



Rediscovering Wilderness

With eight trips to the Everest Base camp, at an average of two per year, the Great Hyderabad Adventure Club (GHAC) is unrelenting in spreading the idea of 'rediscovering wilderness'.

GREAT HYDERABAD ADVENTURE CLUB

MD NIZAMUDDIN

THEIR mission is to promote adventure activities, facilitate training, improve awareness about nature, bring adventure activities to the poor and provide assistance during natural calamities.

Having tied up with the Government of Andhra Pradesh as Adventure and Tourism partner, Great Hyderabad Adventure Club is a registered 'Not for Profit' adventure club with some 6,500 members drawn from all age groups and also gender.

According to Diyanat Ali, the Chief Organiser and Founder of the club, the inspiration for the club came from life. He was raised in Banjara Hills and loved to climb rocks. "There were very few houses in the area and I loved to move in the wilds, while coming from school", reminisces Ali. He later joined NSS, and took the initiative of starting an adventure club unlike any other in the entire city.

This was in May 2008, and since then GHAC has created a niche for itself in trekking and other outdoor adventure activities like hiking, camping outdoors, bouldering, rock climbing, rappelling, paragliding and white water rafting among several others. At present it is organizing 12-15 activities per weekend. There are also at least two activities for children in a month, besides many others for youth.

The club has 100 trained organisers. These men and women are put through stringent 6-months rigorous training in search and rescue, wilderness survival and first aid skills. There

have been no casualties till yet, including during the Everest Base camp trek, mainly due to the level of training provided both to the trainers as well the participants who are put through a month-long rigorous regime.

The team that made it to the Everest base camp in November 2011 consisted of three women. Talking about her experience, K Kiranmai, a Principal of a school in Madhapur called it an experience of a life time. "I am enjoying life like never before and handling things easily because of the positive vibrations at the camp. It was like a spiritual contact with God," she added.

The club that has also received government support recently has been taking children out into the great outdoors for educating them about nature. According to the club guidelines, children between 6 and 12 can come for an activity with their parents, while teenagers require a letter of permission from their parents. "We try to explain to children how various species of birds and snakes live in nature", says Kirti Kumar, one of the organisers.

As part of social responsibility, the club has planned to take orphans out for an outing on the Republic Day from two different areas in the City. "We shall take them to a nature park like zoo or Deer park and would also offer them lunch", informed Suresh Kochattil, an organiser.

The club think tank is also planning Tourism Clubs in different schools in the near future. "By next academic year about 60 schools will have tourism clubs," asserts Suresh.



ON A BRAVE FRONT: Rock Climbing at Badami



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