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Why there are gender differences in the case of Indian rivers-factors behind it, is geological or mythological: A study on Indian cultural history on river

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Abstract

The historical importance of Indian River leads beyond their physical presence, as they deeply woven into cultural, religious, agricultural and economic fabric of the country. Rivers have always played an important role for shaping human civilization. Learning riverine nature in different parts of India, we have seen dance of life to the rhythm of the water in river culture of India. It also effects the the specific roles of religion in different cultural activities. The importance of the river in development of civilization explores the geographical maps of ancient India. The aim of this paper is to identify, why there are few rivers in India recognized as Male River and analyse, the human-river relationship and its impact of their livelihood from ages. How Indian rivers belonging with Indians thoughts and mythological stories in the religious aspects. It is time to go deeper into this issue to understand about the history of Indian cultural reverence and their enduring legacy in modern India.

Keywords: Indian cultural history, Indian mythology, gender and space in Indian culture and Hinduism, feminine and masculine rivers of India, religious and spiritual perspectives on Indian philosophy, river culture of India, cultural history, Vedic literature and Puranas, rivers of India, geology of Indian sub-continent

Introduction

Rivers have been of central importance throughout the human history. Water from the rivers is a basic natural resource, essential for various human activities. Therefore, the river banks have involved as shelters from ancient times. India Rivers have played an important role in the history of the country. Parts of the country are very dry and arid, and thus the rivers of India have helped as irrigation, drinking water, electricity, and even afford transportation. For these reasons, almost all major cities in India are located along with the rivers. Because the livelihood of many Indian is dependent on the river, it has taken on a symbol of holiness in Hindu tradition. It gives life through quenching thirst and watering corps.

The people of Indian sub-continent often used to address some rivers as male and some as female. In India, we allocate specific gender to rivers. Some are male and rest of them is female. In India, we call Female River as *Nadee* (female version of river) and Male River as *Nad* (male version of river). Apart from gender aspect, in India, all rivers are commonly considered as *Nadee*, instead of *Brahmaputra*, *Sindh* (Indus River), *Sone*, *Ajay*, *Dwarakeswar*, *Damodar Nad* (masculine river of India). In India, *Nadee* (river) is the general connotation for river. Some Indians also refer to the river *Brahmaputra* as “it is the only Indian river that is attributed the masculine gender and thus referred to as a ‘नद’, (*Nad*) in Indo-Aryan languages and languages with Indo-Aryan influence. Beside of these, all other Indian rivers are referred to as ‘नदी (*Nadee*)”.

Of course, there are no neuter genders for rivers. It is only when we mention the names of specific rivers e.g. Ganga or *Brahmaputra*, that we suffix the names with *Nad* or *Nadee* and we like to call *Ganga Nadee* and *Brahmaputra Nad*. Then now this thought may come to mind, why are some rivers considered as masculine. What could be the reason behind this? They have some geographical features that set these rivers apart or is there a mythological story behind it? In this connection, I want to focus on the subject that all rivers are not feminine and *Brahmaputra* is not only the masculine river in India. Few other male rivers in India are considering by Hindus from time immemorially.

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Description: Geological life of Rivers (notable for ‘Masculine River’ in India): It is necessary to make out the geographical identity of these rivers before going to discuss their nature and norms. These are essential to talk about their important features and their sources and end. The names of important male rivers of India and their detailed descriptions are as following, where we will give brief note on six male rivers in India-

The River Brahmaputra: The *Brahmaputra* River is the one of a famous Indian river for attributing the masculine gender. The *Brahmaputra* is one of the largest rivers of India, as well as Asia. Courses of *Brahmaputra* River covers three nations are Tibet, India, and Bangladesh. This river originated at *Manas-saravar* near the holy mount *Kailash* in

Tibet. It is a trans-boundary river system which flows through southeast of china, northeastern India and Bangladesh. The *Brahmaputra* River is approximately 2,900km. Long and it flows for length of approximately 916km. within India before entering Bangladesh.

It passes through the entire Tibetan Plateau before entering India. Here it is known as *Tsangpo* River. Then, it enters India in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and cutting into the valley of Himalaya where it known as *Siang*. Here, it breaks through Himalaya near *Namcha Barwa* pick and enters to the Assam as *Dibang*. Then, the river passes through the Assam valley as *Brahmaputra* and south through Bangladesh as *jamuna*. At last it merges with the river *Padma* known as *Meghna*.

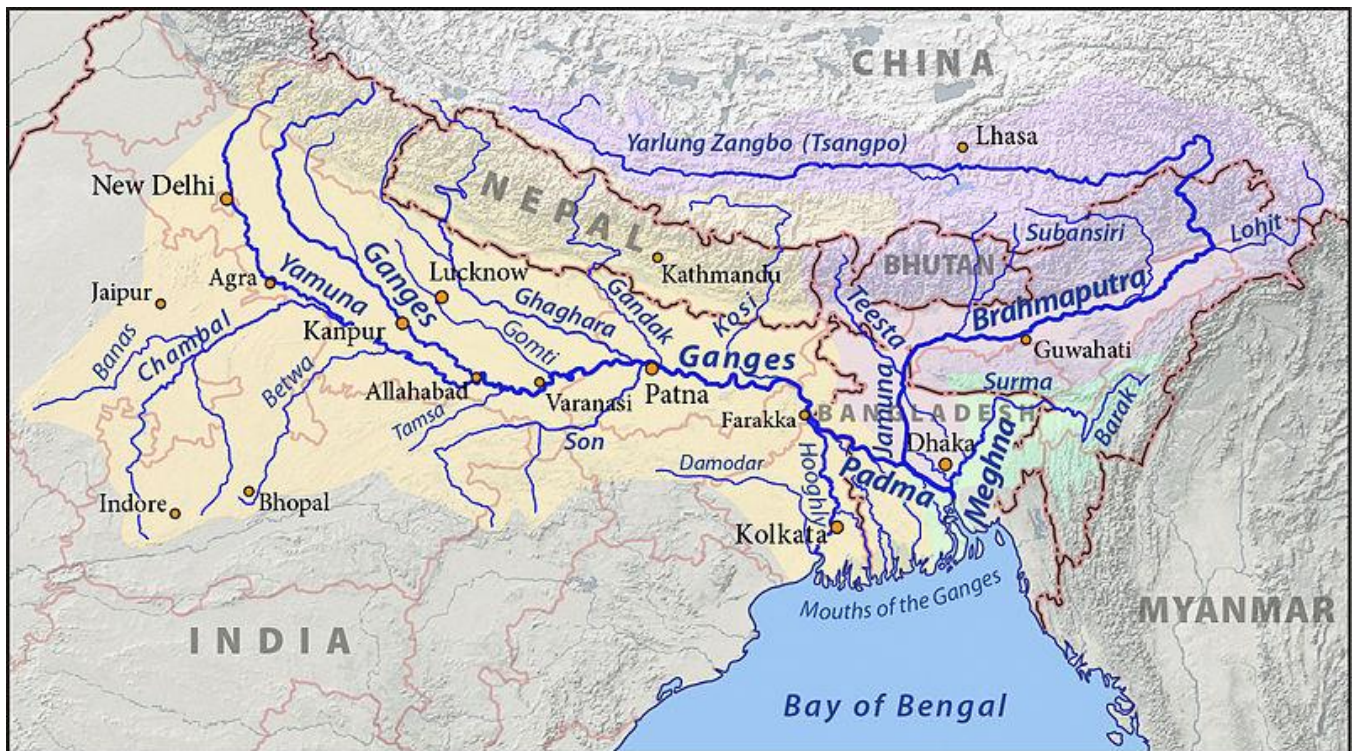


Plate 1: The River *Brahmaputra* is a trans-boundary river system.

The River Sindhu/Sindh (Indus River): Indus river is west-flowing river. It originates in the Tibetan plateau near Lake *Mansaravar*. After entering in India it flows between Ladakh and Karakorum Range. Then it enters to POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) region, post which it enters Pakistan. It forms delta and draining into the Arabian Sea. It is a trans-boundary river system. It flows through three countries- China (Tibet), India (Ladakh region), and Pakistan. It is most important drainage system of the subcontinent of India. There are five major left bank tributaries of Indus- *Jhelum*, *Chenab*, *Ravi*, *Beas*, *Sultej*. The river *Shyok* is main right bank tributary of the Indus. Neither Indus nor any of its tributary cut the topic of cancer or IST line. Its length is approximately 3,180 to 3,249 km. And it flows for length of approximately 709km. within India

before entering Pakistan. Which is one of the longest rivers in Asia. The seven rivers of *Sindhu*, or ‘*Sapta Sindhu*’ refers to the Indus River. Its six tributaries mentioned in ancient Vedic text specifically-the Indus (*sindhu*), *Jhilam* (*vitasta*), *Chenab* (*Asikni* or *Chandrabhaga*), *Ravi* (*parushni*), *Beas* (*Vipasha*), *Saltej* (*Shutudri*). The name Hindu is delivered from the Sanskrit word *sindhu* and ‘Indus’ in ancient Rome. It is the lifeline of civilization. It forms the backbone of agriculture and food production in Pakistan. The river was the pathway of various invasions and conquests, example like Alexander the great, Mahmud of Gajani, Taimur Lang of Samarkand etc. And it continues to become a significant cultural symbol of history. This river has significant historical and cultural importance that one of example is Indus valley civilization.



Plate 2: The River *Sindhu (Indus)* is a trans-boundary river system.

The River Son (or Sone): The River Son (or Sone) is a major southern tributary of the Ganga (Ganges) River in central India. The origin place of the river is Amarkantak hills in the Maikal range, Madhya Pradesh. The river flows through Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Finally it merges with Ganga River on its southern bank near Patna, Bihar. The Sone or Son river is 784km.

long, which is one of the longest Indian rivers. Its major tributaries are *Rihand*, *North koel*, and *Gopad* rivers. The river name Son or Sone come from Sanskrit word (shon). It is also associated to golden-colored, shining sand found along its banks. In Hindi the name ‘Son’ itself is of masculine gender.



Plate 3: The River Son and its tributaries

The River Damodar: The *Damodar* is an inter-state river in the state of Jharkhand and west Bengal in India. The

Damodar is another Masculine river in India. It emerges from the *Boda Hill* near *Khamerpet hills* at “Kuru” Block of

Lohadanga in Chatonagpur plateau of Jharkhand and flows through into two states. In some of the local languages of Jharkhand; *Damodar* River is called as *Damuda*. *Damu* means holy and *Da* means water. The Damodar river length is approximately 592km., after a long traversing for 368 mile (592 Km) through west Bengal it merges into the *Hooghly* River. Gradually, the Chanel of the river has changed its way. Present days, most of its water deposits into the *Mundeswari* River. The River *Mundeswari* emerges with the other rivers and finally falls into the *Runarayan* River. The *Damodar* River meets to the *Hooghly* River southwest of Calcutta.

The River *Damodar* has a number of tributaries. The rivers called as *Barakar*, *Konar*, *Usri*, *Bokaro*, *Bhera* etc. The *Barakar* River is most important tributary of *Damodar* River then others.

Geology and Geo-morphology of *Damodar* River is much diversified. The *Damodar* Valley region has wide-spread plains, plateau and high lands with interesting geo-morphic differences. According to the geologist, "Different rocks types igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic of different geological periods are found in the *Damodar* Valley. Broadly the geology of lower *Damodar* valley is quite different from the middle and upper valley. The lower valley is thickly covered with thick layer of alluviums over the solid rocks of tertiary age. The different Geo-morphic units of *Damodar* valley regions are related to three principal relief features of India as below-

1. The peninsular region having the Archean basement.
2. The Gondwana basin filled in with the sediments and woody materials during the Gondawana period.
3. The Bengal basin filled in with alluvial deposit the tertiary and quaternary periods."

The geology of *Damodar* River indicates heavy metal concentrations at various zones of the river. The banks of the river are reached by heavy metals like coal, iron, zinc etc. The *Damodar* Valley is also very reached in terms of Antiquity. Many results of excavation have thrown new light on the study of Bihar-Bengal Archaeology.

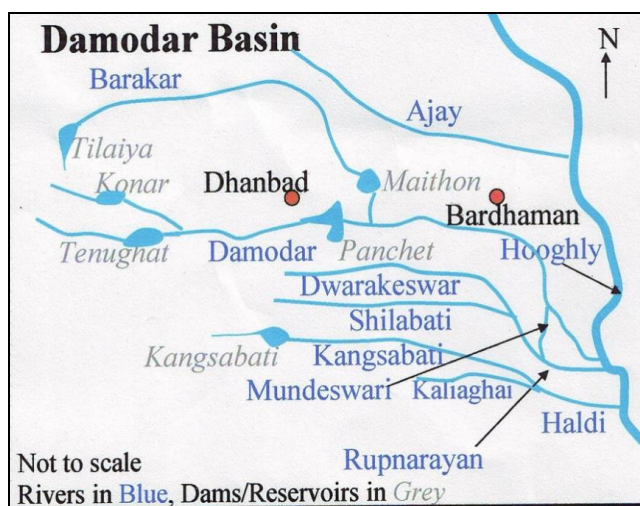


Plate 4: The *Damodar*, *Ajay*, and *Dwarakeswar* rivers system in West Bengal

The River Dwarakeswar: The *Dwarakeswar* River is a major river of south-western part of west Bengal. The source of the *Dwarakeswar* River is Tilboni Hill in Purulia

District. It begins as the *Dhalkisor* River, after enters into the Bankura District it is known as *Dwarakeswar* River. Then it passes through Bankura, Bradman, and Hooghly district of West Bengal. After a long traversing, it meets with River *Silabati* or *Silai* at Ghatal. After this conjunction, these two rivers together are known as *Rupnarayan* which merge into the River *Hooghly* near Gadiara in Howrah district. The river length is approximately 220km.

The left bank tributaries of *Dwarakeswar* are *Gandheswari*, *Kukhra*, *Birai*, *Beko*, *Dudhbhariya*, *Dangra*, *Futary*, *Arkasa* River and right bank tributaries are *Silabati* River. Geologically, the upper course of *Dwarakeswar* River is hilly region in extension of the Chhotanagpur Plateau. The *Dwarakeswar* River basin is also very reached with archaeological sites. Many results of excavation have thrown new light on the study of Bengal Archaeology.

The River Ajoy: The *Ajoy* River is a major river in Birbhum district as well as in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The *Ajoy* River sources on the western part of chhotnagpur plateau region near south west of Munger in Bihar. Then it flows through Jharkhand and then enters in West Bengal at Simjuri near Chittaranjan. At first *Ajoy* River separates Bardwan district from Jharkhand then it forms the border between Bardwan district and Birbhum district. Total length of *Ajoy* River is approximately 334km. to 288km, out of which 152km is in West Bengal. The upper course of *Ajoy* River passes through the hilly region of Chhatonagpur plateau. The River meets the *Bhagirathi* River at Udhyampur near Katwa town. The important tributaries of this river are *Pathro* and *Jayanti* in the state of Jharkhand and other small tributaries in Bardwan district of West Bengal are *Tumuni* and *Kunur*. There is many places along the river bank which has got importance from different point of view. Santiniketan, Joydev Kenduli, Pandurajardhipi, Katwa etc. are examples of those places which is famous for their historical importance as well as for art and culture.

Factors of Conceptualization for naming in Indian Rivers

1. Mythological Stories behind the naming of Indian Rivers:

Most of the river in India has some folklore and myths behind of their naming. So, these mythological stories are also important to formulate the naming of those rivers. These myths or folklore have been habituated to overhear by the people of Indian civilization from the time immemorially. Traditionally religion and society are two prime stands to the Hinduism and they are major supplement for each other. So, the consideration of Male River or generalization of Indian River is possible to following these Hindu's norms.

1.1 The River Brahmaputra: There are many mythological stories about Brahmaputra. According to legends, the word *Brahma* means Lord *Brahma* and *Putra* means Son. So, Brahmaputra is the son of Lord of *Brahma*. "Many years ago, *Shantanu*, a famous sage began a long meditation in this area of north- eastern Himalaya along with his beautiful wife *Amodha/Amogha*. *Shantanu*'s wife is so beautiful that Lord *Brahma* himself became enchanted by her. Lord *Brahma* requested *Amodha/Amogha* to make love with him. But *Amodha/Amogha* did not accept the proposal. At that time Lord *Brahma* had become so excited and he discharged his semen at that place. When *Shantanu* came to know about

this matter, he inseminated the *Brahma's* semen in the womb of *Amodha/Amogha*. Therefore, *Amodha/Amogha* gave birth to a son who was called as *Brahmaputra*. The water tank near the *Shantanu's* Ashram is known by *Brahmakund*".

This is believed that Lord *Brahma* took his first bath in this water body (presently known as *Brahmaputra*) after his birth from *Vishnu's* Naval. For example the river in consideration of naming *Brahmaputra*, we have learn the story that how the *Brahmaputra* River originated. According to Hindu tradition it is part of mythology that semen of Lord *Brahma* fell in place where river flow in its path and son of him was name as *Brahmaputra* (son of Lord *Brahma*), (source: *Padmapurana and Vishnupurana*). In *Rigveda* mentions (*Hiranyagarbha*) taking birth from the navel of *vishnu*.

"तमिद्गर्भं प्रथमं दध्नु आपो यत्र देवाः समगच्छन्तु विश्वे ।
अजस्य नाभावध्येकमर्षितुं यस्मिन्विश्वानि भुवनानि तस्युः ॥"

"The waters verily first retained the embryo (*garbha*) in which all the *devas* (Gods) were aggregated, single deposited on the naval of the unborn (creator), in which all beings abide." (source: *Regveda*, Mandala 10, Sukta 82, Mantra 6, [from Hinduism stack Exchange.com].

Other interesting myths are also associated with this river. The popular story is about the birth of this river in the *Kalikapurana*. It describes how *Prasurama* got rid of his sin after killing her mother *Renuka* with an axe at the behest of his father *Jamadagni*. At that moment, the axe got stuck to his hand and he unable to take it off his hand. Finally he came to *Brahmakunda* and took a dip into the holy water. After his bath the axe became unstuck. With a big relief, *Parasuram* picked it up and threw it as far as he could into the mountain. The axe divided the mountains and the spot where it fell became a source of *Lohit* River and the *kunda* (water tank) where he took bath presently known as *Parasuramkunda* (about 25 km north of Tezu in Lohit Distric in Arunachal Pradesh). According to the legend the river was limited in a *Kunda* (Water Tank) surrounded by hill at that time. Sage *Parasuram* cut down the hill to the one side to release the holy water for the benefit of the common people. The *Brahmaputra* is also called as *Luhit* or *Luit* in Assam. This word is derived from the word *Lohit*, which means blood. This name may be stand on the story of *Parasurama* described above.

The *Bramhaputra* first born as a water body in *Yugandhara* and placed near *Bramhakunda* which is surrounded by four mountains namely *Kailash*, *Gandhamadana*, *Jarudhi* and *Sambwartakka*. Then sage *Parasuram* broke the banks of *Bramhakunda* with his axe to release him as a river *Bramhaputra*.

Another popular story about the *Brahmaputra* is, *Krishna's* brother *Balarama* committed to rid his sin after killing many *brahmins*. Therefore, he wanted to visit the pilgrimage of the rivers *Brahmaputra* and *Laskshya*. Here he used his plough to get them way to flow. These two rivers meet to another river named *Dhaleshwari*. This is the spot, where *Balarama* stopped his plough. This place is called *Langalbandh*. This story primarily found in *Bhagavat Purana*.

According to other legends, there is a different tales addressed to the River *Bramhaputra*. They expressed, famous sage *Parasurama* used the plough to make a path

for the water flow to the plains. At the particulate place is called *Sonargaon*, his plough or *Langal* came to stop for a standstill or *Bandh*. Therefore, this place is called as *Langalbadh*. This spot is considered as holy place by *Hindus*.

According to Tibetan legend, they believed that many years ago, the *Chang Tan* plateau was covered by the waters of a great lake. A *Bodhisattva* decided to cut an outlet through the *Himalayas* to help the common people by its water. This flow of the water is known as *Tsangpo* or *Great River*. The mountains, gorges and jungles through which the *Tsangpo* flows in *Tibet* are considered extremely holy. Ancient *Tibetan* scrolls written by the *Buddhist* monk, says of *Sanctuaries* deep in the *Himalayas*. Here aging is slowed down, animals and plants have supernatural power. *Tibetans* believed that in this area, perhaps through the one of waterfalls at the bottom of gorge, is the doorway to the paradise of Earth, *Shangri-la*.

1.2 The River *Sindhu/Sindh (Indus River)*: The River *Sindhu* is mentioned in classical texts of ancient India such as *Regveda*, the *Puranas*, and in Iranian book the *Zend Avesta*. The *Sindhu* is believed to be the origin of fire (*Agni*)- (source: *Mahabharata*, *Vana Parba*, Chapter 242, Verse 22). in *Regvedic* hymns apply feminine gender to all rivers but the *Sindhu* river attributed as masculine river. The *Sindhu* is seen as a strong warrior among the all river as like as *Bramhaputra* river is. Several rivers are personified and invoked as deities in the *Regveda- Samhita*. One hymn (*Regveda- Samhita* 10.75) celebrates the *Sindhu* or *Indus*. The River *Sindhu* is occupying very important position in *Regved- Samhita*. The entire of one hymn (*Regveda- Samhita* 10.75) celebrates the *Sindhu* as River God (*Macdonell, A.A., Vedic Mythology, p.-86*). in this hymn, the rivers are addressed as representing all the divine waters. The rivers followed by seven streams through the fold courses. Among them, the *Sindhu* is most powerful and flowed surpassing all other rivers. Here, mention of seven divine water streams or rivers are the *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Satudri*, *Purusni*, *Saraswati*, *Asikni*, and *Vitasta*.

"pra su va āpo mahimānamuttamaṃ kārurvocāti
sadane vivasvataḥ |
pra saptasapta tredhā hi cakramuḥ pra sṛtvarīṇāmāti
sindhurojasā ||"

(Source: *Rgveda Samhitā, 10.75.1*)

"īmaṃ me gaṅge yamune sarasvatī śatudri stomaṃ sacatā
puruṣnyā |
asiknyā marudvṛdhe vitastayārjīkīye śṛnuhyā suṣomayā ||"

(Source: *Ibid., 10.75.5*)

In the forth mantra of hymn, the roaring *Sindhu* is compared with a mother cow who runs to caress their calves. Again, in the third mantra of this hymn, here the River *Sindhu* is compared with a roaring bull. In *Regveda Samhita*- this hymn-

"divi svano yatate bhūmyoparyanantaṃ śuṣmamudiyarti
bhānunā |
abhrādiva pra stanayanti vṛṣṭayaḥ sindhuryadeti vṛṣabho na
roruvat ||"

(Source: *Ibid., 10.75.3*)

In one hymn in *Regveda Samhita* 10.75 (75th hymn of 10th Mandalam), the River Sindhu has occupied a important position of river God. In the 34 adhyaya (chapter) of the *Vajasaneyi-Samhita*, there is a mention of 'Sapta- Sindhu' (seven rivers).

“aṣṭau
vyakhyat kakubhaḥ pṛthivyāstrī dhanva yojanā sapta sindhū
n
hiranyākṣaḥ savitā deva āgāddhadrātnā dāsuḥ vāryāṇi ||”
(Source: Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā, 34.24)

This hymn, recited before taking bath and asks the divine water of the *Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaberi* to be present in the water for making the water holy. People invoking these holy rivers, including the *Sindhu* for reducing their sin.

“गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरि सरस्वति । नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरि जलेऽस्मिन्
सन्धिं कुरु ॥”

Gange ca Yamune caiva Godavari Sarasvati |
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri jalesmin sannidhim kuru ||
"O Ganga, O Yamuna, O Godavari, O Saraswati, O
Narmada, O Sindhu, O Kaveri, be present in this water".

The 'Nadistuti Suktam', is the 75th hymn (*Sukta*) of 10th Mandala of *Regveda*. The *Nadistuti* is important for understanding the geography of the Vedic civilization. The River Sindhu is addressed as the powerful of rivers and addressed specifically in verses 1,2,7,8 and 9.

The mythical story about origins of *Sindhu* River is stated that king Bhagiratha had great contribution to bring the rivers down to the earth. King Bhagiratha was attempting to free his ancestors from sin. After performing his penance, Bhagiratha summoned the sacred river, Goddess *Ganga* to earth. The *Ganga* descend from haven and thereafter formed six separate rivers- three flowing to the east are River *Hladini, Pavani, and Nalini*. Other three - River *Sucaksus, Sita, and Sindhu* are following to west. The seventh branch was the *Ganga*, flowed from Himalaya to Gangasagar, entering to the ocean. (source: Shiva Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Padma Purana, Ramayana and Mahabharata). The term 'Sindhu' is found 176 times in the *Regveda*. But always is not specifically indicating to the River *Sindhu*, it is often used for as a generic word for 'river' or 'stream'.

1.3 The River Son (or Sone): The River *Son* or *Sone* is considered as a male river in India. This classification of rivers is found in ancient texts and the *Puranas*. The *Vayu Purana* and *Skanda Purana* is including a interesting story about river *Son*. Here mentions that *Narmada* (the River *Narmada*) was the princess of *Maikal*, was engaged to *Sonbhadra* (the River *Son*). it also known as *Sonbhadra Shila*. Once *Sonbhadra* was destined to marry the *Narmada*. *Narmada* was curiouse about her groom, so she sent her maid (Princess *Narmada's* hiardresser) *Juhila* to meet *Sonbhadra* instead herself. *Sonbhadra* fell in love with *Juhila*, mistaking her for *Narmada*. When *Narmada* discovered this, she turn west and chose to flow to the Arabian sea and she remains unmarried. *Sonbhadra* rejected her, and continued to flow eastward, forming the *Son* river. Eventually the *Juhila* stream formed for her tears, and flows eastward to join the River *Son*. For *Narmada*, legends

identifies as a symbol of independence and dignity, choosing a solitary path. The both river, *Son* and *Narmada* are originated in same place *Amkantak*, *Maikal* hilly range of *Madhya Pradesh* but they flows completely two opposite directions, for *Narmada* it goes east to west and the river *Son* it is west to east.

The River *Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri, Godavari* and *Narmada* are five holy rivers in India. The *Narmada* is holiest among the holy, because according to the legends don't need to take bath in it while a view of River *Narmada* cleanness our sins. The River *Narmada* also known as *Reva* and *Purvaganga* in ancient texts. It is only river who is till unmarried for *Sonbhadra*. *Narmada* and *Son* were born as two teardrops of Lord *Bramha*, so according to the *Puranas*, the *Son* River was a son of Lord *Bramha*, alongside of *Bramhaputra* River of *Assam*.

The river *son* is mentioned in several ancient text including the *Agneya Purana*, the *Ramayana*. It emphasizing it cultural importance. The river *son*, while it flows gently during dry periods, it becomes a powerful force during monsoon.

1.4 The River Dwarakeswar: In general, *Dwarakeswar* River is known as *Masculine River* in *Bengal* region in India. The river is called *Dwarakeswar Nod*, by local people. The Name *Dwarakeswar* has carried masculine gender. However, the meaning of *Dwarakeswar* also appropriate to the male concern. The Sanskrit word *Dwarakeswar* means Lord of *Dwaraka*, which is an epithet for Lord *Krishna*. The River *Dwarakeswar* being an old one, we find references of it in the *Kavikankan Chandi* (*Chandimangal, Kabikankan* Mukundaram chakrabarti, 16th century Bengali Poet), the *Mangalkavya-s*, and other Bengali medieval texts. *Beglar* (Joseph David *Beglar*, 1845-1907, American-Indian engineer, photographer and archaeologist of ASI, Assistant of Alexander *Cunningham*) mention that one has to cross the river *Dwarakeswar* at *Ekteswar* (upstream area of *Dwarakeswar*) to continue on the old route passing from *Tamluk* to *Pataliputra*. He further adds that the same route leads to the north-western provinces of India (*Beglar* 1872-73, *Cunningham* ASI Reports).

1.5 The River Ajoy: However, *Ajoy* is a male given name and the word positively goes to the masculine gender. The word 'Ajoy' derived from Sanskrit word 'Ajaya', which means 'Victorious' or 'Unconquerable' or 'Invincible'. In ancient period, traditionally this word was used to wish Kings before they went for battle. The terms "Ajeya Bhava" was used for meant "Be Victorious". So, the *Ajay* River concenter as *Masculine River* as it name originates from male gender.

2. Nature is Feminine: The feminine concept of nature inhabits very substantial place in Indian religious history. Hindus believes the earth is goddess as mother who known various name as *Pṛthivi, Jagaddhatri, Basundhara, Basudha, Sita* etc. Infect in nature, almost all features of environment are personified as goddesses. Rivers, streams, land, crops etc. are considered of as potent symbols of feminine power, characteristic in nature. In *Vedas, Puranas, Upanisad*, Always notify, the nature is personified through the symbols of divine feminine. The power of feminine principle describes to all-powerful features in nature through the *Shakti* (power) or *Prakriti* (Nature). The Creation, Life,

cultivation, fertilization and its cycles are centered by the feminine principle because female can create life in his womb. Whole world celebrate life through their participation in the cycle of the earth and the universe and thus giving honor to Mother Nature. Mother Nature represents her among the life, desire, beauty as well as she is everything what lives in nature. She is visible in the wheel of birth, fertility, seasons, rain, cultivation, corps and fullness. She is in the waning moon, tides, sunrise and sunset (sunlight remains polite in the time being of sunrise and sunset, in ancient text like *Veda* mentions this particular time as *Usha* which is adopts its feminine nature). Female spirituality is an acknowledgement of the goddess as universe, as planet, as the earth and as women. According to legends Goddess Nature gives everything and she can takes everything, she has connection with life and the cosmic power.

The Indian rivers fertilizes the vast plain land, overhaul the civilization, nourishing the harvest from the time immemorially. Basically, all ancient civilizations of the world were the Gift of Rivers. So, rivers were considered as mother or Goddess in Indian civilization. According to the Hindu religion the *Ganga* and its journeys throughout the natural path is pure at its source and pure after its ends. From this it can be understood that, where the form of nature is clam, gentle and creativeness, nature has been considered as feminine. But where nature rough, dry, turbulent and destructiveness, it is seen as a male and *Tandava* (divine dance of Lord Shiva).

In this context, most of Indian rivers, such as the *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Narmada*, *Kaberi*, *Godavari*, are worshiped as goddesses. Only few rivers like the *Bramhaputra*, *Son* identified as male river in traditional and classic ancient text in *Regveda*.

3. Geological Factor of Conceptualization for naming in Indian Rivers: The masculine conceptualization of river occupies very significant place in Indian history. I think, some of rivers are known as Male River because of its vastness, sheer size, and destructive nature. Thus river's width and length and destructive natures have been seen by Indian Civilization since ancient time. Therefore, may they have considered addressing the river either masculine or feminine on the basis of its nature?

Here, I would like to take three rivers for giving example to the matter which I have discussed above. The three rivers are *Bramhaputra* and *Damodar* and *Son*. These three rivers are famous for its destructive capabilities.

The River *Bramhaputra* is one of largest River system in north-east India, as well as in Asia. In rainy season, the River *Bramhaputra* regularly swamps its banks. Therefore, it occur flood in Assam. Some interesting facts are associated with River Brahmaputra. The *Bramhaputra* flows on an average height of 400 meters for 13000kms in the Tibetan region. This is highest in the world. However, Brahmaputra is one of the most powerful rivers in the world. Brahmaputra River is fifth strongest river in the world on based its flow rate. The Brahmaputra is one of those very few major rivers in the world, which exhibit 'tidal bore'. A tidal bore is a tidal phenomenon in which the leading edge of incoming tide forms a wave or waves of water that travel up a river or narrow bay against the direction of current. This is called a tidal wave in geography. This is one of the reasons behind its massive strength. *Mājuli* or *Majoli* is a large river island in the Brahmaputra River and it is the largest river island in the world. The average width of

Brahmaputra is close to 10 km. in plains, which is on the widest in the world. Where Brahmaputra enters India is till date on the most remote and adventurous part of the world. The river flows rapidly down to the plains from a height of 4000 meters in this region. This unknown region had trapped imagination of British for many decades in 19th century until it was discovered. The largest delta in the world *Sundarban*, is created by the River Brahmaputra along with Ganges and the *Padma* River in Bangladesh. Some of Geologists are considered the River Brahmaputra as Male River because of its vastness.

The River *Damodar* is one of a river in India which drains lot of water in monsoon season. It has number of tributaries that pours water mainly in monsoon season in its river bed. So, for this reasons in early time this river is known as "River of Sorrow" in Bengal. The River *Son* is known for its strong flow, especially during the monsoon season. That time it flows with powerful and destructive characteristic, which is linked to masculine identity.

I am very much sure that everyone would be agreed to the fact of the destructive capabilities of these two rivers. Above explanation, it appears that destructive natures are classified the gender of those rivers. Therefore, River *Damodar*, *Son* and *Bramhaputra* refers as *Nads* and considers as Male River, while others Indian rivers are *Nadee* of feminine in general.

Here, everyone would like to think that does the Ganges River (*Ganga*) not drive of floods and sadness. Obviously, *Ganga* River causes of floods but it does not known for its destructive nature, but it depicts as a most sacred river in Hindu mythology. The *Ganga* is the backbone of Indian culture and without this the country did not appear in the values of its agriculture and economic point. However, after the flood, River *Ganga* deposits high qualities of fertile alluvium which is important to product corps. Thus, there is benevolent aspect in *Ganga* instead of destructiveness. So, *Ganga* refers as *Nadee* and considers as Female River in India.

Most of the river in India, mainly Ganges, *Yamuna*, *Godavari*, *Kishna*, *Kaberi*, *Narmada* are revered as goddesses and are associated with feminine, nurturing, and life giving qualities. But on other side, like the River *Bramhaputra*, *Son*, the River *Damodar* also known for its destructive nature. However, after building the dams by DVC (Damodar Valley Corporation) this flood factor has become trivial. The *Damodar* and *Son* River is a wide, seasonal and flashy river only during rainy season, its flow is more powerful and in summer weather, barely and trickle. Earlier, the flood of *Damodar* River was so destructive in every monsoon that it placed into the folklore, for an example following *Bhadu* song (local folklore) describing those moods-

We have sown the crops in *Asar*.
We will bring *Bhadu* in *Bhadra*.
Floods have swollen the *Damodar*
The sailing boats cannot sail.
O *Damodar*! We fall at your feet
Reduce the floods a little.
Bhadu will come a year later
Let the boats sail on your surface.

(reference: *Bhadu* songs on Damodar River from Brainly.in)
It indicates community's struggles, their emotional link to the river, and their appeals for it to become less destructive.

They expressing their sorrow and hope in the face of the river's destructive power.

Conclusion

One of the main reasons is that people believes, the *Bramhaputra* is only the river with male name because this is one of biggest river in India. In this connection, I would like to mention that other male rivers are also noticeable in India but they are not as famous as like Brahmaputra, because of their size and less popularity than Brahmaputra river. Eventually, some rivers are ignored to exist as Male River or Female River, because they are not well-known and smaller in size or they occupied the tribal name for example- The Kopai River (tributary of Bakreswar River, Birbhum dist., West Bengal), Kunur River (Birbhum dist., West Bengal), Kiul River (tributary of the Ganges, Jamui dist., Bihar), Iril River (tributary of Imphal River, Manipur). So, these river are not famous in the Hindu Rituals as more as the Ganges, *Bramhaputra*, *Godabari*, *Kaberi*, *Narmada*, *Yamuna* etc.

Water hold deep spiritual and cultural significance in india. It revered as divine entity, a purifying agent, and symbol of life. In Indian philosophy, the Water is not one of the agents of *Panchabhut* (the five great elements that make up the entire universe and everything in it, including the human body), but is itself one of five fundamental elements. By whom we all get birth. It is central to religious rituals across various faiths, like the sacred rivers in India. Main source of the water is river, but sometimes water bodies also symbolize divine auspiciousness things.

The Ganga River, is believed to be a pathway to the afterlife, with the act of immersing ashes in its waters cleansing the soul and releasing it from the cycle of reincarnation. In *Veda*, flowing water is seen as a pure and streams as life-giving mothers. It is revered as a giver of life and a symbol of fertility. River is linked to nearly every aspect of social life in India, from daily prayers to meal. Rivers in India are not just source of water but also symbol of Indian cultural heritage and ancient engineering. India's river culture is blend of deep spiritual emotion, daily practicality and historical importance. In Indian culture, river are not just physical entities but are honored as Supreme Being.

The Civilization, when it saw the live giving nature, serving land to fertile and peaceful form of the river, regarded it as mother goddess and Female River in nature. Also, all those river who are large in size and length and showing destructive activities in monsoon season, are considered as Male River. Each major river has its mythology and religious importance often associated with Gods or Goddess. This spiritual reverence has attributed the cultural and religious practice of the Indian people of ages. So, Indian mythology, ancient texts, folklore, *Puranas*, these all are seen as a geographical mirroring of this historical culture of reverence.

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