

Pune Study Tour, MA/M.Sc II Year-2019

An Educational Tour is a part of the academic experience in most institutions. Such tours not only serve the purpose of providing new insights to the students, but they also help students to understand first-hand about various subjects. The sprawling city of Pune was chosen for our study trip and rightly so. Our entire assemblage consisted of 13 students and our Course Coordinators Dr. Aparajita Chattopadhyay and Dr. Dipti Govil. We set off for our destination in three cars on the morning of 21st February and after a four hours car drive filled with cheerful conversations, music and dance, we reached our destination, which was the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics.

There was a lecture scheduled for us followed by an interaction with the Population Research Centre (PRC) in the institute. As soon as we reached, we headed straight for the lecture that was arranged for us. It was by Professor Sangeeta Shroff, Professor, Economics Department. She gave us some immensely useful insights about the current status of Indian agriculture. She reiterated the fact that economic growth should always take place in tandem with social welfare of the people and in no case, should social justice be compromised with for economic growth. The issue of increasing workforce in agriculture and its continuously falling returns to the economy was also raised by her and her ideas on agrarian distress, protein inflation, and Good Agricultural Practices were immensely compelling and thought provoking. After prof. Shroff's lecture, we had an interaction session with the PRC team. The interaction was extremely insightful fun filled and we were given an idea of the different career prospects that we could take on as demographers and how we could hone our skills to undertake meaningful research and contribute productively to the plethora of research work that already exists.

Post lunch, we again had a lecture at the Chest Research Foundation. We were welcomed by Dr. Sundeep Salvi, the director of CRF. He talked to us about air pollution and its various ramifications. He enunciated the fact that ambient air pollution can have grave consequences and what bewildered us the most was the fact that we were so ignorant about very common sources of indoor air pollution like incense sticks, mosquito repellent coils and liquids. He also told us about how we could contribute individually to combatting air pollution and the absolute necessity to do so. We also got to know about certain discoveries like electric scooter which are playing a role in reducing air pollution. The session with Dr. Salvi was extremely informative and interesting. At CRF, we also had a chance to learn about the working of a Spirometer-an instrument used for measuring lung capacity. Since CRF partners with IIPS for conducting the spirometry tests for the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India, it was really interesting for us to see how the testing process is carried out and how the measurements are taken for the survey.

By the time we left from CRF, it was already evening and it had started to get dusky. So we planned on visiting the iconic Shanivaar Vaada for the music and night show. The entire place looked surreal in the pale yellow lights that were put around. The light and sound show was equally mesmerising and all of us enjoyed it immensely.

On the second day, we had a talk session with the Faculty of the Department of Geography in Savitribai Phule Pune University. Over there, we were told about the various facets of Geography as a subject and its linkages with Demography. We were also told about the various versions of GIS and its application in Spatial Demography. After the session, were taken around the Main Campus Building and shown the architecture which was created during British rule. We were accompanied by Dr. Radhika Seshan on this round of the University campus. The entire architecture left us marvelling at its splendour and absolute beauty. After coming back from Pune University, we had lunch and after that, we were allowed to stroll around a bit and explore the nearby cafes and restaurants. It was an enthralling experience and a lot of fun, for sure.

We left Pune at around 4:30 in the evening and reached the campus at about 8:30 at night. These two days were absolutely thrilling and full of excitement and knowledge at the same time. We came back with gazillions of memories and wonderful times to look back to.