

Day 17:

Today was the 17th day of the expedition and we had to move to our next destination- Ghazipur. As per the verbal and folk history, the town was covered with dense forest during the Vedic era and it was a place for ashrams of saints during that period. The famous Gautama Maharishi and Chyavana were given teaching and sermon here in the ancient period. Hsüan Tsang (629AD) has described the name of this place in Chinese as Chen-Chu that stands for "lord of conflict or battle" as a translation of Garjanpati, and its original name was Garzapur. However, some sources state that the original name was Gadhipur in honour of Prince Gadhi (incarnation of Lord Indra).

We reached the Ghat at around 7 AM, all ready to start the journey ahead. We were welcomed by Sh Ajay Kumar Singh, Deputy Commissioner, Varanasi Municipal Corporation, Dr CP Singh, Additional DFO, Varanasi and RTI Officer, SMCG along with people from all walks of life. As October is almost coming to an end, it was chilly at the ghat at this early hour. We interacted with the locals and discussed how we can use other substitutes of single-use plastics. At around 7.30 AM, we decided to move ahead with our journey and bid farewell to the people of Varanasi. Sh Ajay Kumar Singh, Dr CP Singh, other government officials along with students from many schools wished us luck for our journey ahead and flagged us off.

As we entered the city, we could see how the common man respects Maa Ganga. We saw people praying at the Banks of Maa Ganga and taking a dip in the holy river to wash off their sins. For ages, Maa Ganga has been an integral part of Indian spirituality, a river that gives a sense of belonging and pride to the people of India.

We reached the collector ghat at around 3 PM and we were welcomed by District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, CDO, DFO and District Council President along with the students of different schools. At the ghat, Peeyush Gupta from NMCG explained about Namami Gange and interacted with the students from different schools. Sharing his experience so far, Wing Commander Paramveer Singh asked the local people to join the movement.

The evening ended with all the participants standing shoulder to shoulder, and taking a pledge of cleaning the river Ganga and its ghat, and ensuring that each one puts their best foot forward to preserve the cleanliness and purity of the Ganga. The day was the perfect portrayal of the famous Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, showing all different cultures and people coming together to display their raised consciousness for the welfare of the river Ganga.