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Govt to fund research on microbial activity in Ganga water

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To further investigate the claim made through various existing research and studies that the waters of Ganga river have medicinal properties which destroy various kinds of bacteria and microbes, in order to use it for holistic human health, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mr J P Nadda has assured all support for this research including financial assistance. He stated this at the workshop organised recently at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi on the "Non-putrefying properties of Ganga Water". Also present was Ms Uma Bharti, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and senior environmentalist, Mr Krishna Gopal.

Speaking at the workshop, the Union Health Minister stated that in a world increasing fighting various kinds of new and more powerful drug resistant bacteria and germs, such a study which explores and examines what is it that lends this unique property to the Ganga water that not only cleanse itself by destroying germs and microbes present in it, but also purifies other waters, is worth conducting.

He described Ganga as a pious river that has many interconnected and layered values to it, be it cultural, spiritual, economical and environmental. He stated that the river flowing through 2600 kms and crossing many states nurtures these regions by providing livelihood option to many, in addition to irrigation the banks and the plains. It is the mandate of the Government to not only clean the river but to also rejuvenate it, he further stated. He said that the valuable scientific evidence generated as a result of this research and in-depth study will help to understand the medicinal properties of the Ganga water.

He said that in addition to AIIMS, New Delhi, scientists from IIT Kanpur and Roorkee, Banaras Hindu University, National Environmental Research Institute (NEERI) and National Botanical Research Institute will be participating in this detailed study. Another workshop to discuss and deliberate on the findings of the research shall be held after six months, the Health Minister informed.

Ms Uma Bharti highlighted that despite crores of people taking a dip in the river during numerous religious occasions very year, the river has not led to any pandemic or epidemic. This had to be the consequence of some self-purifying power of the river water which prevented its deterioration, she stated. She added that the study will help in using the Ganga water with this unique property for a larger welfare and health of mankind.

Mr Krishna Gopal drew from the studies and research conducted on the exclusive property of the Ganga water and the references from the Akbarnama and the British bacteriologist Ernest Hanbury Hankin, to state that the presence of bacteriophage activity had been detected in the river since long. New research needs to be conducted to further renew this claim, he added.

The workshop was attended by the senior officers from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, AIIMS, NEERI, IIT Kanpur and IIT Rourkee.