From the earliest times the rivers of this country have enjoyed a position of importance. Flowing water is always considered as holy. Many of them are therefore treated as deities. The Mahābhārata which is called an encyclopedia of Indian traditions and customs mentions many rivers of different regions. Of these nine rivers are related to Kurukṣetra. Their names are Sarasvatī, Drīḍadvatī, Āpagā, Vaṭarani, Gangā-Mandākinī, Madhuśravā, Vāsunadī, Kauśikī and Hiraṇvatī. The Vāmana Purāṇa also mentions these nine rivers in one of its passages. ¹

Among them the Sarasvatī has got the foremost position. This was the only river which had a perennial flow whereas the others were only rainy season torrents. It would be proper to deal with each of these rivers separately.

**SARASVATĪ**

Sarasvatī has been mentioned as a great river from the ancient times. It occupied a very sacred status in the Vedic age. It is regarded as the first of the Vedic rivers.
The mention of Sarasvatī in Mahābhārata is traceable at many a place mainly in the form of a river, than in the form of the Goddess of learning. Different scholars have different views regarding the identification of this river. It is identified with four rivers, i.e. the Avestan river of Harahvaitī in Afghanistan, the Indus, a tributary of the Śutudrī which later on merged with the Vipāśa and a river associated with the Drśadvatī and the Āpayā which later on formed the boundary of Kurukṣetra.

According to the enumeration of the rivers in the Rgveda, the Sarasvatī river comes between Yamunā and Sutlej. Indologists are generally of the opinion that Sarasvatī is the same as Sārsutī which flows to the west of Thānesar and is joined in the Patiala territory by a more westerly stream Ghaggar and after passing Sirsa lost in the desert at Bhaṭner. However, a dry river bed called Hākra or Ghaggar can be traced from that point to the Indus. On the other hand, K.C. Chattopadhyaya reminds of the Rgveda, the river Sarasvatī stands for the Indus and in the 10th Mandala of the same work it denotes the Sārsutī of Kurukṣetra. In the Rgvedic age it was a mighty river and flowed into the sea.

The present Sarasvatī is the insignificant stream which rises in the Sirmur hills and enters the plains at Ād-Badṛī in Ambala district, disappears for a time in the
sand near the village of chalaur and reappears at Bhavanipura. At Bālachapur it again disappears but reappears at Barakhera. At Uṛnai near Pehoa it is joined by the Mārkandā and the united stream bearing still the name Sarasvatī ultimately joins the Ghaggar which is the name given to lower part of Sarasvatī. It is also considered to be northern boundary of Kurukṣetra. But in the Mahābhārata it is mentioned that the Sarasvatī disappears at Vināsaṇa but reappears at Camasodbhedha, Śivedbheda and Nāgodbheda. Vinaśana is the gate of Nisāda country and according to one tradition the Sarasvatī did not like that the people of Niśāda deśā may have a glance at her and so she vanished in the sands.

Prof. H.C. Raychandhary describes three main causes of disappearance of Sarasvatī at Vinaśana. These could be the high degree of aridity and the south west Monsoon that drifted the sand, diversion of air containing water vapours and diversion of the headwaters of Sarasvatī through some other rivers e.g., the Yamunā or the Sutlej.

According to a myth recorded in the Epic and the Purānas Sarasvatī issued from the water pot of Brahmā started on its downward course from the Plakṣa tree. It is said in the Vāmana Purāṇa that after crossing a large number of mountains the Sarasvatī entered into the Dvaitāwāna.
Rṣi Mārkaṇḍeya recognized her here in the Plakṣa tree and praised her. The Sarasvatī being pleased, agreed to go wherever Mārkaṇḍeya would take her. Thus the name Plakṣajā is also given to Sarasvatī on account of her supposed origin from a Plakṣa tree.

This stream was also known as Prācī Sarasvatī frequently among Purāṇas in the 9th Century. According to the Padma Purāṇa Śiva stayed with the sage Maṅkanaka on the bank of the Sarasavatī which is known as Prācī Sarasvatī. The abode of Maṅkanaka was in Kurukṣetra. Elsewhere in connection with Puṣkarī also, the Sarasvatī is called Prācī. Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions the Prācī Sarasvatī in the Brahmāvarta-Kṣetra. The Vāmana Purāṇa also refers to Prācī Sarasvatī where by taking bath one gets salvation and follows the divine path.

Vana Parva in the Mahābhārata also refers mostly to the Thānesar-Sarasvatī on whose bank the hermitage of Vaśiṣṭha has been described at the Sthānu tīrtha, located on the northern side of the town. It also mentions another river Arunā as Sarasvatī's own form which was brought down by Sarasvatī herself. This clarifies that the river Arunā was also at one time probably called Sarasvatī. Vālmiki's Rāmāyana refers to it under its derivative name Agneyi on the route from Kekeya to Ayodhya. Salya Parva also narrates a legend about
Aruna-nadī. The sage Viśvāmitra cursed the Sarasvatī as a result of which the river carried bloody water for one year. It was purified by the prayers and penances of the troubled sages. This created a problem for the rākṣāsas who had been enjoying its bloody waters for an year and on their request, supported by the rṣis the Sarasvatī brought river Aruṇā which was its own form and the rākṣāsas ascended to heaven by taking bath in it. The confluence of the river Sarasvatī and Aruṇā is considered to be very sacred. Vālmiki also mentions a river Śardāṅgā which is modern Sadādeni a tributary of Mārkaṇḍa river which enters the plains below Nahan and joins the Prācī Sarasvatī near Pehoa. It is also called Šarāsvatī which is a synonym of Śardāṅgā meaning 'a river abounding in reeds'. The people occupying the region below the Nahan Shiwaliks along the river and extending westwards probably up to Tāngri inherited its name and are known as a constituent of the Śālva confederacy of tribes.

A traditional verse describes the Śarāsvatī as the boundary between the Prācyā and Udīcyā divisions of India. Hemadri quotes the same verse with the reading Sarasvatī for Śarāsvatī. This signifies that at some stage Mārkaṇḍa river had got the name of Sarasvatī. This is proved by the fact that the Aruṇā-Mārkaṇḍa is depicted in the Mahābhārata as Sarasvatī's own form and brought down by
Sarasvati herself. There is another fact which throws light on this point. In the Vāmana Purāṇa she is said to be following sage Markandeya wherever he led her.

The Mahābhārata also mentions Ganga as a small tributary of the Sarasvati. It describes Ganga-Sarasvati-Saṅgama and names a tīrtha Ganga-hrada or tank of Ganga in Kurukṣetra. Vāmana Purāṇa also mentions Ganga among the rivers of Kurukṣetra and also names it with sacred places like Kṛtajapya and Kotitīrtha. This river Ganga is difficult to identify but it was most probably a small stream that joined the Sarasvati in its upper course. The river Chautang meeting the Sarasvati about one and a half miles above the village Bālachapper would appear to answer the situation.

The Rāmāyaṇa describes another river Ikṣumati which is identified with Sarasvati as Vālmiki calls it Pitr-Paitamahī which means created by God Brahmā who is also known as Pitāmaha. The river most closely associated with Brahmā is Sarasvati. Sarasvati is also named as Brahmanādi.

In the Śānti Parva, it is described as the daughter of Brahmā. According to Vāmana Purāṇa and the Epic it is called the first amongst rivers. The Mahābhārata also describes Ikṣumati as a river of Kurukṣetra. Literally
Ikṣumatī means the river which is rich in cane crops. The name is fully applicable to Ghaggar in whose belt cultivation of cane is a very notable feature. The alternate reading Devaṛṣicarita in place of Pitṛ-paitamahI also fits prefectly in the case of Sarasvatī. Illustrious names among gods and men are connected with her. Indumatī, the Variant reading for Ikṣumatī is also a name for Sarasvatī which is supposed to have conveyed the Indumat or Agni-Vadavanala to the ocean. The relation of the Sarasvatī with the tribe of Bhūlingas who have been located around the erstwhile states of Rāmgarh and Morni between the rivers Tāngri and Ghaggar with their headquarters. Probably this very river flowed the village of Bunga north of Rāmgarh.

We have thus three Sarasvatīs mentioned as (1) the Ikṣumatī Ghaggar-Sarasvatī, (2) Arunā-Śaradaṇgā-Śrāṅkaṇḍā-Sarasvatī and (3) Thānesar-Sarasvatī also known as Prācī or eastern Sarasvatī.

For the original Sarasvatī we have to turn to the Rgveda which calls it as a river par excellence. It is regarded as the first of the Vedic rivers. Rgveda identifies it by narrating that the Sarasvatī originates in the mountains and falls in the ocean with a thundering rear. It was the source of food and wealth for the descendants of Nahuṣa and of other living beings i.e. the
tribes like Bharatas, Kurus, Ruśamās, Matsuṣyas and Vidhehas. It holds the superior position among rivers and surpasses all others by her majesty and glory. Rgveda describes that the Sarasvatī causes the prosperity of five folks. She is sacred, immortal, vital and the bestower of wealth. She is called Sindhumātā. She is said to have seven sisters and is sevenfold. She is the Gāṅgā, Yamunā, Śatudrī Paraśuṇī and others. She is described as Ambitamā, Naditamā and Devitamā. This fact is also mentioned in the Mahābhārata. She is associated with the Māruts and Āśvins. The holiness of this river is proved by performance of yajnas on its bank by the sages. According to Macdonell and Keith in the Rgveda, the word Sarasvatī has been used for the river which always flows in Kurukṣetra. So in many hymns of Rgveda, the importance of Sarasvatī has been described.

Other Śamhitas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣadas, Śrautasūtras and Purāṇas also throw some light on the sacred river. Taittirīya Śamhitā, Atharva Śamhitā, Yajurveda Śamhitā and Śukla Yajurveda Śamhitā describes its holiness. Brāhmaṇas performed sacrifices on the banks of the Sarasvatī. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa describes the movements of Sarasvatī. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa, Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, Tāṇḍya Mahā-Brāhmaṇa, Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa and Kauśitakī Brāhmaṇa.
all have glorified the Sarasvatī. The Brhadāraṇyaka-
upniṣada \(^{75}\) also describes it as the foremost river of the
vedes.

The Kāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra \(^{76}\), Lāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra \(^{77}\),
Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra \(^{78}\) and Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra \(^{79}\)
refer to the sacrifices held on the bank of this river as
of great importance and sanctity. The Nirukta \(^{80}\) explains
it as an independent river which counters the view held
by some scholars that it is not an independent river but it
has got its second name as Sindhu.

Like the Mahābhārata in Paurāṇic literature also
there are two Sarasvatīs Prācī Sarasvatī and Pratīcī
Sarasvatī. Skanda Purāṇa \(^{81}\) describes the course of Prācī
and Pratīcī Sarasvatī which flows in the region of Kurukṣetra.
The Vāmana Purāṇa \(^{82}\) speaks in detail about this river and
identifies it in Kurukṣetra. This Purāṇa explains its
sacredness saying that by bathing in it one attains the
merit of Ganga snāṇa and Narmadā snāṇa and obtains the
Deva-mārga and Sarasvatī loka. \(^{83}\) It also mentions seven
tributaries of Sarasvatī as Suprabhā, Kancanākṣī, Vimalā,
Mānasa, Sarasvatī, Sureṇu and Vimalodaka all of which join
it at Saptā-Sarasvata tīrtha. \(^{84}\) These seven names of the
Sarasvatī were given to it at different places. She was
called Suprabhā at Puṣkara \(^{85}\), Kancanākṣī at Naimiṣa \(^{86}\),
Viśāla at Gayā \(^{87}\), Mandhāra at Uttarkośāla \(^{88}\), Sureṇu in
Kedāra, Vimalodaka at Gaṅgādvāra and Sarasvatī in Kurukṣetra. The place of their confluence is known as Sapta-Sārasvata tīrtha which is as holy as Puṣkara, Naīmiṣa, Gayā, Uttara Kośala, Kedāra, Gaṅgādvāra and Kurukṣetra. It is for the benefit for all the human beings that the Sarasvatī Persues her course in different directions. The eastern stream is equated with Gaṅgā, the southeren with the Narmadā, the western with the Yamunā and the northern with the Sīndhu. The Padma Purāṇa contains an interesting story about this river. Sarasvatī, the daughter of Brahmā was ordered by her father to carry the Vadavā-Agni to the western sea for the welfare of gods. She took the form of a river and appeared near the hermitage of Uttahka under a plakṣa tree in the presence of gods which earned her the epithets like Plakṣa-Devi Plakṣaja and Plakṣajata.

The Great Epic Mahābhārata holds the Sarasvatī in great esteem. It describes it as a divine river and gives it the formost place among the rivers. The name Sarasvatī literally suggests that there were many lakes and pools in its course. They are also eulogized at many places and known as sacred tīrthas. Lord Kṛṣṇa performed here a sacrificial session for twelve years. There are many tīrthas situated on its banks. The Sarasvatī is
supposed to consist of seven sister streams all of which are its own forms in different names according to their association with various tirthas. The name Sarasvatī was given to seven rivers called Suprabha, Kaścanaksi, Visāla, Manoramā, Oghavatī, Surenu and Vimalodaka. The Surenu-Sarasvatī is said to have appeared in Kurukṣetra as a result of Kuru's penance while the Oghavatī Sarasvatī happened to come to that locality because of the severe austerities performed by sage Vaśiśtha. Matināra, the ancestor of Duśmanta performed on its bank a sacrificial session for twelve years and after completion of the sacrifice Sarasvatī married him. Among the tribes who fought in the war of Pāṇḍavas there is a mention of Śudras and Ābhīras residing at the banks of the Sarasvatī. In this sacred river one who takes bath gets salvation from all the world by sins. It is mentioned in the Epic that at the time of extinction of the world when Märkaṇḍeya Rṣi had the privilege of seeing God he also had the opportunity of seeing Sarasvatī along with other rivers like Gaṅges.

DRśADVATI

The DRśadvatī finds mention in numerous references in ancient literature. According to Rgveda, the
Dṛṣadvatī was at one time flowing along with Sarasvatī and Āpayā and on its bank, the Vedic seers kindled the Sacrificial fires. The various Brāhmaṇas also mention this river in connection with the sacrificial sessions to be held on its bank. The Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa, Tāṇḍeṣya Brāhmaṇa, Aitereya Brāhmaṇa and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa are full of references regarding its sanctity. Śāṅkhyāyana Śrautasūtra and Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra also speak of this river.

It is described in the Mahābhārata being the southern boundry of the most sacred part of Kurukṣetra. In the Mānavadharma śāstra it is called a devine river and said to have constituted the southern limit of Brahmāvarta. The same idea is also mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Yoginītantra.

The river Dṛṣadvatī has been identified variously by scholars. Law has identified it with modern Chitang which runs parallel to Sarasvatī. Elphinstone and Todd have identified it with Ghaggar flowing through Ambala and Sindh but now lost in the desert sands of Rajasthan. Cunningham equates the Dṛṣadvatī with Rakṣī. He states that Rakṣī forms the southern boundrey of Kurukṣetra, and the south eastern Yakṣī corner at village Sinkh lies on the bank of the old bed of Rakṣī or Dṛṣadvatī. Further he suggests that
probably "Vaiṭarāṇī may be only another name for Drṣadvatī or Rakṣī as it was the name of the mother of Rākṣāsas. He also believes that Kauśikī was a branch of this Rakṣī or Drṣadvatī and Kauśikī junction still exists near village Balu, 27 Km south of Thānesar in Karnal tehsil. While Bhargava has equated it with the Hansi-Hissar branch of the present western Yamuna Canal which is known to have been dug out in an old existing bed originally occupied by the modern Boli nadi which now joins the Western Yamuna Canal about 5 Kms. east of Chhachharauli at the Dedupur headwork. Further it flows past Sugh and then runs west of Jagadhari Railway station. After that, it reaches Indri via Damla and Radour which are in Kurukṣetra District. Entering the present boundary of Karnal district the river passes Karnal coming through Nāgla, Singhoa and Budhakhera. The Drṣadvatī then passing 3 Km. east of Safidon, comes to Sinkh and enters the boundary of Jind district, where it passes by villages, Hat, Assan, Barah, Jind and Rāmrāi. After that its old bed runs past Hansi, Hissar. Siswal and Medakhera till it joins the Sarasvatī. According to Bhargava there was a part of sea called Sārasvata here but when the sea receded, the river ran towards Bhadra. It went a few miles further which is evident by the rows of trees and sweet water wells along its course.
Dṛṣadvatī literally means stony river it is identified with Aṣmanvatī also. A little short of the head works of Dadupur Pathrāla which also means stony receives another hill torrent called Somb whose name appeared to be derived from Aṣmanvatī. On the other side of the Śiśūlkā range close to ridge flows a stream names Assan or Ashmi which now joins the Giri river that flows into the Yamunā. It appears that before the Great Flood this Assan-Ashmi-Aṣmanvatī-Dṛṣadvatī-Pathrāla was one river flowing straight into the bed occupied by the present Western Jamanā Canal.

The weight of evidence thus appears to support the identification of the Dṛṣadvatī with the old bed now occupied by the Western Yamunā Canal.

From the Rgveda to the Purānas the Dṛṣadvatī has all along been held in high esteem as a sacred river. In the Rgveda, the Bharata princes are described as kindling the sacrificial fire on its bank and on the ban-k of the Sarasvati. The river named Aṣmanvatī in the Rgveda also appears to refer to this very river. The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇas and Śrautasūtra mention the Dārśadvata sacrificial sessions which were performed by sages upstream along this river. This sattras were started at Vinasana the place of disappearence of the Sarasvatī and carried on upstream along the river till at the confluence of the
two rivers the Yajamanas shifted to the Dr̄sadvatI and proceeded along its bank to conclude them with the lustral bath in the Yamuna. Later in the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas this river is described as the southern limit of Brahmāvarta which is equated with heaven. By taking in this holy river and offering oblations to the Gods one may get the merit of the Agniśṭoma and the Atirātra Sacrifices. The five hermitages named Nygrodha, Puṇya, Pāncūla, Dālbhya Ghoṣa and Dālbhya were located along this river. The confluence of the Kauśikī and Dr̄sadvatI is considered as of peculiar sanctity.

These who take bath here are freed of all sins.

In the Epic Dhaumyamuni tells Yudhiṣṭhira that there is a well known holy Dr̄sadvatI on which the learned Vaivarṇya and Varṇa who were experts in Vedic lore performed sattras. It is called Raupyā in the Mahābhārata where it is mentioned with Paraśurāma and between his five lakes, the Rāmhradas and the south western gate of Kurukṣetra.

Later in the Vāyu Purāṇa the original name of this river is given as RatnavatI and it is stated that it came to be called Dr̄sadvatI in the Kāli age. The town called Vāyupura is situated on its bank. The river flows through the Naimiśāraṇya. There are ladies also bearing the name Dr̄sadvatI, e.g. the queen of Saṁhataśva, wife of Haryaśva, son of Vāsumatā of the wife of Viśvāmitra and
the mother of Astaka, the queen of Divodasa and mother of Pratardana, a queen of Usinare and mother of Šibi. But it is difficult to say whether these persons were associated with the river of the same name. In the Kalikā Purāṇa it is mentioned as looking like Ganges. According to the Matsya Purāṇa a three year sattra was performed in Kurukṣetra on the bank of Drśadvatī where the Paurava king named Adhiśima-Kṛṣṇa the Brhadratha ruler Senajit and the Aikṣvāka ruler Divākara were in power.

ĀPAYĀ

It is mentioned in the Rgveda with the rivers Sarasvatī and Drśadvatī; later in the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas, it has been described under the name Āpagā also. Many scholars have tried to identify this river. According to Zimmer the Vedic river Āpayā flowed very near to the Sarasvatī river, either as a small tributary which flows past Thanesar or modern Indumati further west. Ludwig identifies it with the Gangā. Cunningham equates the Āpagā with the Oghavatī river and opines that Āpagā or Oghavatī is a branch of Chitang which separates from the main stream a few miles to the west of Ladwa and flows past Palwala to Pabnāva where it is lost in sands. Its whole length is about 25 miles. Bhargava has identified it with a branch of the Chitang.
The Mahābhārata refers to the Āpagā river as flowing to the east of the Mānuṣa tīrtha at a distance of a Kroṣa and it is frequently visited by the sages. In the Epic another Āpagā is mentioned in the Vālīka Deśa ruled by Śalya. It is said that by offering feast to one Brāhmaṇa on the bank of the river one achieves the merit of feeding one crore of Brāhmaṇas. By taking bath in this river and worshipping the forefathers and gods and staying there for one night, the pilgrim obtains the merit of Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. According to the Vāmana Purāṇa, those who offer on its bank the Śyāmaka grain boiled in milk and moistened with Ghee to the Brāhmaṇas becomes free from all sins. Performance of Śrāddha on the bank of this river is considered to be meritorious. The pilgrims offering here the ball of rice to the manes at noon in the month of Bhadra, especially on the Caturdasi of the dark fortnight get liberation.

VAITARANĪ

This river has been mentioned in the Mahābhārata as well as in the Vāmaṇa Purāṇa. The Vaitaranī river of the Epic is identified with some spot in the region of Virāja-tīrtha. It has been flowing near the holy spot of Trivistapa which is now identified with the village of the Thiontha. Bhargava identified this river with
the stream now called Betan as a branch of Sarasvatī and equated it with Rgvedic river Arāmatī. Cunningham\textsuperscript{159} thinks that it may be only another term for Drṣadvatī or Rakṣī as it was the name of the mother of the Rākṣasas. The Vaitaraṇī associated with Virāja rises from the Vindhyas and flows through Orissa into the Bay of Bengal.\textsuperscript{160}

The Vaitaraṇī is sometimes used as another name of the Gaṅgā, particularly in the region of Pitṛs. It is very difficult for the sinner to cross this river.\textsuperscript{161} The Trīviṣṭapa tīrtha was located on its bank and it destroys all the sins.\textsuperscript{162} Another river Vaitaraṇī is mentioned in the country of Kaliṅga and here Dharma performed sacrifices placing himself under the protection of the gods.\textsuperscript{163} The Vaitaraṇī river was also visited by Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī in the course of their exile. They all took bath here and then offered oblations to their Pitṛs.\textsuperscript{164} It is also generally mentioned among the rivers of Bhāratavarṣa.\textsuperscript{165}

**KAUSIKĪ**

According to Rgveda\textsuperscript{166} Kauśikī river was named after sage Kuśika, father of Viśvāmitra whose hermitage was situated on its bank. Since this river is mentioned as an affluent of the Drṣadvatī in the Mahābhārata, Cunningham believes that the confluence of the two rivers Kauśikī and
Dṛṣadvatī still exists near village Balu on the Rakṣī river about 17 miles to the south of Thānesar and 9 miles to the west of Karnal. It is not possible to accept its identification with the river Kosi which runs near Almora and Ramnagar in north western U.P. According to Bhargava it is now represented by lower Chitang in its upper course and is also known as Madhuśrava in local tradition probably because it flowed near Madhuvatī in the Madhu forest.

Kauśikī arises in the Himalayas and runs through Kurukṣetra along with the tīrthas like Sambhavatīrtha before joining the Dṛṣadvatī. The pilgrims take bath in this river, observing fast, worship the god and offer gifts to the Brāhmaṇas on its bank. The Great Epic mentions that by having a dip in Kauśikī one gets the merit of the Rājasūya sacrifice which destroys all the sins. Those who took bath before having meals on the confluence of Kauśikī and Dṛṣadvatī were freed from all sins. Those who stayed for one month on the bank of Kauśikī will get the merit of an Aśvamedha sacrifice. By keeping fast for three nights on the junction of Kauśikī and Arūṇā, one gets relief from all sins. On this river the sage Viśvāmitra attained the status of a Brāhmaṇa. The Kauśikī river having sacred water is called divine river and also on its bank the āśrama of sage
Viśvāmitra is situated and here he performed important sacrifices and austerities.  

**GAŅGĀ-MANDĀKINĪ**

The *Mahābhārata* describes Gaṅgā as a small tributary of Sarasvatī and mentions Gaṅgā-Sarasvatī Saṅgama and names a tīrtha Gaṅgā-hṛada or tank of Gaṅgā in Kurukṣetra. The Vāman Purāṇa also mentions Gaṅgā among the rivers of Kurukṣetra and names it with holy places like Kṛtajapya and Koti tīrtha. The Epic further mentions two Mandākinī rivers, one near Citrakūṭa and the other in the Himalayan region. The second one came to be known as Gaṅgā-Mandākinī. There are same literary references to Mandākinī a sub tributary of Gaṅgā. Vāman Purāṇa also speaks of Mandākinī separately in the story of Jyotismāta who practised penance on its bank for getting a son. It is further mentioned that there was a great fight between the gods and demons and their blood created a river resembling to Mandākinī. But this indicates nothing regarding its identity. Bhargava considers this river a branch of the Āpagā which probably ran past Migdhu, Kopar and Dusai villages to join the Kauśikī. So it was most probably a small stream that joined the Sarasvatī in its upper course. According to the maps the branch of river Chitang that meets
the Sarasvati about 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles about the village Balachappar was possibly the same river.

**MADHUSRAVA**

Madhuśrava or the "Honey welling pool", is the most popular of all the holy places at Pehoa, and everybody accordingly bathes in it. Cunningham\(^{188}\) believes it to represent the pool named Madhuśrava in the Pṛthudaka tiṃḍha complex in the bed of Sarasvatī while Bhargava\(^{189}\) equates it with the Kauśikī river of Mahābhārata near Madhuvatī which was given this name as it passed through Madhu Forest and he further adds that it is same as the lower Chitāṅg.

In the Vāmana Purāṇa\(^{190}\) Madhuśrava is associated with the Cakradhara form of Viṣṇu but no helpful reference is available for this identification. It is also mentioned that Madhuśrava is the sacred river of Kurukṣetra.\(^{191}\) According to the Epic\(^{192}\) by having bath in this holy river one gets the merit of one thousand cows.

**VĀSUNADI**

We have a variant names of Vāsunadī as Amlunadī in the Vāmana Purāṇa.\(^{193}\) Vāmana Purāṇa mentions two Vāsuv rivers one of which is the holy river of Kurukṣetra\(^{194}\) and the other rises at the foot of Rkṣa.\(^{195}\) This Amlunadī name was probably more in circulation and can be spotted
even new in the name of the Umla nadī, a tributary of the Tangri which joins it some distance below Ambala. The Amlunadī may be identified with the Aṁsumati of the Rgveda.\textsuperscript{196} It was on the bank of the Aṁsumati river that Indra is said to have been slain by the demon called Kṛṣṇāsura.\textsuperscript{197} According to the author of Hindi Viśvakośa this river can be identified with Aṁsumati of the Kurupradipa and Ambumatī of the Vanaparva. It has also been stated in the Vana Parva that Sutīrthaka tīrtha was situated on the bank of the river Ambumatī. The Ambuvana may be the forest region on the bank of the Ambunadī.\textsuperscript{198}

HIRANVATI

The Hirānvatī is mentioned in the Epic as a holy river of Kurukṣetra\textsuperscript{199} and here the Pāṇḍavas encamped\textsuperscript{200}. Scholars have different views regarding its identification. B.C. Law\textsuperscript{201} identified it with little Gaṅḍak and the same as Ajitavatī near Kuśānara, which flows through the district of Gorakhapura about eight miles to the west of the Great Gaṅḍak and falls into the Gogra i.e., Saryū. Cunningham\textsuperscript{202} also considers it identical with Gaṅḍakī but in the context of Kurukṣetra this equation has no relevance. The Hirānvatī has been identified by Bhargava with the Drṣadvatī and is supposed to have Vanished now. There are however, certain considerations which appears to support
In the Vāmana Purāṇa this holy river is associated with Rudraks form of Viṣṇu. Both in the Mahābhārata and the Vāmana Purāṇa it is associated with Śrīkaṇṭha Janapada. The Badari tīrtha was situated on its bank and a hill named Hiranyāsthīva formed the boundary of Plakṣa. Vāmana Purāṇa mentions a story which helps to locate this river. Viśvakarman in the form of a monkey, kept Devavatī in a holy hermitage in Śrīkaṇṭha on the southern bank of the Kālindī or Yamunā. He dived into the Kālindī and was carried by the swift current to Śivideśa on his way to Śrīkaṇṭha the monkey met Aṇjana with his daughter Nandayantī whom the monkey took to be Devavatī. Then he ran away with the lady who fell into the Hiranyatī river out of fear and Aṇjana saw it.

All these rivers of Kurukṣetra were invested with sanctity with the passage of time by the people who lived at their banks since time immemorial. Although the idea of seven Sarasvatiṣes had already been born in the vedic age. It was given a concrete form only by the time of the Mahābhārata and Purāṇa when the other supposed tributaries of the Sarasvatiṣes were given specific names, some of which have survived to this day in corrupt forms. The holiest of these rivers were of course the Sarasvati, the Drśadvati...
and the Āpayā whose banks were the scene of sacrificial activity of the earliest Bharata princes and most of the habitations along whose banks were elevated to the status of tīrthas in the great Epic.

These are, of course, all the rivers of Kurukṣetra mentioned in the Mahābhārata. As far as the physical boundaries of the land are concerned. We could also mention the Satadru or the Sutlej and the Yamunā if we go by its cultural limits. These rivers are equally well known to the great Epic apart from many others flowing in different parts of the country.
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6. Rg. X. 75.5.


10. Mbh. III, 80.118.

11. Mbh. III. 80.119

12. Rg. X. 75.5


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16. Vām. Pu. 34. 6-8.
12. Mbh. III. 130.4.


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22. Mbh. IX.42.

23. Ibid. IX.43.30.
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27. P.L. Bhargava, The Geography of Rigvedic India (Lucknow), pp. 72, 100.
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32. Mbh. IX, 43.30.
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36. गंगहुष्टरव तृतीयृं भरतवसः
37. तिन्यत त्रिपुषुतक तीर्थमु कृपे महोपसः
38. गंगहुष्टरव तृतीयृं भरतवसः
39. ते नैन्यतिर्थ्य यथास्त्रार्थी तमाहितिः
40. XIII. 26.33.
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54. Rg. VII.36.6.

55. Rg. VI.61.60, VII.36.6.

56. Rg. X.64.9.

57. Rg. X.75.5.

58. Rg. II.41.16.

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63. Tai, Śm. 7.2.1.4.

64. Athar. Śm. 6.30.1.

65. Yajur. Śm. 20.66.

66. Śukla Yaj. Śm., 34.11.

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68. Ait. Br. 8.1. & 2.19- आयो दैवशतया सत्मृहत।

69. Tait. Br. 2.4.6.7.

70. Śān. Br. 12.3.


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104. Mbh. II.29.9.

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तत्त्वज्ञानं समाप्तिः गाः गाः तत्त्वज्ञानं:।।
जगाम कौशिको पुण्यं रम्यं वित्त्वलो नदीयम।।
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"हार्षतः" निविष्टेतु पाण्डवेव महात्माम।

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दक्षिणार्तिः। गणेशेव श्रेष्ठस्मायोत्तरेण व।

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