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Detailed Report On

**Assam students visit to Porbandar, Gujarat (Mar 29- Apr 3, 2023)**

**Yuva Sangam Youth Exchange Program, Organized under Ek Bharat Shreshtha  
Bharat Scheme, Government of India**

The Government of India has launched the Yuva Sangam Youth Exchange program as part of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative. Its purpose is to enhance the connections between people, particularly youth, from the North Eastern region of India and other states. The program strives to foster empathy and mutual understanding between young people from the Northeast and other regions by facilitating the sharing of their respective cultures. To this end, we joined a group of 29 chosen candidates from various areas of Assam, along with three faculty members from different colleges in the state, as part of the program. All the selected participants from the state of Assam reached Sabarmati station on the 29th of March morning with their luggage. The participants were received warmly by us and other staff members- Bharti, Harish and Vaibhavi of IIT Gandhinagar. We accompanied participants from the station to IITGN in a bus provided by the institute. After the initial registration at IITGN, the participants were given a tote bag, Yuva Sangam T-shirt, a water bottle, and a cap. They were also provided with breakfast. Later they were allocated rooms to freshen up and rest.



Following a period of rest, the students congregated in the learning theater of IITGN for a brief orientation with the institute's administration. During this session, the students introduced themselves and talked about various distinctive cultural traits of their state. Afterward, a group photo was taken with the director and other officials, including the dean of student affairs and the registrar. Faculty members accompanying students presented the director with the traditional Gamusa of Assam as a symbol of honor. The students also had the opportunity to explore certain areas of the IITGN campus, including the Jasubhai Memorial Auditorium.



After having a brief period of rest, students again gathered around 4:30 in the evening. As per the plan, they were taken to visit Akshardham Temple. Students spend about 3 hours inside the temple. They also got a chance to visit the exhibition in the Akshardham temple where they were introduced to the life journey of Swaminarayan through movies, documentaries and things that were on display in the exhibition. Students were also introduced to the rich spiritual heritage of India. After visiting the temple and exhibition for about 3 hours, we returned to the campus. It was dinner time then. After having dinner, some students explored the IITGN campus.



The following day, the students reconvened at the designated meeting point after breakfast, where we departed for Sabarmati Ashram. During the visit, they had the opportunity to explore Gandhiji's residence, known as "Hriday Kunj," and were able to view his Charkha. The guide provided them with a demonstration on how to use the Charkha, and showed them three different types that Gandhiji used, including a stationary one he utilized during his stay at the ashram, a portable version he carried with him during travel, and a simple spindle. As the guide explained, the idea behind the Charkha was to remain productive and never sit idle. In his free time, Gandhiji would spin cotton thread. The students also attempted to spin thread themselves, encountering initial difficulties but gradually learning the technique. Notably, the students were wearing white caps with "G20" printed on them, which caught the attention of some foreign tourists from European countries visiting various places in Ahmedabad during their free time from attending G20 meetings. These tourists interacted with the students, asking questions about the GoI's "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat" program.



After returning from Sabarmati Ashram, the students had their lunch and then proceeded to their respective rooms to pack their belongings. Our train was scheduled to depart from Ahmedabad station to Porbandar at 8:30 PM, so we left the IITGn campus around 6:30 PM to make it on time. We boarded the train at around 8:45 PM and were provided dinner by the IRCTC during our journey. However, we encountered an issue where blankets and pillows, which are typically provided by IRCTC in 3rd AC, were not provided to us. This caused discomfort for the students throughout the night.

The next day, we arrived at Porbandar station at around 6:45 am in the morning. The Porbandar district administration welcomed us, and we proceeded to the accommodation provided by them. The students were given time to freshen up before we gathered to head to the breakfast spot, which was about a 10-minute walk from our stay. After breakfast, the students returned to their rooms and prepared for the day ahead. Subsequently, they had lunch at the same place where breakfast was served. Directly after lunch, we boarded the bus for Madhavpur, where the Madhavpur Ghed Mela was being organized. This location was approximately 60 km away from our stay, and it took us around 1.5 hours to reach there.



The Madhavpur Fair is a five-day festival celebrated during the month of Chaitra, which falls between March and April as per the Hindu calendar. This festival featured a variety of cultural programs and events, with folk dances, musical performances, and a fair was the main highlights of the Madhavpur Festival 2023. The event attracts people from all over Gujarat and north eastern states of India to Madhavpur, where they participate in the festivities and enjoy the Mela. Notably, there was a significant number of attendees from the northeastern states, and various handicraft stalls from Gujarat and seven sister states were also present. During the festival, students attended cultural events showcasing dances from different parts of the country, including Gujarat, Nagaland, and Mizoram. Furthermore, the students interacted with local media, sharing their experiences about the festival. Students spend their whole afternoon and evening in the festival itself and after attending the festival we again boarded the bus to head

back to Porbandar at around 8:30 PM. It again took us approximately 1.5 hours to reach the place of dinner.



The next day, after having breakfast students went to a govt. girls school. In a cultural exchange program between the school students and students from Assam, the latter showcased the Bihu dance form, a traditional dance from Assam. The performance included a solo singing performance of the song "Kor Ajak Xopun" and a duet singing performance of the song "Rong Diya Morom". The students also performed a group dance (fusion of bihu and modern dance forms) on Assamese remix song. The school students also showed their cultural pride with a Garba performance and various other dance performances. In addition to the performances, two students Prodyut N. Sharma and Smita Devi gave a speech on culture and traditions of Assam, including the position of women in Assamese society. They also invited the people of Gujarat to visit Assam. The faculty incharge of the Assam students also spoke about their pride in the Bihu dance form before the performance. The cultural exchange program provided a great opportunity for the students from both states to learn about and appreciate each other's distinct cultures.





After the cultural exchange program, students headed for lunch. The evening plan consisted of visiting Jambavan caves and Shree Hari Temple. At a distance of 17 km from Porbandar Railway Station, Jambavan Cave is an ancient cave located at Ranavav near Porbandar city of Gujarat. The Porbandar district administration staff who accompanied us to the cave told the story of Lord Krishna and Jambavan's 28 days war for the Syamantaka jewel, Jambavan giving his daughter in marriage to Lord Krishna, two tunnels inside the cave one leading to Dwarka and another leading to Junagadh. The students spent almost an hour inside the cave listening to these stories, clicking pictures and praying in front of Shivalingas. The Jambuvan Cave has over 50 Shiva Lingas which are formed naturally. The students were also excited to see peacocks there.



After visiting the cave, we headed towards a famous local temple "hari mandir." It is believed that this is the place where Lord Krishna was in the ashram of his Guru Sandipani. The main attraction of the temple was Chandramaulishwer Mahadev shivling which was resplendent. Students attended the evening aarti there and later we had a couple of group photos. From temple, we directly headed towards the dining place for dinner. After having dinner, all the students went to their respective rooms.



On the last day in Porbandar (2nd April), students got a chance to visit kirti mandir (birthplace of Gandhiji). It is situated in a very narrow street in the busy part of the town. Cars cannot go. It is a two storeyed building, with narrow wooden stair case. One has to take support of thick ropes suspended from the ceiling to climb these narrow and steep wooden steps. The spot where Mahatma Gandhi was born is marked with Swastika Symbol. Above this symbol, there is a large life size painting of his parents. The age-old Oil paintings of both Mahatma and Kasturba Gandhi and black and white photographs engaged in activities, discussions and even sharing a light moment have enticed and drawn many history buffs from all over the world. Largest part of the building is relatively modern and contains a museum, a book stall and an office. Left side of the quadrangle in the building contains the home in which Mahatma Gandhi was born. The house has been preserved more or less intact, albeit with some periodic repair and maintenance This is the place where students got to know about the childhood of Gandhiji. Students were observing each and every minute details about his life. What was interesting was that there was also the birthplace of Kasturbha Gandhi (wife of Gandhiji) just behind the birthplace of Gandhiji.



After visiting Kirti Mandir, students were left free to explore the local places. They visited the local market and got a chance to talk to the local people. Students purchased many local goods, the most notable one was the local saree. In the night, after having dinner we boarded the train for Ahmedabad at about 10:40 PM. We arrived at Ahmedabad station at 7 AM on the next day (3rd April). From there again students were received by IITGN staff. We arrived at campus by 8:30 AM. Students then took their breakfast and went back to their rooms to take the rest. Then in the afternoon, after having lunch students gathered in the conference hall for certification distribution. They interacted with the Dean of Students Affairs and Assistant Registrar of Student

Affairs, sharing their experiences of the Gujarat Trip and expressing their gratitude towards both Assam and Gujarat state governments and both the nodal institutes for this program (IIT Gandhinagar & IIT Guwahati). One of the students, Prodyut, gave the farewell speech. The Dean of Student Affairs also invited them to visit the thin film lab. At around 4:30 pm, students were to leave for Ahmedabad station. Before leaving, they enjoyed their last minutes at IITGN campus by clicking pictures, having sugarcane juice and ice-gola.



Then they boarded the bus from IITGN to Ahmedabad station. During their journey in the bus, we recorded a video about their five day stay in Gujarat. They came here as individuals but went back as a family and with lots of memories to cherish for life.