

Yamuna Yatra 2008

March 19-30, 2008

Take the Epic Journey of Self Discovery and Adventure and Let the River tell Her Story

Call for Applications



"It's been a personal journey... [of] self discovery and ideas for the future..."

Yamuna Yatra Participant, 2007

Calling all to Yamuna Yatra¹ 2008! Come join people from the world over to live a myriad of experiences and colours along the banks of the ancient, holy and mystical River Yamuna. Be a part of the diverse and privileged group who will see for themselves the journey of a river from its **sacred birth place**, the **Yamunotri**, to its **drastically profane** fate at the hands of domestic and industrial waste downstream, and the **lyrical beauty** of the river beside the **Taj Mahal**.

Join the intensely cultural, ecological and experiential celebration of the river of life- where the world is our classroom... *Where learning, living and acting is beyond borders.*

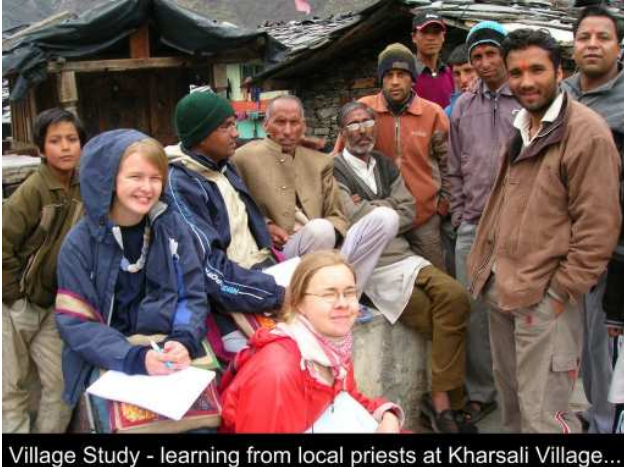
What is Yamuna?

The River Yamuna is a celebrated river which is not merely a source of water supply, but has tremendous significance for the socio-economic, religious and cultural fabric of India.

- The river intricately **binds together 4 major religions** of our nation - **Hinduism** (at Yamunotri, Mathura, Vrindavan), **Islam** (Agra), **Sikhism** (Poanta Sahib), and **Buddhism** (Kalsi Rock).
- The Yamuna is revered as a goddess and according to Hindu mythology Yamuna is the **daughter of Surya** (the Sun God) and **sister of Yama** (God of Death). It is believed that those who take a dip in the Yamuna do not fear death.
- The Yamuna is **1370 km in length** and caters to the needs of approximately 60 million people along its course. The river flows through 7 different states till it merges with the Ganges River in Allahabad.
- The Yamuna River is also the **frontier for the Asian Elephant**.
- Delhi constitutes less than 2% of the river's total length yet it contributes 70% of the Yamuna's total pollution load. At this stretch, the river fails all water quality indicators and is considered clinically dead with dissolved oxygen as low as 0 mg/litre. As different states compete for limited water resources and water scarcity and quality become serious problems, the issues facing the Yamuna need immediate attention.

The Programme - Yamuna Yatra 2008

Experiencing all the Hues of the River, With Each One Perceiving a Different Color



Village Study - learning from local priests at Kharsali Village...



Trekking at the exhilarating Yamunotri

The Yamuna Yatra is a 12-day journey along the banks of the River Yamuna, exploring the **ecological, social, cultural, mystical, spiritual and political facets of the river.**

We will learn about the ecology of the Yamuna, the implications of policies and government programs on the river and the consequences of rapid urbanization and water consumption patterns. Yatris will be able to draw parallels between specific issues concerning the Yamuna to those that affect other rivers in India and water bodies internationally. ***Not only is Yatra an opportunity to learn more about the river, but also to learn about the communities that depend and survive on the river.*** The Yamuna, for us, is the metaphor of socio-political-economic damages to things of religious and ecological reverence, in the era of globalization.

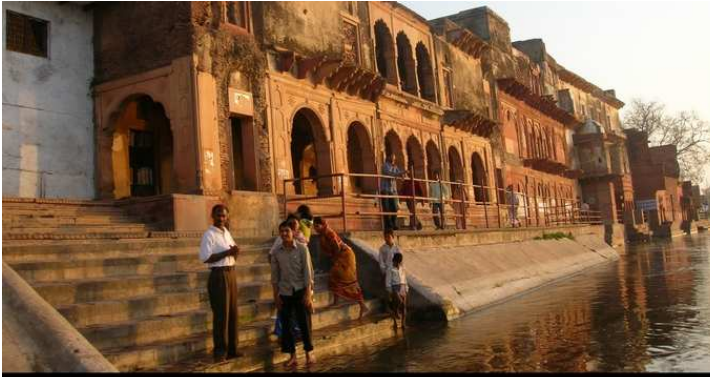
The **Dreamtime Circus, San Francisco** will be traveling with us, **complementing the sessions** and workshops during the entire period of the Yatra and **adding value and creative energies** to the pit stops.

The Yamuna Yatra is an innovative way of **learning, sharing, reflecting, and acting for change** besides being an opportunity to soak in the **brehtaking beauty of the Majestic Himalayas**. The Yatra is also an opportunity for participants to strategize solutions and collaborate and work with individuals from diverse backgrounds.



Snapshots of Youth Yatra 2007

More on the Yamuna Yatra



at Vrindavan Temple, major pilgrimage site along the Yamuna...



Yatris paying their obeisance at Poanta Sahib Gurudwara

The Yamuna Yatras began in 2004. Over the years, **Sweccha has organized six 12-15 day Yamuna Yatras in India**. The Yamuna Yatras have become an excellent space for inter-cultural learning and participation which have been supported by various national and international organizations- the US Embassy, the British Council and the European Union.

Since 2002, Sweccha has conducted **hundreds of Yamuna Walks** along the Delhi stretch of the river for students, civil society organizations, corporations and media. In 2007, **Sweccha coordinated an EU-funded Youth Yatra** which was managed by the **British Council** and consisted of **24 young leaders** from **4 different countries** (Finland, India, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom). Following the Yatra, the participants carried forward what they learned by delivering **100 workshops** in these 4 different countries, collectively organized **10 major events** and **wrote extensively** on issues specific to Yamuna Yatra and their areas of interest.

Yatra Schedule

The trip will start on **March 19 and end on March 30, 2008**. Participants are advised to reach New Delhi by the evening of the 18th. The Yatra traces the river from its source in Yamunotri in the Himalayas through many towns in Haryana, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh. The Yatra **covers a distance of nearly 1000 km** and concludes in Agra. The Yatra will be visiting pilgrimage sites, villages and many places of religious importance.



Trip Schedule	
Day	Route
Day 1	Yatra Flag Off, Delhi to Mussoorie
Day 2	Mussoorie to Lakhamandal
Day 3	Lakhamandal to JankiChatti
Day 4	Jankichatti To Yamunotri
Day 5	Yamunotri To JankiChatti
Day 6	Jankichatti To Gangnani
Day 7	Gangnani To Dakpathar
Day 8	Dakpathar To Yamunanagar
Day 9	Yamunanagar To Delhi
Day 10	Delhi To Mathura
Day 11	Mathura To Vrindavan
Day 12	Agra to Delhi

Elements of the Yatra

Yatris will engage in a variety of interactive activities to complement and nurture their learning and experience along the journey including:

- **Treks, hikes**, walks, swims...
- Workshops on Culture, Ecology, Identity
- Village Assessment Studies
- **Circus Performances** - learn a trick or two from the Dreamtime Circus while they travel with us
- Film Screenings
- **Concerts by the river**
- Interactions with communities along the banks-many of which are ancient hill tribes
- **Environmental Audits and Action Projects**
- Yoga, meditation, dips in the pristine river
- **Camping**, Cook-Your-Own-Meal
- **Endless folklore** and tales told by the locals

Why YOU should come...

- ◆ The Yatra promises **adventure, fun, learning, people, places and much more** that will make this the *epic journey* to beat all else!
- ◆ Get **more than just a "peek"** into the many Indias that live within India.
- ◆ This is **a chance to live a cause** and work on it, not merely to *look* at it and *sympathize*.

Press Speak on the Yamuna Yatra

"[The Yatra beckons] change makers who dare to step out of their atomized worlds..."

"A River Runs Through," *Metro Now*, 3 May 2007

"The Yatra is learning the lesser heard, breaking stereotypes."

"The Youth Yatra," *YOUTHV.com*

"...the sheer gargantuan nature of the mountains surrounding us and the force of the mighty Yamuna alongside our tents..."

The Sunday Times Online, 29 April 2007 (Sri Lanka)

What previous Yatris say about their Journey:

*"It's the story of a **growing economy at the cost of a depleting environment**"*

"...the yatra doesn't end here, it's just the beginning..."

"The yatris epitomize hope for the future..."

About Swechha – We for Change Foundation

Swechha is a Delhi-based non-governmental organization that was launched in the year 2000 as the “**We for Yamuna**” campaign. Within months, “We for Yamuna” shaped up as one of the strongest voices on Yamuna in Delhi. The campaign eventually transformed into a full-fledged NGO. The organization today covers a wide gambit of work, spanning over ecological, civic and policy level issues-striving to build awareness and advocacy among students, civil society groups, corporate and the media.

Swechha had been given space in the **UNDP office** in India to function from in its first six years, and the UNDP still remains one of our key partners. The organization is one of the 6 from around the world that has been short listed and **profiled on CNN Be the Change** this year. (For more information, please visit www.cnn.com/bethechange).

We organized an **Integrated Yamuna Yatra** in 2006 funded by the **American Embassy**- this Yatra included differently-abled and economically backward children as part of the journey of learning. Again, in 2007, Swechha organized the **EU-funded Youth Yatra** for 24 youth leaders from 4 different countries. The event was managed by the British Council. (You can catch glimpses of the Youth Yatra at www.youthyatra.in). We have also facilitated training programmes for Corporates including **NOKIA, Wellspun** to name a few. Swechha is working closely with **SRTT** and the **Govt. of Delhi** to bring its Life Skills Curriculum to government run schools of the capital.

How to Apply

We need you to send us the following:

1. A Statement of Purpose - explaining why you want to come to Yamuna Yatra 2008.
2. Your latest Curriculum Vitae

Our email address is swechhaindia@gmail.com. (Please write ‘*Application for Yamuna Yatra 2008*’ in the subject column). For further information, you can call us at 00-91-11-26671758 or visit our website (www.swfc.org.in). We will inform you about the subsequent application details after we receive your mail and documents. Last day for receiving applications is: **February 23, 2008. The Yatra is open to people of all backgrounds regardless of age, race, country or affiliation.**

Yatra Fee

Total Cost is Rs. 15,000/per participant (for Indian Nationals) and \$ 600 (or equivalent) for Foreign Nationals. This price includes transportation, accommodation and food during the Yamuna Yatra. If you require financial aid, indicate so in the application. Please note that we do not have any funding for this programme and participants will have to take care of their air/train travel to New Delhi and back. However, we will continue with our efforts of seeking grants and donations and will notify the participants accordingly.

For more information, queries, or clarification, please contact:

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¹ **Yatra (Hindi):** *A journey; a pilgrimage towards higher aspirations .During a Yatra we capture images, words, worlds and thoughts, encounter people in varied circumstances, share their cultures and concerns, live a myriad experiences to reach our destination with enriched perspectives of respect, diversity and resolve to make a positive change for the future.*

Swechha – We for Change Foundation, B-1/46 Third Floor, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017, India
Phone/Fax: 00-91-11-26671758, Website: <http://www.swfc.org.in>