

RAJENDRA ACADEMY FOR TEACHERS' EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL TOUR – DARJEELING (2024)

Educational excursion is an integral part of the learning process. It is a great way for students to interact, experience and grasp theory practically. It involves group activities and requires students to work together which helps them develop teamwork skills, social skills etc.

Darjeeling “Queen of the Hills” was the destination of this year's educational excursion. It is one of the most beautiful hill stations in the country. The beauty of Darjeeling lies in the numerous tea estates, the various historical monuments, and the natural sceneries.

Darjeeling, a town in the Indian state of West Bengal, has a rich history. Originally inhabited by the Lepcha and Bhutia communities, it came under the influence of the Gorkhas in the early 19th century. The British East India Company acquired Darjeeling in 1835, and it became a popular hill station due to its cool climate.

Notably, Darjeeling played a significant role during the British Raj, serving as a retreat for British officials. The town's tea industry began in the mid-19th century, and Darjeeling tea gained international recognition. Post-independence, Darjeeling became a part of India in 1947.

Over the years, Darjeeling has retained its charm, attracting tourists with its scenic beauty, tea estates, and cultural diversity. However, it has also experienced socio-political tensions, particularly related to demands for Gorkhaland, a separate state for the Gorkha ethnic community.

Some information of visited places:

ROCK GARDEN

The Rock Garden in Darjeeling, India, known as the "Barbotey Rock Garden," has a unique history. It was created by the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Tourism Department. The garden was developed in the late 20th century, officially opening to the public in 1994.

The project aimed to transform an unused and rocky terrain into a picturesque garden. The construction involved meticulous planning to integrate the natural rock formations into the landscape. The garden showcases terraced beds, waterfalls, and pathways, making use of the existing rocks to create a harmonious blend of nature and man-made features.

Darjeeling's Rock Garden has since become a popular tourist attraction, offering visitors a serene



ROCK GARDEN

escape with its scenic beauty, diverse flora, and cascading water features. It stands as a testament to human creativity in transforming challenging landscapes into aesthetically pleasing and tranquil spaces.

PEACE PAGODA

The Peace Pagoda in Darjeeling, also known as the Japanese Peace Pagoda, was built under the guidance of Nichidatsu Fujii, a Buddhist monk from Japan and founder of the Nipponzan-Myōhōji Order. The construction of the Peace Pagoda began in 1972 and was completed in 1992.

The primary purpose of the Peace Pagoda is to promote world peace and unity among people of different races and creeds. It stands as a symbol of harmony and showcases four avatars of Lord Buddha. The pagoda offers panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and the town of Darjeeling.

The Peace Pagoda is an integral part of Darjeeling's cultural and religious landscape, attracting both tourists and pilgrims. It stands as a testament to the enduring message of peace and non-violence, propagated by Buddhism.



PEACE PAGODA

TEA GARDEN

Darjeeling's tea industry has a rich history dating back to the mid-19th century. The establishment of tea plantations in Darjeeling began in the 1840s when Dr. Archibald Campbell, a civil surgeon, experimented with tea cultivation in the region. Recognizing the favorable climate and soil conditions, the British government supported the development of the tea industry in Darjeeling.

The first commercial tea garden, the Steinthal Tea Estate, was established in 1852 by the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company. Subsequently, other tea estates were founded, and by the late 1800s, Darjeeling had become a prominent tea-producing region.

The unique climate of Darjeeling, with its misty weather, high altitudes, and well-defined seasons, contributes to the distinctive flavor profile of Darjeeling tea. The tea gardens in Darjeeling are known for producing high-quality, aromatic teas that are often referred to as the "Champagne of Teas."

Over the years, Darjeeling tea has gained international recognition for its premium quality, and the tea industry has played a significant role in the economic development of the region. Today, the picturesque tea gardens of Darjeeling continue to be major contributors to the global tea market.



TEA GARDEN

THE PADMAJA NAIDU HIMALAYAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK

The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, commonly known as the Darjeeling Zoo, has a history dating back to 1958. Named after Padmaja Naidu, the daughter of Sarojini Naidu and the then Governor of West Bengal, the zoo was established with the aim of conserving and breeding endangered Himalayan species.

The Darjeeling Zoo is renowned for its focus on the preservation of Himalayan fauna, particularly endangered species like the red panda, snow leopard, and Himalayan wolf. Over the years, it has played a crucial role in successful breeding programs for these species, contributing to their conservation.

One of the notable features of the zoo is the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), established in 1954, which is adjacent to it. The HMI is dedicated to training mountaineers and has a museum displaying artifacts related to mountaineering.

The Darjeeling Zoo has evolved into a significant tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world. It continues to contribute to wildlife conservation efforts and serves as an educational institution promoting awareness about the importance of preserving Himalayan biodiversity.



THE PADMAJANAIU HIMALAYAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK

HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING INSTITUTE (HMI)

The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) in Darjeeling was founded in 1954 by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, and Tenzing Norgay, the renowned Sherpa mountaineer who, along with Sir Edmund Hillary, first successfully ascended Mount Everest in 1953. The institute was established with the primary objective of promoting mountaineering and preserving the rich history and culture of the Himalayas.

HMI has been a pioneer in mountaineering training and has played a significant role in shaping the careers of mountaineers. The institute provides comprehensive training in various aspects of mountaineering, including rock climbing, ice climbing, and high-altitude trekking. It also conducts rescue operations and research related to mountaineering.

The HMI complex includes a museum that showcases the history of mountaineering, featuring equipment used in early expeditions, photographs, and memorabilia. The institute's location,

overlooking the picturesque Darjeeling town, adds to its charm.

Over the years, HMI has garnered international acclaim for its contributions to mountaineering education and research. It remains a prestigious institution, attracting aspiring mountaineers and adventure enthusiasts from around the world.



HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING INSTITUTE (HMI)

THE MALL ROAD

The Mall Road in Darjeeling, often referred to as simply "The Mall," is a historic market area that has been a central hub for locals and tourists alike. Its history is intertwined with the colonial past of Darjeeling.

During the British colonial era, Darjeeling became a popular hill station, and The Mall emerged as a prominent shopping destination. The architecture along the road reflects the colonial influence, with charming buildings that house a variety of shops, restaurants, and cafes.

The Mall has been a witness to the changing times and has adapted to the evolving needs of the community and visitors. It offers a range of goods, including local handicrafts, traditional clothing, and souvenirs. The vibrant atmosphere and scenic views make it a favorite spot for leisurely strolls.

Over the years, The Mall has retained its cultural and commercial significance, becoming a symbol of Darjeeling's charm. Today, it remains a bustling market where visitors can experience the local culture, shop for unique items, and enjoy the picturesque surroundings.



MALL ROAD

THE CLOCK TOWER

The Darjeeling Clock Tower, also known as the "Ghanta Ghar," was built in 1850 during the British colonial period. It stands as a prominent landmark in Darjeeling, West Bengal, India. Originally erected to honor the memory of Queen Victoria, it served as a public clock for the bustling town. The clock was imported from the famous clockmaker, Gillett & Johnston of London. Over the years, the tower has become an iconic symbol of Darjeeling, attracting both locals and tourists. Its historical significance and architectural charm make it a notable feature in the town's rich heritage.



THE CLOCK TOWER

TIGER HILL

Tiger Hill, situated near Darjeeling in the Indian state of West Bengal, is renowned for its breathtaking views of the sunrise over the eastern Himalayan peaks, including the majestic Kanchenjunga. The hill holds historical significance, as it was a crucial location during the colonial era.

During the British rule, Tiger Hill served as a strategic point for the British forces. It was a key vantage point for observing the movements of the Nepalese and Bhutanese borders. The name "Tiger Hill" is believed to have originated from the presence of tigers in the area during that period. Today, besides its historical relevance, Tiger Hill is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors eager to witness the spectacular sunrise and panoramic views of the Himalayan range, making it an integral part of Darjeeling's tourism landscape.



TIGER HILL

KANCHENJUNGA

Kanchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world, is located on the India-Nepal border in the eastern Himalayas. Here's a brief history:

Exploration and Naming:

Kanchenjunga was first surveyed by the British in 1849 during the Great Trigonometric Survey of India. It was initially labeled as "Kinchinjunga."

Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker named the mountain "Kanchenjunga" in his honor after his exploration of the region.

Climbing Attempts:

The first attempt to ascend Kanchenjunga was made by a British team in 1905, but they stopped short of the summit to respect local beliefs considering the mountain sacred.

The first successful ascent was made by a British expedition in 1955. Joe Brown and George Band reached the summit.

Conservation and Cultural Significance:

The Kanchenjunga Conservation Area was established in 1998, covering the region around the mountain to protect its unique biodiversity.

The area is culturally significant for the indigenous people, and climbing permits often require climbers to respect local traditions.

Recognition:

Kanchenjunga has been recognized as a symbol of cultural identity, both for the local communities and the nations surrounding it.

Challenges and Environmental Concerns:

Climbing Kanchenjunga poses significant challenges due to its difficult terrain and unpredictable weather.

Conservation efforts emphasize the need to protect the delicate ecosystem and maintain the cultural integrity of the region.

Kanchenjunga's history is intertwined with exploration, cultural significance, and the challenges of high-altitude mountaineering.



KANCHENJUNGA

THE MAHAKAL MANDIR

The Mahakal Mandir in Darjeeling, India, has a rich history dating back to the late 18th century. It was established in 1782 by Lama Dorje Rinzing, a Buddhist monk, and was initially a small shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Over the years, the temple underwent several renovations and expansions.

In the mid-19th century, the then Maharaja of Burdwan, Mahadhiraj Nripendra Narayan, contributed significantly to the temple's development. He erected a new structure, transforming the temple into a larger and more prominent place of worship.

The Mahakal Mandir has since become a sacred pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists. Its unique blend of Hindu and Buddhist influences reflects the cultural diversity of the region. Devotees visit the temple to seek blessings and witness the mesmerizing views of the surrounding Himalayan landscape. The temple remains an integral part of Darjeeling's cultural and religious heritage.



THE MAHAKAL MANDIR

TOY TRAIN

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), known for its iconic toy train, was established in 1881 during British colonial rule in India. It was primarily intended for transporting tea from the hills to the plains. The narrow-gauge railway covers a picturesque route, offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas. In 1999, UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site, recognizing its historical and cultural significance. The DHR continues to be a popular tourist attraction, blending history, engineering, and scenic beauty.



TOY TRAIN

BATASIA LOOP

The Batasia Loop in Darjeeling, India, was constructed in 1919. It's a spiral railway track designed to reduce the steep gradient for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The loop offers panoramic views of Darjeeling town and the Himalayan range, making it a popular tourist attraction.



BATASIA LOOP

THE GHOOM MONASTERY

The Ghoom Monastery, located in Darjeeling, India, was established in 1875 by Lama Sherab Gyatso. Also known as the Yiga Choeling Monastery, it is one of the oldest Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the region. The monastery houses a 15-foot high statue of Maitreya Buddha and rare manuscripts. Over the years, it has become a significant spiritual and cultural landmark, attracting visitors with its unique architecture and serene surroundings.



THE GHOOM MONASTERY

TENZING ROCK:

Named after Tenzing Norgay, the Sherpa climber who, along with Sir Edmund Hillary, was the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest in 1953.

Tenzing Rock is a popular spot for rock climbing activities and is known for its challenging terrain.



TENZING ROCK

GOMBU ROCK:

Named after Nawang Gombu, another Sherpa climber and nephew of Tenzing Norgay. Gombu was the first person to climb Everest twice, reaching the summit in 1963 and 65.

Gombu Rock is also used for rock climbing and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape.

Both rocks are significant not only for their geological features but also as tributes to these renowned mountaineers who played crucial roles in the history of Everest exploration. The sites attract adventure enthusiasts and tourists interested in the legacy of mountaineering in the region.



GOMBU ROCK

RATE organised a five days Darjeeling tour. Tour was being planned and coordinated by Dr. Sourav Paul, Dr. Subhadip Ghosh, Dr. Sonia Yasmin. Students (M.Ed, B.Ed, D.El.Ed), teachers were a part of this tour which commenced on 15th January 2024 and lasted till 18th January 2024. Each student had to submit consent from parents in writing to join the excursion. A detailed schedule for the trip was prepared. Respective teachers were assigned with specific responsibilities like Finance, First aid, Food and snacks, cultural event, tour report and so on. Each teacher had to take care of 7 students.

The experience of sightseeing was a lifetime memory. Standing at 2590 metres we got a glimpse of the magnificent sunrise over kanchenjunga mountain. At the peak of Ghoom the splendour of nature unfolds . A stunning view emerges as the golden rays dance on the snow capped summits.

The Mahakal mandir, The Japanese Temple, Peace Pagoda all set amidst the tranquil nature provide peace and spiritual renewal. Trekking the snow capped summits is not merely climbing; one understands them and feels the earth beneath his feet. Established on 4th November 1954 Himalayan mountaineering Institute has trained over 45000 aspirants from all over the globe. The learning here was one of a lifetime and for a lifetime. After sight seeing the evenings were spent shopping, especially at the Mall located close to the hotel itself. local purchase was the chief attraction. Shopping for local artefacts and woollen stuff, enjoying the flavours of local food, horse riding in the mall were other attractions.

Students got insight into how the layout of the mall has been systematically planned and what techniques are being used by the varied business groups to grab customers. Bringing cultures together was also the purpose of this trip. So our students, through a vibrant show, portrayed the culture of the plains of Eastern India. The locals gathered in large numbers to watch the event and they were thoroughly excited and thrilled.

The journey began at the wee hours of 15th January from Durgapur by bus. A part of the team moved from Durgapur to join the rest at Bardhaman station. The entire team boarded the Uttar Banga Express at 9.22 pm on 15th January and reached NJP the next morning at 6.15 am. From here the next part of the journey was by car. Eight cars carried off the enthusiast lot through the meandering hill road. Sound of Music, fun and laughter filled the air. At Darjeeling the team checked into a lovely hotel called "SWEET HOME INTERNATIONAL ". Rooms were assigned to students and staff members as per the set schedule. After freshening up and taking lunch, all quickly moved out for sightseeing. Places visited includes-

16th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Japanese Temple, Peace Pagoda and The Rock Garden.
17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiger hills, Batasia loop, Ghoom monastery
18th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Himalayan mountaineering Institute • Mahakal Mandir • Darjeeling Mall



Embarking on the adventure, we commenced our journey aboard the Uttar Banga Express (Train No. 13147). The outbound leg was filled with anticipation and excitement as we explored various destinations. Upon completing our expedition, we returned home with cherished memories, once again aboard the Uttar Banga Express (Train No. 13148).



OUR HOTEL NAME: HOTEL SWEET HOME INTERNATIONAL, GANDHI ROAD, DARJEELING.

An excursion initiates students to the joys and Vagaries of community living. From the experience of the students it is evident that though enjoyment with friends was an agenda, they were not oblivious to their surroundings .While they could appreciate the scenic beauties they would also identify the infrastructure bottlenecks that could hamper the tourism industry in and around Darjeeling in the near future. Concern about the excessive traffic jams, pollution, changing weather conditions and unplanned construction etc are a challenge to the existence of this heaven on earth.

Human mind is inquisitive by nature which allows us to be more imaginative and retain information by visually experiencing activities. One can see that the application of Course work to real life experience is an important factor of the trip. Without their dedicated efforts this educational tour could not have been organized are- Respected Chairman Sir -Jayanta kumar Chakrabarty, RATE Principal -Dr. Manas Masanta, Dr. Sourav Paul, Dr. Subhadip Ghosh, Dr. Sonia Yasmin , tour organized team & students.

Derek Walcott- "I read, I travel, I become."



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THANK YOU

RAJENDRA ACADEMY FOR TEACHERS' EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL TOUR -DARJEELING (2024) PHOTO ALBUM

