

## 4. Industrialisation of Rivers: A sacred and profane approach

**Neha Singh**

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Indore, India

**ORCID iD:** <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7942-3206>

**URL** <http://hss.iiti.ac.in/neha.html>

**E-Mail:** [nehaiiti716@gmail.com](mailto:nehaiiti716@gmail.com)

**Dr. Neeraj Mishra**

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Indore, India

**ORCID iD:** <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5709-9465>

**URL** <http://iiti.ac.in/people/~nmishra/>

**E-Mail:** [nmishra@iiti.ac.in](mailto:nmishra@iiti.ac.in)

### Abstract:

*The process of industrialization has resulted in spread and dissemination of science and practical knowledge that has attacked religion and superstition. The miracles of holy rivers have been gradually replaced by scientific explanations. This paper explores the nuances that industrialization is mired with, in relation to the rivers, associated large infrastructure and rivers attributed sacredness. The paper uses the case of river Kshipra flowing in the city of Ujjain to explain the shifting attribution of 'sacred' from natural things like rivers to materialistic things like money. The paper discusses the change in the significance of river during a world famous festival of Hindus for holy dip Simhastha. The paper explains the shift in focus of Simhastha from holy dip to crowd control, space allocation, crass commercialisation and unchecked competition. It explains using the theory of sacred and profane of Durkheim and Eliade, how in the modern time's secularisation of religion and sacralisation of secular has created the sacred/profane distinction which is making the rivers only the source for consumption forgetting their actual significance.*

### Keywords:

*Ujjain city; Kshipra River; Sacred and Profane; Hindu Religion; Simhastha*

# Industrialisation of Rivers: A sacred and profane approach

## 1. Introduction

With the advent of industrialisation the traditional systems of understanding the significance of sacred places have been deteriorating or abandoned to some extent or even abused, for the promised convenience of modern pleasures and gatherings but where they fall short is when those twentieth- century replacements grow to be undependable and unserved (Colopy, 2012). The traditional human-nature interactions have been embodied in ritual performances, but with the onset of industrialisation and western colonial invasion, humans have drifted away from nature.

Industrialisation was considered to be the perforation of western Christian cultures over the native cultures which have brought the hybrid state to the natives which Bhabha mentions in his post-colonial criticism (Bhabha, 1994). Hybrid state discussed here encompasses techno-centric paradigm and traditional systems. Thus the emerging global world brought in techno-centric compass that effected economic, social and cultural networks. The techno-centric compass generated a generalized apocalyptic anxiety as machinisation gradually replaced humans.

In the early eighteenth and nineteenth century, the small scale industries in India were replaced by mass production driven by machinisation. It instigated new social relations, shifting of people from rural to urban areas, the geographical congregation of people at one place and alteration in their occupational structure. The stratagem of industrialization has its ramifications of spread and dissemination of science and practical knowledge which has affected the traditional understanding of religion and superstition. The escalation of industrialization brought hardships, difficulty, and misuse of resources which made religion and morality less visible. For example, in the nineteenth century, Christianity was forced to undergo a ransack pounce of cognition, mainly from the viewpoint of the newly explored doctrine of biological evolution.

As the scientific knowledge and technology widened, the area of religion shrank i.e. in modern industrial societies, the hold of religious beliefs have declined. Numerous customary functions of religion were classified as secular institutions. The development of industrial societies surpassed local and national boundaries, and in this process, they decentred and questioned all antecedent forms of identity, accessibility, power, and authority, both religious and non-religious (Fasching, 2012).

The humans had sought a global understanding of humanity even before they knew they had lived on a globe this can be comprehended through the idea of ancient philosopher Stoic who promotes a contention that global cosmopolitanism prevails in a shared universal "logos" or

“reason.” The great religions intend at universalising the fact that what all humans have in common is God, or Tao or Brahma or Buddha nature (cosmic inter-dependent co-arising), etc.

Different religions throughout the world offered what Lyotard called metanarratives (cosmic myths) that composed transcultural civilisations like Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish and Islamic civilizations (Fashing, 2012). In addition to these, there were the most recent metanarratives- the utopian saga of scientific progress (whether in its Capitalist and Marxist versions) came along the advent of enlightenment and secularization. The civilizations formed by the name of different religions had their metanarratives established norms which were centered at defining what it means to be human. Industrialization forced the clash of all such narratives and consequently decentred all of them (Fasching, 2012).

When its cause and effects were observed in India, the traditional sacred places began to be threatened by enclosure (privatization) and state usurpation. The neoliberal belief promoted the market and economic growth which began to exploit natural resources. Industrialization combined the omnipresent nature of the modern state with unchecked forces of private enterprise and laissez-faire markets, promises to encourage development as the only way to meet pressing social-environmental challenges (Levi *et al.*, 2015). This spirit led to the division of society into two realms: the State which persuaded the community to privatise in order to outsource its social functions and expanding private sector which triggers an inevitable amassment of private wealth by the fortunate law. The ordinary people had little or very less place in this dichotomy (Levi *et al.*, 2015).

In a process to create room for ordinary citizens in the dichotomy of state and private sector the industrialization has been challenged for the past few decades. Critics have argued against industrialization and claimed that the growing economy has a devastating effect on society and the environment (Levi *et al.*, 2015). There have been some Indian scholars and authors who have notable contributions to this debate. For example, Vandana Shiva and Rajni Bakshi discuss how GDP-oriented growth and the market economy bankrupts the poor and destroys resources, how industrialization impoverishes communities, and how intellectual property laws are utilised for biopiracy and ways to outlaw age-old sustainable practices such as seed-saving (Levi *et al.*, 2015). They also argue for diversity, localism and empowering communities as alternatives. This paper discusses the effects of industrialisation on one such resource i.e. river water.

Water has a universal recognition in almost all the major religions of the world. Most religious beliefs necessitate the certain ritualistic use of “holy” water. The naturalness of such water has the stance in its known historical and unknown mythological origins, and the unreachable remote sources, raise its significance even further (WHO, 1997). With the establishment of industries and the rapid progress in communications and commerce, there has been a fast growth of urban areas along the rivers in India (WHO, 1997). This does not let the river remain the clean source of water, but it becomes a channel, which receives and transports municipal wastes away from the towns (WHO, 1997). Thus industrialization has ensured a commoditising culture even for resources

like water which Arjun Appadurai has mentioned in his *"Social life of things"* where he explicates the nuances of value creation through commercialisation (Appadurai, 1988). Thus the traditional notion of the river as something sacred gets converted to a more exchange value entity (Shiva, 2002; Alley, 2012).

This paper aims at discussing the ongoing commodification in and around the rivers after industrialization. In an attempt to understand how such sacred places are decreasing and people are getting alienated farther away from the holy rivers, the paper is divided into three major sections. The first section of the paper talks about the importance of rivers in Hindu religion and gives a detailed historical backdrop of the city and the river and the interlinkages between the two to focus on the factors which are responsible for the degrading water quality of the rivers in India. The second section utilizes the theory of "sacred and profane" elaborated by Durkheim and Eliade to show the modification of sacred places to profane with the advent of industrialization. The final part of the paper discusses the major concerns of the exploitation of the river water as a resource and its implications on the environment.

## 2. Background

This section of the paper explains the sacredness of water in different religions. From different religions, it narrows down to Hinduism in India, where the festival of holy dip *Kumbh Mela* is performed after every twelve years at four different places: Nasik, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Allahabad. The paper chooses Kshipra river flowing in the city of Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh to discuss how industrialization has increased the gap between human and nature that people are reminded of the river during festivals like *Kumbh Mela*. The weather variability, groundwater depletion, urbanization and increase in population have changed the river from perennial to non-perennial, and it has also forced the state to satisfy the needs of the people through managing and exploiting the water from the other rivers.

Water is viewed as a sacred constituent in most of the religions of the world. Some of the major religions that give sumptuous importance to water are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism. In early Christians, the act of baptism was believed to be an act of purgation from the original sin which Adam and Eve had committed. The sacrament of baptism is a representation of second chance to live as children of God. In Judaism, the immersion ritual was the symbol of spiritual or physical renewal and purity, a process to unify with original cognisance. In Islam which was geographically confined to arid regions there, water was considered a precious gift, divinely sent and to be carefully managed. Muslims also have this concept of ritual bathing, deemed to be an essential element of their religion because it gives a state of purity back to the believers. In Buddhism, water is considered to be salubrious, and in Buddhist New Year, it's salubriousness is celebrated. The Hindus,

who predominantly have this notion of purifying immersion in water, believe that the water that flows in the form of Ganges is sacred, and even though the river is currently polluted, the belief in its powers for spiritual regeneration still floats amongst people. But all this attention to water and belief in its intrinsic sacredness is ancient than its link to the main world religions of today (Abrams, 2000). So throughout the world, one can observe that water is universally symbolic of purity.

Water became an essential element of life with the gradual discovery of nature. Early humans had Mother Goddess the source of life from whose womb all living creatures were born. She was the goddess of earth or nature which had the ability to give and take life. She could also reiterate herself in the continuous cycle of seasons and water, from death or rebirth. Around 100,000 years ago (Middle Paleolithic Age), human beings started using triangular tombstone symbols and dug little cups into the stone to accumulate rain water which was contemplated to be the life-giving fluid. Around 40,000 years ago (Upper Paleolithic Age), human beings created stone sculptures and rock engravings of animals and female figures. The fragments found by archaeologists nearby water sources were of affirmation that these waters were likely to be considered sacred or magic, or they were therapeutic. During Neolithic period, alongside circular trenches found in cavern were connected to agrarian or funerary sects which are an archaeological evidence of ritual manifestations in the presence of water. During Bronze Age, humans considered running water more sacred than still water (UNESCO, 2006). Therefore discovery of water at different places during different ages reveal that water gave people life, food and a healthy environment to prosper.

The qualities of water made the prehistoric humans think that water was a divine gift, and hence its forms were worshiped like lakes, rivers, springs, and glaciers. They were named according to their cult, and the names last till today. In many cultures, water appears as reflection or an image of the soul. For example, in Japan water foreshadows the simplicity and purity of life. In Europe, during ancient times the water springs were either used as open-air sanctuaries, or wooden or stone temples were built for it. For example, Syracuse, a Greek colony founded in 733 BC took its roots alongside the fountain of Arthusa. It emanated forward in the peninsula of Ortygia; a place considered sacred where Arethusa, nymph of Arthemis, daughter of Zeus, was expected to live (UNESCO, 2006). The ritual or the practice of throwing precious metal objects into the rivers and lakes or depositing them nearby was a process which involved all prehistoric and proto-historic groups of Europe and coincides with the reduction in cave water cults. This ritual lasted a long time, from about 3400 BC until the late Bronze Age XII-XIII century (UNESCO, 2006).

In ancient Rome where the Tiber (another deified River) flowed had seen the prominent ceremonial state functions which were initiated with sacrifices to Jove Linceus, "bringer of rain," a name was originally given to the Greek God Zeus. In Rome only, the most important religious position, the Pontifex Maximus (literally "the best bridge builder"), finds its origin from a magistrate or priest in charge of water and the construction of bridges. Today this term is used for the highest representative of the Christian world the Pope. The Asian region has struggled with frequent and

torrential rains prompted by humid winds, monsoons, which occurred suddenly and had damaging effects on the countries of Indian Ocean. In order to stop them or lessen them, the people of India turned to water gods. Narayana or Vishnu is the god, who lives on the water, and he is the one who perpetually re-absorbs the things which are created and then from him only they are born again (UNESCO, 2006).

From the elaborate discussions on different religions, the paper narrows down to one, i.e., the Hindu religion and the importance of river water for this religion. Hindu religion is mostly practiced in India where every river is considered to be sacred and is an extension and manifestations of divine gods. According to Rig Veda, the very possibility of life on earth is associated with the release of heavenly waters by Indra, the god of rain. Indra's enemy Vrtra, the demon of chaos withheld and hoarded the waters and inhibited creations. When Indra trounced Vrtra, the blessed water gushed to earth, and hence life originated. That is why folklore of Hindus proposes that river Ganga sprung from the heaven. A great festival centered on river Ganges, named *Kumbh Mela*, is celebrated for the life that sprung for creation. The story behind this festival says that gods and demons were fighting over the *Kumbh* (pitcher) filled with *amrita* (nectar) created by the churning of the oceans. Indra's son Jayant ran away with the *Kumbh*, and for twelve consecutive days demons kept on fighting gods for the pitcher. Ultimately the gods won, and they drank the nectar of immortality. During this battle for *Kumbh*, the nectar's (*amrita*) four drops fell at four different places namely: Allahabad, Haridwar, Nasik, and Ujjain, which are the four cities where the festival of *Kumbh Mela* is celebrated even today (Shiva, 2002).

Out of the four places the paper chooses to discuss Ujjain city situated on the fertile land of Malwa which is an ancient historical pilgrimage city of India. It is accounted as the cultural capital of India (Kumar *et al.*, 2004). Ujjain city had many names in its past like *Vishala*, *Kanak Shiringa*, *Amaravati*, *Pratikalpa Avantika*, *Ujjaini*, etc. It is one amongst the seven sacred cities of the Hindus, where *Jyotirlinga Mahakal* is positioned. It is situated on the right banks of river Kshipra where during '*Simhastha Mela*' or '*Kumbh Mela*' a festival in every twelfth year is held (Kumar *et al.*, 2004). The Hindus consider River Kshipra as one among the four rivers that possess the 'nectar of immortality' flowing in the city of Ujjain. River Kshipra occupies an important place in the Hindu religion and is considered to be the "*Ganges of Malwa*." According to mythologies, a holy dip in this river during *Kumbh Mela* can free a soul from the cycle of re-birth.

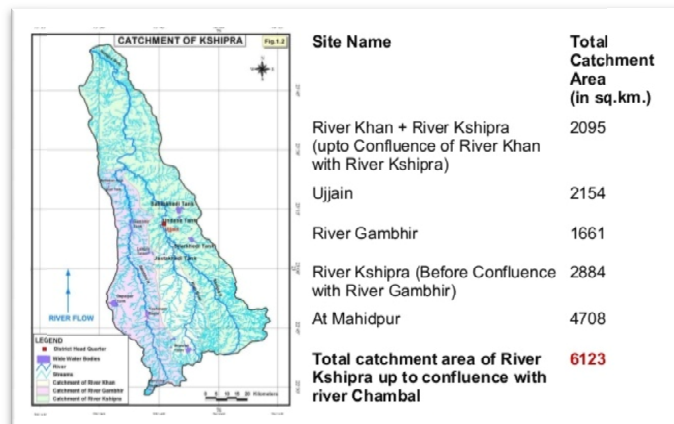


Figure 1.1: Catchment area of Kshipra River Basin upto confluence with river Chambal  
Source: (Giri, 2014)

Kshipra is a river of central India also called Shipra or *Avanti Nadi*. The origination of Kshipra River takes place from the Vindhya Range and flows in the north westerly direction across the Malwa plateau to join Chambal River. Kshipra has a catchment area of 5600 square km before its confluence with Chambal river. Its nominal source is on the Kokri Bardi hill, 20km southeast of Indore near the small village Ujeni (22°31'N and 76°E).



Figure 1.2: Picture shows river Kshipra and its sub-tributaries extending from Indore to Ujjain city  
Source: (Kumar et al., 2015)



The main tributaries of Kshipra comprise of Gambhir River which joins her near Mahidpur and Khan River which merges with her at *Triveni Sangam*, Ujjain. The main course of the Kshipra lies over the grassy plains of Malwa between low banks and from Mahidpur it is characterized by high rocky banks. The river has lost its perennial nature and now runs dry for 5 to 6 months in a year. The water of Kshipra is mainly used for drinking, industrial and lifts irrigation purposes. The main land use along the river is agriculture (NWM, 2011).

Kshipra river is reported to be perennial upto 1980, but gradually the river has become dry during the non-monsoon season primarily due to overexploitation of groundwater (NWM, 2011). The river now receives negligible sub-surface base flow. As the industries took over the city, the population increased which led to the construction of 1.2 lakh tube wells during the last 25 years. Because of depletion of groundwater for irrigation purposes, the acute shortage of drinking has also been reported in many places. The drinking water requirement is met by transporting water. The cities of Indore and Dewas are dependent on river Narmada for their water supply, which is lifted and is reported to be a very costly arrangement (NWM, 2011). The areas around the Kshipra river is developing domestically and industrially; there is a lack of water resource in Ujjain city as the river goes dry during summers. Ujjain suffers from water scarcity in both rural and urban areas. To meet water demands of the said region the required water is supplied from Gambhir reservoir. The increasing population, industries, and festivals like *Simhastha* have increased the demand of water (Kumar *et al.*, 2015). Therefore even though scientific advancement has made water available for holy dip during *Simhastha*, the focus is not the river and its revival but space allocation, crass commercialization, unchecked competition and crowd control (Bhatt, 2015).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This section elaborates on the theory of sacred and profane taking the idea from Durkheim and Eliade. It begins with Marx's understanding of religion and then using Durkheim and Eliade to explain how with industrialization understanding of sacred and profane is changing. It also discusses how with time the people practicing one particular religion will have to question the concept of commercialization of their rituals and traditional practices so that the natural resources on which their religion depends can be sustained.

Marx's saying about religion that it is 'the sigh of the oppressed creature,' 'the illusory happiness of men' (McKinnon, 2005). Religion according to him was 'the reflex of the real world,' and best of all it was 'the opium of the people' through which he tried to make people realize that religion is an idea developed from the minds of the people (McKinnon, 2005). According to Marx, religion was a fundamental illusion which could also be seen in the thoughts of Durkheim as he mentions in these lines: "*Out of this effervescence itself religious ideas seem to be born, that after a collective effervescence men believe themselves transported into an entirely different world from the one they have before their*



*eyes, that sacred beings, the creations of collective thought, attain their greatest intensity at the moment when the men are assembled and are in immediate relations with one another, when they all partake of the same idea and the same sentiment"* (Lukes,1985:p.463) (Olson, 2000). Durkheim went steps ahead of Marx to understand the significance of the communal nature of religion than only paying attention to its effect on the individual. He was not interested in the religious experience of individuals, but rather he was interested in the communal activity and the communal bonds which according to him creates participation in religious activities (Coser, 2003:p.137) (Olson, 2000).

Durkheim emphasized on the relation between individuals and collectivity. He was not satisfied with all earlier social theories, which considered 'individual' as their starting point. He rejected the ideas which were built upon the 'will,' 'desire' or 'violation' of the individual and held that scientific understanding of all social phenomenon is only possible through collective nature of a social group, community or society. He contended that society has nature, which is peculiar in itself. It is different from individual nature. Society must work collectively forgetting the individual interest. Individual must submit to the inconvenience of any sort or sacrifice without which social life would be impossible. Thus society imposes upon individuals the nature of its collectivity. For example, as individuals one is supposed to perform certain actions which one may not agree with, but just because they are rules of conduct or behavior one needs to obey or follow them. Through this process, the special reality of society molds the thinking, acting, and consciousness of an individual.

According to Durkheim religion can be gestated as a unified system of practices and beliefs which can be related to sacred things. He believed that these sacred things had forbidden aspects attached to it which separated them from daily practices and unite into one single moral community called a Church, for all those who believed it (Durkheim,1965:p.62). For Durkheim religion is a combination of four elements: a Church, the sacred, practices, and belief. These elements are defined as follows: beliefs being the sets of collective representations in society; practices, the rituals enacted in society to celebrate and reinforce beliefs; the sacred being is the matter of reference to religious beliefs and practices, and the Church was the organization which structures religion socially. Out of these four elements, the sacred is beyond doubt the most important component in Durkheim's definition of religion. Pickering (1984:p.115) expresses his views about religion through his writings on Durkheim. He says *"For Durkheim, at the heart of every religion stands the sacred... Durkheim gives a prior place to the sacred even over religion itself."* The additional elements of religion like belief, practices and a Church are functional to the sacred, and they rely on sacred for their existence. Beliefs and rituals are dependent on sacred, and the church acts as an organisation for celebrating identifiable sacred beliefs and rituals (Orru et al., 1992:p. 47-61).

Sacredness according to Durkheim is representation collective, illustrated as a feature of *pensee* and *conscious collectives*. As a quality of things or, rather, as Durkheim insists, a quality

superadded to things sacredness can come to be its real self only within the domain of collective consciousness (that is, in the domain of conscience and of consciousness). Sacredness is an aspect of the real that exists only in mind but cannot possibly exist as the real in only one mind. The sacred points to aspects of the real that stupefy Durkheim in a way, that he thinks there are several things in the social world to amaze us. Sacredness is like soul real but without extension (Fields, 1995: p.xlv- xlvj).

Durkheim asserts that society practices moral authority over individuals. This moral authority provides society a great deal of respect, for its age, wisdom, and character. Such a society obtrudes emotions, beliefs, ideas, and institutions upon the individuals marked out for respect. Such moral codes, beliefs, and ideas, etc. are backed up by the collectivity, an individual breach would be responsible for inviting societal punishment. Thus things or actions which are good for society is cultivated by something sacred. Religious dogma, totemic symbols or modern flag, etc. are all sacred things. They inspire in an individual the feeling of reverence and amazement. The profane things are just the opposite of sacred things. Profane things do not hold the same place as given to sacred ones. The society keeps sacred things separate from profane things. For Durkheim, sacred things are those, which become a coercive measure intended to ensure compliance, and are protected and isolated. The profane things are those who hold less respect than sacred, and sometimes people are also told to keep a distance from them.

Eliade continues by defining sacred as something which shows its supernatural characteristics to people. Humans become aware of 'something' sacred only when that 'something' shows itself. When the sacred shows itself to humans, it becomes distinct from profane, and so it is designated as hierophany (Eliade, 1959). The history of the religion of a society is a collection of many such hierophanies which shows sacred realities from primitive to developing a society of today. The most basic kind of hierophany like, a manifestation of the sacred in some primary object example, stone, tree or a river to the supreme hierophany which for a Hindu, is the incarnation of God in the form of *Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, and Shakti*. Even though the society transforms into a modern society, it still is confronted by the same mysterious act- the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, the physical existence of something that does not belong to this world, in the material things that are an important part of this natural "profane" world. The sacred tree or river is not adorned to be tree or river rather they are worshiped because they show some characteristics which make them no longer a tree or a river but the sacred, the '*Ganz Andere*' (Eliade, 1959). By demonstrating through its actions or appearances any ordinary object becomes sacred, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu by serving the humans.

A sacred river remains a river for the profane that have not been manifested to the sacred qualities of the river; it only becomes sacred for those who have been shown its sacred characteristics. In other words for those who had the religious observations through certain events, all nature is competent of disclosing as cosmic sacrality, for them, the cosmos, on the whole, becomes a hierophany (Eliade, 1959). Humans who are considered to be superannuated tend to live in the sacred. This tendency is understandable because of the primitives, but for the humans of the modern societies, the sacred is considered to be equivalent to power, and, in the last analysis, to the reality. Hence the sacred is thoroughly soaked with being (Eliade, 1959). The two methods of being in the world are sacred and profane that are dependent on the different positions humans have conquered in the cosmos. Sacred cannot live alone it has to be contrasted by profane, as mentioned in extensive theoretical treatments by Durkheim and Eliade. Their perspectives were similar, although Durkheim's notion of religion was more sociological, focusing on societal consequences, while Eliade's was more psychological, focusing on the change in behavioural outcomes (Stirrat, 1984), (Belk et al., 1989).

For Durkheim, the contrast between the sacred and the profane was known to all as the universal social fact. He wrote 'sacred and profane,' 'have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes' (Durkheim 1915:p.38-9). The universality of the distinction has been taken up by other writers, including Malinowski, but for some, its basis is not so much social as it is part of the very business of being human, a slightly different starting point. Moreover, Eliade has argued that the distinction between sacred and the profane is a product of humanity's 'terror of history' (Eliade, 1954). For Eliade, the contrast between the sacred and the profane shows the distinction between two types of time. 'Profane time' which is ultimately concerned with suffering, 'this doleful state of being' as Brandon calls it, whilst 'sacred time' is an attempt to deny 'the definitive character of historical event', and to return to a primeval state of being: the myth of the eternal return (Brandon, 1965:p.66).

Eliade's formulation of the sacred as existing outside time is worth pursuing in some detail for it provides a model of the sacred other than that found in Durkheim and in one sense or another, it is the fair characterisation of much that is claimed within the religious discourses of most, if not all, the world religions. Thus in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism, it can be argued that the most sacred, is that which is concerned with salvation and is that which is outside time. In Hinduism during *Kumbh Mela* the timings and dates which are provided for the people to take bath, reveals the importance of 'sacred time' and that timing as said bestows a human being *moksha* which signifies setting free of the humans from the cycle of birth and death. Similarly what is central to Buddhism is the discoveries of Buddha concerning the nature of nirvana which exists in a timeless state. Finally, the concept of belief in Catholicism which consists of eternal truths whilst at another level, the

sacrifice of the mass is not simply a reproduction or a representation of Christ's crucifixion on Calvary but is contemporal with that original sacrifice (Stirrat, 1984).

This paper refers to the idea of time mentioned by Eliade that the sacred involves a 'return to the beginnings of time.' It stresses that the world religions include a sense of the sacred which is conceived of as timeless and that this timelessness of necessity involves the beginnings of time (Stirrat, 1984).

#### 4. Methodology

This section operationalizes the theory of sacred and profane as elaborated in the previous section. With the rise of industries and the spread of capitalism made the sacred applicable in the society through two trends: first, it involves gradual secularisation of contemporary institutional religion; second, it involves gradual sacralisation of the secular. Both reflect shifting boundaries between sacred and profane. Secularisation of religion means the discontinuance of certain traditional practices like decreasing family religious rituals, such as bedtime and collective readings of sacred literature and prayers at meals (Bossard *et al.*, 1950). It also includes discontinuance of mass gatherings in various religions involving lesser separation of sacred and profane times, demystification and lesser perpetuation of ritual and myth.

Sacralisation of the secular means nationalistic celebrations which reflect the sacralisation of the secular within politics (Demerath, 1974; Shiner, 1972). For example, the concept of national holidays which are celebrated more widely and commonly than many religious holy days; making people stand and sing the national anthems with all the reverence of hymns, making national flags the icons or the symbol of representation of a particular country; and recognising contemporary national heroes and monuments has supplanted the widespread worship of religious saints and shrines (Geist, 1978; Roberts, 1984; Rook, 1984; Warner, 1959). This demonstrates that secular is sacralised in science today. Science recognised as the quintessential arbiter of veracity in societies that idolize national thoughts and casual explanations (Capra, 1975), which is much of the disquietude of the fundamentalists. Some theorist's like Weber stated the substitution of scientific for religious belief to be called "the disenchantment of the world," while Schiller expressed it as "the disgodding of nature" (quoted in Berman, 1984, p.57). The manifestation which was considered as miracles of God was gradually replaced by scientific clarifications (Inkeles, 1983).

As a result of both secularisation of religion and sacralisation of secular, the distinction between sacred and profane has become applicable to the secular context of utilisation. Meanwhile, anything can possibly become sacred (Acquaviva, 1979), sacred status is not dispensed fortuitously across the elements of culture. Alternatively, the consumers validate the sacred/profane dissimilitude within their common domains of experience. The changing sacred religious domain lies

under six major categories: 1) *Places*: for the people who are dependent on agriculture their farmland is their sacred center, and their life depends on rain water. People who see the nature as the sacred place is because of its beauty, majesty, and the power to evoke ecstasy and flow without help from myth, ritual, or contamination (Brereton, 1987; Lipsey, 1984). The places considered to be sacred disclose their sacredness through hierophanous indicators. If a place is declared sacred, it necessitates reverential behaviours such as purification prior to entry, pilgrimages, silence, removal or wiping of shoes, or sacrificial offerings. 2) *Times*: The separation between sacred and profane places separates the time into sacred and profane periods. The time declared sacred is merely an interval that is otherwise profane. If once this span of sacred time begins, it seems infinite and without meaning. Sacred times occur cyclically during the day, week, month, and year. The moment one enters the sacred place during the sacred time; purification rituals may accompany entry into this time to separate it from profane time. 3) *Tangible Things*: It includes icons, clothing, furnishings, artifacts, and possessions that symbolically objectify sacred. The shrines are decorated, and they honour sacred relics that make them distinct from the profane world (Geary, 1986). In the naturistic religions, the animals may be considered totemic and sacred (Houghton, 1959). The objects which are believed to be sacred are not treated as ordinary objects, and they demand special handling. 4) *Intangible Things*: These are dances, magic formulae, crests, songs and names which are considered sacred (Beaglehole, 1932). 5) *Persons and Other Beings*: If certain persons manifest themselves as extraordinary they are thought to be sacred and are separated and worshiped like prophet, gods, and saints. The lives of God, saints, and prophet takes on a sacred character through self-abnegation, martyrdom, good deeds, piety and sacrifice. 6) *Experiences*: The participation of the prepared individuals at sacred times and places are themselves sacred, while a journey away from home for a business is profane (Fabien, 1983). While the religious pilgrimage is a traditional form of sacred travel (Turner *et al.*, 1978), a part of any touring involves seeking of sacred. Worship of the pure, uncrowded natural site recalls naturistic religion (Belk *et al.*, 1989).

The paper uses both the trends and categories changing the sacred religious domain to understand how the sacred is shifting from natural things like rivers to materialistic things like money.

## 4.1 Analysis of the Study

According to Sanatan Dharma and Vedic culture, rivers have a unique place. They are treated as mothers and are said to be speaking about their age old experiences, keeping human emotions alive. The scriptures of Hindu religion discloses that its primogenitors kept a continuous relation with rivers and prospered in developing a spiritual dialogue with them as a result of which, these rivers dedicated themselves in the process of refining humanity. Paper covers one such river named Kshipra, flowing since the times of ancient India to the present age. The river has witnessed ups and

downs of cultural and spiritual evolution as well as rise and fall of dynasties that flourish on its banks. It is said to be originating from the womb of the earth and flowing on its uppermost layer. Therefore the river water is not just an ordinary water it is intermingled with sorrows, happiness, expectations, and aspirations of common people that are the reason why it is called 'Lok Sarita,' the river of the masses (GoMP, 2016).

Through its ancient times, Kshipra river has been scattering its water at the holy feet of Lord Mahakal, and since then it is considered to be living symbol of faith. Kshipra finds its reference in Mahabharata, Yajurveda, Bhagwat Puran, Shiv Puran, Brahma Puran, Waman Puran and Ling Puran. Great poet Kalidasa praised Kshipra in words like '*kshiprawatah priyatmiva prathanachaturah.*' Rishi Vashistha calls it a river of salvation. Due to its religious significance, the river Kshipra is perceived as pious and sacred and is in fact considered to be salvation granting Ganga of Malwa. On its banks famous *Simhastha Kumbh Mahaparv* recognised as the great religious gathering takes place in every twelve years for a holy dip (GoMP, 2016).

After industrialisation, river Kshipra and its sacredness were severely affected. The increase of construction of industries in its catchment, cutting down of trees to promote agriculture along its course, discharge of industrial effluents and domestic sewage, human settlements along the river, unplanned constructions have led to the poor health of the river ecosystem and loss of aquatic life. The river today does not resemble anything close to the way it has been described in ancient times. Its water quality degrades from Triveni Ghat where one of its tributary river Khan coming from Indore joins it. There are three major ghats namely Gaughat, Ramghat and Siddhvat Ghat where there are certain drains which get mixed with the river. The process of degradation of water continues till it reaches Kaliyadeh stop dam. After that, there are no major inputs of wastewater into the river. The main source of pollution of Kshipra is Khan as it carries domestic and industrial wastewater of a major town Indore. This stretch of 19.79 kms of Ujjain city is most affected from pollution Kshipra has very less water during the non-monsoon season and hence during that time for the festivals government brings water from the other river Narmada (Gupta *et al.*, 2014).

According to a study (Rizwan *et al.*, 2016), the stretch of 19.75 kms of Kshipra river does not carry the good quality of water. The study (Rizwan *et al.*, 2016) reveals that the pH value for the stretch varies from 7.15 to 7.70 which explains that the water is slightly alkaline. Thankfully this value falls within the maximum permissible limits as directed by World Health Organization. The change in pH value is indicative of increasing draining of industrial effluents, domestic effluents, the respiration of algae that is feeding on the contaminants and photosynthesis. Total dissolved solid (TDS) varies from 1050-1590 mg/l which according to Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS 10500-1991) the maximum desirable TDS is 500mg/l and the acceptable level of TDS in the non-availability of a better source of water is 2000 mg/l. The study observes that the TDS level of the river varies from 1050-1590 mg/l because of the effect of anthropogenic activities both inside and around the river such as clothes washing, mixing of sewerage, garbage dumping and throwing ashes during the holy



dip. The overall dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration is very low but mostly varies from 4.2 to 4.6 mg/l. Central Pollution Control Board has declared the minimum levels of DO for bathing as 6 mg/l. The unpolluted natural water is supposed to have a biological oxygen demand (BOD) of 5mg/l or less. BOD of Kshipra in the stretch varies from 60.3 to 75 mg/l which shows that River Kshipra is highly polluted. Increase value of BOD in Kshipra is due to high volume of untreated sewage and municipal discharges. The said discussions prove that Kshipra's water quality is continuously degrading (Rizwan et al., 2016)

According to the survey, Kshipra lies decaying in the backyard of the city of Ujjain till Simhastha arrives. The observations made through the study of Simhastha 2016 are as follows: two years before Simhastha 2016, government diverted river Khan for the stretch of 19.75 kms, through Khan river diversion project, which was a temporary arrangement to keep the river clean. Due to the scarcity of water in Kshipra, Narmada Kshipra Simhastha link project was launched, which fulfilled the water requirements of the people to take a holy dip. There were almost 7.5 crore people who turned out to be at *Kumbh Mela*, 2016 (PTI, 2016) in the city of Ujjain. To ensure the continuous availability of water for the month-long festival, five cubic meters per second of water was pumped from the Narmada river at the cost of 720,000 rupees (\$10,688) per day. Around 2.7 billion rupees were sanctioned by the government for various *Kumbh Mela* activities (Menon, 2016). The escalation of the cost to conduct the festival in 2016 was fifteen times higher than the cost induced for the previous *Simhastha* held in 2004 (Purohit, 2016).

The changing climatic conditions, population increase, increase in anthropogenic activities, an excess of sewage generation and having fewer facilities to treat the waste disposed of in the river has affected the nature of river Kshipra today. The polluted water has infected the river to the extent that more than 90% of the fish in the river has died (Purohit, 2016). It can be inferred from this study that there is a shift in the boundary between the understanding of sacred and profane which reveals selectively permeable nature of the domains of experience. Religion has become secularized, and the secular sacralised in today's society. Consumption of nature has become the primary focus of the people which has led to alienation from the resource till the need arises. Also, the need of humans gets fulfilled through technology, which makes them forget the relevance of natural resource in the long run.

## 5. Conclusion

The study reveals that protection of vital resources cannot be ensured through market logic. It demands a recovery of the sacred and recovery of the commons. Even today many people while taking holy dip during *Simhastha* do not see the value of water in terms of its market price but in terms of its spiritual worth. States have to stop forcing devotee's to worship water market.



The study discloses that the development of an understanding of the anthropogenic structure of water is necessary in order to help human beings consume it. Rather than going to the river to bring water, the water is fetched to their utility areas through several technologies which beguile the genuineness of nature. These structures built to provide comfort to the people ignore the anthropocentric or nature-centric ideas. While constructing a bridge, the engineer does not pay attention to the reactions of such constructions on the water bodies nearby. The countries hydraulic systems these days are considered to be the symbols of power that indicates subjugation of nature to fulfill human needs and to create aesthetic beauty. A 'built environment' is solely the product of culture, but a 'waterscape built environment' will never be as the flow of water cannot be restrained by any limitations. The physical and modified waterscape can be perceived through 'managed' and 'not managed' resources. But both 'managed' and 'not managed' are contradictory to each other as the former varies synchronically and the later diachronically. In order to manage the physical and modified waterscape, it's also important to question what constitutes management which has not been established well in India.

It's difficult for the water to escape social construction because it has been attributed with different meanings and utilized in different ways in the history of humankind. But unfortunately, there are no recorded historical documents about this (Tvedt, 2015). If the focus shifts to developing such a history, it would aid in the management of future water systems. The metaphorical representation of water throughout ages denotes the end of all things, the passage of time, fertility, youth, male-female dichotomy, power, etc. The change in these metaphors indicates how water-societal interactions have transformed with time. By studying the change in the interaction of water and society, one can develop an idea of preserving spiritual, ecological, cultural and social significance. This study discloses the extraction of water from the rivers without thinking of restoration of quality of water flowing into the river which has led to the deterioration of the Kshipra river of Ujjain city. The observed stances prove that the cultural significance of the river has very less effect on its existence. It seems people have the wrong notion that because the river is holy whatsoever is given to it; it would not affect its capacity to endure it. This kind of understanding has to be negated, and awareness programs have to be active to help people preserve the natural resource rather than taking it for granted.

It is important to understand that sacred water carries us beyond the market place into a world charged with myths and stories, belief and devotion, culture and celebration. These are the world that enables us to save and share water and convert scarcity into abundance. All of us are *Sagar's* children, thirsting for waters that liberate and give us life- organically and spiritually (Shiva, 2002). The struggle over the *Kumbh*, between gods and demons, between those who protect and those who destroy, between those who nurture and those who exploit, it's ongoing. All of us have a role in shaping the creation of the story of the future. All of us are responsible for the *Kumbh*- the sacred water pot (Shiva,2002).

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