

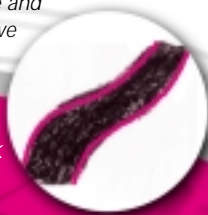
"We aim at understanding the science as well as the sociology of the river in a non-classroom fashion. We do not want environment education to be limited to just plain text books"

— Vimalendu Jha of "We for Yamuna", an initiative of Swachha We for Change Foundation, which organised the Yatra along with "Development Alliance"

Day 1:

Kudasia Ghat, New Delhi. First glimpse of Yamuna.

"Yoga was an essential part of our Yatra. At 5 am, Chitra Madam would come and bang on our doors to wake us up. She would drag us all out of our rooms and we followed her moaning and groaning about the time, the weather etc. We started off with asans and Surya Namaskar." **Rhea Dubey (VIII)**



DAY 2:

Down the Mussorie ridge to Lakhamandal, Uttaranchal. Saw clean Yamuna for first time! River Dip.

"Door se dekha to barf ka bhandar, door se dekha to barf ka sansar, paas aye to kachre ka sansar!"

DAY 3:

Tyre puncture, spare tyre rolls into the Yamuna! Janki Chatti. Kharsali village in Uttaranchal. Bonfire.

"We visited Kharsali, a village of 150 families near Janki Chatti. For some of us it was the first time seeing a village! Most people work in the potato farms. Electricity was introduced in the village 10-20 years back. They get all their water from a tank. Yamuna water is used only for religious purposes. There's electricity. Mostly all the villagers had radios and televisions in their homes. We were quite amazed to learn this. It goes without saying that this is one of India's more developed villages. For me it was an experience of a lifetime visiting Kharsali."



Kharsali Village
Well built houses. Not what we expected!

DAY 4:

Water testing. 5 km trek from Janki Chatti to Yamunotri. Meeting with mules and eager pilgrims. Clean up at the banks, next to Yamunotri temple. So much garbage! Hailstorm. Freezing cold. Rains. Campfire and singing.

"We were enjoying ourselves so much that we didn't realise how dangerous the trek was! The path was extremely narrow, and there were many people travelling up on mules and palkis. This didn't make much room for the "enthusiastic" walkers. We were pushed from one side to another, and if we didn't then we would hear shouts of "side sister", and sometimes even "side auntie", which quite a few girls took offense too!"

Anushka Prasad (Class IX)

DAY 5:

Puja at Yamunotri temple. Hot spring bath. Downward trek to Janki Chatti. Rains. Everyone gets drenched.

**From Wow!
to Yuk!**

IN 14 DAYS!

DAY 14:

Agra. Taj Mahal. Last view of Yamuna. Breakfast at a dhaba. Exhibition and sharing experiences at Park Hotel, New Delhi. *Yatra has come to an end. What a trip it has been!!*
Preeti Venkatram (Class IX)

DAY 13:

Sacred geography and GIS session Yamuna boat ride in Mathura.

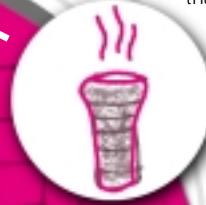


Mathura
Wake up!

DAY 12:

Mathura. Vrindavan. ISKCON temple. Swamiji's Yamuna tales. Boat ride. More water testing. McDonald's. "Yamuna connects many religions. She is supposed to be a goddess and her birth has its own history in Hindu mythology. Yamuna is worshiped at its source, Yamunotri and Lakhamandal. All this way, small sacred structures can be seen. As the river enters the plains, Kalsi Rock representing Buddhism is situated on the banks of the river. Paonta Sahib is said to have been the residence of Guru Govind Singh for four and a half years. Vrindavan is a place where Lord Krishna spent his childhood. Agra represents Islam. It is not only by coincidence that these religious buildings are present along Yamuna."

Vrindavan
Lassi!



DAY 11:

Brahmo Sarovar temple. Panorama Centre. Delhi. Overnight stay at home!

DAY 10:

Yamunanagar Sewage Treatment Plant. Ballarpur Industries (Asia's largest paper manufacturing plant.) Kurukshetra. Bus accident, narrow miss. Rains. Kurukshetra. Light and sound show.

Tajewala Barrage

Mango-plucking cut short



DAY 9:

Assan Barrage. Paonta Sahib in Himachal. Langar. Seva: washing utensils. Tajewala barrage, Haryana. Pluck raw mangoes, escape big danda! Final dip at Hathni Kund. River turns dry and dirty from here!



Kurukshetra

shattered windscreen!

"As I went up the river, I discovered the Yamuna. She looked so happy, clean and jumping around. I came down to the hills and I saw a different river. I asked who she was and came to know it was the Yamuna getting polluted. As I reached the plains I saw a river with dirty water flowing and I asked who she was. I came to know that she was the dying Yamuna."
Abhishek Marla (Class VIII)

DAY 8:

Yamuna Bridge. Swimming. Rafting. Bye-bye mountains, hello plains. Kalsi Rock with Ashoka's 14th edict. Dakpathar, Uttaranchal.



Dakpathar
Chicken!

"When the cars stopped, I opened the door and stared at the huge iron and steel monstrosity that was called the Yamuna Bridge. We were directed down a ramp that wove itself between two small cottages. We went underneath towards flight of stairs leading towards the river's bank. A small stream ran up to the river, and right in the middle of the banks, amidst the huge rocks and tiny pebbles, there was a huge mango tree with heavy green but unripe fruit. But that didn't deter anybody from picking the mangoes and eating the fleshy fruit with salt to cut the sourness."
Rohan Dang (Class XI)

DAY 6:

Barkot. "Down" yatra begins. Gangnani Kund bath. Ganga and Yamuna are closest to each other here as the local saying goes! Cricket match: Villagers thrash Yatri!

DAY 7:

Rari forest. Deodar trees. English-speaking sadhu. Painting session.

For 14 days, students from Delhi's Shri Ram School took a "Yatra from Purity to Profanity" to track the course of the Yamuna from its source. The purpose was to create awareness about how pollution is finishing the Yamuna and the life it supports. The students also conducted water purification tests, yoga classes and took heritage notes. They covered 13 destinations and will showcase their findings at an exhibition — "Impressions and Expression" in New Delhi.