

## **1. Evaluate the relationship between rivers and the social-economic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal: A Historical Review**

The relationship between rivers and the social, economic, and cultural life of Ancient Bengal is a multifaceted and profound one, with rivers playing a central role in shaping the region's history and development. In this historical review, we will explore how rivers such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna influenced the ancient society, economy, and culture of Bengal.

### **Geographical Context:**

Ancient Bengal, located in the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, is a region crisscrossed by a network of rivers. The Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers, along with their numerous tributaries, define the landscape of this region. The fertile alluvial plains formed by these rivers made Bengal one of the most agriculturally productive regions in the ancient world. This geographical advantage had a profound impact on the society, economy, and culture of the region.

### **Economic Significance:**

1. **Agriculture:** The fertile riverbanks and deltas of Bengal were ideal for agriculture. Ancient Bengal became a rice-producing powerhouse, contributing significantly to the agrarian economy of the Indian subcontinent. The annual flooding of the rivers deposited nutrient-rich silt, ensuring bountiful harvests.
2. **Trade and Commerce:** Rivers served as natural trade routes, facilitating the movement of goods and people. Ancient Bengal was strategically positioned on the maritime Silk Road, which connected it to Southeast Asia, China, and the Middle East. Trade along these river routes enriched the region and fostered cultural exchanges.
3. **Fishing:** The Rivers teemed with fish and other aquatic resources. Fishing was not only a major source of livelihood but also contributed to the dietary habits and cuisine of the region, with dishes like "Hilsa" gaining cultural significance.

### **Social Implications:**

1. **Settlement Patterns:** The availability of water for irrigation and transportation influenced settlement patterns. Villages and towns sprang up along the riverbanks, forming a dense network of communities. These settlements often had a distinct cultural and social life centered on the river.
2. **Social Hierarchies:** Control over irrigation and access to river resources often led to the emergence of social hierarchies. Those who controlled the water supply held significant power and influence in ancient Bengal's society.
3. **Cultural Diversity:** The Rivers facilitated the cultural region's cultural identity with people from other regions. Over the centuries, this led to a rich tapestry of cultural diversity, with elements of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions coexisting and blending.

### **Cultural Significance:**

**1. Religion and Rituals:** Rivers held immense religious significance in ancient Bengal. The Ganges, in particular, was revered as a sacred river. Pilgrims from across the subcontinent traveled to bathe in its waters, and riverbanks became sites of religious ceremonies and rituals.

**2. Art and Literature:** The beauty and symbolism of rivers found expression in art and literature. Ancient Bengali poetry, such as the works of Rabindranath Tagore, often featured the rivers as metaphors for various emotions and experiences.

**3. Festivals:** Festivals like Durga Puja, which celebrates the goddess Durga's victory over evil, often involve the immersion of idols in the rivers. This ritual not only signifies the cyclical nature of life but also fosters a sense of community and cultural identity.

**Challenges and Vulnerabilities:**

While rivers brought immense benefits to ancient Bengal, they also posed challenges. The annual monsoon floods, although vital for agriculture, could be destructive, displacing communities and causing hardships. Furthermore, the changing course of rivers could lead to shifts in settlements and land ownership, leading to disputes and conflicts.

**Invasion and Conquest:**

The strategic importance of Bengal's rivers made the region vulnerable to invasion and conquest. Throughout history, various empires and dynasties, including the Mauryas, Guptas, Mughals, and British, sought to control Bengal due to its economic significance. The riverine geography played a crucial role in the geopolitical struggles of the region.

In conclusion, the relationship between rivers and the social, economic, and cultural life of Ancient Bengal was symbiotic and profound. Rivers were the lifeblood of the region, providing sustenance, transportation, and inspiration. They shaped settlement patterns, influenced social structures, and played a central role in the cultural and religious life of the people. However, they also presented challenges and vulnerabilities that shaped the region's history. Today, the legacy of this relationship is still evident in the vibrant culture and agricultural productivity of modern-day Bengal.

## **2. Evaluate the relationship between rivers and the socioeconomic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal: A Historical Review**

The relationship between rivers and the social, economic, and cultural life of Ancient Bengal is a topic of great significance in the history of the region. Bengal, located in the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, is crisscrossed by a vast network of rivers, most notably the Ganges (Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and Meghna Rivers. These waterways have played a crucial role in shaping the region's development and its society.

### **1. Agriculture and Economy:**

Rivers in Bengal have deposited fertile alluvial soil over the centuries, making the region one of the most agriculturally productive areas in the subcontinent. The annual flooding of these rivers helped replenish the soil and allowed for multiple harvests a year.

- Rice cultivation became the primary agricultural activity, and Bengal became known as the "Rice Bowl of India." The surplus rice production was not only essential for the sustenance of the local population but also for trade, contributing to the economic prosperity of the region.
- The river routes provided natural transportation networks, enabling the movement of goods, including rice, textiles, and other commodities, fostering trade and commerce. The rivers served as natural highways for the transportation of goods and people.

### **2. Urbanization and Settlements:**

- The rivers also influenced the development of settlements and urban centers along their banks. Ancient cities such as Pataliputra (modern-day Patna) and Gaur were strategically located near riverbanks, facilitating trade and administration.
- The waterways allowed for easy access to fishing, which played a vital role in the diet and economy of the region. Fishing communities and markets thrived along the riverbanks.

### **3. Culture and Religion:**

- Rivers held immense cultural and religious significance in Ancient Bengal. The Ganges River, in particular, is revered by Hindus as a sacred river. Pilgrims from across the

subcontinent came to bathe in the Ganges, and numerous temples and shrines were built along its banks.

- Folk traditions, rituals, and festivals often revolved around the rivers. Boat races, for instance, were a popular form of entertainment and competition.
- The riverine landscape also influenced art, literature, and folklore. Poems and songs often celebrated the beauty and mystique of the rivers, becoming integral to the region's cultural identity.

#### **4. Environmental Challenges:**

- While the rivers brought numerous benefits, they also posed challenges, such as seasonal flooding and riverbank erosion. Coping with these natural phenomena required sophisticated engineering and management systems, which led to the development of skills in water management.

In summary, the relationship between rivers and the social, economic, and cultural life of Ancient Bengal was profound and multifaceted. These rivers were not just geographical features but also integral components of the region's identity, shaping its agriculture, economy, urbanization, culture, and religious practices. They played a pivotal role in defining the unique historical and cultural heritage of Ancient Bengal.

### **3. Evaluate the relationship between rivers and the socioeconomic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal: A Historical Review**

The relationship between rivers and the social, economic, and cultural life of Ancient Bengal is a complex and multifaceted one. Rivers have played a central role in shaping the history and development of this region, and their influence can be observed in various aspects of ancient Bengali society.

#### **1. Economic Significance:**

- **Agriculture:** The fertile floodplains of rivers like the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna made Ancient Bengal an agricultural powerhouse. The annual flooding and deposition of silt enriched the soil, allowing for multiple harvests a year, which sustained a large population.
- **Trade and Commerce:** Rivers served as natural trade routes, facilitating the movement of goods and people. Ancient Bengal was a vital hub for trade between South Asia and Southeast Asia, thanks to its riverine network.

#### **2. Social Impact:**

- **Settlements:** The presence of rivers led to the establishment of numerous settlements along their banks. These settlements often grew into cities and towns, fostering diverse communities and cultures.
- **Transportation:** Rivers were the primary mode of transportation in Ancient Bengal. Boats and ferries were essential for daily commutes and trade. This reliance on rivers created a unique social and cultural connection to waterways.

#### **3. Cultural Influence:**

- **Religion and Mythology\*\*:** Rivers played a significant role in Bengali mythology and religion. The Ganges, for example, is considered a holy river in Hinduism, and it has shaped various rituals and festivals in the region.
- **Art and Literature:** Bengali literature and art often feature rivers as a source of inspiration. Poems, songs, and paintings frequently depict scenes along riverbanks, showcasing their cultural importance.

#### **4. Food and Cuisine:**

- **Fish and Rice:** Rivers provided an abundant source of fish, which became a staple in Bengali cuisine. Rice, another dietary staple, thrived in the fertile riverine soil, making rice and fish integral to Bengali meals.

#### **5. Environmental Challenges:**

- **Floods and Erosion:** While rivers brought fertility, they also posed challenges. Seasonal floods and erosion could devastate settlements and agriculture, leading to a constant struggle to adapt.

#### **6. Political Influence:**

- **Territorial Control\*\*:** The control of riverine territories and access to waterways often determined political boundaries and conflicts. Various dynasties and empires vied for control over the region due to its economic significance.

#### **7. Modern Impact:**

- **Urbanization:** The modern cities of Bangladesh and West Bengal, such as Dhaka and Kolkata, continue to rely on river transportation and face challenges related to water pollution and management.

In summary, rivers were the lifeblood of Ancient Bengal, influencing its economic prosperity, cultural identity, and social structure. While they provided numerous advantages, they also presented challenges that shaped the region's history and development. Understanding this historical relationship between rivers and Ancient Bengal is crucial for comprehending the contemporary social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the region as well.

#### **4. Evaluate the relationship between rivers and the socioeconomic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal: A Historical Review**

The relationship between rivers and the socio-economic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal is deeply intertwined and has played a pivotal role in shaping the region's history. Bengal, located in the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, is crisscrossed by an extensive network of rivers, including the Ganges (Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and their numerous tributaries. This natural abundance of water resources has profoundly impacted the region throughout its history.

##### **1. Economic Prosperity:**

Rivers have been the lifeblood of Ancient Bengal's economy. The fertile alluvial plains created by the rivers' regular flooding provided ideal conditions for agriculture. The annual inundation replenished the soil with nutrients, making it highly productive. Ancient Bengali farmers cultivated rice, jute, and various other crops, making the region one of the world's leading rice producers.

##### **2. Trade and Commerce:**

The rivers of Bengal also served as essential trade routes. They facilitated the movement of goods and people, connecting the hinterlands to the coastal areas and beyond. The bustling river ports of ancient Bengal, such as Pataliputra (modern-day Patna) and Tamralipta (modern-day Tamluk), played a pivotal role in trade with Southeast Asia, China, and the Middle East. Bengal's prosperity and wealth were closely tied to this river-based trade network.

##### **3. Transportation:**

Rivers served as natural highways for the movement of people and goods. Boats and ships were a common means of transportation, allowing for the easy movement of people, merchandise, and cultural influences. This river-based transportation system facilitated the exchange of ideas, languages, and technologies.

#### **4. Cultural Exchange:**

The rivers of Bengal facilitated cultural exchange with neighboring regions and distant lands. Ancient Bengal was at the crossroads of various trade routes, and as a result, it became a melting pot of cultures. Bengal absorbed influences from the Dravidian South, Indo-Aryan North, and Southeast Asia. This cultural amalgamation gave rise to a unique and diverse cultural identity that is still evident today.

#### **5. Settlement Patterns:**

The pattern of settlement in Ancient Bengal was greatly influenced by the rivers. Villages and towns often developed along the banks of rivers, where people had easy access to water for drinking, irrigation, and transportation. The riverbanks were also prone to flooding, which influenced the construction of houses on raised platforms or earthen mounds (known as 'tolas').

#### **6. Religion and Rituals:**

Rivers held immense religious significance in Ancient Bengal. The Ganges, in particular, was considered sacred, and people believed that bathing in its waters would cleanse their sins. The riverbanks were dotted with temples, ghats, and shrines. Festivals like Ganga Sagar Mela, held at the Ganges and Bay of Bengal confluence, attracted thousands of pilgrims.

#### **7. Challenges and Vulnerabilities:**

While the rivers brought prosperity, they also posed challenges. Annual flooding could be devastating, causing loss of life and property. Managing and controlling the rivers' flow through the construction of embankments and canals became crucial for agriculture and urban development.

#### **8. Decline and Shifting Courses:**

Over time, the course of rivers in Bengal shifted, sometimes dramatically. This could lead to the abandonment of once-thriving cities and the emergence of new settlements. The unpredictability of these shifts posed challenges to maintaining a stable socio-economic environment.

In conclusion, the relationship between rivers and the socio-economic and cultural life of Ancient Bengal was symbiotic. Rivers were the source of economic prosperity, trade, and transportation while also influencing settlement patterns, culture, and religion. However, they also brought challenges, especially in the form of flooding and shifting courses. Despite these challenges, the rivers of Ancient Bengal played a central role in shaping the region's history and identity, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to influence modern Bengal.

### **(Article-1): Influence of river on the culture, social system, and economy of Bangladesh; A study**

#### **Introduction:**

Bangladesh has been blessed with the unique gifts of nature. The position of this country is not exactly flat but has gradually moved higher than the sea level. Moreover, it is the largest delta in the world. This country adjacent to the Bay of Bengal is unique in its natural diversity. Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world. Just as the geographical uniqueness has made the country known on the world map, it has also had a far-reaching impact on the socio-economic, cultural, religious and political aspects of the people of this country. As a result of the geographical position of Bangladesh, the water stream originating from the Himalayas flows over the country according to its natural religion and merges into the Bay of Bengal. Along the way, Bangla enriched this township with numerous rivers; Bengal became riverine Bangladesh.

#### **Influence of rivers on human civilization:**

Rivers have been inseparable from the way of life of people since the dawn of civilization. The glorification of rivers has occupied an important place in the writings of various scriptures and sages throughout the ages. Considering the role of rivers in the development of civilization, former vice president of the World Watch Institute, Sandra Postal, said - it is impossible to discuss the history of human civilization without the contribution of water (rivers and seas). In fact, it is the contribution of rivers to human civilization. Most of the ancient civilizations of the world such as Assyrian, Chaldean, Indus, Chinese, etc., and today's modern civilizations have developed in the areas along the banks of different rivers. This fact is equally applicable to our country.

#### **Rivers of Bangladesh:**

It is said that Bangladesh is a country of thirteen hundred rivers. Thousands of rivers are spread across the country. Padma, Meghna, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra are the main ones. Also, there are numerous small and big rivers in this country including Teesta, Surma, Kushiara, Buriganga, Shitalakshya, Madhumati, Kartoya, Karnaphuli, Garais. Each river is unique. The towns of Bengal are surrounded by these rivers in deep compassion.

#### **Varieties of rivers in Bangladesh:**

Rivers cover a large part of Bangladesh's diverse landscape. The rhythmic movement of the water on the river, and the beauty of the sailing boat attract the attention of beauty-hungry people. In the autumn, white flowers can be seen on the banks of the river. The banks of the river are full of different kinds of animals. During the rainy season, the river overflows its banks and floods the surroundings. Such form of the river is very beautiful. All in all, the nature of Bangladesh has become rich due to the contribution of the river.

#### **Positive impact of rivers on people's lives in Bangladesh:**

Since time immemorial, the river has a deep connection with the life of the people of Bengal. The Austrians were the first to start farming in eastern and central India. Based on this, they united and started a civilized life. They cultivated paddy, betel nut, banana and coconut which still occupy an important place in the culture of Bengal. At the root of all this is the contribution of the river. Apart from this, rice and fish from ancient times. The main reason for the main food of the people of Bengal is the riverine nature of this country. Water is the main ingredient in rice cultivation. And the river has met the main demand for water in this region for agriculture since prehistoric times. On the other hand, our rivers provide an important part of the required fish throughout the year. Hilsa of Padma-Meghna has a worldwide reputation. The fishing community has survived for ages with the blessings of the river. Moreover, the river route is also very popular for communication and transportation of goods.

#### **Role of the river in the economic development of Bangladesh:**

The river has a great influence on the economy of Bangladesh. The river is one of the means of communication for the people of Bengal. The cities are finding cheap labor as jobless people flock to the cities after losing their homes due to river erosion and floods. Rivers are the biggest sources of drinking water. The silt brought by the flood from the river has made the soil of this country fertile. The economic structure of the city is not excluded from the effect of social change of obtaining cheap labor. The presence of skilled workers in the productive sector of industrial cities has played an important role in creating new social stratifications, distribution of population, and socio-economic environment. Thus the river continues to have a great influence on the social and cultural life of Bengal.

#### **Influence of Rivers on Bengali Culture:**

Bengal and Bengali culture have directly and indirectly revolved around the river. If culture is a reflection of society, then almost everything that exists in society is built around the river. The

culture of this country which has reached its present state through various ruins represents a mainly agricultural society centered on the river. The influence of the river has emerged in the language of the people of this region. Moreover, proverbs, everyday speech, and The Rivers are not excluded from the organization of family-social and religious events. Even Bengali literature covers a large part of the different rivers of this country. Because of the river-centered life and culture, a huge collection of Bhatiali and Sari songs has developed in this country. Apart from this, one of the accessories of Bengali culture is largely influenced by the river. Lungis and towels have gained exclusive popularity for their role as aids in the riverine agricultural system. The river has been playing one of the important roles in the interrelationship and social construction of the coastal civilization. There is little interdependence among livestock as agricultural use is limited. On the other hand, in Bengal, the river-based agricultural system requires teamwork for water irrigation. By this, people are encouraged in team spirit. From this side Looking at our social bonds, teamwork, patriotism,

#### Adverse Effects:

Due to the varied behavior of the river, there are many changes in the life of the people. The fish available from the river is helping us to meet our non-food needs as well as earn foreign exchange through export. Foraging culture also developed around rivers. The people who are victims of river erosion have moved to the city and created slum problems, increasing the social crisis. Due to the erosion of Padma and Yamuna, homeless people are flocking to the cities. The ratio of the urban population is changing. Another adverse effect of rivers is flooding. Our country is hit by floods almost every year. As a result, there is a huge loss of life and property.

#### Conclusion:

It is as if the river of Bangladesh has kept this country alive just like the blood flow of the body. Sujla-Sufla, crops have made this country green. Many rivers have lost their youth due to environmental degradation. Many rivers are almost extinct today. But once upon a time, townships were formed in this country as a riverside civilization. Even though the rivers have lost their luster due to time, they continue to protect the balance of the nature and environment of this country in various ways. And so there is no doubt that Bangladesh will not survive unless the river survives. That is why everyone should try to protect the rivers for the sake of Bengal's nature, economy, and culture.

#### **(Article-2): Influence of river on the culture, social system, and economy of Bangladesh (Prehistoric Era to 1205 AD); A study**

Bangladesh now, as in the past, most of the people live in villages. At its root lies the generous contribution of nature; because the bounty of nature in the production of agricultural products of Bengalis was immense. Numerous rivers and monsoons have contributed to the fertility of the plains. The productive potential of the land encouraged cultivation and attracted large numbers of people to settle in the plains. Thus, the rural population grew rapidly in the riverine regions of Bengal; As a result, there is not even a single piece of land left in Bangladesh except for cultivation. In many cases, settlements are now being built on agricultural land. This region is currently one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

#### **Rivers of Bangladesh**

Earlier the borders of present-day Bangladesh have been marked. But nature follows its own whims and does not follow boundaries. To talk about Bengal's history, ancient civilization and geography, climate, and rivers, not only the background of greater Bangladesh is enough, but also on an all-India basis. Most of the rivers of present-day Bangladesh flow through West Bengal and Bangladesh. Some rivers originate in the Himalayas but flow over Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal. So, to say something about the rivers of this country, West Bengal also becomes an integral part of the discussion. The geographical identity of the combined territory of Bangladesh and West Bengal is as follows:

In the north are the snow-crowned Himalayas and the Himalayan mountain range, states such as Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. The Brahmaputra River and its valleys in the northeast, the Garo, Khasia, Jaintia, Tripura, and the hilly tracts of Myanmar in the east. Plains up to Dwarbanga or Dwarbhanga in the north-west; on the west by the mountainous Goiric plateau of Rajmahal, Santal Parganas, Chotanagpur, Manbhum, Singhbhum, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj; Bay of Bengal to the south. Bengal is surrounded by high mountains in the north, rugged rock plains in the east and west on both sides, vast seas in the south, and smooth Sufla plains in the middle. This is the geographical identity of Bengal. There are numerous rivers flowing over this land since birth and there are also vast reservoirs.

Like the soil of Bangladesh, the rivers and streams of this country constantly change their currents and have built many civilizations at times and destroyed them at times. Therefore, not only Bangladesh but the civilization and economic foundations of Greater Bengal are related to the flow of rivers. The main reason was that roads were very limited in this country full of rivers, swamps, and forests. Therefore, trade, transactions, exchanges, and transportation are all based on waterways. Transport of goods by river was for ages the easiest and at times the only mode of transport in certain regions. In Bengal, these rivers are one of the sources of vitality of the country. They have taken an important role in shaping the topography of Bengal. The movement of rivers has determined the shape of Bengal. Although these rivers are identified as the main controlling forces of the region, it is not possible to reconstruct the continuous history of their course in ancient times. Because, in ancient times as well as today, the course of these rivers changed frequently. River channel changes are very common, especially in plains. Cities, ports, and trade centers were built on the banks of these rivers, and political centers were also established on their banks. Gaur, Tamralipti, was built on the banks of the Ganges. But the course of the Ganges changed over time. As a result, the communication system of Gaur and Tamralipti was destroyed and their dominance was lost.

Once all their importance is lost. Moreover, the navy was one of the branches of the military forces of the rulers of ancient Bengal. Along with the change of the river channel, the importance of the wharf of a port also disappeared.

So while these rivers helped Bengal prosper, they also destroyed the economy and military power, and political influence at times. Therefore, all historians agree that the change in the course of these rivers deeply affected the lifestyle and overall activities of the people of ancient Bengal.

There are more than seven hundred rivers in Bangladesh alone. These rivers spread across the country like a net. The total length of the river is about 22,155 km. About 1350 billion cubic meters of water flow through these rivers. With this flow of water, about 2.5 million tonnes of silt is deposited annually through Bangladesh into the Bay of Bengal. In the past, the amount of flowing water and sediment carried by the river was much higher. Arable land, localities, cities, and ports have been built on this sediment. Again this river has destroyed many towns and cultivable land. This erosion of the river has been going on at an unstoppable pace for ages. A brief history of the flow of notable rivers and their contribution to the rise and fall of the country is given below:

### **Major rivers of Bangladesh:**

Karnaphuli 180 Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong, Kapotakh 260 Jessore (80) Khulna (180), Kumar 162 Jessore, Faridpur, Kushiara 228 Sylhet (228), Chhota Feni-Dakatia 195 Noakhali (95) Comilla (100), Lower Meghna 160 from Chandpur to Bay of Bengal, Matamuhuri 287 Chittagong Hills and Chittagong Mathabhanga 156 Rajshahi (16) Kushtia (140), Navganga 230 Kushtia (26) Jessore (204), Old Brahmaputra 276 Mymensingh (276), Punarbhaba 160 Dinajpur (80) Rajshahi (80), Rupsa-Pasur 141 Khulna (141), Sangu 173 Chittagong Hill Tracts



(92) Chittagong (80), Surma-Meghna 670 Sylhet (290), Comilla (235), Barisal (145), Teesta 155 Rangpur (115) Ganges and Brahmaputra and Their numerous branches mark the boundaries of the natural and diverse parts of Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh has been divided into four major divisions: North, West, Central and East. Each of them is rich in tradition. These are respectively. The ancient Pundravardhana region, north of the main course of the Ganges, the Padma, and west of the Brahmaputra, had one of its famous mandals, Varendra, 2. The other tributary of the Ganges was the ancient Raja on the western side of the Bhagirathi, 3. The section between the Bhagirathi, the Padma, the lower Brahmaputra and the Meghna is Bengal and 4. 55

## **(Article-2): What can be done to protect the river; A study**

### **Importance of rivers in Bangladesh:**

Bangladesh is a river-dependent country. Hundreds of thousands of rivers and canals, canals and canals are scattered throughout the country. Until recently, rivers were the main means of communication for the people of the country. Rivers were the means of isolation and communication for this small country. Gradually, the communication system of Bangladesh is improving by building bridges over the main rivers. Undoubtedly, accessibility of communication paves the way for human development. Besides, it is also true that Bangladesh's culture and people's lifestyles are mostly built around rivers. The civilization of the ages has been built on the basis of the river. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the river which has been completely neglected.

### **World Rivers Day:**

A 'World Rivers Day' is observed in the international arena. World River Day is celebrated in different countries of the world including Bangladesh to protect rivers. The main purpose of observing the day is to make people aware of river protection. River protection activities are seen all over the world. However, as rivers and human life are inseparable in our country, common people including environmentalists are concerned about rivers. World Rivers Day is celebrated every year on the last Sunday of September to raise awareness about rivers. Earlier in 2005, the United Nations declared a 'Water for Life Decade' to create public awareness for river conservation.

### **Bangladesh River Protection Commission:**

In order to prevent illegal encroachment of the river, water and environment pollution, river pollution caused by industrial factories, construction of illegal structures, and various irregularities and to restore the normal flow of the river, proper maintenance of the river and making it navigable, it is necessary to ensure the multi-dimensional use of the river for socio-economic development. Commissions were constituted and some laws were also drafted. But it can be seen in the media that even though the National River Protection Commission Act was drafted 2 years ago, it has not yet been enacted. Although many bills have been passed in the National Assembly in these 2 years, this draft law still remains in limbo. If the government is really serious about saving the country's rivers, it should take immediate steps to enact a new National River Protection Act. Any delay in passing the law will worsen the condition of our rivers. Because one after another, all our rivers are slowly dying due to continuous encroachment and pollution.

### **Need river census:**

It can be seen from various historical data - in the 19th century, there were four and a half thousand rivers in the entire region. The Water Development Board says that the number of rivers is currently 450. As private it is 7 hundred. But the river census has not been done yet. So it is difficult to say the actual number of rivers in the country. It is only possible to get an

accurate account of the country's rivers only by determining the river census and river definition.

According to river researchers, rivers never die alone. When the river dies, the towns on the banks also start to die little by little. If the capital Dhaka is the reason for the death of the Buriganga, then the condition of Dhaka is almost ruined due to the death of the river! Buriganga, Turag, Banshi, Balu and Shitalakshya rivers are gradually becoming lifeless due to the poisoning of untreated waste from industrial factories. To get out of this situation, it is necessary to arrange river governance quickly.

### **What is the rule of the river? Or what is river rule?**

The country's rivers are usually eroded on both sides and their banks are broken. Houses, land, and property are lost. To prevent such erosion, large stones can be thrown at the height of the bank from the river surface, or concrete blocks can be made like a dam between the water flow and the bank. It is an effective method of river governance.

Besides, reclamation of river beds to maintain navigability and depth of river, maintaining water flow and river environment is another form of river governance.

Along with that, various initiatives like constructing large reservoirs, retaining water by renovating the dykes, and improving the quality of water can be taken very easily. By doing this, it will be possible to save the water necessary to prevent desertification in the country and to prevent the pressure of the water coming down from the upstream. Unwanted floods can also be prevented.