

Immersion Program at Aapshara Dalit Homestay



About Aapshara Dalit Community Homestay

Since 2016, Hands-On Institute has been working with the Dalit community of Aapshara Village in Tanahun, Nepal, to establish Aapshara Dalit Community Homestay, the first Dalit homestay of its kind in Nepal. Currently, 19 families are officially registered as host families, while 4 additional families, who lack the infrastructure to host guests, contribute as traditional skill workshop facilitators. A nine-member management committee oversees and manages the community homestay operations. Countries have experienced the authentic hospitality of Aapshara Dalit Homestay. In the last years (before Covid-19), “Aapshara Dalit Community Home-stay” hosted hundreds of people from 25 plus countries. The homestay is located in Aapshwara Village in Tanahun district (150 KM west from Kathmandu and 50 KM east from Pokhara).

Who are Dalits?

The *Dalits*, historically considered ‘untouchable’ represents lowest strata of the Nepali society and a marginalized community. For centuries, Dalits have faced systemic exclusion, discrimination and economic marginalization. Traditionally, Dalits were denied basic rights to own businesses or pursue livelihoods of their choice and often worked as semi-bonded laborers for upper-caste landowners.

Although caste-based discrimination was legally abolished in 1963, **untouchability and social exclusion persist in various forms**. Even during the 2015 earthquake relief efforts, Dalit communities were disproportionately neglected. According to Human Rights Watch, **Dalits make up 13% of Nepal’s population (approximately 3.6 million people), with 80% living in extreme poverty**.

Socio-cultural strengths of the Aapshawara village is manifested through various community-based organizations/groups like youth club, saving groups led by women, community forest management committee, Dalit’s traditional institution called ‘Guthi’ etc.

The homestay offers a platform to learn about practices of caste system and an opportunity to learn stories of Dalit who have been suppressed and discriminated for centuries. Moreover, the homestay provides an opportunity to live like locals and learn about rural life. Also, visitor can learn different traditional skills possessed by Dalit; like iron work, bamboo crafting, making mud jewelry and learning to play traditional Nepali musical instruments.



Sample Itinerary

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY
DAY 1	2-3:30 PM	Hike to Community from Damauli (There are two ways to get the community. Hiking (1.5 hours) from nearest city, Damauli or take a local bus/hire bus (20 Min) to community.)
	3:30-4:30 PM	Welcome, Introduction, Village Orientation and Transfer to Homestays (Divided in different homes)
	4:30 PM onwards	Live like locals! We will then follow family, live with them, help them in household work or just observe their family life.
DAY 2	7:00-9:00 AM	Community Lecture on Being Dalit: Community homestay management committee will share us their story of how it was/is being dalit and the story behind starting Dalit Guthi (traditional institution of dalit) and dalit homestay. They will share us their stories of suppression.
	9:00-10:30 am	Eat Brunch (We will follow local people's schedule to eat food. Generally people drink tea and light snacks as breakfast and eat rice, lentil soup and curry as brunch)
	11:00 am-3:00 PM	Learning traditional Skills: Learn traditional skills like iron work at hearth, bamboo work, basket weaving, learning to play local musical instruments and making mud jewelry. Participants can choose one of two of the skills you want to learn.
	3:00-4:00 PM	Visiting Local School: We will visit a government school and will interact with students and teachers. We will also explore local issues, issues of dalit and overall community.
	5:00-7:00 PM	Cultural Evening: Mothers group local youth club will perform cultural program. We will also have an opportunity to interact with local people as well we engage in cultural dance and singing.
DAY 3	7:00-9:00 AM	Community Lecture: Women Issues- We will meet a local women's saving group. The organization is involved in saving and also works in women issues of local women. We will learn about how they have been working and their challenges.
	9:00-10:00 AM	Brunch
	10:30 AM	Farewell and Leave community

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



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