

## **Gangotri Retreating 12m Annually: Experts**

Gangotri glacier, one of the largest in Uttarakhand, is retreating at 12 metres per year, said scientists at the GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIHED) who are studying the site to come up with long-term strategies to combat the threat posed by global warming.

The team is measuring the retreat of the 30-km-long glacier and the water flow in the Ganga.

"The Gangotri glacier is receding at 12m annually. Our team is collecting data of the Ganga river flow and scrutinizing the receding of the glacier. The glacier retreat rate for this year is yet to be studied," said chief investigator of the project, Kireet Kumar, senior scientist, GBPIHED in Almora.

Giving details on how the field study was being conducted, Kumar said that the team is using GPS to mark the new point of glacier retreat.

The team is also examining Chaturangi glacier, which is 4.5 km from Gangotri. "The study of Chaturangi glacier which feeds Gangotri is important to assess the river flow in Ganga," said Kumar.

Kumar, however, said that the glacier retreat is unlikely to drastically affect Ganga river flow.

"It will not affect the river flow because natural springs, rivulets and rain water contribute towards increasing the water flow. Also, the glacier's contribution to the river flow is reduced after catchment areas like Devprayag."

The GBPIHED team will complete its study in September this year and the data will help unravel the hydrology of the glacier.

Environment minister Anil Madhav Dave in a written reply in the lower house of Parliament said that according to the latest glacier mapping carried out by the ISRO, 87% of glaciers have shown no change, while 12% have retreated and 1% have advanced. The ISRO had studied 34,919 glaciers in Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra and Trans Himalaya region using satellite data from 2000 to 2001 and 2010 to 2011.

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