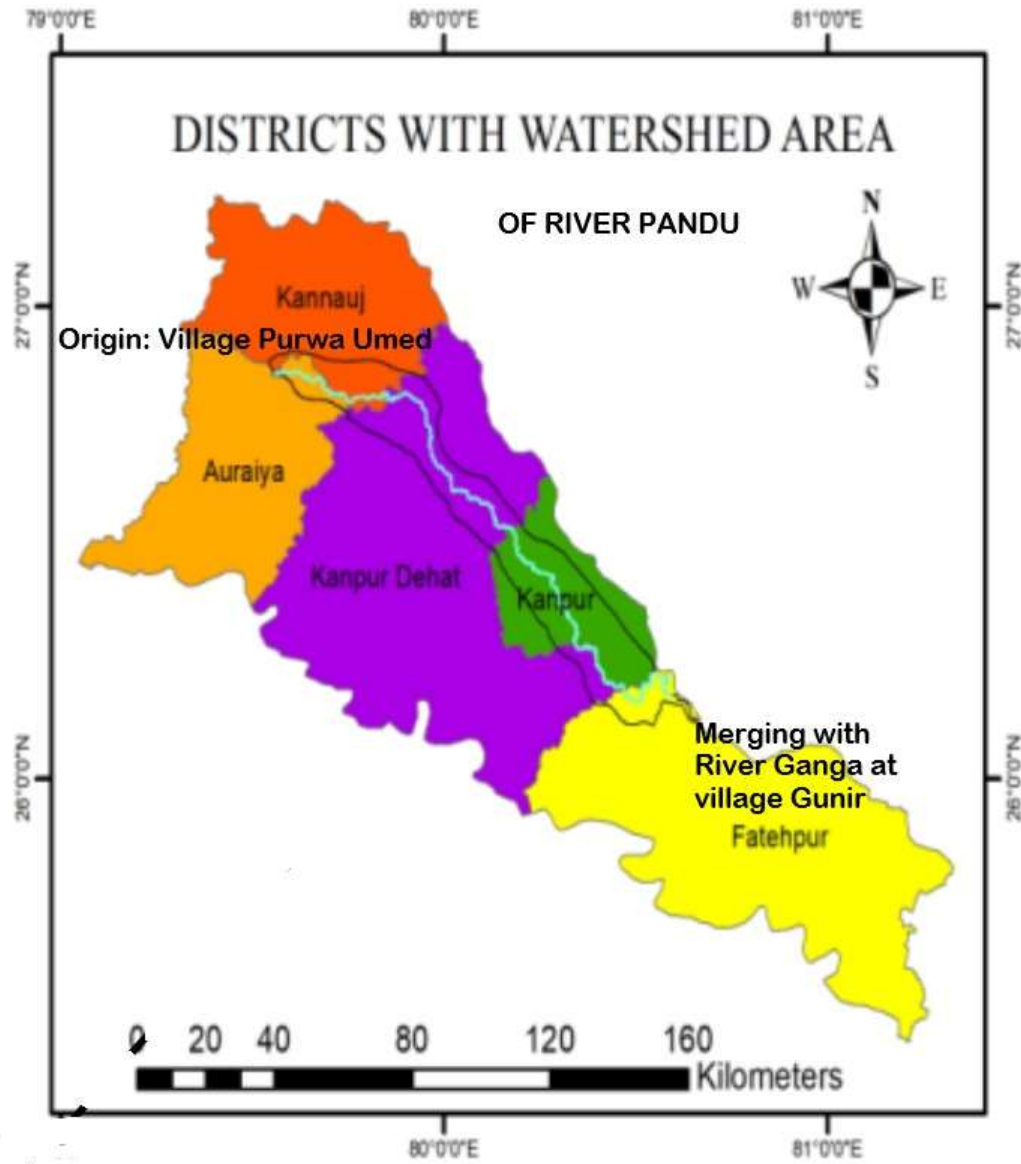
The Pandu River is indeed a tributary of the Ganges, flowing through Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. It's a significant waterway, serving as the southern boundary of the city. The river has faced pollution challenges due to industrial and sewage discharge, but efforts are underway to revive it through bioremediation. The Pandu River flows into the Ganges River, making it a tributary. According to Singh and Singh (2022): 'The velocity of Pandu river is increasing during the monsoon season. The Pandu river starts its journey 120 km from a lake in Purwa Umed Village and passes through the five districts. The length of Pandu river is 242 km. The Total area of Pandu river watershed covers 1721.3 ha. Pandu river end its existence by merging with the Ganga at Gunir village in Fatehpur district. River flows through the Kannauj, Auraiya, Kanpur dehat, Kanpur Nagar and finally merging with river Ganga in district Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh. The area under the study is Pandu river stretch lies between the latitude 26°52'38.77"N to 26°9'50.08"N and Longitude 79°32'31.68"E to 80°35'49.03"E in covering five districts of Uttar Pradesh.'¹⁵

¹⁵ Garima Singh, Ram Chandra, Sudhakar Shukla (2022) 'Monitoring of Wetlands In Pandu River Sub watershed Uttar Pradesh Using Remote Sensing And Gis Techniques', International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET) Vol. 9. No. 3. Pp. 528-535

Map-1: Location Map of river Pandu, Source: Garima Singh et. al (2022)



Map-2: River Pandu district watershed area, Source: Garima Singh et. al (2022)



The source of Pandu River is a lake in Farrukhabad, near village ‘Purwa-Umed’ village [Which now comes in the Auraiyya district] where there is a lake around which we have swamps and from there as a small stream it grown to be a river till it meets River Ganga in Fatehpur, in colonial records its narrated likewise; ‘...The Pandu has in this district [Farrukhabad district] a course of some eight miles other only. It enters from Etawah and passes through the southern villages of the Tirwa tahsil into the Cawnpore district. The Arind flows out of the Mainpuri district through Sakrawa and along the southern border of Sakatpur into Etawah. The total area returned at survey as covered by water in Lakes and this district is 44,579 acres. These figures includes the area occupied by the rivers, but a good deal of it is accounted for by the large and numerous stretches of water found among the *Jhil* or lakes around the *usar* plains. These occur mostly in pargana Shamsabad East and in the Chhibramau and Tirwa tahsils. Talgram means the village of *jhils*.’¹⁶ Neave further writes; ‘...neither this river nor the Pandu has any *tarai*. The tahsil contains several large stretches of *dhak*¹⁷ jungle and a number of huge *jhils*, and is also remarkable for the large area of its rice fields and the prevalence of canal irrigation.’¹⁸ The river runs for around 120 kilometres and meets the river Ganga in Fatehpur. Before Pandu enters Kanpur, it flows through Kanpur, forming the southern boundary of the city. The Pandu River has a length of 242 km, according to the International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET). The total area of the Pandu River watershed is 1721.3 ha. Pandu river¹⁹ which was known for its crystal-clear water two decades back even today remains major source of irrigation and drinking water for villages along its banks. During the colonial era resourcefulness and utility of river Pandu as tributary of River Ganga was well understood hence many bridges, aqueducts and canal were channelised through river Pandu among one famous aqueduct is Gujaini Aquaduct.

¹⁶ E.R. Neave (1911) *Farukhabad: A Gazetteer* Vol. IX, *District Gazetteers of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Allahabad, Pp. 9-10

¹⁷ *Butea monosperma* is a species of *Butea* native to tropical and sub-tropical parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia. It is also known as flame of the forest

¹⁸ Neave, *Loc. Cit.* P. 263

¹⁹ Punarav Bharat: <https://punaravbharat.wordpress.com/tag/pandu-river/>

Image-2: Gujaini Aquaduct and Bridge on River Pandu

Note and Source: The Pandu River, a tributary of the Ganges River flows in Kanpur city, such an aqueduct about 143 years old is built on the Pandu River at kilometer 2.398 of the Fatehpur Feeder, which is a fine example of engineering, seeing which people are surprised. We also know this aqueduct by the name of Gujaini aqueduct, cement and rebar were not used in the construction of aqueduct, but this bridge/aqueduct has been made only with brick, lime and lime, in its construction jaggery syrup and pulse of Arhad. Also used was due to which this bridge is still standing firmly. The Pandu river flows from below this bridge and over it the Fatehpur feeder (canal) with a capacity of 1250 cusecs of water flows, providing irrigation facilities to Kanpur Nagar, Fatehpur and Kaushambi.²⁰

Challenges to River Pandu in Post-Colonial Era: However, with the post-colonial industrialisation and unchecked exploitation of river Pandu has made its crystal water turned black, eventually in several parts of the river as it enters the sub-urban areas of Kanpur Nagar to Kanpur city the river not only stinks, the magnitude of the contamination can be gauged from the fact that many of the people exposed to the water are suffering from a host of skin problems. Even though the deplorable condition of river water has been brought to the notice of the authorities concerned, no action has been taken in this regard. And the poisoning of Pandu continues. The biggest villain of the piece is the Panki Thermal Power Plant. According to sources, the plant uses around 3,000 tons of coal and churns out 40 tonnes of fly ash every day. The ash is dumped in a fly ash pond spread over an area of two square kilometers. The slurry overflows from the pond and finds its way into Pandu. An ambitious project for safe disposal of the fly ash is awaiting sanction from the central government.

²⁰ Ramganga Organization-Kanpur: <https://ramganga.org.in/gujaini-aqueduct.php>

Further downstream, when drains of domestic sewage and industrial effluent mix with the river, its water turns black. The plight of the villagers is aggravated once monsoon recedes as the river water leaves behind a blanket of fly ash on a large tract of agricultural land. The ash is deposited in the fields even in the dry season as the farmers use its ash laden water, rich in mercury, to irrigate their fields. Large deposits of such slurry can be found in these fields which have an adverse effect on productivity. Hapless villagers in the area complain that some of their lands have become uncultivable. Fly ash slurry makes the soil less porous and impedes aeration as a result of which lands turn fallow, claim the farmers. Earlier, the land along the Pandu River was known to be highly fertile. The kahars, a local backward community, were leased out the land to grow vegetables every year. However, due to pollution from Thermal Power Plant, there are no takers for the land. Effluents generated by around 6,000 small, medium and big industrial units located in Panki and Dadanagar industrial areas are also discharged into the four nalas (storm water drains) that fall into the Pandu River. Most of these industries are of electroplating, detergents, chemicals (processing chrome sulphate also), waste oil processing and some Ordinance units. Villagers claim that when the Gun Factory releases toxic black oil into the river, fish die in shoals. Some locals also pointed out that their cattle die within hours if they consume the river water accidentally. Despite this, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has not undertaken any study of the industrial pollution in the area, let alone the pollution of the Pandu River. In the absence of any scientific study, no one knows the exact chemical composition of the effluent and sewage being carried by the nalas into the river Pandu. With the virtual death of Pandu in Kanpur, thousands of villages have lost a vital water resource. Today the locals fear to even touch the river water. In case, they venture out into the water by mistake, they develop boils and rashes on their feet. The toxicity of the water has forced them to depend on groundwater for their water needs. However, industrial pollution has taken its toll on groundwater of the area too. It is apprehended that water at the depth of around 35 feet might contain dissolved ammonia, nickel, chromium and fluoride. In such a situation, people are left with using government installed handpumps which draw water from a depth of 100 feet. Under Ganga Action Plan Phase II (GAP II), the government proposes to make Pandu river pollution-free. The idea is to tap the sewage falling into the Pandu River through interception and diversion and then treat the same. Kanpur's Pandu River to be revived with bio-remediation treatment Kanpur Municipal Corporation has taken-up the task to purify Pandu River, with directions of the National Green Tribunal.²¹ Rivers are the essential lifelines of human societies. Every society which grows in its human settlements and cultural and technological transition evolves through its river cultural systems. Will we learn from cultural heritage and historical legacy as how our essential essence of identities are created by these rivers and their entities? The future of our today resides on how much we nurture, conserve and revitalise through our heritage riverine heritage of Maa Ganga and her tributaries is significant part of it.

²¹ [Weblink: https://www.knocksense.com/kanpur/kanpurs-pandu-river-to-be-revived-with-bio-remediation-treatment](https://www.knocksense.com/kanpur/kanpurs-pandu-river-to-be-revived-with-bio-remediation-treatment)

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PLATES

River Pandu near Kanpur Nagar Rural areas of Baghpur and Shobhan in 2025 May images by Author

Plate-1



Plate-2



Plate-3

