



## Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat

### Report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of EBSB Student Exchange Program

*"India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great-grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."* - Mark Twain

India's culture is indeed so vast and profound that it has always managed to capture visitors not only from its own states but also from all over the world. It comprehensively brings out that one idea, which prominently runs through all the modes of thought and social outlook and that is the idea of oneness. The endearing quest for the realization of this goal has afforded Indian culture a continuity, universality, spirituality and humanity which has also furnished it invulnerable, beyond the reach of the ravages of time. This idea of oneness actually provides India its most needed unity in diversity and the sense of national integration.

With this very message in our hearts, we, the student community, the professors and the officials of IIT-Guwahati welcomed the student contingent group from IIT-Jodhpur at our campus on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. The second phase of the EBSB Student Exchange Program took place between 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 at IIT-Guwahati. A total of 62 students, full of energy and enthusiasm along with two teachers and two officials from IIT-Jodhpur participated in the exchange program. On 6<sup>th</sup> March, we received them from the Guwahati station at around 7 p.m and they reached our campus at around 8.30 p.m. They were welcomed along with a short briefing followed by dinner.

The very next day, we took them for a bird walk around the campus followed by a yoga session. After that, the program was formally inaugurated at the auditorium by the Deputy Director of IIT-Guwahati in the presence of other dignitaries. After the inauguration, the contingent group were taken for a city tour, covering the hotspots of Guwahati including the State Museum and a visit to Deepor Beel, a Ramsar recognized wetland. The team came back to the campus in the evening time and after taking some rest, they were all invited for a movie screening and the name of the movie was "Riaz".

On 8<sup>th</sup> March, they were first taken to Kamakhya Mandir, a holy shrine and a very famous Shakti-peeth located in the Nilachal Hills of Guwahati. Everyone loved the place for its pristine beauty and the view-points from where people get to see a panoramic view of the city. After the temple visit, the group headed towards Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, a noted wildlife sanctuary mainly famous for Rhinos and Wild Buffalos. Everyone praised the rich flora and fauna of the place and they got to know about the rich forest cover of Assam from the trip. Soon after reaching the campus of IIT-Guwahati, the evening started off with a cultural program from our side. The main

attraction of the program was the Debogandhar performance by Prabhat Sharma and group. The whole cultural program was designed in such a manner that it covers all the aspects of the Assamese culture including the different types of folk songs and dances of Assam. After the program, it was really nice to hear from them about their unique experience of getting to know about the culture of this state of the country and they had interesting questions related to the performances.

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, we at first invited them for a traditional Assamese breakfast. After that, they were taken to Doul Govinda Mandir, a very ancient Shri Krishna temple located in the banks of Brahmaputra keeping in mind the Pre-Holi celebration in the temple and that was followed by a visit to a nearby small tea estate and they were back to the campus before lunch. After lunch, the students attended a language session on the Assamese language and they were excited to learn new words and accents. After the workshop, as we were heading towards the closing ceremony of the event, we started the evening with a performance by Gandharba Sanskritik Gosthi. The unique performance is a composition of many facets of Assamese culture which included some unique Assamese culture like Holi Geet, Nao Khelor Geet, Ojapali and folk dance and instrumental music from almost all tribes of Assam in their composition. It was followed by some beautiful performances by the students of IIT-Jodhpur which included a skit, a presentation, few songs and most interestingly the Ghoomar dance of Rajasthan. It went for an hour and soon we started the closing ceremony. All the students, officials and teachers were felicitated with a sweet momento from our side followed by a vote of thanks. The day ended with a banquet dinner, where again all the items of Assamese cuisine was served. It was followed by an informal gathering & a casual conversation session between the students of both the institutes. The next day, with heavy hearts we had to bid them goodbye and few of us went to see them off in the railway station.

What we learnt from this “Student Exchange Program” as our takeaway is that the sole purpose of this wonderful program was to identify and discover the idea of oneness which acts as the basic current and runs like a golden twine through the entire fabric of Indian life and offers a frame-work for understanding how modern cultural forms of both the states have emerged out of very different histories and traditions. The entire journey gave us an account of literature, theatre, film, modern and popular art, music, movies and food. In a series of engaging, erudite and specially designed events we got a chance to explore in detail the social divisions, customs, communications and daily life of both the states and which only compelled us to think in awe how wide-ranging are the cultures that persist in the different regions of India. These kind of programs truly helps us to understand the continuities and fissures within Indian culture. But all throughout, what comes to the forefront is the extra-ordinary richness and diversity of our Indian culture as a whole.

With all such beautiful moments & happy memories, we are only thankful to MHRD for initiating such a beautiful program for the students. I would like to end my report with a beautiful quote of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian culture which goes as –

*“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive. So, as Indians we should try to blend with one another with the utmost freedom to protect the magnanimity of our culture.”*