

FOR SCHOOLKIDS, THIS IS THEIR BEST DIWALI GIFT

How a paint brush changed fate of a school wall and more

Anindya.Chattopadhyay
@timesgroup.com

Photos: Anindya Chattopadhyay

New Delhi: This particular walled stretch at Lodhi Colony stank horribly of urine. Of course, it isn't uncommon in Delhi to see people nonchalantly relieving themselves anywhere they choose in public, but this location happened to be the wall of Dewan Chand Arya Senior Secondary School.

The ignominious state of the institution's wall was always on the mind of the school management. A couple of months ago, Dr Charu Wali Khanna, a trustee, and Lalita Kharabanda, the school manager, discussed whether beautifying the wall would deter those who shamelessly fouled the area. Enthused by the possibility, Kharabanda approached Delhi Street Art to help change the appearance of the wall and turn it into a platform for the preservation of the environment.

Delhi Street Art founder Yogesh Saini revealed, "We realised that the wall was virtually an open urinal for the drivers of autorickshaws and taxis that park near India Habitat Centre. We planned, therefore, to create a visual treat not only for schoolchildren and their parents, but also for the thousands who drive past the segment every day."

Khanna, who is a Supreme Court advocate, added, "The art on the school wall has a two-fold objective. First, it de-



COLOURFUL CHANGE: Artists completed the art work in three days on walled stretch at Lodhi Colony, which earlier stank of urine

picts the importance of children playing serious roles in monitoring and managing the

community environment. And then to show that children's participation in environ-

ment protection will inspire them to spread the message in their communities and foster the values of collaboration between the children and families on the environment."

Artists of Delhi Street Art completed the art work in three days. Eyeing the colourful and cheerful images of flora and fauna on a teal blue background, Garvit Tiwari of Class VIII and Kaushal Gupta of Class IX chorused, "This is the best gift we have received for Diwali." With a sense of fulfilment, Kharabanda added, "The Sanskrit shlokas on the wall will remind people about our cultural heritage and traditions."