

### Importance of Sahibi River for District Rewari, Haryana (India)

Pawan Kumar Tanwar

Assistant Professor of Geography, Government College Sihma, Mahendragarh, Haryana (India)

Corresponding author Email: pawantanwar8571@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Sahibi River is an ephemeral river and rises from Mewat hills in Jaipur Alwar in Rajasthan and after gathering water from several tributaries, forms a broad stream and enters the district near Ranawi after which it enters Rajasthan and then re-enters Haryana near village Jaithal. The district, except in its Eastern part is flat and sandy and absorbs all the rain water. There are heavy floods created by Sahibi River in Haryana and Delhi. To moderate these floods a barrage has been constructed near masani village and is called Masani barrage.

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#### Introduction:

The Sahibi River is important for District Rewari for irrigation, its historical significance as a former lifeline, and the creation of wetlands like the Masani barrage area, which supports local ecosystems and wildlife. It enters Haryana near Rewari and, despite being seasonal and now polluted, still holds importance for agriculture through its riverbed and structures like the Masani barrage, which helps manage rainwater.

The **Sahibi River**, also called the **Sabi River**, is an ephemeral, rain-fed river flowing through Rajasthan, Haryana (where its canalised portion is called the "Outfall Drain No 8") and Delhi states in India. It originates in the eastern slopes of the Saiwar Protected Forest (PF) hills in Sikar District, enters Jaipur district near the foot of these hills, and after initially flowing southeast and east turns northeastwards near Shahpura and continues further till it exits Rajasthan to enter Haryana and further drains into Yamuna in Delhi, where its channeled course is also called the Najafgarh drain, which also serves as Najafgarh drain bird sanctuary. It flows for 300 km of which 157 km is in Rajasthan 100 km is in Haryana and 40 km in Delhi.

The current and paleochannels of the Sahibi River have several important wetlands that lie in series, including the Masani barrage wetland, Matanhail forest, Chhuchhakwas-Godhari, Khaparwas Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhandawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Outfall Drain Number 6 (canalised portion in Haryana of Sahibi river), Outfall Drain Number 8 (canalised portion in Haryana of Dohan river which is a tributary of the Sahibi), Sarbashirpur, Sultanpur National Park, Basai Wetland, Najafgarh lake and Najafgarh drain bird sanctuary, and The Lost lake of Gurugram, all of which are home to endangered and migratory birds, yet largely remain

unprotected under extreme threat from the colonisers and builders.

Several Ochre Coloured Pottery culture sites (also identified as late Harappan phase of Indus Valley civilisation culture) have been found along the banks of the Sahibi and its tributaries such as Krishnavati river, Dohan river (originates near Neem Ka Thana in Alwar district) and Sota River (merges with the Sahibi River at Behror in Alwar district and its canalised portion in Haryana is called the "Outfall Drain No 6"). The drainage pattern for all these rivers is dendritic.

#### Geography

The Sahibi River originates from the eastern slopes of the Saiwar Protected Forest hills in Aravalli Range near Jitgarh and Manoharpur in Sikar district of Rajasthan state. After covering about 157 km distance in the Rajasthan state. After gathering volume from a hundred tributaries, the Sahibi River forms a broad stream around Alwar and Kotputli.

#### Tributaries

These west to north-west flowing rivers originate from the western slopes of Aravalli range in Rajasthan, flow through semi-arid historical Shekhawati region, drain into southern Haryana.

- Sahibi River originates near Manoharpur and Neem Ka Thana district, and flows through Haryana, along with its following tributaries:
  - Dohan river (Kotkasim drain), tributary of the Sahibi River, originates near Neem Ka Thana in Sikar division.
  - Sota River is a major tributary of the Sahibi River, merges with the Sahibi at Behror in Kot Behror district.
  - Krishnavati river, former tributary of the Sahibi River, originates

near Dariba copper mines in Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, flows through Patan in Dausa district and Mothooka in Alwar district, then disappears in Mahendragarh district in Haryana much before reaching Sahibi River.

- Narainpur Nala carries the drainage of north-west of Bansur Tehsil and drains into Sahibi.
- Surakh Nali from babariya bund in Bansur drains into Sahibi at Sodawas.
- Khar Nali drains at Sodawas.
- Kasauti Nala in Behror drains into Sahibi River.
- Hajipur or Harsora Nala from Bansur drains into the Sahibi at Bijwar in Mundawar tehsil.
- Indori river is also a tributary of Sahibi River.

#### Basin and catchment area

Sabi River Basin is located in the mid north eastern part of Rajasthan. It stretches between 27° 18' 39.13" to 28° 13' 55.10" North latitude and 76° 58' 21.09" to 75° 45' 35.05" East longitude. It is bounded in the northwest by Shekhawati River Basin and Ruparail and Banganga River Basins in the southeast. The northern boundary is shared administratively with Haryana State. The Basin extends over parts of Jaipur Rural and Neem Ka Thana, Kot Behror, Khairthal, Rewari, Jhajjar, Gurugram districts. The total catchment area of the Basin is 4607.9 km<sup>2</sup>.

The catchment area of the Sahibi River encompasses the following cities and towns: Sikar, Jaipur, and Kotputli in northeastern Rajasthan state; Rewari district, Gurgaon district and Jhajjar district in southern Haryana state; and Delhi state.

#### Why in the news?

- Using satellite imagery, non-profit organization Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has successfully traced the flow of the Sahibi river which is now classified as ephemeral.

- The Sahibi originates in the hills of the Aravalli Range in Rajasthan's Sikar district. It used to flow from Rajasthan and Haryana before joining Yamuna in Delhi.
- The river is now bracketed into various canals and nullahs and flows only when it rains heavily in the catchment areas. In Delhi, it is now known as the Najafgarh drain.

#### Source: Down To Earth

##### About Sahibi river:

- It is also called the Sabi River.
- It is an ephemeral, rain-fed river flowing through Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi in India.

##### Course:

- It originates in the eastern slopes of the Saiwar Protected Forest hills in Sikar, enters Jaipur, and after initially flowing southeast and east, it turns northeastwards near Shahpura and continues further to enter Haryana.
- It further drains into Yamuna in Delhi, where its channeled course is also called the Najafgarh drain, which also serves as Najafgarh drain bird sanctuary.
- It flows for 300 km of which 157 km is in Rajasthan, 100 km in Haryana and 40 km in Delhi.
- Its current and paleochannels have several important wetlands including the Masani barrage wetland, Matanhail forest, Chhuchhakwas-Godhari, Khaparwas Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Sultanpur National Park, Basai Wetland, Najafgarh lake etc.
- Several Ochre Coloured Pottery culture sites (belonging to late Harappan phase of Indus Valley civilisation culture) have been found along the banks of Sahibi river and its tributaries such as Krishnavati river, Dohan river and Sota River.



### **Water irrigation in Rewari**

The main streams in the district are Sahibi and Krishnawati rivers. Sahibi River is an ephemeral river and rises from Mewat hills in Jaipur Alwar in Rajasthan and after gathering water from several tributaries, forms a broad stream and enters the district near Ranawi after which it enters Rajasthan and then re-enters Haryana near village Jaithal. The district, except in its Eastern part is flat and sandy and absorbs all the rain water. There are heavy floods created by Sahibi River in Haryana and Delhi. To moderate these floods a barrage has been constructed near masani village and is called Masani barrage. The Krishnawati River enters in the Southern part from Mahendragarh district and nearly makes a border between Mahendragarh and Rewari district. This is a blind river and its water gets absorbed by sandy soils. The flooding water is useful for crops and contributes to ground water reservoir. There are various other small nalas also carry rain water from the hills during monsoon season. The total water availability in the district as canal is 16.13 MCM. The water availability under Kharif season is 7.02 MCM while under rabi season it is 9.11 MCM.

### **Importance for District Rewari**

- **Water for agriculture:**  
The Sahibi is a vital source of water for irrigation in the Rewari district, providing water for farms.
- **Masani barrage:**  
The Masani barrage, located on the river near Masani village, is a significant structure completed in 1989 that helps manage floodwaters and serves as a bridge on NH 919.
- **Supporting wetlands:**  
The riverbed and structures like the Masani barrage create important wetlands that are habitats for

migratory birds and other wildlife, making the area significant for nature lovers and birdwatchers.

- **Historical significance:**

The Sahibi River is considered a historical river, having witnessed the flow of water for many centuries.

- **Groundwater recharge:**

During heavy monsoon rains, the river's sandy bed absorbs rainwater, which helps in recharging the groundwater.

### **Ecological importance**

This is an important part of the ecological corridor along the route of Sahibi River which traverses from Aravalli hills in Rajasthan to Yamuna via Masani barrage, Matanhail forest, Chhuchhakwas-Godhari, Khaparwas Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Outfall Drain Number 8 and 6, Sarbashirpur, Sultanpur National Park, Basai and The Lost Lake (Gurugram). It lies 5 km northwest of Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary and 46 km northwest of Sultanpur National Park via road.

The entire 100 km stretch of Sahibi River and its streams (Sota river, Kotkasim drain and Indori river) in Haryana are ecologically dead. Gurugram also dumps polluted discharge in the riverbed of Sahibi. In some of its reaches, from Mandawar and Kotkasim to Haryana border, meandering of the river causes bank erosion.

- **Flood management:**

Although the river is now a seasonal drain, the Masani barrage has helped control flooding in the region, which was once a significant issue.

### The river's present-day status and Challenges and revival efforts

- **Seasonal river:**  
The Sahibi is an ephemeral, or seasonal, river and remains dry for most of the year.
- **Pollution:**  
Over the years, the river has become heavily polluted due to industrial waste, sewage, and encroachment, turning its channel into a foul-smelling drain in some parts.
- **Water scarcity:**  
The region faces water scarcity, and the Sahibi River's flow is often diminished or non-existent due to unsustainable water use practices.
- **Incomplete flow:**  
The river's flow is interrupted, particularly downstream of the Masani Barrage, due to private land cultivation and legal/acquisition challenges, notes Times of India.
- **Legal and administrative efforts:**  
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the governments of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Delhi to take steps for the revival of the Sahibi River, indicating ongoing efforts to resolve the issues.
- **Integrated plans:**  
Haryana has developed an Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP) to guide the sustainable management of its water resources, including the Sahibi River, to bridge the gap between demand and supply.

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