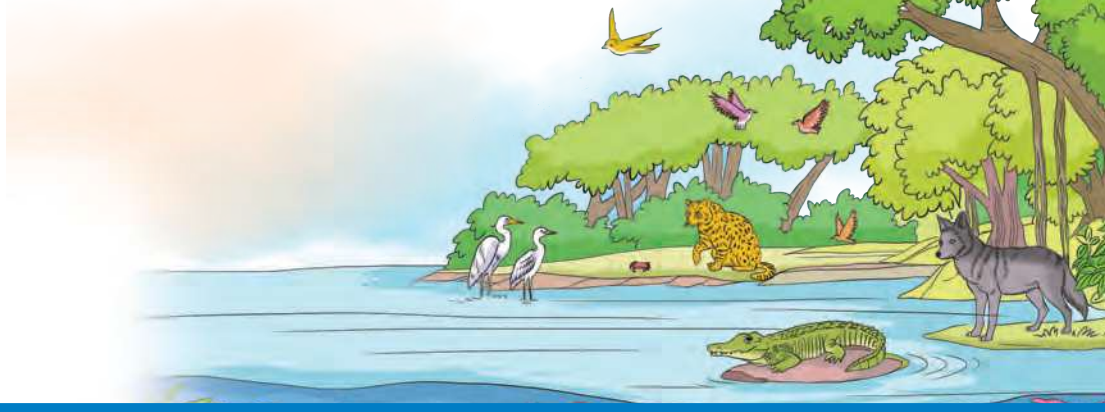
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2 Journey of a River

Where I Begin, Where I Flow

I have no feet, but I travel far,
Through fields and forests, under moon and star.
I quench your thirst and help plants grow,
From mountain to sea, I quietly flow.

Who am I?

Yes! I am a river.

I am Godavari. My journey begins high up in the Western Ghats at Trimbakeshwar in Maharashtra.

Although I start out as a stream, as I move across the land, rainwater and other streams join me, making me wider and stronger. The small streams joining are my tributaries.

I travel 1,465 kilometres before joining the Bay of Bengal. I am the second longest river in India after river Ganga.

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Look at the image given below and answer the following.

1. Name the states that Godavari flows through.

2. Name a dam and a wildlife sanctuary along the length of Godavari.

3. Which other small rivers join Godavari in its journey?



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There are fascinating stories about me, many from the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas*. I am called Dakshina Ganga because I flow through southern India and am regarded as sacred.

In places like Nashik, near where I begin, people come from all around to take a dip in my holy waters, especially during events like the Godavari Pushkaram.



The Life I Hold

I flow all year round which makes me a perennial river. Some rivers flow only when they receive water in the rainy season, which makes them seasonal rivers.

I pass through rich forests full of wildlife, including the tiger, barking deer, the Indian golden gecko and the famed red sandalwood trees. You have learnt in the last chapter that freshwater sources like me are home to many plants and animals.

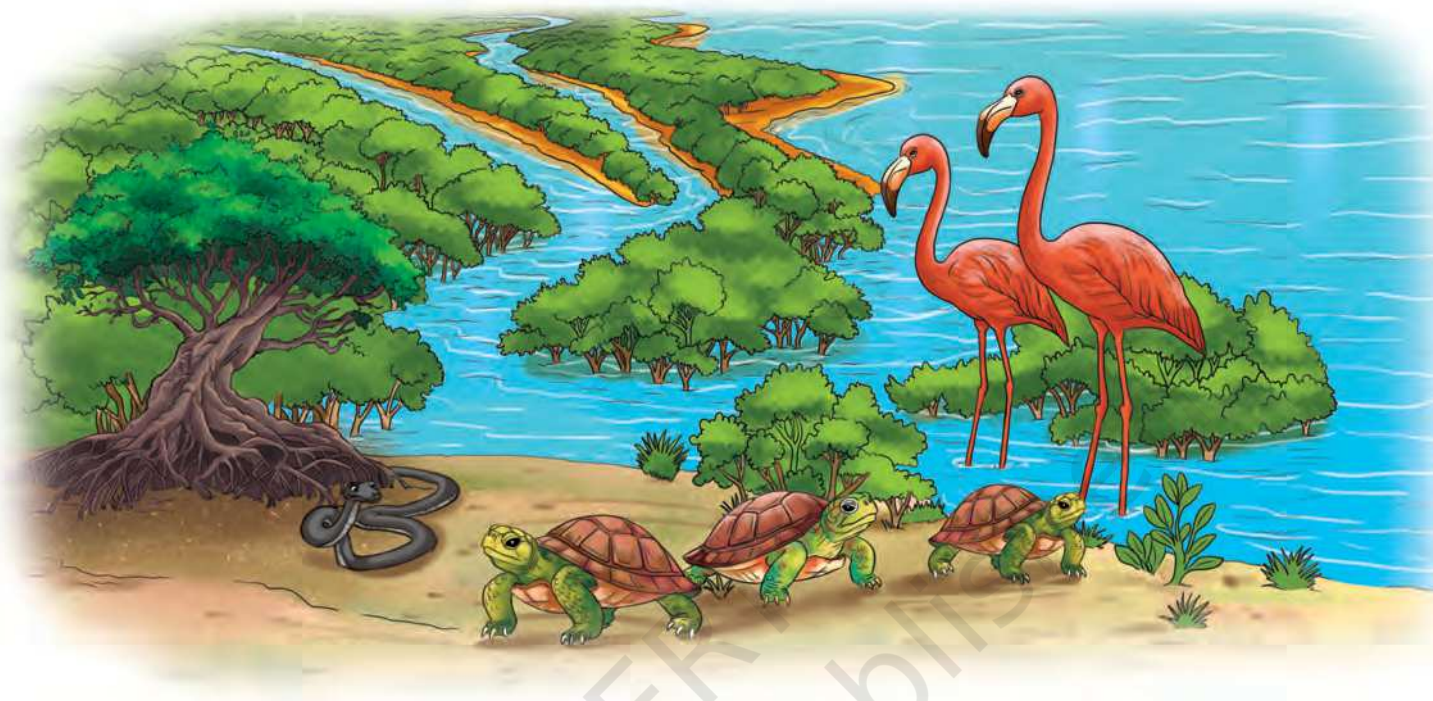
When I reach the sea, I spread out into many small streams that form a delta. My freshwater meets

India has built its longest river bridge, the Bhupen Hazarika Setu, over the Brahmaputra River. It is more than 9 kilometres long!

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the salty sea there. This place is called the Coringa Mangrove Forests, where my journey ends.



The Many Ways I Support Lives

Since ancient times, people have always built their homes near rivers or water bodies. Can you guess why?

Do you know the many ways I support people every single day? I provide water to people in the many towns and villages around me.

The water for all houses, schools and fields comes from me. I not only help people drink, cook and wash, but also help them to grow food, and make things in their factories. I also support many livelihoods.

My water is carried in pipes and canals, and shared by many.



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The Chenab rail bridge in India is the highest railway arch bridge in the world.

Ecotourism means visiting natural places like forests, rivers or mountains to enjoy their beauty, watch animals or birds, and learn about nature without harming the environment.

1. List three ways in which people are dependent on the river Godavari.

2. In which occupations are people engaged near the river Godavari?

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3. Which crops do you see growing near the Godavari?

4. Which crops grow in your region? Where does the water for irrigation come from?



Activity 1

Make a poster in your classroom showing all the ways rivers help people. Include drawings of homes, farms, boats, fishermen and more.

Dams—Storing My Water, Changing My Flow

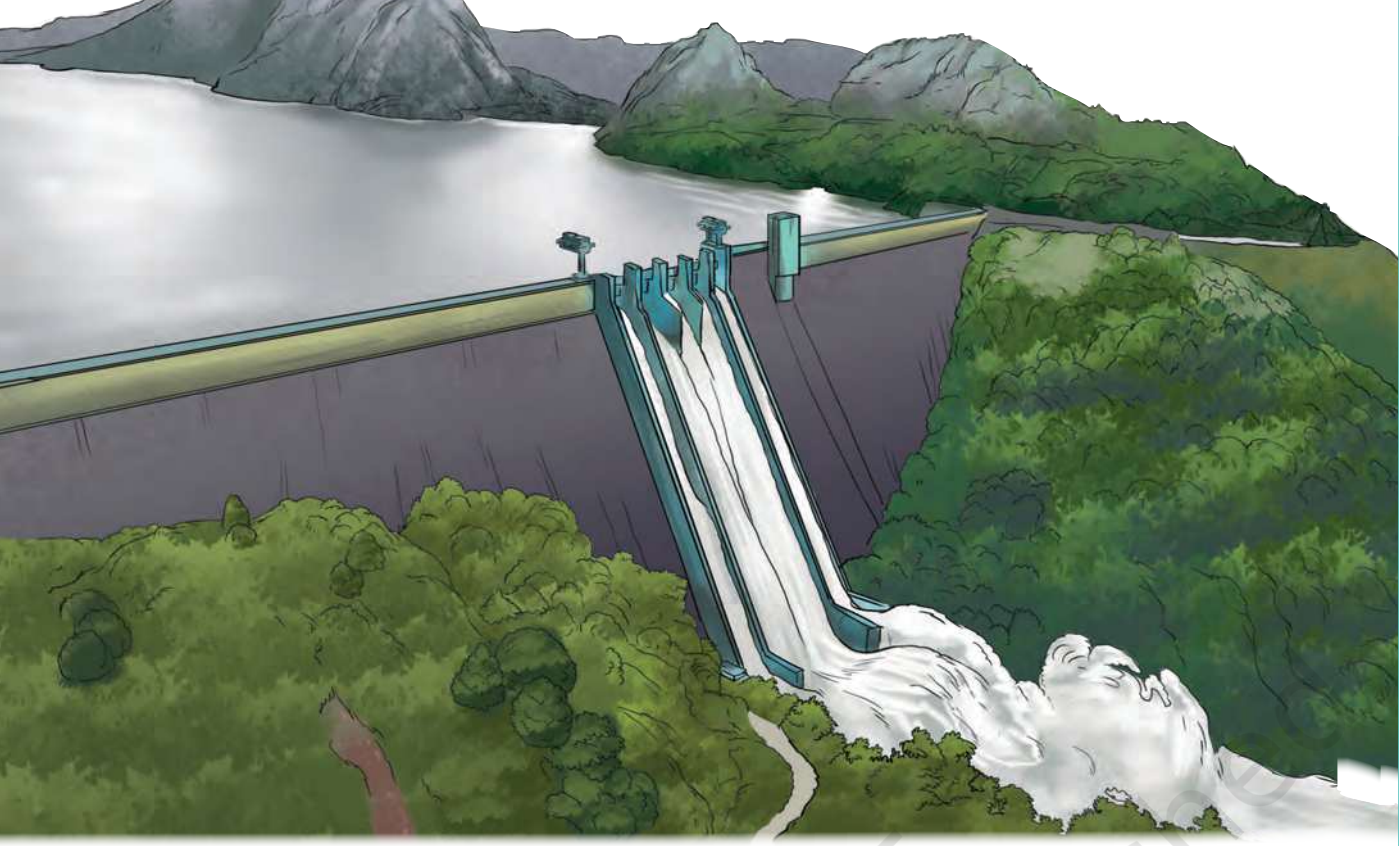
Did you know that there are more than 900 dams that store my water so people can use it even during dry seasons, to drink, grow crops and make electricity.

But have you ever wondered what happens to me when a dam is built? What happens to the forests, animals and the people living near me?

A dam is like a giant wall that blocks my flow and stores water in a large water body called a reservoir. While this stored water helps many people, it also floods land that was once home to animals and people. Many have to leave their homes and shift elsewhere when dams are built.

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The Majuli island in Assam is the world's largest river island, formed by the Brahmaputra river.

When you open a tap, it is hard to imagine the journey that water has taken and the many sacrifices that were made so you could have it. That is why, it is so important to use water wisely and never waste it!



Write

What problems can arise after a dam is built? How can they be solved?

What Pollutes Me and Why it Matters

With more people and factories coming up near my banks; waste, plastic and dirty water pollutes me. Sometimes I do not smell or look clean. Yet people use my water, which could make them sick. I wish I could tell them to help keep me clean and free from waste.

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One important way to do this is by creating less waste in the first place by using eco-friendly products.

The fish, turtles, and birds that live in and around me have nowhere else to go. Slowly, they are beginning to disappear. This makes me very sad.

Write

1. Where do the plastic wrappers and bags that we litter end up?

2. What kinds of soaps, shampoos or floor cleaners (natural or readymade) are used in your home? Where does the unclean water mixed with these cleaners go?

Discuss

Ask your parents or elders, about the condition of water bodies near your home when they were your age. What is the status of those water bodies today?



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Activity 2

Make a list of things that we throw into the waste bin at home or school. If these things were thrown into a river or a pond, how would each of these items harm the animals, plants and people who live nearby, and use this water?

Activity 3

Take two clear glasses of water. Add a spoonful of sugar in one and a spoonful of cooking oil in the other. Stir both well and observe.

What do you observe? Which one appears clear?

This experiment shows us that some things dissolve in water and some do not. Can you list a few things that:

Dissolve in water

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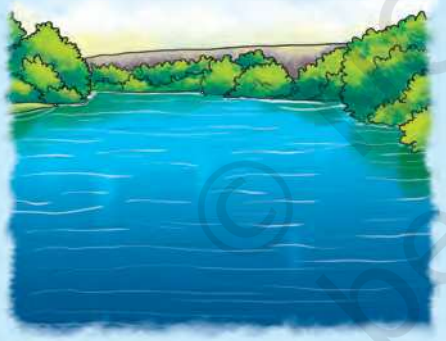
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Do not dissolve in water

Harmful things like chemicals or dirty soapy water can hide in rivers like me. So, even when my water looks clean, it might still carry things that can hurt the living beings.

Activity 4

Look at the two images given below. Which river looks healthy and why? How do so many plants grow in water? What do you think happens when too many plants grow in a river?



River with clean water



Surface covered by 'green blanket'

Sometimes fertilisers that are used to grow crops get washed down into my water. They make plants and other organisms grow very fast, until they cover my surface like a 'green blanket', which slowly starts choking all the life inside me. It becomes hard for the fish to breathe. Also, my water becomes unsafe for people to drink.

I must say that many people are trying to help

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keep my water clean. In places along my journey, too, people are working to stop waste from going into my water. Every small step you take helps me stay fresh and full of life. I am pleased to see that efforts are being made to keep my water clean.

Do you know?

The Namami Gange programme is helping clean the Ganga river so that it stays healthy for people, fish and birds.

Write

Can you list three things you can do to protect the water bodies near you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

When a River Floods

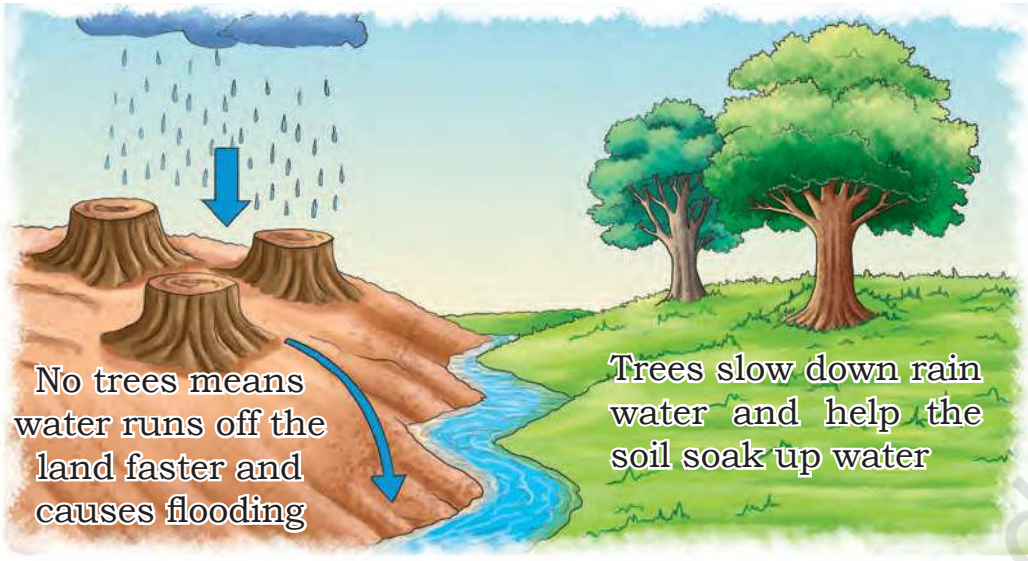
Most of the time, I flow gently, helping life grow all around me. But I never forget that I am powerful. When there is too much rain, I expand and become faster, deeper and bigger. I roar through the land, faster and wilder than anyone can imagine. This is when I cannot help overflowing my banks and flooding large areas.

When too much rain falls, all the water rushes into me and my expanding waters flood houses, fields and roads causing great damage, and destruction. People and animals often have to leave their homes to stay safe.

Hirakud dam in Odisha is one of the longest earthen dams in the world, stretching over 25 kilometres.

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Activity 5

Match the Columns

Note: One problem could affect more than one thing.

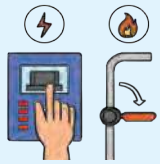
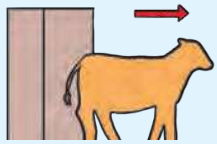
Flood problem	What it affects
(i) Dirty water	(a) Shelter for people
(ii) Broken roads	(b) Safe drinking
(iii) Lost crops	(c) Learning
(iv) No electricity	(d) Travel and transport
(v) Spread of diseases	(e) Lights, fans and phones
(vi) Damaged homes	(f) People's health
(vii) Schools shut	(g) Food supply

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Activity 6

Flood Safety Tips

Before	During the Flood	After
 Stay informed through the local news	 Disconnect electricity and gas	 Avoid contact with flood water and swimming
 Prepare an emergency bag with food, medicines and flashlight items	 Do not walk or drive in flood water	 Do not touch power lines
 Know the process to evacuate and safe alternative routes	 Get to a higher ground	 Do not go home or to disaster areas until it is declared safe
 Leave before flooding starts	 Follow evacuation orders	 Communicate to your family that you are safe
 In flood prone areas, keep useful items at home (sandbags, ladder, rope, etc.)	 Free cattle and lead animals to a safer place	 When back at home, clean and disinfect surfaces, and items

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Activity 7

Read the flood safety tips given in Activity 6 and organise a role-play where you are the *Sarpanch* or Municipal Corporator of your village or city.

Discuss what actions you will take to—

- prevent flooding
- prevent damage caused by flooding
- keep elderly people and people with disability safe
- keep animals safe

Have a Disaster Emergency Kit Ready



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When a River Runs Dry!

There is a lot for people to worry about when I flood in places. But when a river runs dry, it causes great problems for people too.

Take a moment to imagine your day without water. Not easy, right?

1. What would you do if you had no water in your home for an entire day?

2. What if there was no water for a week? How would you bath, drink, cook or clean? Where would you go to find water?

When there is no availability of water for a very long time, families may have to leave their homes and move to places where water is still available. This is not just for people, animals suffer too. Fortunately for them, I am perennial and flow across the year. So I can continue to look after everyone along my way.

Do you know?

In 2019, Chennai had to run special water trains from other districts because its reservoirs dried up. In contrast, heavy rains in Bengaluru in 2022 flooded homes and roads, showing how both water shortage and excess can affect lives.

Some fish like the hilsa (ilish) travel from the sea into rivers to lay eggs—a natural wonder called fish migration.

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In some places, people use water ATMs, which are special machines that give clean water when you put in a card or coin. These steps help us use water wisely and protect it for the future.

The National Water Mission works to manage water properly and help people use water wisely across India.

Thank you for listening to my story. But I need your help too. When you save water, plant a tree or stop waste from reaching me, you are showing me love. Remember, even small actions can make a big difference!

Each one of you can help save water by doing small things every day.

- Use water efficiently. Do not waste it.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.
- Do not waste drinking water.
- Fix leaking taps with the help of adults.
- Reuse clean water left from washing fruits or vegetables in watering plants.
- Remind family and friends to save water too.
- Remember, every drop counts!

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Let us reflect

1. Find out which river(s) flow through your state.
   (a) What are they used for?
   (b) Are there any dams on them?
2. Ask your grandparents or parents to share any story or festival related to rivers in your region and present it in the class.
3. Ask an elder in your family:
   (a) What was the condition of rivers when you were a child?
   (b) What has changed since then?
4. Why do you think people built houses and cities near rivers in the past? Are rivers still important today in the same way?
5. If you could create one new rule to protect rivers in your city or village, what would it be?
6. Think about a time when you wasted water. What could you have done differently?
7. Can you design a simple water filter using everyday materials? What would you include and why?
8. Imagine you are planning a new city near a river. What steps would you take to:
   (a) keep the river clean.
   (b) prevent floods during heavy rains.
   (c) ensure there is always enough water for everyone, even during summers.

Ganges river dolphin, India's national aquatic animal, is blind and uses sound to find its way in the water.

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