



# INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (BHU) VARANASI



## National Brainstorming Workshop

### People's Varuna: Culturally Connecting with the River

*organized by*

**Department of Humanistic Studies (HSS)**

*in collaboration with*

**Smart Lab on Clean River (SLCR)**

**Department of Civil Engineering (CIV)**

**Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)**

**January 31, 2025 (Friday)**

#### Concept Note:

The river Varuna, often revered as 'Adi Ganga', hailed in the Vedas and Puranas as the 'giver of life' and from whom the 'sacred' city of Varanasi derived its name, is now battling for its own sustenance. Such is the present status of the river that without our immediate and active intervention, its flow could be lost forever and the river would become merely a relic of history. The loss of the rivers and the riverine ecosystems is a concerning trend of 21st century India, which has claimed many significant rivers either partially or wholly. We most assuredly do not want Varuna to be the next victim, and it is for this reason that we initiated this brainstorming workshop session in the IIT (BHU) Varanasi as the Department of Humanistic Studies (HSS), the Smart Lab on Clean River (SLCR), the Department of Civil Engineering (CIV) and Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) have come together to find innovative and practical ways of saving Varuna by making the river part of people's daily lives and cultural imaginations.

There have been several scientific studies, focusing on hydrological, geomorphological aspects, but it is the cultural implications of the loss of the river and its vibrant ecosystem that have belied the academicians and the policy-makers alike. But in India, owing to its unique socio-cultural realities, no initiative can ever be successful in saving the river unless its cultural aspects are taken into consideration. Rivers encircle our lives from birth to death and remain both as the witness and active participants of our significant cultural activities. In many cases, the cultural value of the river tends to determine its place in the society and can be utilized to good effect by making communities part of the conservation drive.

**Scope:** - We welcome participants of all fields, including academics, social activism, journalism, policy-making, self-help groups and NGOs interested in culturally reviving the river among its people. We encourage interdisciplinary submissions that can factor the innovative ways to bring art, culture, science, technology, governance and economic activities in a single platform that addresses, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Varuna as a cultural entity
- Mythological and historical dimensions of Varuna
- Varuna in literature, songs, photography and oral traditions
- Varuna's temples, Pilgrimage and the Panchkosi Yatra
- Varuna's own folk culture and festivals
- Varuna in the city
- Varuna, agriculture, fishery and people's livelihood
- The socio-economics of Varuna's banks
- Varuna and the possibilities of community participation
- Methods of culturally connecting people to rivers
- Social Paradigms of rivers in reference of Ganga's minor tributaries
- Water and River Culture
- Philosophy of River

## Important Dates:

**Last date of submitting (200-words) abstract: 15/01/2025**

Submissions at: [workshopvaruna@gmail.com](mailto:workshopvaruna@gmail.com)

Tentative date of intimation on selection: 20/01/2025

Last date of registration: 22/01/2025 (if selected, registration link will be provided)

Refreshments and lunch will be provided to the participants only.

No registration fee will be charged from the presenters.

No TA/DA and accommodation will be provided to the participants.

**Program Venue: ABLT, Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi**

## Organizing Committee

**Patron: Prof. Amit Patra, Director, IIT(BHU), Varanasi**<sup>(TBC\*)</sup>

**Convener:** Dr. Manhar Charan (HSS)

**Co- convener:** Dr. Pramod Soni (Civil)

**UBA:** Prof. Rajesh Kumar

**SLCR:** Dr. Shishir Gaur

**Treasurer:** Dr. Shreyansh Jain

**Civil Engineering Department:** Prof. Anurag Ohri

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