

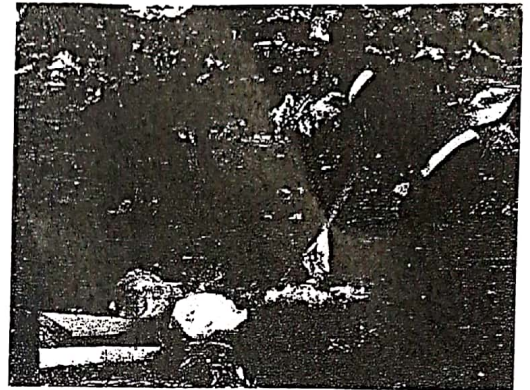
SS7G10 The student will discuss environmental issues across southern and Eastern Asia.

a. Describe the causes and effects of pollution on the Yangtze and Ganges Rivers.

b. Describe the causes and effects of air pollution and flooding in India and China.

India: A Polluted Sacred River

The Ganges River has been a sacred part of the Hindu religion for several thousand years. Varanasi is the holiest of the cities along the river's 1,560-mile course. In 2001, about 20 million people bathed in the Ganges at Varanasi during an important festival of the Hindu religion. Unfortunately, this was a very bad idea. The Ganges River is highly polluted with dangerous bacteria. About 300 million gallons of untreated sewage, trash, and food are poured into the Ganges daily. Experts estimate that about 80 percent of all illnesses and one third of deaths in India come from diseases carried by dirty water.



Bathing in the Ganges River
Photo by A2B.com

Hindus believe that they will have a peaceful journey to the next life if their ashes are strewn in the Ganges River. Tragically, families who cannot afford that process often place the body of their loved one in the river instead. Animal carcasses are deposited there as well, adding to an already dangerous situation. Many of India's sewage systems are simply overwhelmed since they were designed in the early 1900s and haven't been updated, even though the population in India has soared over the last century.

The Yangtze: Pollution and Problems

In China, more than seven percent of the world's population, or 400 million people, live along the banks of the Yangtze River. Billions of tons of chemicals and waste from agriculture, industry, and people pour into the river every year.

Because of the river's vast size, the pollution is somewhat diluted. Nevertheless, the nitrates from farm runoff enable algae to multiply, decreasing oxygen that fish need to survive. Pollution has killed the smaller fish in the river and harmed the larger ones, so that many people are afraid to eat any fish caught there.



Fishing in the polluted water of the Yangtze River
Photo by worldpress.com

Hundreds of millions of Chinese villagers do not have safe drinking water because water sources like lakes, rivers, and aquifers have been polluted by industry. Water pollution affects Chinese cities as well. When water quality is tested and the water is too polluted to drink, city residents drink bottled water. Schools sometimes close because there is no clean water for students.

