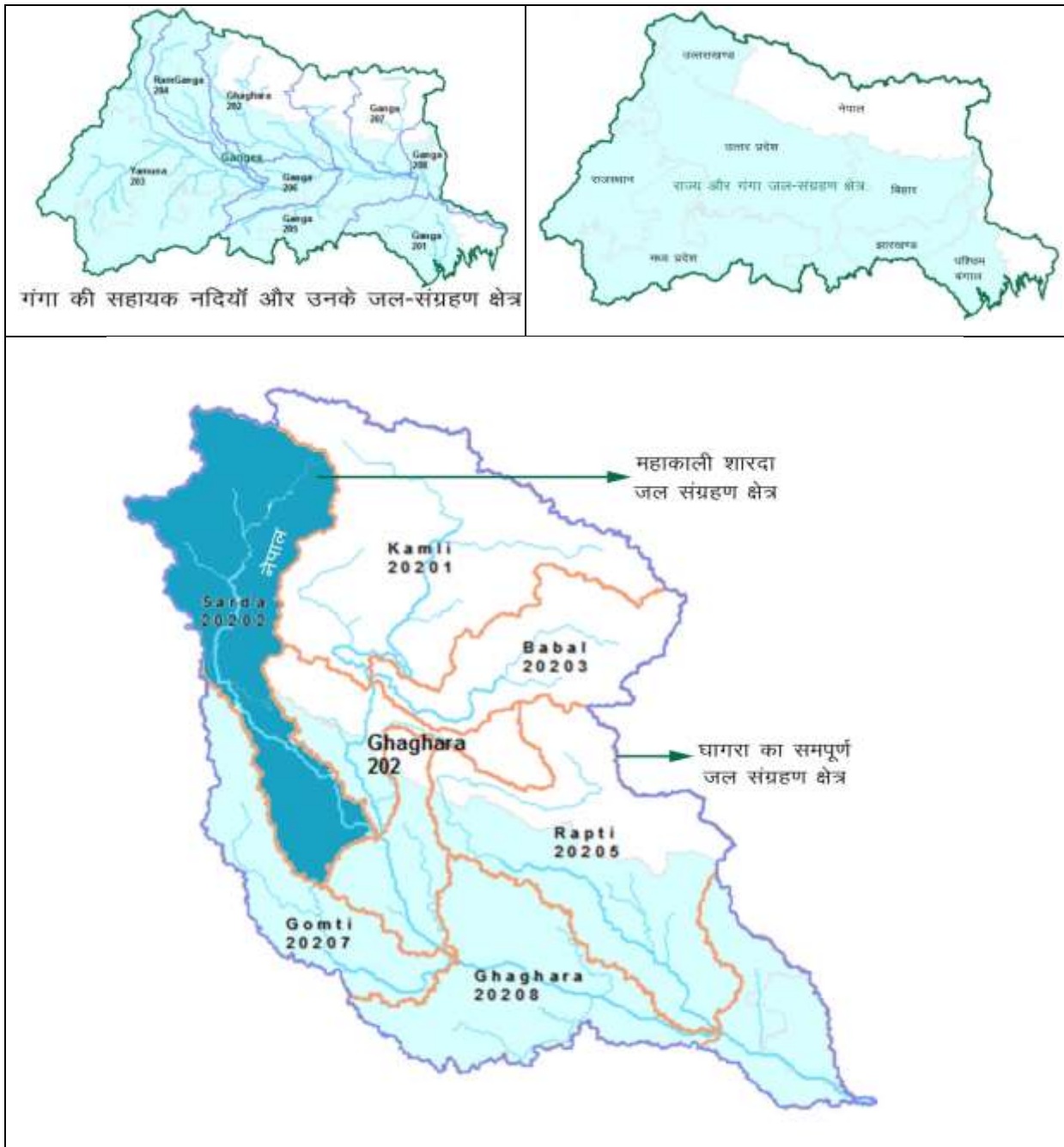


River and its Environs: Mahakali / Sharda – An Introduction



The river Mahakali is called by various names viz. Kali, Mahakali, Sharda along its course falling in India and Nepal. River Mahakali is a Himalayan catchment of Ghagra sub basin of the large Ganga Basin, originating from the Trans Himalayan region (>3600 m) ultimately draining the region through the Tarai plains of Uttar Pradesh. Almost 1/3rd catchment area of Ganga basin lies in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The catchment area of Mahakali is around 15,260 sq km, large part of which (9,943 sq km) lies in Uttarakhand and rest lies in

Nepal. Mahakali is a trans-boundary/international river. In whole of South Asia, rivers have played a symbiotic role in the dependence of communities on them, their socio-cultural-economic relations, and mutual economic cooperation and with changing times these inter-linkages needs to be strengthen further.

Numerous rivers and streams join the Mahakali from the higher, middle, lower and outer Himalayas and almost each of such confluence (at least of major rivers)



acts as a place of socio-cultural, trade-festival importance. Before the river encounters Tanakpur barrage (Sarda Ghat) and later Banbasa Barrage, the main river is a free riverine stream. The catchment boundaries of Mahakali/Sarda basin cut across administrative boundaries of 'Far Western' Himalayan region of Nepal comprising four districts of Baitadi, Dadheldhura, Kanchanpur and Darchula through major parts of Pitthoragarh (except the top most NW border), almost whole of Champawat, Bageshwar district (excluding upper part of Kapkot Tehsil) and very small parts of lower Almora and Udham Singh Nagar. In the upper reaches Mahakali/Sarda flows through narrow gorges passing through Garbyang, Tawaghat and Dharchula and spreads as it flows downwards in the lower hills. The upper Sarda Barrage (also known as the Banbasa Barrage) is built here and water of the river is diverted into the Sarda Canal system.

The Confluences

The ecological setting of the region has many facets attached to it like, geographic peculiarities, ecological significance, limitations of expansion, socio-cultural and economic ties and many other aspects. Tawaghat is the place where Kali receives Dhauliganga and flows towards Dharchula where 280 MW Dhauliganga project of NHPC is operational. Dharchula is zone affected by recurring landslide and floods. The most recent landslide event occurred in October 2016. The unprecedented rainfall event in June 2013 in Darchula of Nepal and Dhauri Valley are also not very old incidents. Dharchula in India and Darchula in Nepal may slightly differ in nomenclature but the towns and their inhabitants share similar cultures and traditions. Gori Ganga, formed from Milam and Nanda Devi Glacier, flows down and joins Kali at Jauljibi and this is a common market and social gathering place of importance for communities of both countries. Few kilometres downstream from Jauljibi, River Chamliya of Nepal, flowing from Nepal's Gurans Himal, meets Kali on its left bank – here a 30 MW hydroelectric project on Chamliya is waiting completion. Further down, Saryu

joins Kali at Pancheshwar, Panar and eastern Ramganga meet near Rameshwar. On the right bank, Lohawati from Lohaghat and Ladhiya from the Nainital hills flow to meet Sharda / Kali.

Key Components and Purpose

Confluence Conclaves: This effort/process is to interact with people and enable interaction among the communities from river valleys within the catchment boundaries of Mahakali/Sarda to increase understanding on social, environmental, cultural, economic, climate change, etc. Given the importance of Sangams or confluences, confluence conclaves will be held at 12 locations in Uttarakhand and Nepal (7 in India and 5 in Nepal). Most often the people in adjacent valleys only meet during special instances and regular interactions are rare so these confluence conclaves will prominently highlight people's issues. The day-long confluence conclaves will focus on issues of local and trans-boundary waters, community institutions, resource management, developmental issues, and others which are related across different age groups and gender. Though it is a challenge, but it is hoped that issues will emerge over time providing direction and momentum to deep thinking and mutual exchange.

Continuity and Relevance (Voice based messaging): The purpose is to connect more voices which remain unheard. And these issues will be so wide-ranging that it will require a long-term and easier mechanism of interaction, where without any physical effort, you can share your information, programmes, events, or issues. It is named **Voices of Sarda (VoS)**.

You can interact with Voices of Sarda (VoS) by giving a missed call to this number - **7409465288**. Once you give a missed call, you will get a call back and you will be guided to record your message, listen to your message and other pre-recorded messages of others. The messages will be moderated and if required you will be called to verify the content of your message and it will be moderated for the purpose listening by

