

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER IN THE RELIGION

2.4 Hinduism

The Ganges is a sacred river to Hindus along every fragment of its length. All along its course, Hindus bathe in its waters, paying homage to their ancestors and to their gods by cupping the water in their hands, lifting it and letting it fall back into the river; they offer flowers and rose petals and float shallow clay dishes filled with oil and lit with wicks (diyas). On the journey back home from the Ganges, they carry small quantities of river water with them for use in rituals (Ganga jal, literally water of the Ganges). The swiftly moving Ganges, especially in its upper reaches, where a bather has to grasp an anchored chain in order to not be carried away, is considered especially purifying. What the Ganges removes, however, is not necessarily physical dirt, but symbolic dirt; it wipes away the sins of the bather, not just of the present, but of a lifetime. The Department of Posts is offering Ganga jal in bottles at a price to the devotees across India. The water is collected at Gangotri, the source of river Ganges.



Label on the postal department sold Gangajal water bottle



Postal department sold Gangajal water bottle price receipt



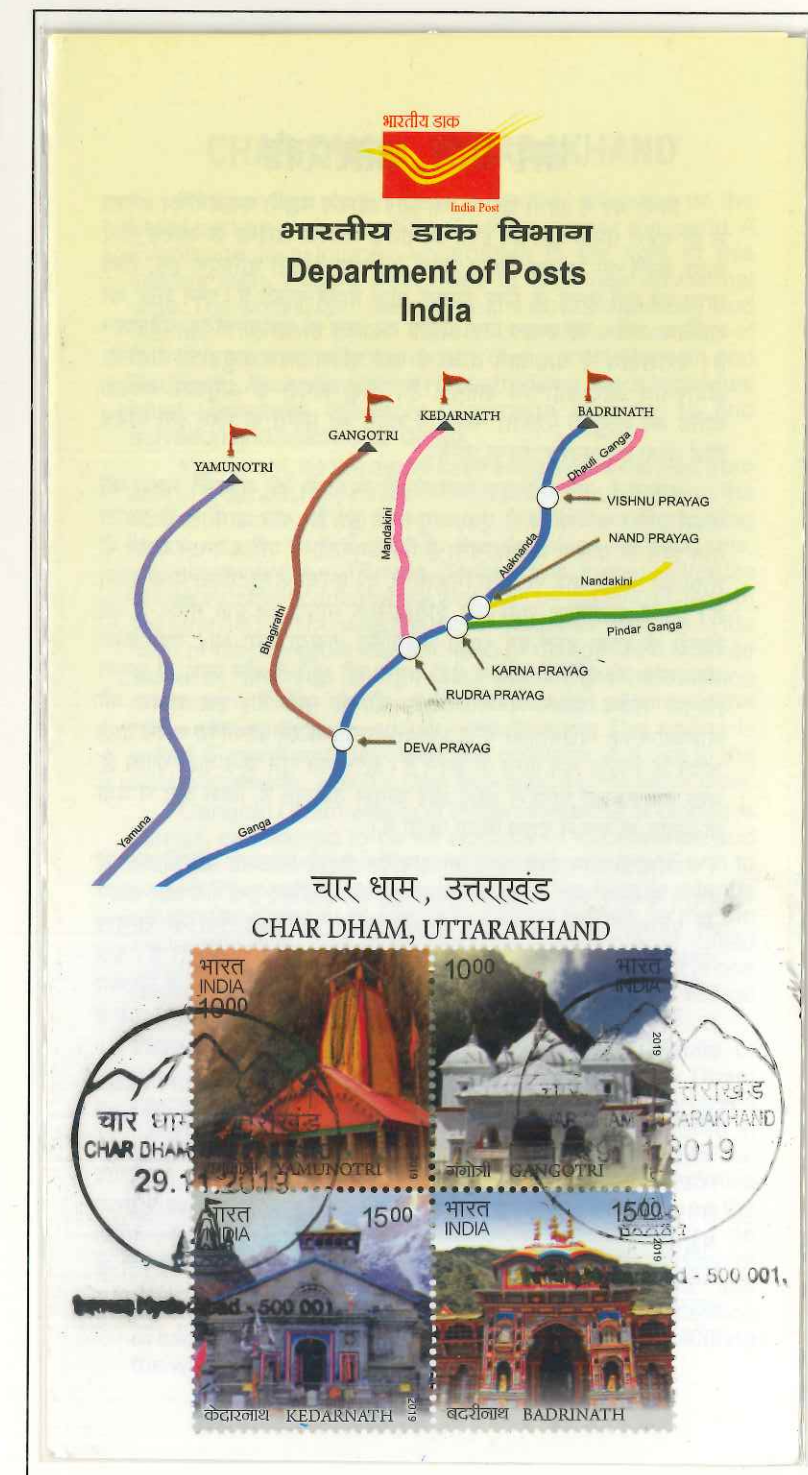
Ganga originates from Gomukh



Ganga with its tributaries



Cancellation: Siva and Gangajal at your door



Ganges with its tributaries