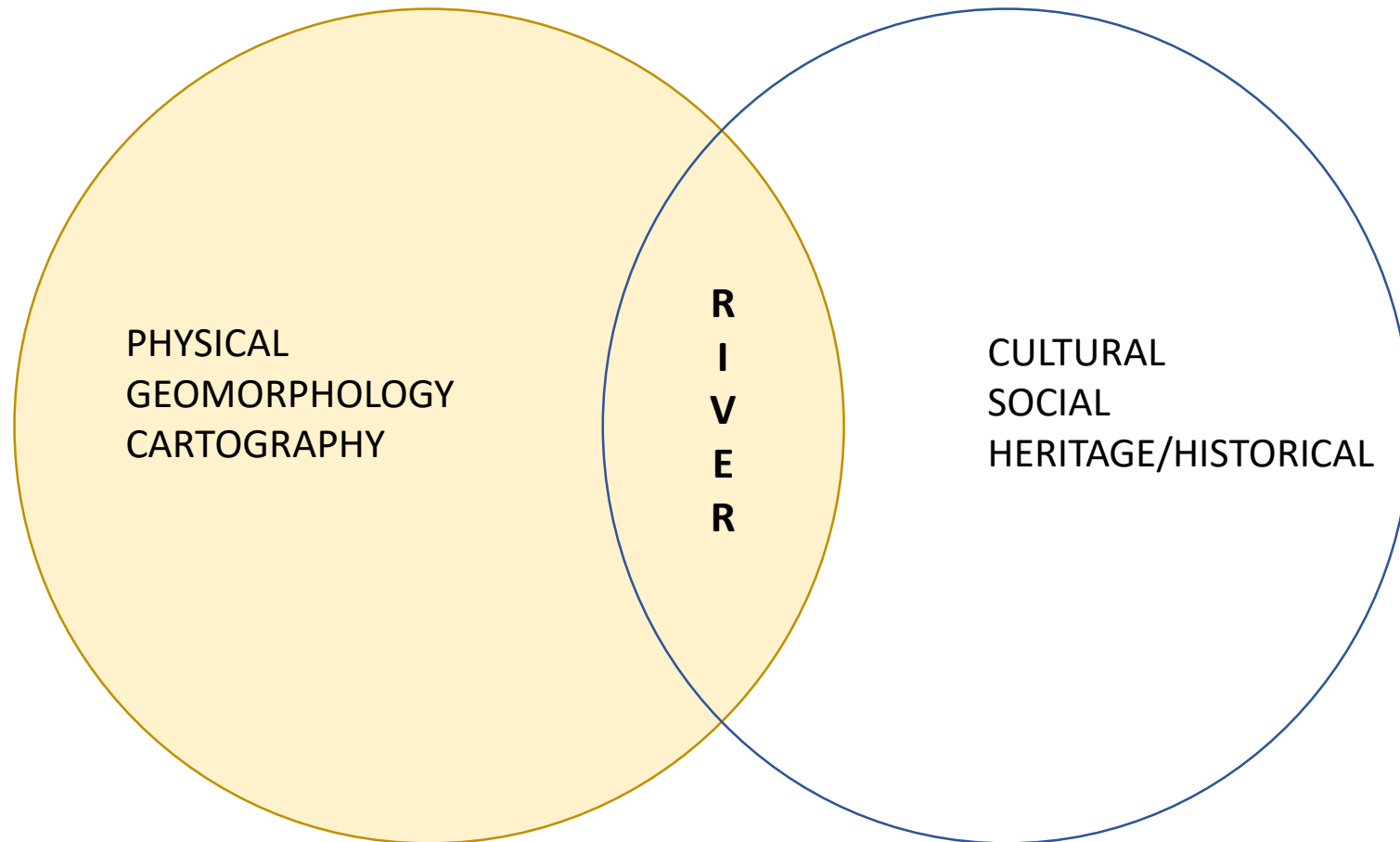




Adi Ganga: Nature, Networks & Narratives

ADI GANGA : An amalgamation of various themes






MESSY ASSEMBLAGE of a LANDSCAPE



**Distributary
Tidal creek of the Ganga delta system**



The old channel of the Hoogly



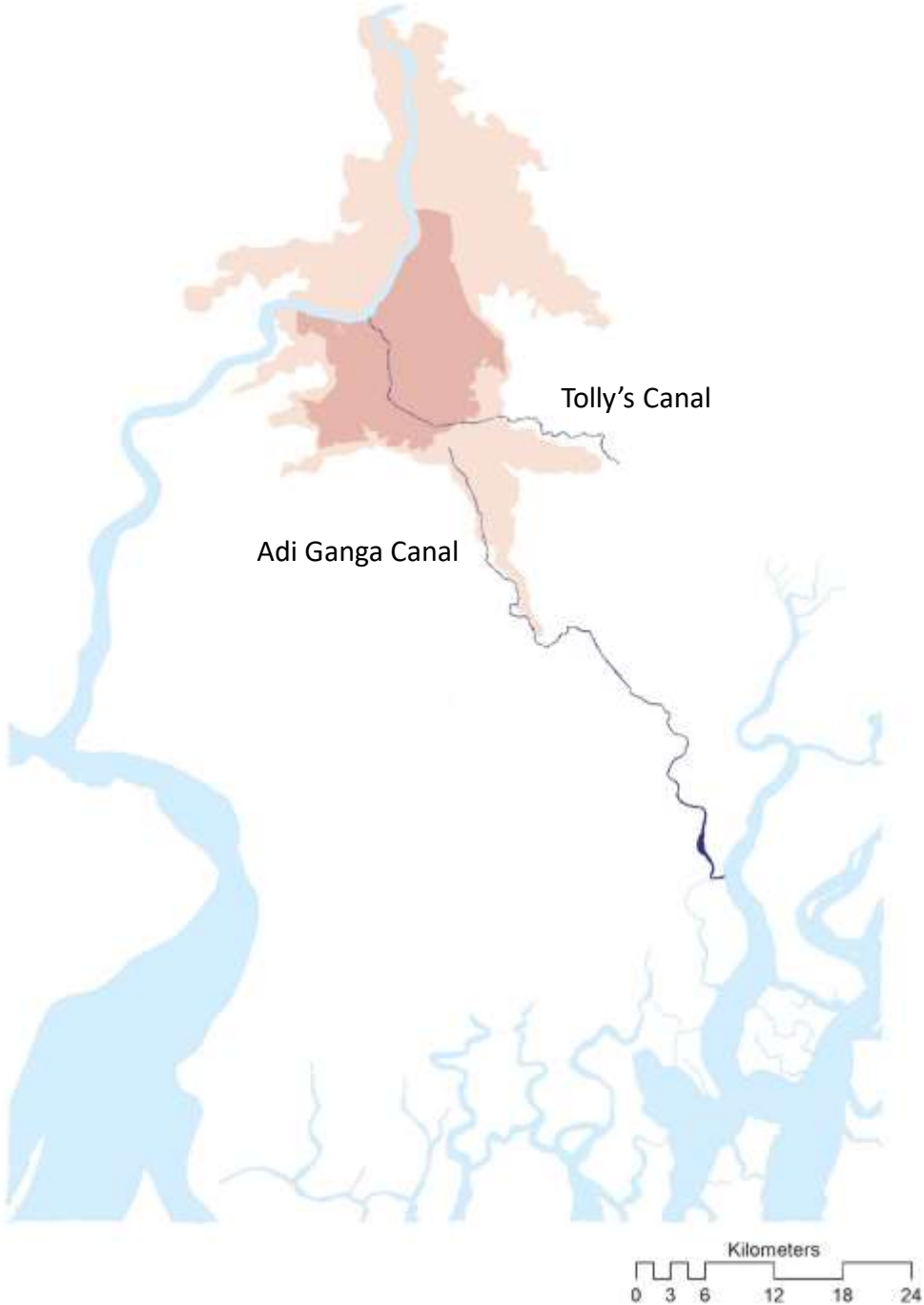
Tidal dynamism

A photograph of a river with murky, silty water. The water reflects the surrounding trees and sky. The riverbank in the foreground is covered in a thick layer of dark sediment, littered with various pieces of trash including plastic bags, a white plate, and other debris. In the background, there are lush green trees and some structures, possibly houses, partially visible through the foliage. The overall scene suggests environmental degradation and pollution.

Silty dynamics

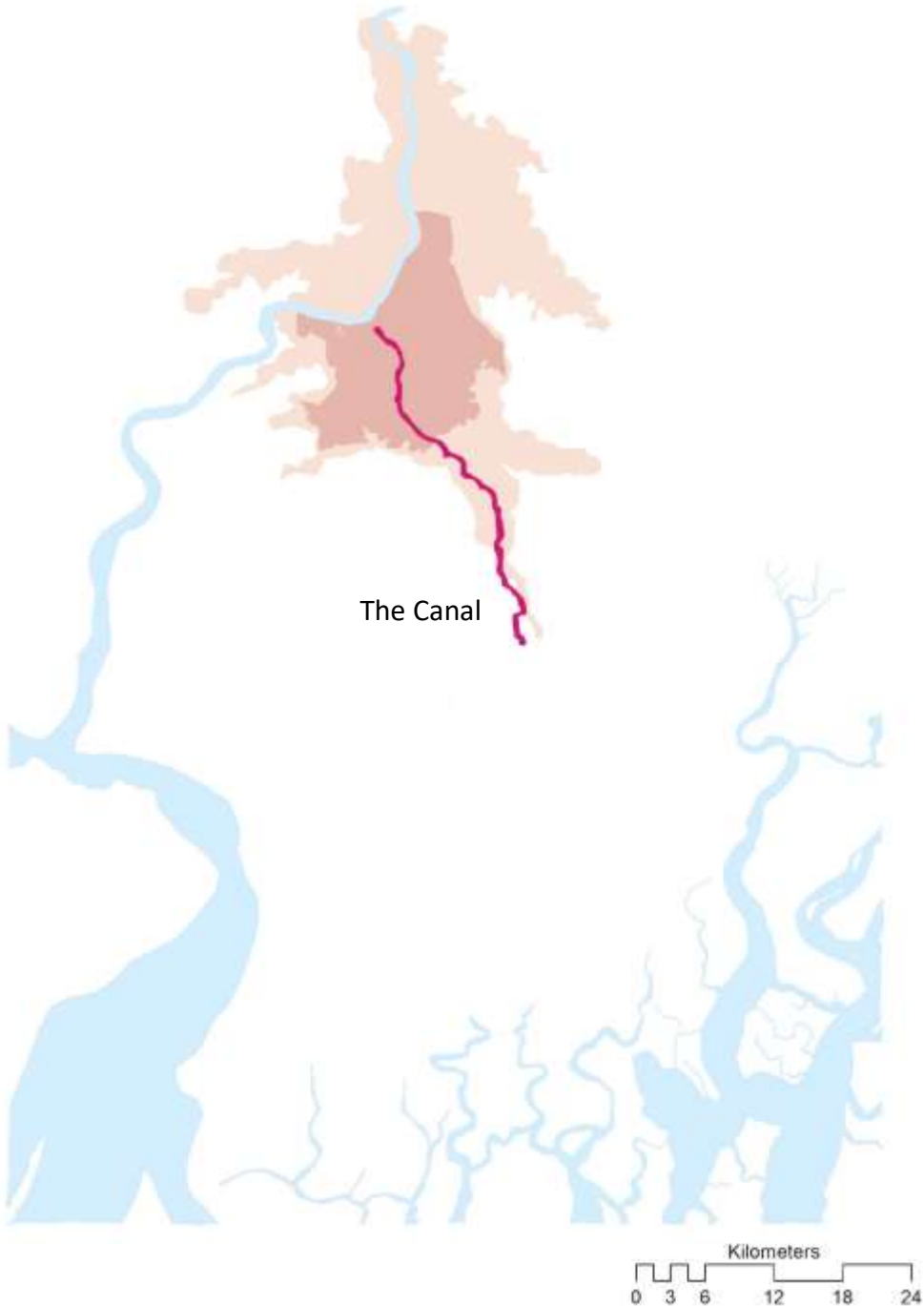
Adi Ganga- Tolly's Canal
Google Earth and Bing Maps (2021)

- Urban Sprawl
- Kolkata
- Water bodies

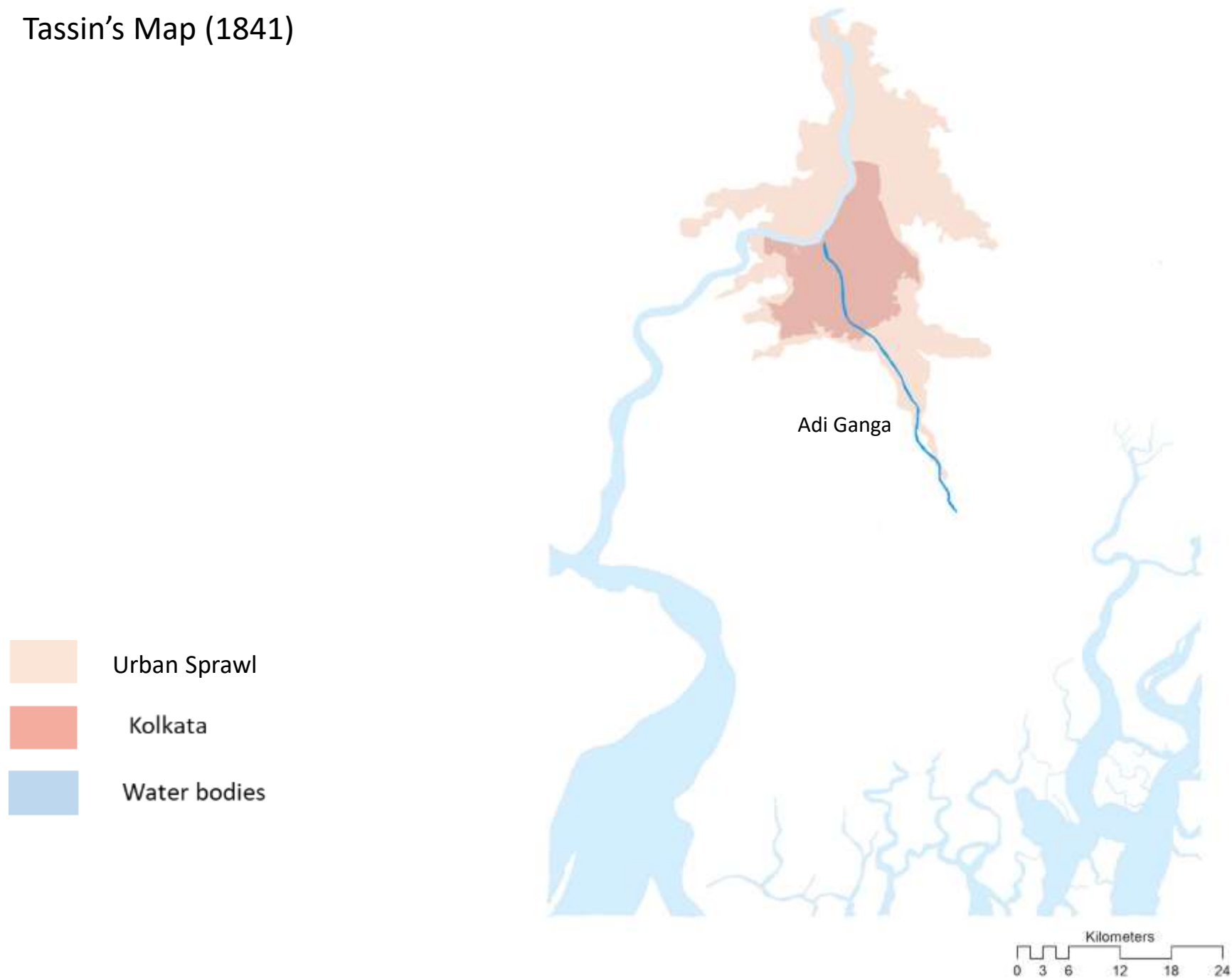


Renell’s Map (1767)

- Urban Sprawl
- Kolkata
- Water bodies



Tassin's Map (1841)

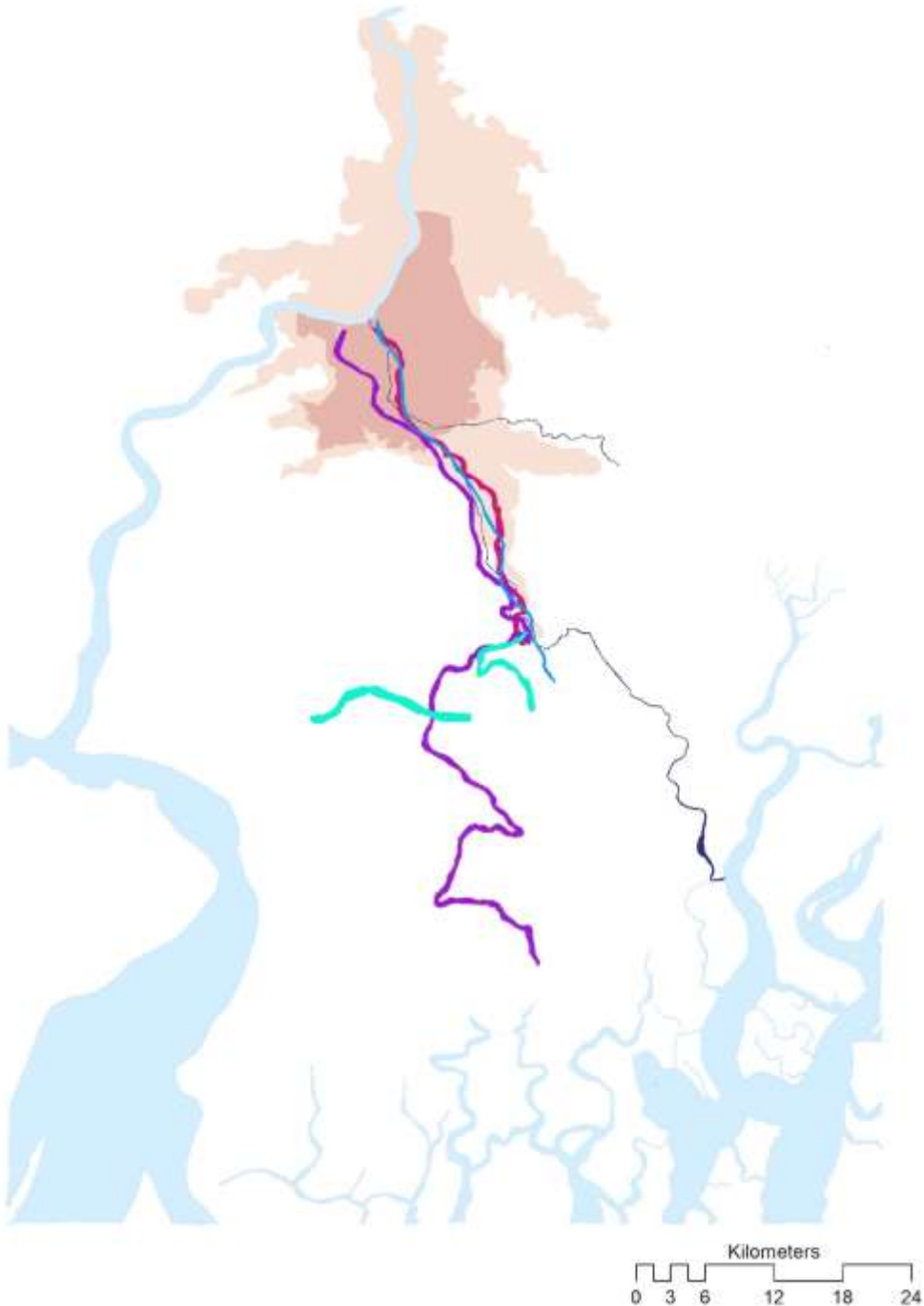


Rudra's Map (2010)

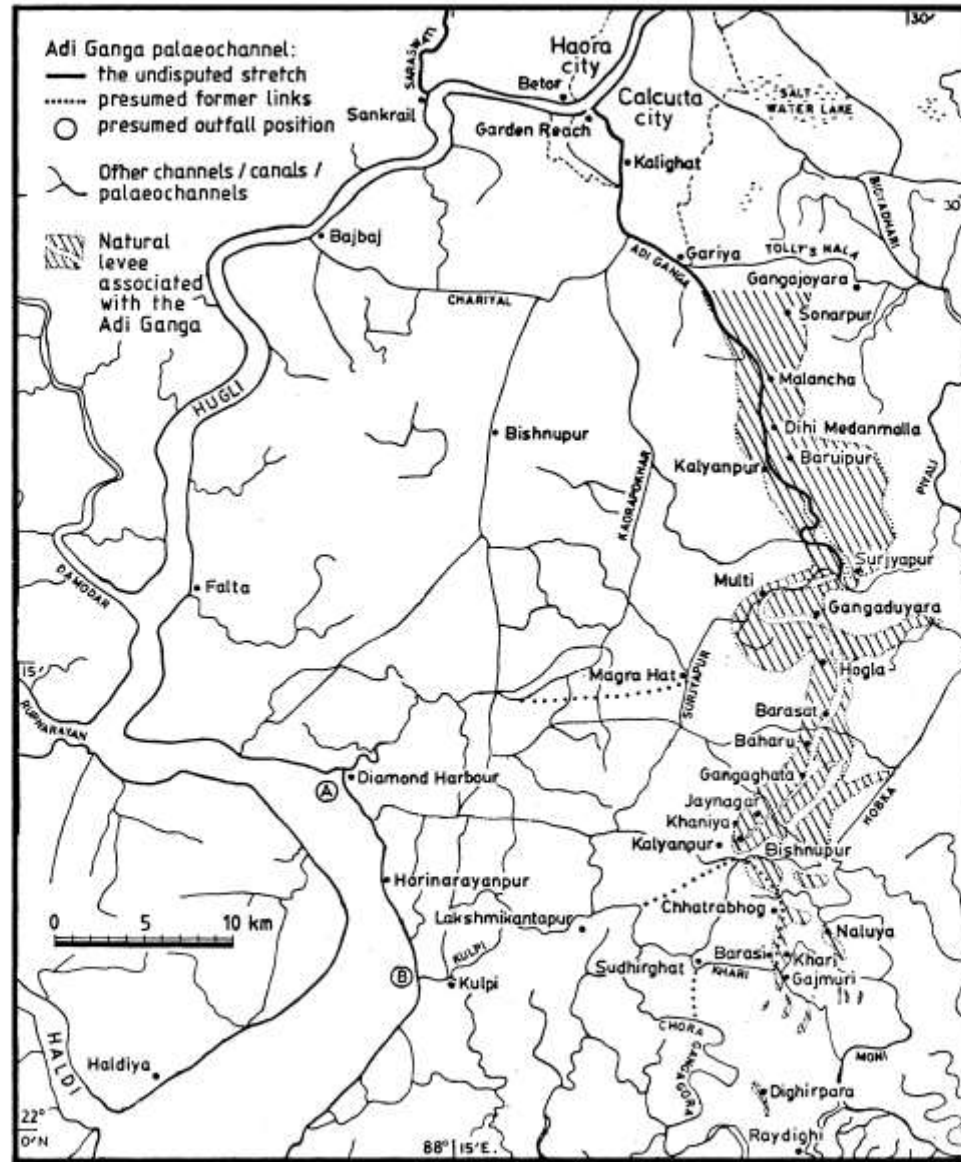
- Urban Sprawl
- Kolkata
- Water bodies



The Cartographic Contestation
centring around the river



Source: Banerji, 2021
(unpublished)



JOINS THE FOLLOWING MAP

Source: Bandyopadhyay, 1996



Adi Ganga- Field Sketch Map

The Heritage River

SEARCH attempts for Adi Ganga revival in IIT-Kharagpur workshop

Somdatta Basu | TNN | Updated: Dec 31, 2018, 20:09 IST

✉ 🖨 A- A+

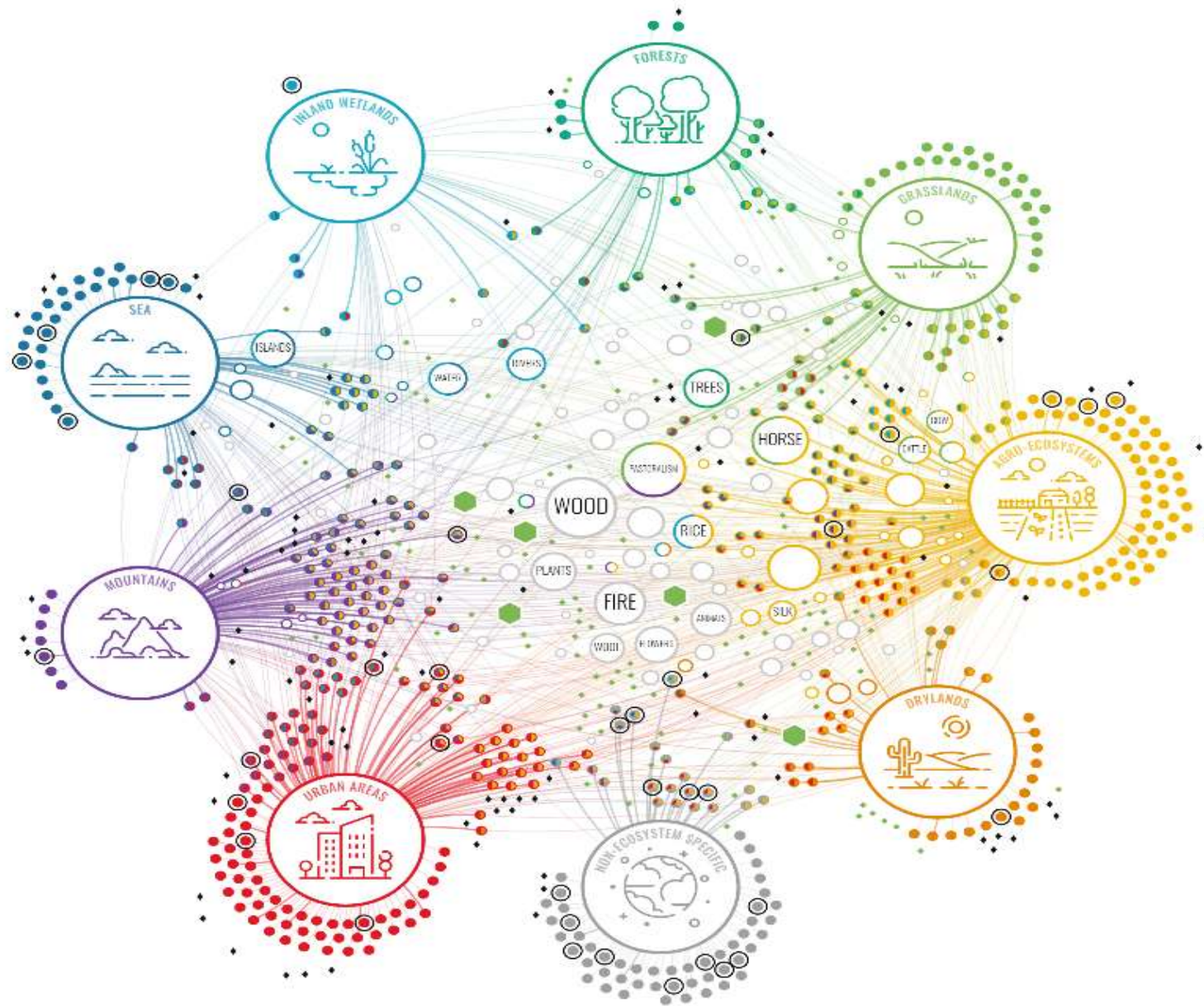


The plight of Adi Ganga. (File Photo)

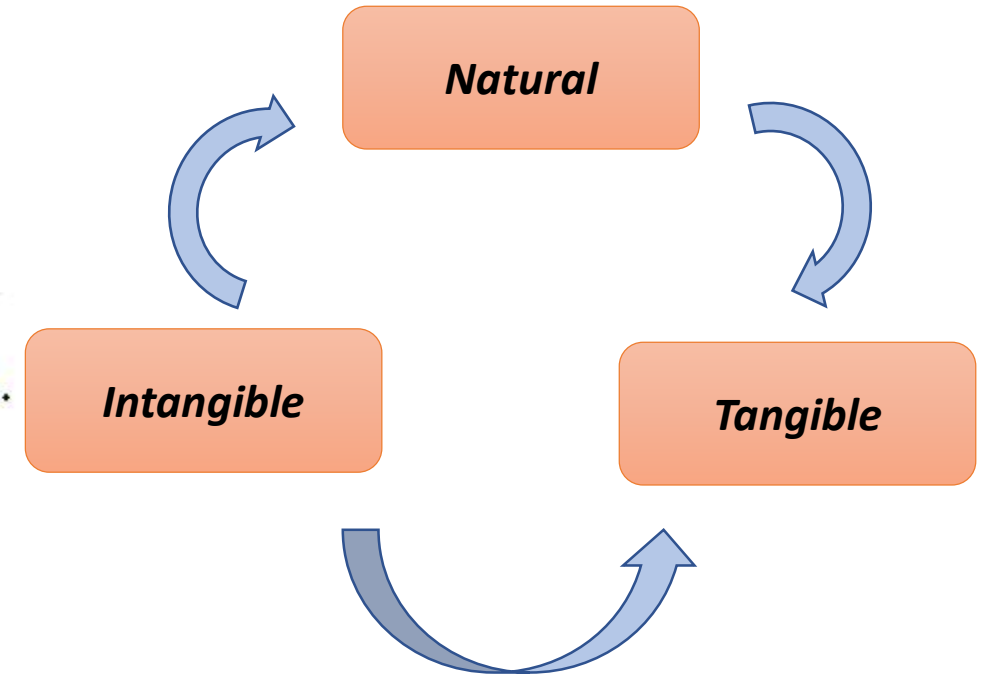
environmentalists

KOLKATA: The heritage canal Tolly's Nullah, which is the backbone of the city's drainage system, has almost been wrecked by unchecked construction, related land-fill, the lack of proper waste management and periodic maintenance. Reviving the [Ac Ganga](#) – Tolly's Nullah water channel has become a key concern for government bodies, urban planners and





Understanding Heritage



Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

UNESCO Living Heritage and its relation to Biomes and Resources

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/dive&display=biome>

New Zealand river first in the world to be given legal human status

🕒 15 March 2017 | Asia



GETTY IMAGES

The Whanganui River is revered by New Zealand's Maori people

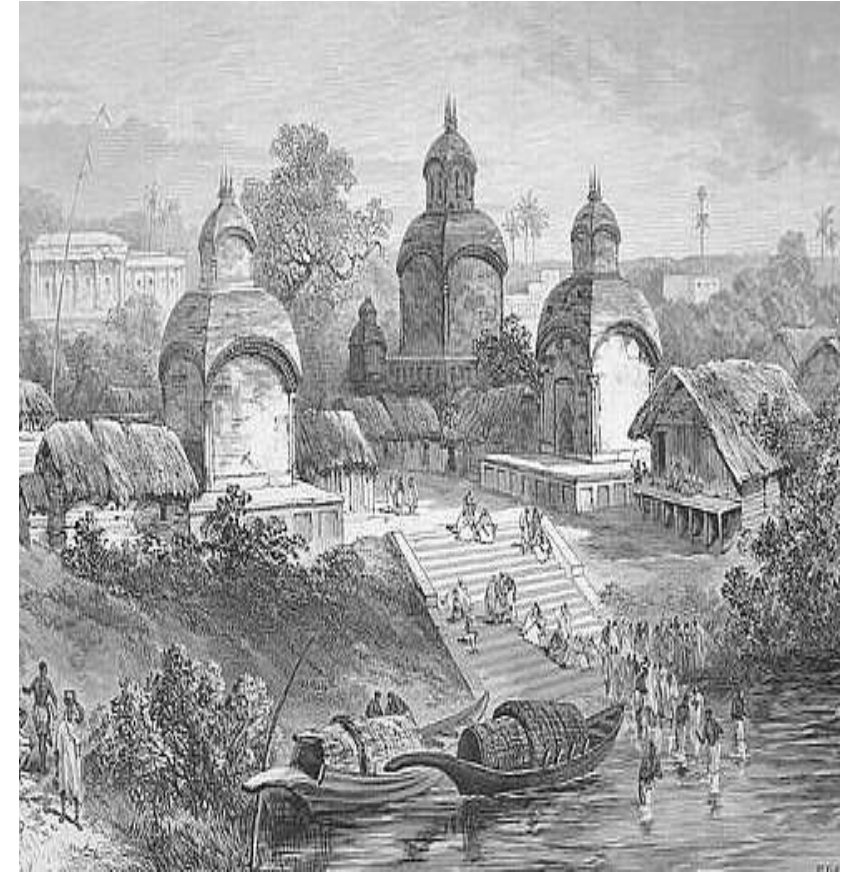
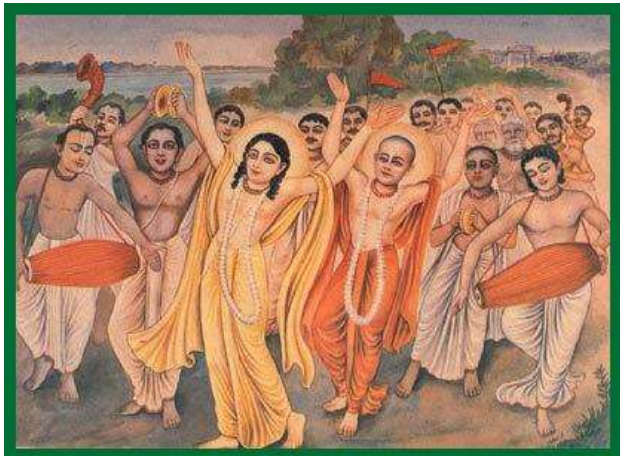
A river in New Zealand has become the first in the world to be granted the same legal rights as a person.

The New Zealand parliament passed the bill recognising the Whanganui River, in North Island, as a living entity.

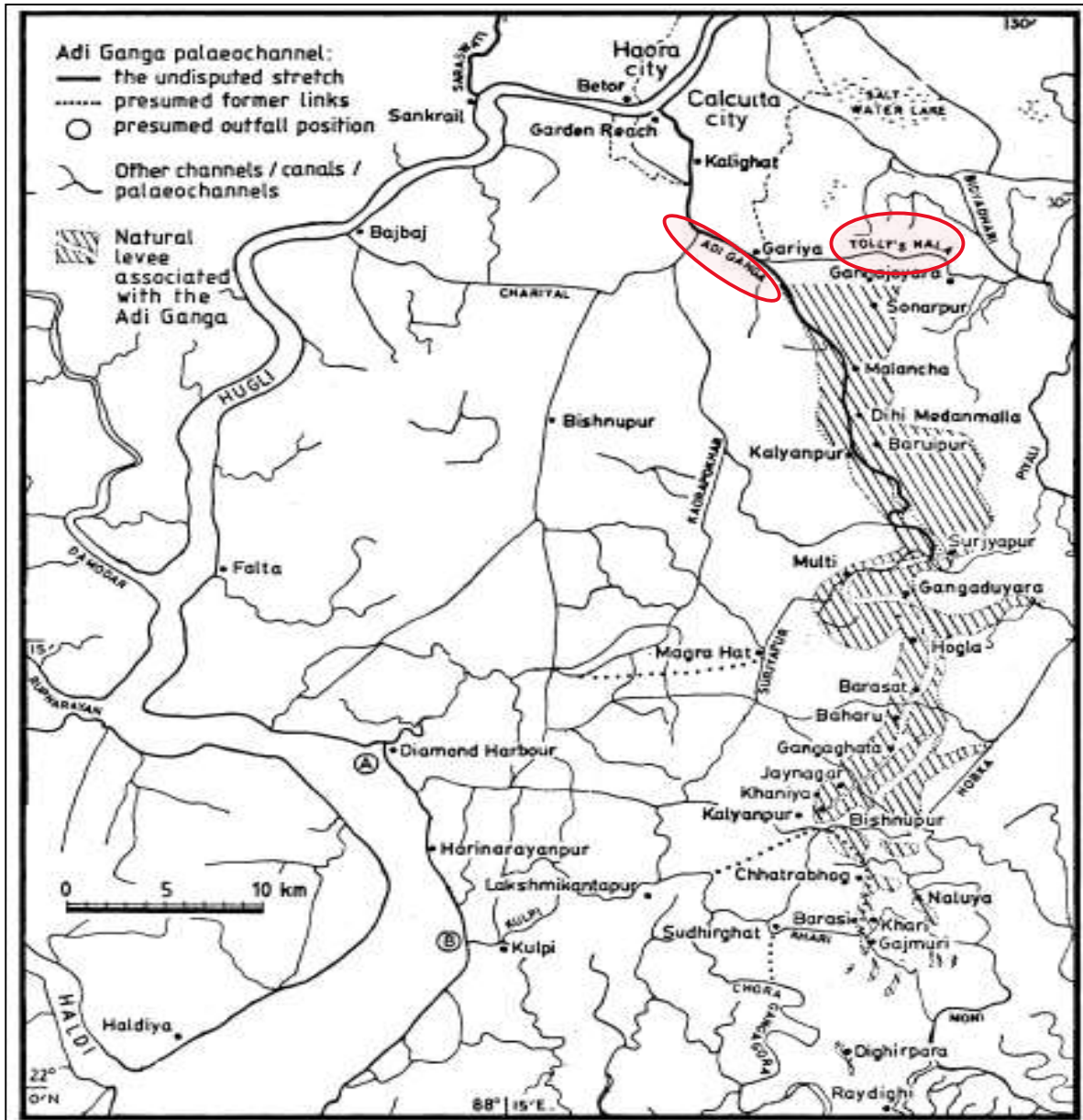
"I am the River, The River is me"

Rivers and Heritage Initiative, UNESCO

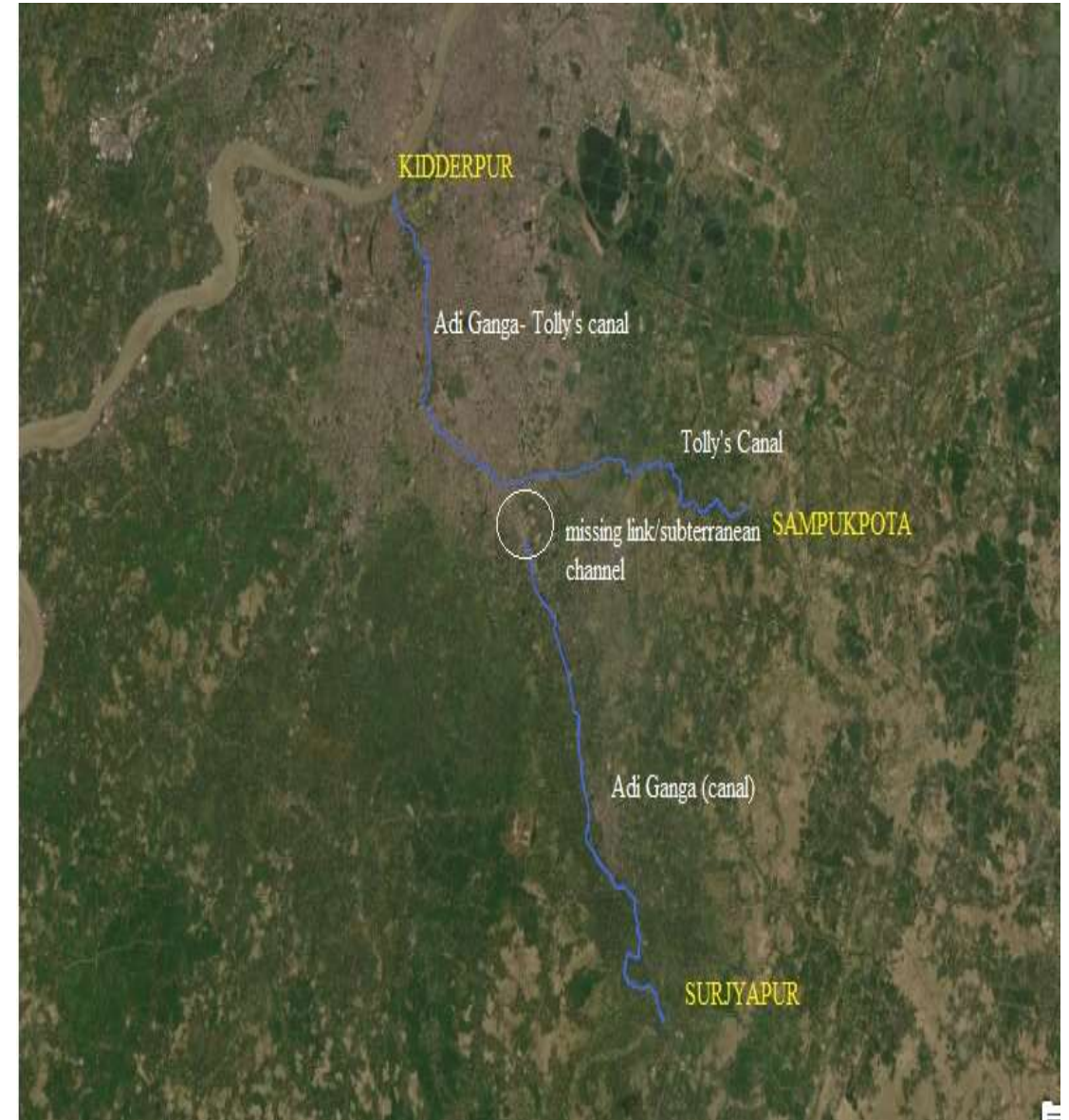
An Illustrious Past



River or Canal?



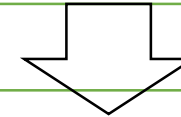
Bandopadhyay, S; 1996



Banerji, D; 2021 (Unpublished)

Colonial Interventions

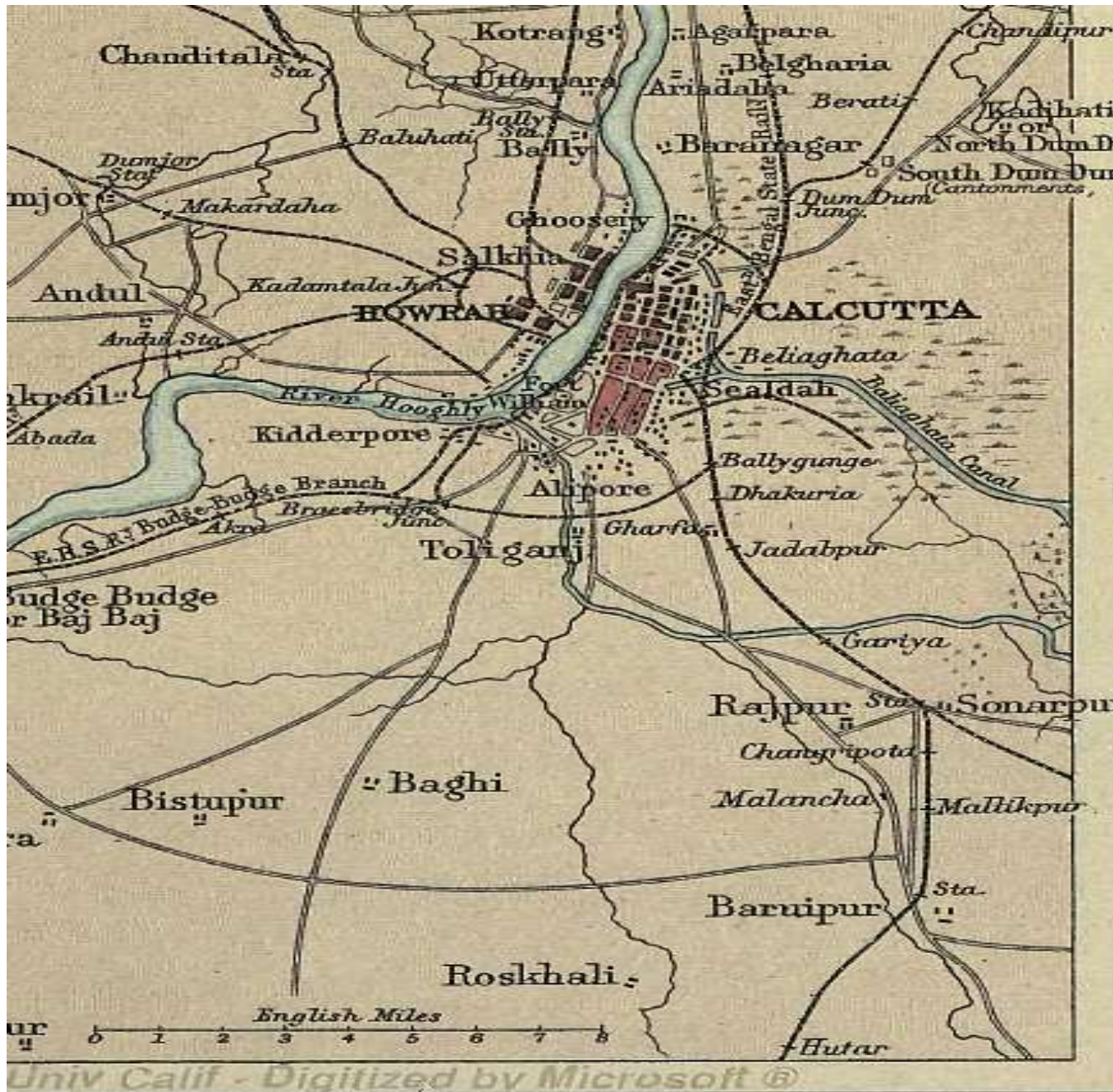
Inception of 'Tolly's Nullah' by Major William Tolly in 1775



"The Deed recites the former grant to the late Colonel William Tolley, the Will of the Deceased, and that Mrs Tolley had proved the same in the prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury and taken upon herself the sole executioner thereof..."

-an extract from Proceedings of Governor General in Council in Public Department dated 23rd October 1786

June 8th, 1804, proceeding 24; WBSA



Bartholomew, J.G, 1900

Tolly's Nullah.

Years.

	<i>Collection</i>	<i>Charges</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>Receipts</i>
<i>1818/19.</i>	<i>89,596</i>	<i>7,705</i>	<i>81,891</i>	
<i>1819/20.</i>	<i>88,401</i>	<i>8,214</i>	<i>80,187</i>	
<i>1820/21.</i>	<i>78,495</i>	<i>9,621</i>	<i>68,874</i>	
<i>1821/22.</i>	<i>76,010</i>	<i>7,447</i>	<i>68,563</i>	
<i>1822/23.</i>	<i>67,739</i>	<i>17,477</i>	<i>50,262</i>	
<i>1823/24.</i>	<i>67,351</i>	<i>7,475</i>	<i>59,876</i>	
<i>1824/25.</i>	<i>68,708</i>	<i>6,529</i>	<i>62,179</i>	

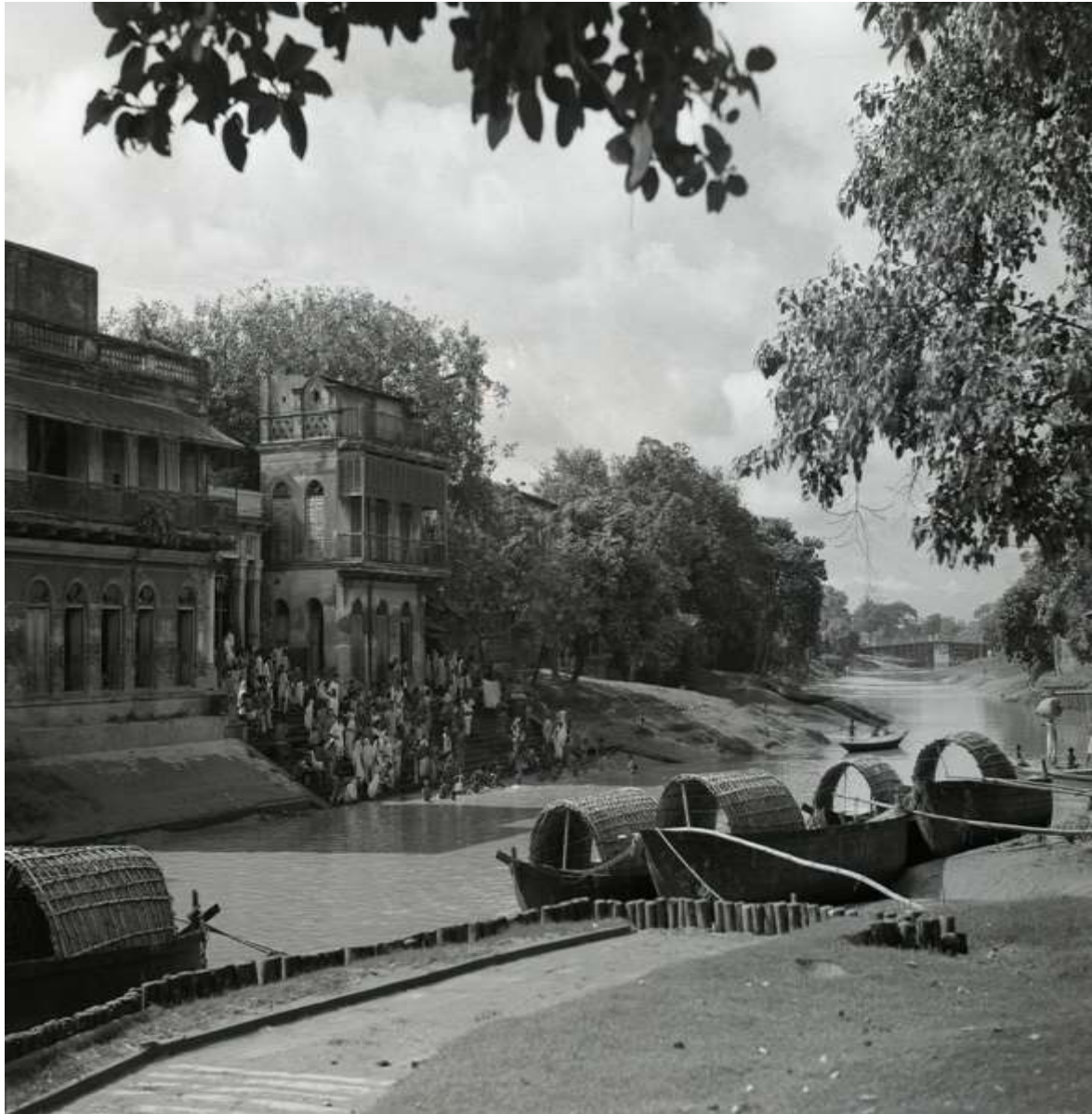
YEARS	TOLLY'S NULLAH		
	COLLECTIONS	CHARGES	NET RECEIPTS
1818/19	89,596	7,705	81,891
1819/20	88,401	8,214	80,187
1820/21	78,495	9,621	68,874
1821/22	76,010	7,447	68,563
1822/23	67,739	17,477	50,262
1823/24	67,351	7,475	59,876
1824/25	68,708	6,529	62,179

An annual account of tolls from 1818/19 to 1824/25 from Holt Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government

Years	Boats passing through Circular Canal	Boats passing through Tolly's Nala	Total
1855-56	87,780	84,215	171,995
1856-57	92,475	73,776	166,251
1857-58	97,095	77,139	174,234
1858-59	106,200	72,063	178,263
1859-60	91,133	96,579	187,712
1860-61	135,410	8,365	143,775
1861-62	141,953	93,794	235,747
1862-63	145,727	68,737	214,464
1863-64	145,778	87,274	233,052
1864-65	154,909	81,153	236,062

Prior to 1860 boats under 25 mds. burden were not registered as they paid no tolls.

From a holy river to a sewer



Adi Ganga, 1945



Adi Ganga, 2021

Shades of Environmentalism



Nostalgia vs Social Realities



Mohit Ray

Environmental and human rights activist based in Kolkata

HOME ABOUT ARTICLES BOOKS

Save Adi Ganga

People throughout the world are now becoming conscious of their heritages. And heritage includes a large number of varied things. It may be a special dialect, a dance, a musical tradition or even a hill, a forest, a river. A community's history can be intertwined with a small local river; a river may represent a country's tradition. There is no Vedic India without the river Saraswati or a later India without the Ganga. There is no Kalidasa without the Shipra river, no Bhatiali song without the river Padma. Similarly Bengal's history is linked with Adi Ganga.

Conservation by/for whom?

‘Bourgeois Environmentalism’ (Baviskar 2006, 2011)

The Metro Story





A Tale of Brutal Eviction

- Development vs Ecological Devastation
- Grassroot vs Government

Environmentalism of the poor
(Guha & Martinez, 1997)



Area	Families	Number of People
Hastings to Tolly Golf Club	2, 500	12, 500
Tollygunge to Garia	1, 300	6, 500
Garia to Samukpota	450	2, 250
Boat Canal to Tolly's Canal	4, 350	20, 250

(Source: *Biday Adiganga* (in Bengali), Vasundhara Foundation, 2003, p 10)



Whose River?

Narratives of Now



References

Baviskar, A. (2006). Demolishing Delhi: World-class city in the making. *Mute*, 2(3), 88–95.

Baviskar, A. (2011). What the eye does not see: The Yamuna in the imagination of Delhi. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 46(50), 45–53.

Guha, R., & Martinez-Alier, J. (1997). *Varieties of environmentalism*. London: Earthscan.

Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. NY and Oxon, Routledge.

Mukherjee, J. (2016). The Adi Ganga: A forgotten river in Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 51(8).

Mukherjee, J. (2020). *Blue Infrastructures of Kolkata: Natural History, Political Ecology and Urban Development in Kolkata*. Springer. Singapore

Bandyopadhyay, S. (1996). Location of the Adi Ganga palaeochannel, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal: A review. *Geographical Review of India*. 58. 93-109.