



RURAL IMMERSION EXPEDITION ORGANISERS & PARTICIPANTS AT ANIRUDH ASHRAM



Rural Immersion Expedition to Vikasnagar Circle, Uttarakhand organised by Delhi Greens

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Delhi Greens organises Rural Immersion Expedition to Village Dhaure Ki Dandi, Uttarakhand

Delhi Greens organised a three-day long Rural Immersion Expedition (RIE) to Village Dhaure Ki Dandi near Langha Range in Vikasnagar Circle, Uttarakhand. The objective of the RIE was to invite and engage urban India for:

- understanding the challenges faced by Rural India,
- getting an experience to live close to Nature in the Himalayas, and
- being able to feel the clean, blue River Yamuna before it reaches Delhi.

The three-day Expedition took place on 28, 29 and 30 June 2019 and the participants included students from the University of Delhi and a young professional working in the Banking sector.

The participants were provided with an orientation to village life through literature reading and group discussion at the beginning of the Expedition. The Eco-spiritual Anirudh Ashram in the Dhaure Ki Dandi village became the base-camp for the Expedition. Anirudh Ashram is a serene and peaceful ashram built using traditional architecture and farming practices, with abundant floral and avian biodiversity.

The participants were introduced to the traditional architecture, biodiversity and cultural practices of the village life upon their arrival at Anirudh Ashram. The meals included freshly prepared organic food and the air and water in the village are as fresh as they can get. The morning of the second day



The RIE participants were hosted by the Eco-spiritual Anirudh Ashram, which is a symbol of traditional knowledge of Uttarakhand and is a Nature lovers' paradise.



The Expedition included a visit to the clean River Yamuna and a Rock edict inscribed by Emperor Ashoka on the bank of the river that has not been adequately deciphered till date.

began with an introduction to some of the challenges of rural India, especially large-scale migration of people away from villages in search of livelihood opportunities and scarcity of water resource in the Himalayas. The interaction began with a group discussion with a village elder followed by visits to the houses in the village. The participants were able to meet villagers from all generations and gather their perspective about rural life and its comparison to urban dwelling. A trekking experience to a nearby dry rivulet and green meadow added to the experience and focused on the need to construct check dams as well as for conserving water resources through traditional methods and practices.

The warmth and love experienced by the participants at each house they visited highlighted the *Atithi Devo Bhava* (*Guest is equivalent to God*) philosophy still

prevalent in the villages of India. Many other learnings enriched the experience of all the participants through this interaction with the villagers. The third day began with a trip to the nearby bank of River Yamuna. From here, the participants were also taken to the Rock Edict by Emperor Ashoka along the bank of River Yamuna, which is at least 2,000 years old.

The clean, blue and flowing River Yamuna invites everyone to itself. This was the second visit of the participants to River Yamuna during the Rural Immersion Expedition after viewing it from the historical *Paonta Sahib Gurudwara*. The three-day long Rural Immersion Expedition concluded with a rich learning experience for all the participants, as well as an understanding of the need for creating sustainable livelihood opportunities in an attempt to reverse migration from cities back to the village.



Participant Feedback:

This was the first Expedition I ever experienced. It was very amazing and carefully planned. I enjoyed interacting with people, going on walks and the river. It was very enriching and I took a lot out of it. It provided a lot of educational information and facts on Environment.

– Tania Sharma, B.El. Ed. student of Miranda House, University of Delhi

