

The Age-Old Tradition of Maa Narmada Parikrama: A Spiritual and Geographical Perspective

Ekta Chandel¹

¹Research Scholar, SAM Global University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract. The Narmada River holds profound spiritual, historical, and ecological significance in Hindu tradition. Revered as Maa Narmada, it is frequently mentioned in sacred scriptures, including the Mahabharata and Markandeya Purana. One of the most esteemed religious practices associated with the river is the Narmada Parikrama, a circumambulatory pilgrimage undertaken by devotees for spiritual merit. This study explores the Narmada's religious significance, scriptural references, and the traditional practices followed during the Parikrama. Additionally, it examines the river's geographical attributes, hydrochemistry, and ecological role. The findings underscore the interplay between faith and environmental consciousness, emphasizing the need for conservation efforts to preserve the sanctity of the Narmada.

Keywords. Narmada River, Hindu Pilgrimage, Narmada Parikrama, Sacred Geography, Religious Traditions

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1 Introduction

Narmada is one of the most revered rivers in Hindu culture, holding a status comparable to that of the Ganga. Just as the Ganga is venerated as a mother in Indian scriptures, Narmada is also affectionately referred to as Maa Narmada. The river possesses profound spiritual, historical, and cultural significance, being mentioned in numerous ancient texts and epics.

Among the most sacred traditions associated with the river is the Narmada Parikrama, a revered circumambulatory pilgrimage practiced for centuries. This ritual journey, undertaken by ascetics and devotees, embodies the deep reverence for Narmada within Hindu civilization [1, 2].

The present manuscript aims to explore this time-honored tradition by analyzing scriptural references that underscore its spiritual and social importance while also providing an overview of the river's geographical attributes.

The Narmada basin spans approximately 92,672.42 square kilometers and exhibits diverse topographical features, ranging from the hilly terrain of Amarkantak, its point of origin, to fertile plains and a coastal delta. It is divided into Upper, Middle, and Lower sub-basins, comprising 150 watersheds that sustain extensive agriculture (56.90%) and forest cover (32.88%). Extending over a length of 1,312 km, the Narmada is one of India's largest west-flowing rivers, characterized by dynamic hydrology and susceptibility to high-magnitude floods [3, 4].

The river is frequently mentioned in scriptures such as the Mahabharata and Markandeya Purana, wherein it is extolled for its sanctity and divine attributes. The stones found in its waters, known as *Banalinga* or *Narmadeshwar*, are considered sacred and are worshiped as Shiva lingams [5].

This study seeks to examine the sacred tradition of Maa Narmada Parikrama from both a spiritual and geographical perspective, illuminating the enduring legacy of this venerated pilgrimage.

2 Scriptural and Spiritual Description of Narmada

2.1 Names of Narmada in Scriptures

Ancient scriptures suggest an intrinsic connection between the Narmada and Tapti rivers, with some texts indicating that Narmada is a reincarnation of Tapti. According to the *Markandeya Purana* [1], Tapti is described as the daughter of Lord Surya (the Sun God) and Devi Chhaya. Additionally, in the *Mahabharata*, Tapti is mentioned as the mother of Kuru, the progenitor of the Kuru dynasty [2].

Narmada (नर्मदा) is known by several other names in Hindu scriptures [6, 7], including: Tuhinakarasuta (तुहिनकरसुता) – Daughter of the Snow-Clad Mountains, Induja (इन्दुजा) – Born of the Moon, Reva (रेवा) – The Roaring One, Murla (मुरला) – The Joyful One, Purvaganga (पूर्वगङ्गा) – The Eastern Ganga, Mekalsuta (मेकलसुता) / Mekalkanya (मेकलकन्या) – Daughter of the Mekal Mountains, Somobhdva (सोमोद्भवा) / Somasuta (सोमसुता) – Born of the Moon, Veda-garbha (वेदगर्भा) – The Womb of the Vedas.

The following verses illustrate the divine significance of Narmada:

रेवेन्दुजा पूर्वगङ्गा नर्मदा मेकलान्द्रिजा ॥1083॥
(*Revenduja Purvaganga Narmada Mekalandrija*)

Narmada, born of the moon, is also called the Eastern Ganga and the daughter of the Mekala mountains [6].

शोणो हिरण्यबाहुर्मैकलकन्या च नर्मदा रेवा
॥674॥ (Mahabharata 3.1.1.674)
(*Shono Hiranyabahur Mekalkanya Cha Narmada Rewa*)

The river Narmada, also known as Reva, is the golden-armed daughter of the Mekala mountains [7].

2.2 Narmada Water Quality from a Health Perspective

The Raja Nighantu [5] describes the health benefits of Narmada's water:

सा विन्ध्यपर्वतान्निःसृता पश्चिमेतमसानद्यां प्र-
विष्टा । तस्याः पर्यायः । रेवा २मेकलकन्या ३
सोमसुता ४ । अस्या जलगुणाः । लघुत्वम् ।
शीतलत्वम् । सुपथ्यत्वम् । दाह-पित्तशमनत्वम्
। वातदातृत्वञ्च ।

(Sa Vindhyaparvvatannihsrita
Paschimetamsanadyan Pravishta |
Tasyaah Paryayah | Reva 2 Mekalka-
nya 3 Somasuta 4 | Asya Jalgunah
| Laghutvam | Sheetaltvam | Supa-
thyatvam | Dah-Pittashamanatvam |
Vaatadatritvam Cha |)

The river, emerging from the Vindhya moun-
tains (Amarkantak), flows westward. It is known
by the names Reva, Mekalkanya, and Somasuta.
The water of Narmada is described as light, cool,
easily digestible, and beneficial in balancing ex-
cess heat and bile within the body. Additionally,
it aids in pacifying *Vata dosha*.

2.3 Spiritual Importance of Narmada Water

Narmada is extensively mentioned in several
revered scriptures, including the Mahabharata
[2], Narmada Purana [8], Devi Bhagavata Pu-
rana, Bhagavata Purana, Surya Purana, and
Agni Purana. The Skanda Purana provides a de-
tailed account of the river's sanctity in the Reva
Khand.

According to the Mahabharata (Vana
Parva), offering Narmada water to one's an-
cestors (Pitra) and deities is believed to con-
fer spiritual merit equivalent to performing the
Ashwamedha Yajna [9]. Furthermore, merely
touching the sacred confluence of the Sona and
Narmada rivers (Vansagulma) is said to bestow
similar spiritual rewards.

In the Mahabharata, Sage Narada extols the
sanctity of the Narmada with the following dec-
laration:

*“A single dip in the Ganga purifies
in a day, bathing in the Saraswati
purifies in three days, but merely re-
membering the Narmada is enough to
attain purification.”*

This assertion underscores the unparalleled
spiritual reverence attributed to the river.

2.4 Stones of the Narmada: The Sacred Banalingas

Narmada is venerated not only for its sa-
cred waters but also for the unique stones
found within its riverbed, known as Banalingas.
These naturally occurring Shiva lingams, also re-
ferred to as Narmadeshwar lingas, are consid-
ered highly auspicious and are widely worshiped
across India [5].

The geological and spiritual significance of
these stones has been a subject of scholarly ex-
ploration. The alluvial deposits of the Narmada,
coupled with its neotectonic activity, have been
studied for over 150 years. However, focused re-
search on the Banalingas has gained prominence
only in recent years [3, 4, 10, 11].

2.5 Historical References to Narmada in the Mahabharata

The Narmada river is frequently mentioned
in the *Mahabharata*, particularly in the context
of significant historical events. Table 1 provides
key references [2]:

3 Narmada Parikrama

3.1 Narmada Parikrama and Associated Rituals

The Narmada Parikrama is an ancient spir-
itual tradition that involves circumambulating
(*parikrama*) the sacred Narmada River. This
pilgrimage, spanning approximately 3,000 kilo-
meters, holds profound religious significance and
is believed to purify the soul, bestow spiritual
merit, and invoke divine blessings.

The concept of *Parikrama* is deeply embed-
ded in Hindu tradition, symbolizing devotion,
penance, and surrender to the divine. It is be-
lieved that Maharishi Markandeya was the first
to emphasize the spiritual importance of the Nar-
mada Parikrama. The pilgrimage traditionally
begins at a chosen point along the river, follows
a route encircling Maa Narmada, and concludes
at the same location.

Section	Context	Chapter	Verse	Description
268	Varuṇa's Assembly	9	371	Mentioned among the rivers in Varuṇa's celestial palace.
281	Sahadeva's Journey	31	1114	Referenced during Sahadeva's travels in the southern region.
358	Tīrtha Yātra	82	4094	Recognized as a sacred pilgrimage site.
370	Tīrtha Yātra	85	8151	Associated with Śoṇasya and Vamśag-ulma.
377	Dhaumya Tīrtha	89	8355, 8357	Located in the western region.
404	Tīrtha Yātra	121	10306, 10310	Visited by Yudhishṭhira; bathing here is said to grant spiritual merit.
434	Saugandhikā Harāṇa	156	11437	Mentioned in the episode of Hanuman bringing the Saugandhika flower.
459	Mārkaṇḍeya's Vision	188	12908	Seen by Sage Mārkaṇḍeya in the cosmic form of Nārāyaṇa.
494	Āṅgīrasa	222	14231	Listed among the rivers that are considered mothers of sacred fires.
639	Rājadharmā	52	1893	Compared to a great river flowing toward Ṛkshavanta Mountain.

Table 1: Historical References to Narmada in the Mahabharata

There are various forms of Parikrama, each carrying unique religious and cultural significance:

- Hanumant Parikrama – A special pilgrimage dedicated to Lord Hanuman.
- Runda Parikrama – A circumambulation performed with great austerity.
- Jalehari Parikrama – A water-based circumambulation involving spiritual practices conducted on the river itself.

The Mahabharata [2] and other sacred texts [12] extol the immense spiritual merit attained by those who complete this sacred journey.

3.2 Traditional Practices Observed During Narmada Parikrama

Pilgrims undertaking the Parikrama adhere to strict observances and disciplines to maintain the sanctity of their journey. The following traditional practices have been passed down through generations [12]:

- Continuous chanting of the sacred name Rewa (रेवा), another name for Narmada, throughout the journey.

- Keeping one's gaze fixed on Maa Narmada as an expression of unwavering devotion and reverence.
- The river must not be crossed at any point except at its origin in Amarkantak and its confluence with the Arabian Sea.
- The pilgrimage is ideally undertaken bare-foot, carrying only essential belongings.
- Pilgrims refrain from shaving and avoid the use of oil and soap to maintain bodily and spiritual purity.
- If a Shiva temple is encountered along the route, pilgrims must perform the appropriate worship and rituals.
- Hoarding food beyond a single day's requirement is discouraged.
- Observing truthfulness, celibacy, and humility throughout the pilgrimage.
- Relying solely on Maa Narmada for sustenance and avoiding deep immersion baths in the river.

- Performing daily *Puja* and *Aarti* to Maa Narmada, ensuring that the journey remains spiritually uplifting.

3.3 Present-Day Perspective on Narmada Parikrama

Despite the challenges of modern life, the tradition of Narmada Parikrama continues to thrive. Many saints (sadhus) and devotees still undertake the journey on foot, typically beginning at the Arabian Sea in Bharuch, Gujarat, proceeding upstream to Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, and then returning along the opposite bank. The complete pilgrimage spans approximately 3,000 kilometers (Figure 1) and requires several months to complete.

However, given contemporary constraints, many pilgrims now opt to complete the Parikrama using motor vehicles such as cars or buses. Although the traditional method involves

walking, it is widely believed that undertaking the pilgrimage in any form remains spiritually rewarding [12].

Beyond its religious significance, the Parikrama also fosters environmental awareness, as the river is revered as a lifeline for millions.

The Narmada Parikrama remains one of the most significant Hindu pilgrimages, deeply ingrained in spiritual, cultural, and geographical traditions. Whether undertaken by foot or by modern means, the journey embodies devotion, self-discipline, and the pursuit of divine blessings. As this sacred tradition continues to inspire millions, preserving the ecological and cultural sanctity of Maa Narmada is essential for future generations.

Table 2, 3, 4 presents a list of significant spiritual and geographical landmarks along the Narmada that serve as key stops during the Parikrama.

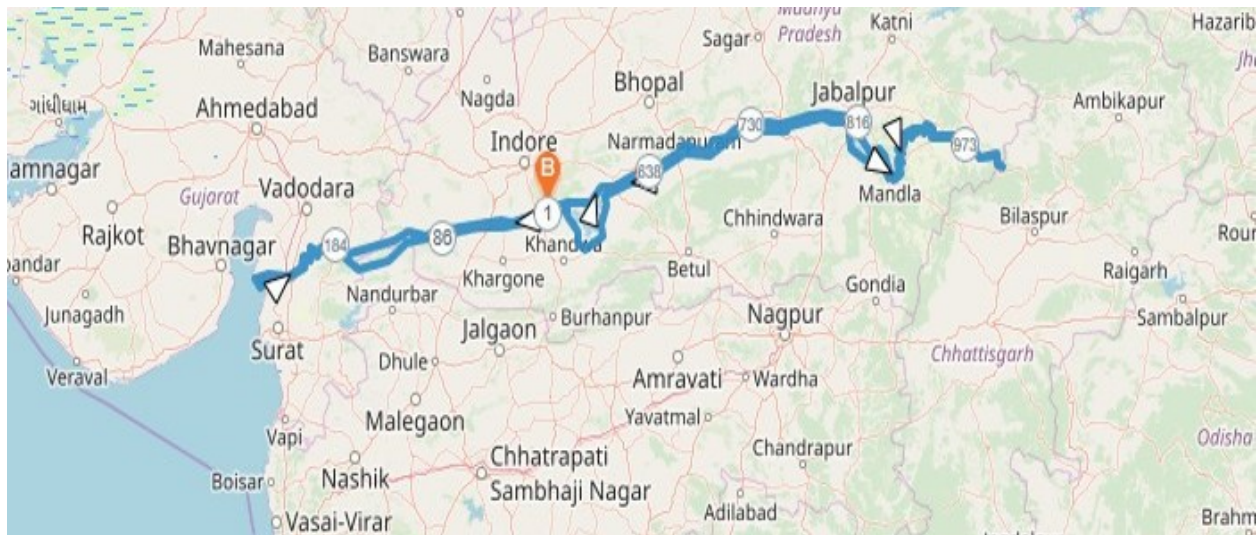


Figure 1: Narmada Parikrama Route

4 Narmada Geographical Details

4.1 Narmada Basin

The Narmada basin features a diverse topography, beginning with its origin in the hilly region of Amarkantak, transitioning through fertile plains in its middle course, and finally reaching the coastal delta where it empties into the

Arabian Sea. The river plays a crucial role in sustaining agriculture, ecology, and human settlements along its banks.

The Narmada basin is classified into three distinct sub-basins:

- Upper Narmada Basin – Originating in Amarkantak, characterized by rugged terrain.

Sr. No.	Name	Category	Waterbody	Location	District	State
1	Amarkantak	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada River	Located on	Shahdol	Madhya Pradesh
2	Bagh Caves	Archaeological Site	Narmada River	Nearby	Dhar	Madhya Pradesh
3	Bargi Dam	Dam	Bargi Dam Reservoir	Located on	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh
4	Bawangaja	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada River	Nearby	Barwani	Madhya Pradesh
5	Bhedaghat	Archaeological Site	Narmada River	Located on	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh
6	Bhrigu Kaman-dal	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada and Son Rivers	Located on	Shahdol	Madhya Pradesh
7	Dudhdhara Waterfall	Waterfall, Temple	Narmada and Son Rivers	Nearby	Shahdol	Madhya Pradesh
8	Garudeshwar Temple	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada River	Nearby	Narmada	Gujarat
9	Kapildhara Waterfall	Waterfall, Temple	Narmada River	Located on	Dindori	Madhya Pradesh
10	Mandu	Archaeological Site	Narmada River	Nearby	Dhar	Madhya Pradesh
11	Nemawar Ghat	Temple, Archaeological Site	Narmada River	Nearby	Harda	Madhya Pradesh
12	Omkareshwar Temple	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada River	Located on	East Nimar	Madhya Pradesh
13	Pachmarhi	Water Sport, Temple	Narmada River	Nearby	Hoshangabad	Madhya Pradesh
14	Salkanpur Temple	Pilgrimage (Temple)	Narmada River	Nearby	Sehore	Madhya Pradesh
15	Tinchha Waterfall	Waterfall, Temple	Choral River	Located on	Indore	Madhya Pradesh
16	Veda Narmada Sangam	Temple	Narmada River	Located on	West Nimar	Madhya Pradesh

Table 2: Important Places Along the Banks of Narmada

- Middle Narmada Basin – Encompassing fertile plains, highly suitable for extensive agriculture.
- Lower Narmada Basin – Leading to the coastal region, where it merges into the Arabian Sea.

Spanning an area of approximately 92,672.42 square kilometers, the basin supports a vast and intricate ecosystem comprising 150 watersheds and numerous tributaries. Nearly 56.90% of the land is dedicated to agriculture, while 32.88% is covered by forests. The riverbed is primarily composed of black soils, which vary in depth and composition across different regions.

The Narmada River basin accounts for nearly 3% of India's total land area, extending across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh. It is geographically delineated as follows:

- Latitude: 21°27 N to 23°37 N
- Longitude: 72°38 E to 81°43 E

Bordering Geographical Features:

- North: Vindhya Range
- East: Maikala Range
- South: Satpura Range
- West: Arabian Sea

The basin extends 953 km east to west and has a maximum width of 234 km north to south. It spans 27 districts and 20 parliamentary constituencies, with Madhya Pradesh having the largest share of the basin.

Hydrologically, the Narmada River has an es-

timated annual water potential of 45.64 billion cubic meters (BCM), with approximately 34.50 BCM of utilizable surface water. The river's drainage network consists of 41 tributaries, 19 of which are classified as major rivers [3].

Temple Name	Location (Village/ City)	Spiritual Significance
Limbaeswar Mahadev	Mithi Talai	Starting point of the Parikrama; dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Jamadaghi & Parashuram Tirtha	Hari Dham	Associated with Sage Jamadaghi and his son Parashuram; includes Sukhdev Ashram.
Lunthaneswar Mahadev	Lakhi Gaon	Ancient Shiva temple.
Mahalakshmi & Nilkantha Mahadev	Dahaj	Temples dedicated to Goddess Mahalakshmi and Lord Shiva.
Amareswar, Amionath, Somenath, Chandramouliswar Mahadev	Ametha	Cluster of Shiva temples; significant for devotees.
Someswar Tirtha, Sranganath Mahadev	Swagaon	Sacred site with temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Kapileswar Tirtha	Koliad	Holy site named after Sage Kapila.
Baijanath Tirtha	Begni	Sacred spot with historical importance.
Kapaleswar Tirtha	Kaladra	Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Nageswar Mahadev	Kesrol	Ancient Shiva temple.
Ballukeswar, Kantheswar Temples	Amalawar	Notable temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Apsareswar Tirtha, Dindiswar Mahadev	Eksal	Sacred sites with temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Bharbhuteswar Mahadev, Pancha Mukhi Mahadev, Narmada Temple, Ram Temple	Bharbhut	Important pilgrimage site with multiple temples and ashrams.
Hanuman Temple, Pancha Mukhi Mahadev	Kukarwada	Temples dedicated to Lord Hanuman and five-faced Shiva.
Subarna Bindheswar Tirtha, New Mahakaleswar Mahadev	Timbi	Sacred sites with significant temples.
Narmada Ashram	Berwada	Ashram dedicated to the Narmada River.
Kamnath, Koteswar, Bhutnath, Nilkantha, Biswanath, Bhuteswar Temples	Bharuch	City with numerous ancient temples and ashrams.
Omkereswar and Maha Rudra Temples	Maktampur	Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Baidyanath, Ghoreswar, Kamnath, Dudheswar Mahadev Temples, Gayatri, Radha Krishna, Shitala Mata Temples	Jharieswar	Diverse temples dedicated to various deities.
Koteswar Mahadev	Kadoth	Ancient Shiva temple.

Table 3: Northern Bank Route: Mithi Talai to Amarkantak (Part 1)

4.2 Present-Day Narmada Water Hydrochemistry

The chemical composition of Narmada's water plays a crucial role in determining its suitability for agricultural, domestic, and industrial applications. Factors such as major ion distribution, mineral weathering, and CO₂ absorption significantly influence its hydrochemistry.

Research suggests that silicate rock weathering is the predominant process impacting the river's water chemistry, contributing to long-term CO₂ regulation in the atmosphere [3, 4].

Key Observations from Hydrochemical Studies [3, 4, 13–16]: 1) pH Level: Ranges from slightly acidic to marginally alkaline, 2) Total Dissolved Solids (TDS): Varies between 59.1

Temple Name	Location (Village/City)	Spiritual Significance
Sukleswar, Aditeswar, Hunkereswar Mahadev Temples	Sukla Tirtha	Cluster of Shiva temples.
Mangalnath, Shet Baraha Tirtha	Mangaleswar	Sacred sites with historical significance.
Bharadwaj Ashram, Dutta Temple	Duttamadi	Ashram and temple dedicated to Sage Bharadwaj and Lord Dattatreya.
Anandi Mata Ashram, Linkeswar, Kedareswar Mahadev	Nikora	Ashram and temples with spiritual importance.
Angareswar Mahadev, Jalaram Temple	Angareswar	Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and Saint Jalaram.
Dharmeswar Tirtha	Dharmashala	Sacred site with historical significance.
Nanda Mata Tirtha, Nandikeswar Mahadev	Nand	Temples dedicated to Goddess Nanda and Lord Shiva.
Someswar and Karkateswar Temples	Somej	Ancient temples with spiritual importance.
Pancha Kuber and Punit Ashram, Narmada Temple	Moti Koral	Important holy place with multiple temples and ashrams.
Kapardiswar Mahadev, Rang Abadhut Ashram	Nareswar	Temple and ashram with spiritual significance.
Hanuman Temple, Ramananda	Kahona	Temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman and Sage Ramananda.
Narmadeswar Tirtha	Fathepur	Sacred site with historical importance.
Chandra Pravash Tirtha, Mahadevananda Ashram	Kothia	Temple and ashram dedicated to Lord Shiva and Sage Mahadevananda.
Kapileswar Tirtha	Diber	Holy site named after Sage Kapila.
Trilochoneswar Mahadev Temple	Mandava	Ancient Shiva temple.
Pancha Mukhi Hanuman, Satyanarayana, Angareswar, Pandaveswar Temples	Malsor	Multiple temples with significant spiritual importance.
Kotiswar Angirash Tirtha, Kedareswar, Uttareswar, Rohiniswar, Bhogeswar, Ganapati Temple	Sinore	Cluster of temples dedicated to various deities.
Soubhagya Sundari Mata Temple, Nageswar	Kanjetha	Temples dedicated to Goddess Sundari and Lord Shiva.
Hatyaharan Tirtha, Dutta, Anusua Mata Temples	Anasua	Sacred sites with historical significance.
Koteswar Sadhana Ashram, Koteswar Mahadev	Koteswar	Ashram and temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
Prabha Tirtha, Prsvasheswar Mahadev, Narmada Sadhana Kuthir	Barkal	Sacred sites with spiritual importance.
Asharam Ashram, Radha Krishna, Hanuman Temples	Moleya	Ashram and temples dedicated to Lord Krishna and Lord Hanuman.
Kedarnath, Badrinarayana Temples	Badrikashram	Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.
Gangonath Mahadev Temple, Saraswati Cave	Gangonath	Temple and cave with spiritual significance.
Kali Mata, Ram Krishna, Sarada Mata Temples, Anandamoyi Ashram	Bhimpura	Multiple temples and ashram with spiritual importance.

Table 4: Northern Bank Route: Mithi Talai to Amarkantak (Part 2)

mg/L and 343 mg/L, 3) Dominant Cations: Calcium (Ca^{2+}) and Magnesium (Mg^{2+}), 4) Primary Anion: Bicarbonate (HCO_3^-).

Anthropogenic Influences: Elevated chloride (Cl^-) and sulfate (SO_4^{2-}) levels indicate human-

induced pollution, groundwater discharge, and natural spring activity. High nitrate (NO_3^-) concentrations primarily result from agricultural runoff and industrial effluents.

4.3 Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks Along the Narmada Basin

The Narmada Parikrama route traverses several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, emphasizing the importance of ecological conservation while accommodating millions of pilgrims (Table 5).

The Narmada basin is not just a geographical entity; it is a lifeline that integrates hydrol-

ogy, ecology, agriculture, and spirituality. The river's diverse topography, hydrochemical characteristics, and ecological significance make it an invaluable natural resource. As the tradition of Narmada Parikrama continues, maintaining the sanctity of the river and preserving its biodiversity are vital for ensuring its legacy for future generations.

Sr.No.	Name	Type	Waterbody	Location	District
1	Bori	Wildlife Sanctuary	Tawa River	Nearby	Betul
2	Dindori National Fossils Park	Fossil National Park	N/A	N/A	Mandla
3	Dumna Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	Bargi Dam Reservoir	Nearby	Jabalpur
4	Kanha National Park	Tiger Reserve	Banjar River	Nearby	Mandla
5	Kheoni	Wildlife Sanctuary	N/A	N/A	Dewas
6	Pachmarhi	Wildlife Sanctuary	Denwai River	Nearby	Chhindwara
7	Phen	Wildlife Sanctuary	Burhner River	Nearby	Dindori
8	Ratapani Tiger Reserve	Tiger Reserve	Narmada River	Nearby	Sehore
9	Sardarpur	Wildlife Sanctuary	Man River	On	Dhar
10	Satpura	Wildlife Sanctuary	Denwai River	Nearby	Hoshangabad
11	Singhori	Wildlife Sanctuary	N/A	N/A	Raisen

Table 5: Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks in the Narmada Basin (Madhya Pradesh)

5 Discussion & Conclusion

The Narmada River holds profound scriptural, cultural, and ecological significance (Table 1,2,3,4,5, and Figure 1). The sacred tradition of Narmada Parikrama continues to inspire devotees, fostering both spiritual devotion and environmental awareness. However, modern challenges, including industrial pollution, urbanization, and deforestation, threaten the purity of the river. Hydrochemical studies indicate rising levels of nitrate, sulfate, and chloride, pointing to significant anthropogenic influence [3, 4, 13–16]. Addressing these concerns through effective policies, conservation efforts, and responsible pilgrimage practices is essential.

For preserving the sacred tradition of Narmada Parikrama, it is crucial to 1) Protect pilgrimage sites and prevent pollution through strict conservation measures, 2) Safeguard biodiversity along the Parikrama route, 3) Educate

pilgrims on responsible environmental practices, 4) Integrate sustainable approaches while preserving traditional rituals.

In conclusion, the Narmada is not just a river but a sacred lifeline embodying faith, heritage, and ecological balance. Ensuring its preservation will sustain the spiritual and environmental legacy of Maa Narmada for future generations.

Compliance with ethical standards Note required.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. **Financial support and sponsorship** None.

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