

# Report on Educational Excursion and Community Engagement Programme Organized by Government Training College, Hooghly

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Date: 07 February, 2024 to 10 February, 2024

Location: Kalimpong and Darjeeling

This year Govt. Training College, Hooghly organized an educational excursion and community outreach programme to Kalimpong and Darjeeling to explore the cultural, historical and natural attractions of this renowned hill station and to provide the students with an enriching experience, fostering cultural appreciation and understanding. Darjeeling occupies a special place in the South Asian imaginary.

With its Himalayan vistas, lush tea gardens, and brisk mountain air, Darjeeling is a place somehow different from the rest of India in the plains below and an escape from the proverbial heat of the country. The romance with the 'queen of the hills' lives on, as thousands of Indian and foreign tourists flock annually to the region to taste its world-renowned tea, soak up the colonial nostalgia, and glimpse mighty Mount Kanchenjunga.

The journey started once 12343 Darjeeling Mail departed Sealdah Jn. at 11:05 pm. After an overnight journey the train reached New Jalpaiguri Jn. next morning at 08:05 am. The tour operator had hired cars for the participants to reach Kalimpong which is about 75 km away from NJP.



As the cars were traversing and snaking through the hilly landscape, everyone was spellbound to have a glimpse of the majestic Coronation Bridge that spans across the Teesta River connecting the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong as well as the picturesque view of the blue water of the Teesta River surrounded by lofty mountains.



The cars halted briefly as students visited the Pine View Nursery and the Chitrabhanu, where the famous house was built in 1943 and which was declared as a heritage by the West Bengal Heritage Commission in 2018.



Before checking in hotel, the students were taken to the one of the main attractions of Kalimpong, the Delo Park, known for beautiful mountain views, exotic flowers, landscaped gardens, certain recreational activities and picnic spots. Situated at an altitude of 1,704 metres atop the Delo Hill, the Delo Park absorbed the tiredness off the students. Though capped in mist and clouds, the



scenic beauty enchanted everybody and left a lasting impression on them as the Tintern Abbey or the Daffodils had on William Wordsworth.



Next morning a yoga session was conducted on the hotel lobby where all the students, teachers and non-teaching staff actively participated.



On the way to Darjeeling, the cars halted first at Lamahatta Eco Park, famous for the vast stretch of Pine, Dhupi & Large Cardamom trees along with the looming Mount Kanchenjunga in the forefront.





Next stop was at the Ghoom Buddhist Old Monastery, founded back in 1850 by Lama Sherabgyatso. Students also visited the Ghoom Railway Monastery of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The highest railway highway station of India was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999.



The Batasia Loop and the Gorkha War Memorial, without which a trip to Darjeeling would remain incomplete was the next destination. The view of the spiral railway track, the memorial to the Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army who sacrificed their lives after the Indian Independence in 1947 and the sleeping Buddha of the Himalayas in the horizon left the students spellbound.





In the afternoon everyone went in groups to the Mahakal Temple and spent time in the Chowrasta Mall, an iconic place for the tourists as an observatory hill. The square, surrounded by ancient pine trees is lined with old yet permanent stores towards the west and an open vista of rolling hills, snow peaks and shadowed valleys on the east.





The students were blessed to catch a glimpse of the majestic Mt. Kanchenjunga early in the morning of February 10. This is perhaps the best moment for the students to cherish. Time passed by as students stood motionless on the Observatory Hill witnessing the snow-capped summit change her colour at sunrise.



The Peace Pagoda was one of the last spots that the students visited. The quiet and serene ambience of the Buddhist pagoda incorporated a sense of calmness and peace in the minds of the students.



The students also visited the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park and the Happy Valley Tea Garden on their way back to New Jalpaiguri.



## Community Outreach Programme

A Community Outreach Programme was conducted by the students among the residents of Kalimpong and Darjeeling. The survey was conducted to make an attempt to know about their social and community life, environmental challenges and natural disasters faced by them as residents of hilly areas, applicability and effectiveness of different Government policies, infrastructural adequacy and their suggestion of overall improvement of the standard of life in the hilly regions of Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Three students, Snehasis Biswas, Saikat Kundu and Joyjit Sen were oriented to

conducted the survey and all other students actively helped them to carry out the task and make it successful.





GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL  
GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE,  
HOOGHLY

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Estd. 1955

Community Outreach Program

Dt. 07/02/2024 to 11/02/2024

**Section 1: Demographics**

1.1 Name: *Sumit Chataney. (SUMIT GHATANAY).*

1.2 Age: *21*

- Under 18
- ✓ 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

1.2 Gender:

- ✓ Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

1.3 How long have you been living in a hilly area? *Since birth.*

**Section 2: Environmental Challenges**

2.1 How do hilly terrains affect your daily commute? *Availability of vehicles is not as much as expected.*

2.2 What environmental challenges do you face in terms of infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.)? *BRO is doing excellently, yet some improvements needed*

2.3 How does the terrain impact your access to essential services (healthcare, education, grocery stores, etc.)? *Everything is available as per need.*

~~On~~ ~~20th~~ ~~2023~~ ~~2023~~ On 4<sup>th</sup> Oct., 2023, a severe flash flood occurred in the Teesta terrain. Normalcy of life  
3.1 Have you experienced any natural disasters in your area (e.g., landslides, earthquakes, was Skattered floods)? If yes, please describe your experience. Yes.

3.2 How well-prepared do you feel for potential natural disasters in your hilly region? NDRF & SDRF  
help us to defend ourselves against disasters.  
Section 4: Livelihood and Economy

4.1 How does the hilly terrain affect your job opportunities and economic activities?

4.2 Are there specific industries or types of work that are more prevalent in hilly areas?  
Please specify. Tea industry, tourism, matchbox manufacturing,

### Section 5: Social and Community Life

5.1 How does living in a hilly area impact your social life and community engagement?  
No impacts noticed as I am a Resident of Kalimpang.  
5.2 Are there community initiatives or programs that help address challenges in hilly areas? If yes, please describe.

### Section 6: Healthcare and Accessibility So-So

6.1 How easily can you access healthcare facilities in your hilly region? Mostly available.

6.2 Have you faced challenges in receiving timely medical assistance due to the terrain?  
No.

### Section 7: Quality of Life Yes.

7.1 On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being extremely poor and 10 being excellent, how would you rate your overall quality of life in the hilly area? 8 out of 10.

7.2 What aspects of daily life do you find most challenging in the hilly terrain?

7.3 How satisfied are you with the availability of public services (e.g., healthcare, education, transportation) in your hilly region? Satisfied,

### Section 8: Government Impact

8.1 To what extent do you believe government policies have positively impacted your quality of life in the hilly area? We are benefitted by Govt. policies to a good extent.

8.2 Are there specific government initiatives or programs that you feel have significantly improved living conditions in hilly regions? Not Sure.



8.3 In your opinion, what are the main areas where government intervention is needed to enhance the quality of life in hilly areas? *Health care, drinking water, roads, disaster management and electric supply.*

#### Section 9: Infrastructure and Accessibility

9.1 How would you rate the condition of infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.) in your hilly area? *Overall good.*

9.2 Do you feel that the government has adequately addressed the accessibility challenges posed by the hilly terrain? *Yes.*

#### Section 10: Natural Disaster Preparedness

10.1 How confident are you in the government's preparedness and response to natural disasters in your hilly region? *The govt. should be more alert to evacuate places during disasters and swift in restoring normalcy.*

10.2 Are there specific measures you believe the government should take to improve natural disaster preparedness in hilly areas? *Not sure.*

#### Section 11: Suggestions for Improvement

11.1 As we all know, there is an unsaid division between North and South Bengal. As a resident of North Bengal, which is distant from the capital city, do you feel any difference or negligence? *Sometimes we feel segregated from the heart of the state. We expect more inclusivity.*

11.2 What recommendations do you have for the government to enhance the overall quality of life in hilly areas? *Work facility, roads, disaster management, health care.*

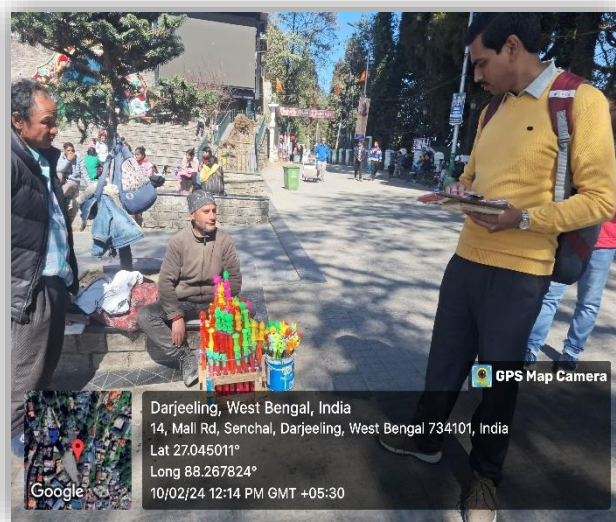
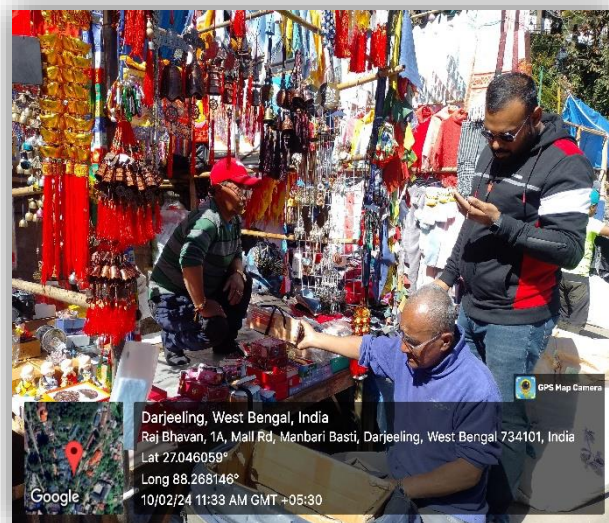
11.3 Are there specific policies or interventions you would like to see implemented to address the challenges unique to hilly terrain? *NO.*

*Dumit*

Signature of the Interviewee

*Jyoti Sen 09/02/24*

Signature of the Interviewer



Thus the educational excursion came to an end and students bade adieu to the Queen of the Hills as they boarded 12378 Padatik Express which departed NJP Jn. at 08:40 pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 and reached Sealdah Jn. next morning.



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**Co-Convenor: Prof. Suman Saha, Assitant Professor, WBES**

**Other Members:**

- 1. Prof. Satyajit Hansda, Assistant Professor, WBES**
- 2. Sri Bishnu Pada Sarkar, Member of the Non-teaching Staff**
- 3. Sri Prem Chand Routh, Member of the Non-teaching Staff**