

TARAgam Yatra 2022 in Bundelkhand

TARAgam Yatra 2022, Development Alternatives' (DA) annual event was organised in Bundelkhand from 22 to 23 November, 2022. Here, DA's interventions around land water management, afforestation, clean technology-based livelihood options, capacity building of local institutions, enabling communities to fulfil basic needs of drinking water, sanitation, shelter, and energy, supported through enterprise development, and skill development for job creation were showcased as part of the Yatra.

On the first day of the Yatra, all the Yatris along with the DA team travelled to TARAgam Orchha where the Yatra was commenced with the lighting of the lamp; a welcome address by Mr Shrashtant Patara, CEO, Development Alternatives, and address by the Special Guests - Her Royal Highness the Infanta Cristina of Spain and Mr Tarun Bhatnagar, District Magistrate, Niwari.

Following this, the TARAgam Mela was inaugurated by Her Royal Highness the Infanta Cristina of Spain and Mr Tarun Bhatnagar, District Magistrate, Niwari, with other dignitaries present. The Mela showcased many stalls such as IMEDF's handmade soaps, Jal TARA Arsenic filters, terracotta and bamboo products, household decorative items, chanderi silk sarees, etc.



The Mela being inaugurated at TARAgam, Orchha

After a series of presentations on Natural Resource Management, LOCO Model, Check Dam, and Women Literacy Program- TARAakshar at TARAgam Orchha, the DA team along with Mr Stuart Worsley, Countries Programme Director, Green Economy Coalition, Ms Jean McLean, Lead, Communications, Green Economy Coalition, and the Yatris visited the Madore village, which is around 12km away from Orchha in Madhya Pradesh. Here, they witnessed the operations of the LOCO Models - Locally Owned and Community Operated Models pioneered by DA that ensure dependable water supply to the communities even in harsh summers of the arid Bundelkhand region. The Yatris spoke with the inhabitants, learnt about the water woes that existed before the models were installed, and the many ways in which their life has improved once water supply was brought right to their homes through the LOCO Models.

Thereafter, the Yatris visited the Gurari Check Dam some few kilometers from Madore. This dam was built by DA in 1994 to help alleviate the issue of water scarcity in the drought ridden Bundelkhand. The Yatris also witnessed, as part of this field visit, the many entrepreneurship models under DA's Integrated Village Development Programme like poultry farming, vermicomposting, etc., that the organisation has helped incubate to provide livelihood opportunities in a region that is plagued with very high out migration numbers.



Field visit to witness the installed LOCO Models

Following the field visits, the event “Ek Shaam Radio Ke Naam - The journey of Radio Bundelkhand in empowering communities” was held where DA’s Community Radio – Radio Bundelkhand, its reach, and impact on the lives of the farmers was discussed. The radio was initiated in 2008 with the objective to raise awareness on climate change and impart expert advice on farming, harvesting, and sowing practices to the farmers.

The second day of the Yatra was reserved for deliberations, sharing of experiences based on the exposure visits and knowledge sharing by various other like-minded organisations working on the same themes in the same region as the Central Agroforestry Research Institute and Anubhav Sansthan. Overall, the TARAGram Yatra 2022 in Bundelkhand provided an experience of on-ground action and helped stir conversations to advance a compelling, practical, and solution-oriented vision for the well-being of people and the planet. The Yatra proved to be a unique experience of social impact and learning of both theory and practice.



Field visit to the Gurari Check Dam near Orchha