

Yamuna River Initiative-YaRI Orientation for NDMC School Heads, teachers, and Principals

Background

YaRI is a school-based initiative to raise awareness and respect among students about the legacy of the river Yamuna and instil empathy among them for the Yamuna River. MIE collaborated with NDMC to implement this initiative in their schools after successfully implementing it in Modern Schools.

In this background, MIE hosted an orientation session for heads of schools, principals, and coordinators of NDMC schools, which was composed of interactive sessions to provide information regarding the aims, objectives, and tools of YaRI. The orientation session was organised to support NDMC schools to include YaRI in their everyday classroom practices. The session was organised on 16.09.2025 at the Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School.

The two hours session was attended by Mrs. Vibha Khosla, Principal, Modern School Vasant Vihar, Mrs. Shivani Sahni, Principal, Modern School Faridabad, Mrs. Shashi Bidwat Garg, Principal, Saraswati Vidyalaya Sr. Secondary School for Girls, Mrs. Suhasini Khusihinder Nath, Principal, DAV Public School, Sreshtha Vihar, and over 43 participants from NDMC schools.

Opening Remark



The session was opened by Mrs. Nalini Singh Rajput, Headmistress, Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School (RSJMS) who introduced the YaRI project, its aims and objectives, and shared her experiences of how she implemented it in her school. She welcomed all the guests and participants and invited Mrs. Ambika Pant, Honorary Secretary, Board of Trustees, Modern School, to share her vision for YaRI and how the idea developed.

Inaugural Address

Mrs. Pant encouraged the participants to explore the possibilities of incorporating YaRI into everyday classroom practices and to consider why it has become one of the most pressing issues. She shared an anecdote about a student who, while visiting the Krishnamurti school on the banks of the river Ganga in Banaras, exclaimed, "Why isn't there a river in my city?"



This was especially striking coming from a girl born and raised in Delhi, and she felt foolish for expressing such a thought. Therefore, to bring back the Yamuna into the consciousness of students and not only students but to all of us, it is essential to understand her rich legacy and consider her as a living entity.

Interactive activity



This was followed by an activity wherein each participant was given a sheet of paper to write on. The tables were provided with seven sheets labeled "YaRI", each featuring the name of a river, such as Kaveri, Yamuna, etc. Each table was assigned a specific river. Participants were asked to follow the instructions given on the sheet and write down their responses. As the responses were discussed, it became clear that rivers symbolise various concepts and are connected to many aspects of our lives, including religion, transportation, entertainment, language, and as lifelines. However, we tend to reduce their significance to merely being associated with pollution.

Presentation and exhibition

Taking cues from the discussion, the session moved forward with a presentation on YaRI by Dr. Anviti Singh and Dr. Feroz Khan. The presentation provided participants with an overview of the initiative and the mechanism of collaboration between NDMC and MIE for YaRI. As the initiative has already been rolled out in Modern School Barakhamba Road and Raghbir Singh Junior Modern School, an exhibition was organised to help participants understand how it can be implemented in their schools.



Reflections from Participants

One of the participants expressed gratitude to be part of such an initiative. Another participant shared her views and said that it is the community that is to be empowered if we wish to achieve our goal. For students, she suggested that just like in foreign universities, where there is a mandate to show social service contribution, in India also this must be started to attract more engagement from students.

Mrs. Sabeena Sood, Vice Principal AAV, Mrs. Shashi Bidwat Garg, and Mrs. Suhasini Khushinder Nath, Principal DAV School, also shared their views.



After the participants got a sense of the exhibition, Mr. Pramod Kumar from NDMC shared his thoughts and inspired teachers to implement it in their schools. He also shared how NDMC is taking this initiative forward and the plan for the upcoming months. He also asked participants to create their own implementation plan.

Conclusion & Way forward

Mrs. Nalini Singh Rajput concluded the session by showing a unique artwork by one of her students. The student was so inspired by the initiative that she went to one of the Yamuna Ghats to contribute to its cleanliness drive. She picked up plastic from the ghat, cleaned it, and created a beautiful artwork. She is creating more such artwork and is planning to organise an exhibition of it. In the words of Mrs. Ambika Pant, “YaRI is surely making waves in schools and the community.”

In the upcoming months, NDMC will implement the initiative in the schools and share activity videos, lesson plans, and any other material they wish to be uploaded on the YaRI website.

