



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2024-2025



SWECHHA

ABOUT SWECHHA

Swechha is an organization dedicated to enabling ourselves and others around us to 'Be the Change', in making a visible difference to the Environment- both Physical and Social. *Our mission is to inspire, create and support - a just, equitable and sustainable society, for everyone and forever.*

Our genesis lay in the year 2000 as 'We for Yamuna' campaign, a collective response towards growing apathy towards one of the most polluted rivers of the world. Since then the organization has gathered popular and powerful voices for the support of this cause and has emerged as the loudest and strongest voice in India on the matter. Apart from this campaign, Swechha has grown over the decade to work on other issues of sustainable development and social change and has had considerable impact locally, nationally as well as internationally.

In the numerous things we do at Swechha, there are three key Focus Areas we address: (i) Environment and Citizenship; (ii) Education and Governance; and (iii) Empowerment and Enterprises.



GOVERNING BODY

1. Rajeev Singh, President
2. Vimlendu Jha, Secretary
3. Aruna Pandey, Member
4. Farhad Vania, Member
5. Lopamudra Sanyal, Member
6. Kuriakose Verghese, Member
7. Navin Joshua, Member
8. Ashim Bery, Member



PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

This report consists of Swechha's programs and **Activities** over the last year (2024-25), detailed under the following heads –

- Sustainable Lifestyles & Education
- Sustainable Agriculture and Integrated Development
- Sustainable Cities & Ecology
- Resilient & Equitable Communities

1. Sustainable Lifestyles & Education

We strongly believe that all of us need to wake up and Act on the criminal ways in which our needs and growing wants are damaging and affecting the Environment, both Physical and Social. Whether it is a drying Yamuna, an overflowing Landfill, or a fast-depleting green cover of the city, there is an urgent need for all of us to know, learn, and Act on these concerns. Climate Change is a cumulative impact of several local and global environmental inactions or irresponsible actions. Given below are the details of the **Activities** conducted under this head in 2024-2025

i) Bridge The Gap: As the name suggests, our Bridge The Gap program aims to bring education and sustainability under one umbrella, keeping life skills and active citizenship at the core of our intervention. We work with both government as well as private schools, through curriculum-based intervention, which includes conducting workshops, exposure trips, campaigns, practicum, and infrastructure development, across themes of land, water, air, waste management, climate change, and inclusive ecology. We also conduct teacher training and work with educators, to build their capacity around the pedagogy of sustainability education. In the last 15 years, the 12-16 session long curriculum has been successfully implemented in over 250 schools of Delhi NCR with over 50,000 students and has been supported by Sri Ratan Tata Trust, Nokia Siemens Networks, American Express, National Geographic, and Adobe. In 2024-2025 Swechha worked with 15 schools and curated year-long curricula and leadership journeys to build environmental stewardship in schools on air pollution, water conservation, waste management, responsible consumption, food, and urban gardening, which resulted in student-led campaigns, and green action projects. The program was supported by Acuity Knowledge Partners and Acuity KP Solutions as a part of their CSR initiative in 2024-2025



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ii) **Cityscapes:** Cityscapes is an experiential learning initiative by Swechha that takes students beyond the classroom to explore and understand the environmental challenges facing urban India – particularly in and around Delhi. These half-day excursions offer a first-hand look at critical issues such as pollution, waste, biodiversity loss, and water management, helping students build a personal connection with both the problem and potential solutions. Each of these CityScapes has been designed as half-day field visits (usually 4-5 hours) to various ecological hotspots in the city of New Delhi. These walks include:

- **Yamuna walk** – Tracing the river Yamuna from its entry point in Delhi through its 22 km stretch to demonstrate to students the drastically harmful ways in which the city has polluted the sacred river. It aims to highlight our collective role and responsibility towards destroying and saving the Yamuna. Stoppages include exploring the river at Sonia Vihar, Wazirabad Barrage, Najafgarh drain, Kudasia Ghat, and Kalindi Kunj Ghat. A main component of this educational trip is an **hour-long boat ride on the Yamuna river**, which students **experience**, offering a unique perspective on the river's current state.
- **Landfill walk** – Landfills are one of the worst-kept secrets of the Capital. Out of the 15 landfills in the city, 12 are full, and three are overflowing with waste. The landfill walk brings us face-to-face with waste generated by urban India and aims to highlight our apathy towards the problem.
- **Forest walk** – It is an opportunity for students to explore the green patches and major forests in the city, such as Sanjay Van, Aravalli Biodiversity Park, and Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. These walks intend to instill a sense of responsibility in the students and make them aware of the dangers of the fast-vanishing urban forest cover.
- **Birding Walk** – An immersive experience at sites like Sultanpur National Park and Okhla Bird Sanctuary, where students learn about migratory birds, migration patterns, bird identification, and the role of birds in wetland ecosystems. The walk also explores the impact of climate change on bird migration and habitat loss.
- **Farm Fun(Day)** – These half-day educational visits to Swechha Farm are designed as hands-on experiences for young students to foster their knowledge, skills, and understanding of sustainability, agriculture, and the connection between food and human health. During the visit, students engage in various farm activities suitable for their age, including vermicomposting, growing mini farms, planting in the native nursery, collecting seeds, designing DIY worm bins, birdwatching, and a lot more. The visit is an immersive experience where students build their capacity and skill sets in a fun and interactive way.

In 2024-2025, Swechha led over 50 such cityscapes to various ecological hotspots in Delhi such as river Yamuna, Sanjay Van Forest, Aravali Biodiversity Park, Asola Bhatti, Sultanpur National Park, and Swechha Farm, directly engaging over 5000 school students through these excursions.



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iii) Yamuna Yatra: One of the flagship programs of Swechha, and also one of the most celebrated ones, Yamuna Yatra is a 12 days journey, from Yamunotri to Agra, tracking River Yamuna from where it originates and is pristine, down to the point where it reaches Agra and is almost a toxic body of water. This 12-day journey-based camp is a mix of environmental learning, fun and adventure and a holistic understanding of modern-day civilisation, and the nuances of industrialisation and sustainability. This 1000 kilometre journey includes Interacting with the River (camping on the riverside), as well as the communities around it, policy makers, religious institutions, market forces and others. Since 2004, we have conducted over 30 Yamuna Yatras, with over 2000 young leaders, in partnership with Vasant Valley School, Pathways World School, The American Embassy, British Council and The European Union. It is a life-changing experience for most young people as it helps them question and stretch beyond their comfort zones while connecting with a larger world. The Vasant Valley School has acknowledged the effectiveness of a travel based learning programme like the Yamuna Yatra and has made it a part of their annual curriculum for Grade XI. In March and April 2024, Swechha conducted its annual Yamuna Yatra programs with 50 Grade XI students from Vasant Valley School.

iv) Naturescapes: This year our 'NatureScapes' program aimed to create enriching experiences and challenges for young people to experience different ecologies of India. It saw a balanced mix of fun, adventure, and learning. These 4 day journeys were purely experiential and provided a space for young minds to understand ecological challenges and work with communities.. We worked with urban schools to give the students an experiential learning environment through workshops, village interactions, home visits, Shramdaan, and cultural events. We conducted 3 trips with The Shriram Millennium School Noida, with grade 9 traveling to Ranthambore, grade 10 to Sariska, and grade 12 traveling to Mukteshwar.

v) Swechha Farm School: Swechha Farm School is a non-traditional education and practice lab, a pop-up institute, for present and future consumers of our world, for future growth. It's designed as a Learning Centre – a hub for ecological design innovation and incubation, sustainable agriculture, environmental practices, life-skills, and personality enhancement programs. The purpose of the Farm School is to engage the community at large, especially young people, on issues of resilience and finding long-term solutions to ecological degradation, health and poverty. We aim at inspiring action and catalyzing communities for a regenerative and sustainable world, one with low impact and high quality lifestyles. Some of the salient features and practices being implemented and developed at the farm school include a multi-layer farming shed, traditional agricultural practices, bee keeping, vermicomposting using DIY methods, and an indigenous native tree nursery. This year, we hosted over 300 students from The Heritage School, at the Farm and engaged the students in hands on workshops related to bee-keeping, vermicomposting, food growing, hydroponics and nursery development.



Key activities at the farm school include –

- One-time exposure visits
- Experiential learning
- Volunteering camps
- Farm Stays

Focus areas include –

- Sustainability and resilience
- Ecological design and innovation
- Life skills, and personality enhancements

2. Sustainable Agriculture & Integrated Development

Farm School Community Development

In a climate-constrained world, with constant competition over natural resources, high levels of poverty and hunger, agricultural distress, and an expectation to fulfil the growing food demand of over 1.39 billion people, all point to the need for India to urgently adopt wide-scale sustainable agricultural and integrated development practices. Mewat, district Alwar, where the Swechha Farm School is located, is one of the poorest regions of India, where the land is predominantly barren and the local village community has been largely insulated from mainstream access to health, education, and development benefits.

Over the two last years, we've been developing this region as a living prototype to promote innovations in sustainable agriculture, community development, livelihood generation, and women empowerment. Our programs are embedded in the engagement with communities of rural Rajasthan and link agriculture with various other human development indices. They are designed to engage the community at large, especially young people, to build their resilience and capacities to find long-term solutions to ecological degradation, health, and poverty.

In 2024, we conducted a pilot program in partnership with The Morimura Fund, aimed at empowering youth and working with local farming communities. We aimed at working with young students (primarily adolescent girls) to introduce them to profitable agriculture and allied practices/processes/businesses; Educate, empower, and impart financial literacy training; build their capacity for efficient marketing and market linkages; and promote farming as a viable career choice amongst youth.



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3. Sustainable Cities & Ecology

Swechha partnered with Purpose India, and launched a new initiative 'Ekjut Kanpuriya' aimed at spotlighting and platforming the needs, expectations and priorities of the residents of informal settlements of Kanpur. The initiative was committed to amplifying the voices of residents in these settlements who require inclusive and meaningful representation in urban planning and designing.

More specifically, we aimed at strengthening their capacity to implement responsible solid waste management, paving the way for a cleaner and healthier city, and riverine ecosystem. By connecting the idea of cleanliness with community pride, we aimed to actively involve residents in voicing their concerns, meeting local representatives and demanding equitable access to municipal services. Swechha designed and led a series of training modules on solid waste management with residents from informal settlements of Kanpur over two weeks in June 2024.

4. Resilient & Equitable Communities

Swechha serves as a member of a coalition of 300 Civil Society Organisations from India known as 'Girls Count' that rigorously converges efforts to draw attention to issues of gender-based discrimination, with a particular focus on the Declining Child Sex Ratio (DCSR) in partnership with The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The coalition strives to strengthen policy, amplify advocacy, and establish accountability through dialogue, capacity development, support for community action, and evidence generation.

Girls Count, in collaboration with UNFPA and civil society partners, implemented a multi-pronged strategy to address gender-biased sex selection (GBSS) and strengthen the implementation of the PC-PNDT Act. Key initiatives included:

1. **Partner Engagement & Capacity Building:** A regional consultation in Patna brought together 40 CSOs from six states to share best practices and strategize against son preference. Additionally, a two-day workshop in Delhi trained 21 CSO representatives from 15 states as a Resource Pool to advocate for GBSS awareness and PC-PNDT Act compliance.
2. **High-Level Advocacy:** Meetings with parliamentarians led to letters urging action against online GBSS. Efforts to include GBSS in political party manifestos saw partial success, with INC committing to gender equality enforcement. Post-election engagement with newly elected MPs is planned.



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3. Community Engagement: Multi-stakeholder workshops in Bihar's Khagaria and Sheikhpura districts fostered collaboration among officials, medical practitioners, and CBOs to improve sex ratios. Street plays on International Women's Day in Delhi highlighted GBSS, while plans for hospital-based campaigns celebrating girl births are underway.
4. Research & Policy Influence: A study assessing District Advisory Committees in Bihar, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh was initiated to identify gaps in PC-PNDT Act implementation. Legal reviews and a climate change study are slated for future quarters.
5. Coalition Strengthening: Virtual workshops enhanced partners' understanding of the PC-PNDT Act and parliamentary advocacy strategies. Regular e-newsletters and social media campaigns amplified messaging on GBSS, women's rights, and climate change impacts.

These efforts underscore Girls Count's commitment to systemic change, community mobilization, and policy advocacy to eliminate gender-biased sex selection and promote gender equality.