

YaRI with SABARMATI: Time to Befriend Our Rivers

What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase “*YaRI with SABARMATI*”?

Salt. Life. Clean water. Polluted water. Gandhiji. Friendship with rivers.

Rivers are not just streams of water; they are the veins of our civilization. They hold within them history, culture, livelihoods, and the very rhythm of life.

The **Sabarmati** is a striking example. Once a neglected, almost dry riverbed, it was revived through the **Sabarmati Riverfront Project**, undertaken during Shri Narendra Modi’s tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Today, its 10.5 km stretch through Ahmedabad is home to promenades, gardens, cultural spaces, and even **water sports** like boating, jet skiing, and river cruises. It has become a tourist attraction and a living example of how a city can reclaim and celebrate its river.

Now contrast this with the **Yamuna in Delhi**. A river steeped in history — flowing past temples, forts, and the capital’s cultural landmarks — but gasping for breath in the 22-km stretch through the city. Here, untreated sewage and toxic waste overwhelm its waters. Before it enters Delhi, Yamuna is relatively clean. After Delhi, when it meets the Chambal, it revives. But in the heart of our nation, it is suffocated.



YaRI: Yamuna River Initiative

“**YaRI**” — short for *Yamuna River Initiative* — is an inspiring project conceptualized by **Ms Ambika Pant, Secretary, Board of Trustees, Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi**.

This initiative involves students from all Modern School branches across Delhi and NCR. It integrates disciplines — language, science, mathematics, social science, and the arts — to help learners:

- Trace Yamuna’s journey from its Himalayan origin through the states, discovering culture, traditions, and history.
- Collect and compare water samples from Yamuna in Delhi with other water bodies.
- Conduct interviews with local communities.
- Create documentaries, exhibitions, and rallies to spread awareness.

Through YaRI, students are not just studying a river; they are forging a **friendship with it**.

Sabarmati vs. Yamuna: A Tale of Two Rivers

- **Both are witnesses to history** — Sabarmati with Gandhiji's Salt March and satyagraha, Yamuna with Delhi's heritage and grandeur.
- **Both carry a contrast** — stretches of purity versus stretches gasping for survival.
- **Both remind us of our responsibility** in shaping their destiny.

If Sabarmati can be reclaimed as a vibrant riverfront, why not the Yamuna?

Friendship with Rivers

I stand by your banks, O Sabarmati,
You whisper of salt, of freedom, of truth.
From Gandhi's march to gardens today,
You shine again with laughter and youth.

And Yamuna, mother of Delhi's soul,
Temples and forts adorn your side.
Yet in the city's heart you cry,
Choked by waste, your flow denied.

Two rivers, two stories — both deeply tied,
One reborn, one pleading, both dignified.
Friendship means healing, to give, not take,
To return clean waters for our children's sake.

Sabarmati shines with clean waters; Yamuna waits for her turn. Friendship with rivers is not poetry — it is responsibility.

The Way Forward

Sabarmati's revival is proof that transformation is possible. Yamuna's plight is a reminder that urgency cannot wait. Together, they call us to action:

- Treat sewage before it enters the river.
- Reduce plastic and toxic effluents.
- Reclaim riverbanks as spaces for people and life, not dumping grounds.
- Strengthen awareness through projects like **YaRI**, where education meets responsibility.

When we befriend a river, we are not just protecting water. We are protecting life, culture, and the future.

Sabarmati shows us what can be done.

Yamuna asks us: *When will you do it for me?*

Blog By:

Dr Shivani Sahni

Principal

The Modern School, Greater Faridabad

Managed by Modern School Society

Barakhamba Road, New Delhi