

NATIONAL EXPOSURE VISIT OF TDCs, SIKKIM 2023

(15/01/2023 to 21/01/2023)

Dr Dharmender Dagar
Coordinator

List of the participants

S. No.	Name	Designation	S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr Anil Kumar	TDC	16.	Ms Sabena	TDC
2.	Ms Preeti	TDC	17.	Mr Jagat	TDC
3.	Ms Poonam	TDC	18.	Mr Ajay	TDC
4.	Mr Yudhishtir	TDC	19.	Mr Badri	TDC
5.	Mr Sunil Kumar	TDC	20.	Mr Ashok	TDC
6.	Mr Anil	TDC	21.	Ms Hashmeet Kaur	TDC
7.	Ms Inder Devi	TDC	22.	Ms Suman	TDC
8.	Ms Neelam	TDC	23.	Mr Amit Kumar	TDC
9.	Mr Monu	TDC	24.	Mr Praveen	TDC
10.	Mr Suresh	TDC	25.	Mr Jaiveer	TDC
11.	Mr Subhash	TDC	26.	Ms Babita Rani	TDC
12.	Mr PK Sharma	TDC	27.	Mr Devender Singh Khatri	TDC
13.	Mr Gopal	TDC	28.	Mr Sandeep Kumar	TDC
14.	Mr Sonu	TDC	29.	Dr Dharmender Dagar	Coordinator
15.	Ms Surya Kiran	TDC	30.	Ms Sonia Tondon	ASO

Sikkim at a glance

1) Sikkim, a state in India, is located in the eastern Himalayas, in the north-eastern part of the country. It is one of the smallest states of India. Sikkim is bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north and northeast, Bhutan to the southeast, the Indian state of West Bengal to the south, and Nepal to the west. The capital and largest city is Gangtok, in the south-eastern part of the state Kangchenjunga, the highest peak in India and the third highest peak on Earth.

2) Vegetation - There are mainly five types of forests in Sikkim namely sub-tropical, moist mixed deciduous, moist temperate, conifer and sub-alpine forests. With an area of 7096 km², the state has 30.77% forest as a protected area which includes seven wildlife sanctuaries and one national park which is the highest in the country. Khangchendzonga National Park, the only national park in the state is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site declared in July 2016.

3) Language: The official languages of the state are English, Nepali, Sikkimese (Bhutia) and Lepcha. Nepali is the vernacular of Sikkim, while Sikkimese (Bhutia) and Lepcha are spoken in some areas.

4) Districts of Sikkim- Sikkim has four districts East Sikkim, West Sikkim, North Sikkim and South Sikkim whose capitals are Gangtok, Geyzing, Mangan and Namchi respectively.

5) Out of 3 ethnic groups Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali. Sikkim is a beautiful cultural bouquet filled with fascinating folk dances, traditions and customs. Traditional dresses like bhaku.

6)*Education* -The school in Sikkim is affiliated to CBSE & ICSE board. Sikkim is a partner state of Delhi under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. The literacy rate of Sikkim is 82.6%, which ranks 13th in India.

Sikkim which is the crown of India and also the brother of 7 sisters (North East State), Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister while addressing the State Agriculture Ministers' Conference declared Sikkim as the first organic state of India.

Historical Sites

1. Siddheshwar Dham, Namchi
2. Yumthang
3. Zero Point.
- 4 Nathula Border
- 5 Baba Harbhajan Singh Valley Temple
- 6 Rumtek or Rumtek Monastery (Math),

famous people of sikkim

- 1 Danny Dengzongpa (Film History) 2. Baichung Bhutia (Indian football player)

“Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” is an initiative announced by Hon’ble Prime minister on 31st October 2015. This programme aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different states and UTs of India with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding amongst them.

SCERT in the collaboration with DOE has provided us a great opportunity to visit Sikkim and acquaint ourselves with the diverse culture of Sikkim. A team comprises of 30 members (28 TDCs from different schools of DOE along with Ms. Sonia Tondan from SCERT, & Dr. Dharmender Dagar, Asst. prof. DIET Ghummenhera) reached Bagdogra on 15th Jan 2023. From there we travelled to Gangtok via the route of Siliguri. It took approx 5 hours to cover the distance of 124 km and reach from Bagdogra to Gangtok. This journey was though quite long and tiring but highly exhilarating as the road passed through lush green forest along the meandering Teesta- river. Finally, we reached the Cardamom residency where we had to stay for one night.



Gangtok is the largest populated place as well as the capital of the mountainous Northern Indian state of Sikkim. It is at the centre of Sikkim's tourist industry. It is in the eastern Himalayan range at an elevation of 1650 m (5410 feet). Kanchenjunga mountain range is quite visible from this city. While visiting the local areas and markets of this city, we got to know many interesting facts about the culture, language, occupations of the people living here.

The population of Sikkim is approx 6-7 lakhs. Most of the people here speak Nepali language but they are well acquainted with Hindi as well. People of different religions are found here like Hindu's, Buddhist, Christians and Muslims. People here are generally known as Nepalese, Bhutia, Tibetan aur Lepcha.

The major religious festivals of Sikkim are Diwali, Christmas, Dussehra, Holi etc. Nepali festivals like Maghe Sakranti, Ram Navami are also celebrated here. We can see glimpses of Buddhism and their festivals also. People wear mostly common western attire but their love for traditional dresses like Bhutia, Gho, dumidum can also be seen. Men wear Thokorodum including pyjama, shirts and a cap. Tourism and agriculture are the main sources of livelihood of the people. However, the state has only about 12% of its land under civilization. Women in Sikkim are equally participating in all the economic activities to support and meet the economic needs of their family. Most of the women are working here.

Apart from its sight, seeing and adventures, Sikkim is also famous for food. Sikkim is known as an organic state, so people here tend to prefer fruits, vegetables, eggs and meat from local farmers that are organically cultivated Momos, noodles, noodles soup, bamboo shoot, curry, dal Bhat. Thukpa are the most popular delicacy among the people of Sikkim.

While visiting Gangtok or nearby areas of Sikkim, we realized that life here is full of many hardships. Extreme chilly weather and natural conditions make it difficult for people to survive.

Still, they are always seen with smiling faces and contented faces. Sikkim is a worth seeing place. One must surely visit this place.



After the tiring long mountain road journey of the first day, everyone was fast asleep at the "Hotel Cardamom" in Gangtok. We received directions from our Group Leader and Coordinator Dr. Dharmendra Dagar ji to be ready for breakfast at 7.30 am and to leave for Lachung by 8 am.

State Government Senior Secondary School, Bojoghari.

All of the TDCs got up with a very happy note. After the morning tea at the hotel, we left for a visit to the nearby State Government Senior Secondary School, Bojoghari. Within a few minutes, we reached that school on foot. Everyone found the school impressive. After the brief visit, we returned back to the hotel and had breakfast discussing the challenging terrain for building such school at mountain slopes. Immediately after that we packed our bags and checked out of the hotel and left for Lachung. Making new friends each one of us was excited to go see Lachung. We all boarded the cabs. The one we boarded was driven by a young man, Ruchak. He was very cheerful and quick to answer. He was our driver as well as guide for this tour. By now our taxi was racing along the winding mountain roads. Here the roads were narrow and had sharp turns. Somewhere it was a very steep climb. As the car kept moving forward, we were surprised to see how cool and composed the drivers were. We would all on our guard at every sharp turn but Ruchak was a very skilful driver and made us relax. He used to reassure us every now and then to be fearless of the journey and we went on like this. The height and vastness of the mountains was visible. The trees and plants there were mesmerizing. The beautiful and picturesque views were making us happy. The air was so fresh and pure as it was welcoming us.

Seven Sisters Fall : After a journey of about two hours, our happiness to add to our excitement we saw a waterfall. When we saw a beautiful waterfall falling from the mountains in front of us, everyone was excited. Its name was "Seven Sisters Fall". Every camera was clicking cheerful faces of the TDCs. The residents informed us about the name of the waterfall. As water from the height falls at seven different places there, it is called "Seven Sisters Fall." The beauty of the huge rocks under the thundering waterfall was impressive. The water was pristine clear that everything was clearly visible at the bottom. All the companions were going near the fall for a panoramic view and capturing the beauty in their cameras. Some companions were seen battling with the cold air with the help of tea and coffee. A beautiful bridge over the canal was adorned by the colourful Buddhist Prayer Flags along with a Buddhist shrine and Dharamchakra. After enjoying for about an hour, we were back in our seats in our cabs. The pine and deodar trees on the mountains looked very attractive. The river Teesta was seen flowing at the foothills along the path. As we climbed higher up the mountain, a drastic drop in temperature was felt.



The Theng Tunnel

A long tunnel welcomed our group. When we came out of the "Theng Tunnel" through the mountain on the way, all were surprised and it compelled us to think about the efforts of fellow human beings, who carved out such a unique path through the chest of the mighty mountain. On the way after a while, we at a distance we saw the "Yak". It was very strong and dark in color. We were also surprised to see its big horns. When we expressed our desire to see him from close quarters, Ruchak our driver paused the taxi. We all went near the yak and took some photos. We discovered our childhood in it. As many of our comrades had seen yaks for the first time. After meeting the Yak, we went ahead. We realized that road making and repairing is a all-season continuous task in the mountains. Somewhere the roads were lying damaged and somewhere the road was in good condition. Repair work were also in progress at some places. Ruchak was successfully pushing the taxi overcoming all the difficulties and obstacles in the way. After listening to Hindi music for some time, he put on some other music, which we could not understand. When asked, he told it be a song in Nepali language. We were also told that most of the Sikkim people understand Nepali. We were enjoying that melodious music and in the meantime the cab kept leaping miles after miles. The boy Ruchak, when asked about the tattoo on the hand on his hand, it was told that it is a tradition in Sikkim. The would-be groom needs to have a tattoo done on his hand for the would-be bride, before marriage. He kept enlightening us about many important social, cultural, and geographical information with us and while the cab kept galloping ahead.

The Prayer Flags: We noticed at many places, white and colored flags on both sides of the road with prayers written on them. We were told that these white flags were put for the peace of a departed soul and the colored flags were placed after a wish is fulfilled. They are placed at clean and airy slopes of the mountains. These auspicious flags are 108 in number. Most of these flags were placed at the turn of the road, which looked very attractive. It was told that these flags are not taken down after installation, rather they get degraded naturally due to sun and rain. We observed there at various places, that the women work in every field for their livelihood. Women were seen running shops, hotels, and other businesses primarily. As the cab kept climbing up the mountain, the temperature kept dropping and the chill kept increasing. After some time, our cab reached near the “State Government College of Magashila,” which was situated at the state highway. We visited the building and saw the well-maintained library; it was beautiful and orderly. We also saw the artistic project work by the students there, which was highly commendable. We took some photographs there too and moved on. Just, after a while at some distance, a tyre of a cab of our group got punctured. There we saw a strong spirit of co-operation. Drivers were helping each other to solve that problem. Meanwhile we got down there and had tea and coffee.



The people and Culture

At some distance an elderly village woman was seen carrying some vegetables on her back in a big basket. We approached her to know more about her health and daily life. At first, she was a little hesitant, after realizing our eagerness she talked with us. She was very hardworking but healthy even at the age of 70. She was like an inspiration for us. Both the cabs were ready and started running again after an hour.

On the way we saw a marriage program was going on. The colorful costumes of the guests present there gave us a real glimpse of the culture of Sikkim. Their traditional costumes were looking very beautiful and attractive.

Lachung, the destination: In this way, after traveling for several hours, we finally reached Lachung, completing our day long journey. It was very cold there. The temperature was reported several degrees below zero. It was bone-chilling cold there. For many of us it was a new experience leaving *Delhi Ki Sardi* far behind. Most of the companions moved into their hotel rooms after a welcome tea. But some of us went out for a brief walk with some of our friends. Roaring sound of rushing waters of the river was heard in the dark. The water flowing on the roads was found frozen at some places. It was a pleasant surprise to see this scene with our own eyes and felt the strong presence of harsh nature. We passed by an army unit crossing the Sentry Gate. There, we met the great sons of our motherland performing their duty in that harsh weather. The strong spirit of patriotism among the soldiers to guard their country at any cost made us realize the significance of our great armed forces. Their promptness and spirit of service was enough to wake our spirit of patriotism. There some memorials of some martyrs were raised, we offered flowers of gratitude. There we had important information from the soldiers about the challenges of the weather in Lachung. We

returned to our hotel after expressing our gratitude towards all those alert soldiers. By the time we got back to the hotel, a hot meal was ready. We were very hungry. After dinner, we went to our room and went to rest. Due to extreme cold conditions, many colleagues had to make additional arrangements for the room heaters. We were so tired that we soon feel fast sleep. Thus, this second day of Sikkim tour was spent with great enthusiasm. It was an opportunity to know and learn a lot about the Sikkim's geography, society and culture. Thus, the second day of our Sikkim tour was very successful and informative.

DAY 3:

On the third day we went from Lachung to Yumthang Valley, Teesta River (Hydro Power Electric Plant) and Zero Point, and back to Gangtok.

**LACHUNG*

Before reaching LACHUNG, Our journey started on January 16 morning from Gangtok the capital of Sikkim to Lachung and the weather is almost unpredictable throughout the journey. You never know when snow might greet you. Several waterfalls seven sisters water fall, Amitabh Bachchan



Falls (real name is Bhewma Falls),naga falls, were seen in the way.

Hydroelectric project. The project has been established since September 3, 2014, in Chungthang on the Teesta River has the potential to generate 1200 MW of electricity. This is the third dam on Teesta River. The Lachung and Lachen, two glacier fed rivers in northern Sikkim, join the southern Chungthanges.



Theng Tunnel is a road tunnel on the Chungthang-Mangan highway in North Sikkim. The 578 meters long tunnel is the longest tunnel in the state of Sikkim. It is constructed by Border Road Organisation as part of Project Swastik on the Sino-Indian border.



During ride we have enjoyed ALAAV in between to save us from cold waves.



All the above beautiful and charming places add to the charm and adventure of the journey. The taxi reached Lachung after taking a few breaks throughout the ride.

LACHUNG, A hill station town with an altitude of about 9,600 feet, Lachung offers some stunning views of the snow-capped Himalayas along with the Lachung and Lachen rivers in its vicinity.

Located at a distance of about 125 km from Gangtok, it is the first night halt for the tourists as it gets dark before they reach here. Most of the inhabitants of Lachung are Lepchas, of Tibetan origin, and the languages spoken here are Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutia. You can easily explore the city on foot, as it is a small village.

Beyond this, Yume-Semdong and Yumthang Valley, located at 16 kms distance, are popular destinations.

Yumthang Valley

Our journey to Yumthang valley started in the morning on 17 Jan 2023.

Yumthang Valley is located in the North Sikkim district of Sikkim at an altitude of 3,575 m (11,729 ft) above sea level. This valley is surrounded by the Himalayan mountains and is very beautiful. It is 148 km from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Is located at a distance. Yumthang Valley is also known as "Valley of Flowers". Red, orange, purple, yellow and white flowers are found here. Due to heavy snowfall, the Yumthang Valley is closed from December to March.

Enriched with natural beauty, this place attracts many tourists during the spring season with beautiful wild colourful flowers like roses and buds. Apart from this, there are various other attractive places around this beautiful place.

****Zero Point Sikkim****

We were eager to explore Zero Point Sikkim as we were fascinated by the fact that it is the last outpost of India. Our journey to Zero Point began when we boarded a taxi from Lachung early in

the morning. The road trip from Lachung to Zero Point is one of the juiciest road trips ever. pollution!! Oops, this term is not present in the dictionary of North Sikkim. Zero Point, also known as Yumesamdong, Zero Point Sikkim is situated at an altitude of 15,300 ft above mean sea level (23 km from Yumthang Valley) and is the last outpost of India. The road ends here!!! The drive from Yumthang Valley to Zero Point is through rolling hills amidst the rugged terrain of the



geographical region. Zig zag road on Zero Point Sikkim route. We Enjoying the journey, we reached zero point.

There is hardly any vegetation in Zero Point as it is covered with snow for most of the year but still, you can spot yaks grazing in the snow in search of vegetation.



Due to the height of the zero point, the oxygen in the air decreases and some people may have difficulty in breathing.

The place is a short distance from the international border between India and China, so a special permit is required to visit Zero Point Sikkim and the driver may charge some extra INR for the same.

After spending an hour at Zero Point, our taxi headed back to Gangtok.

During the visit to Sikkim, there were a large number of *two colored flags* on the side of the roads there. One of them was *white* and the *other was colourful*, something was written on the colourful. White colored flags are used for the peace of the souls of the dead. Apart from this, colorful flags are a symbol of worship so that people get positive energy. It is used by the people of Buddhism.



108 flags are hoisted when a person dies. The flags fluttering in the wind represent the peace of their souls.



During the journey, saw the *spinning wheel of Dharma*. It is said that this is the *prayer wheel*, by rotating it sins are washed away and it is rotated from its right side. Here also it seems that whether it is plains or mountains, despite all the progress, the soul of India is the same. People's beliefs, beliefs, superstitions, concepts of sin and virtue and imagination are the same.

It was a great experience with a group of great people (TDCs) to explore the amazing place SIKKIM.

DAY: 4



Day 4(18th January 2023), began with a trip to Nathu La pass. Located at 14,150 feet, Nathu La in East Sikkim is around 55 km away from Gangtok, the state capital. We all were very excited for the trip and talked at lengths with the soldiers about the political and geographical importance of the place in Indo-Sino relationship.



On our way to Natula pass we got to see the Famous Changu Lake/Tsomgo lake, it is a Sikkim glacier lake at 12,310 feet. Tsomgo is a name that means 'water source.' It's 40 kilometres from Gangtok town, on the rugged Jawaharlal Nehru Road that leads to Nathula. Pass.

It is one of India's uncommon and magnificent high- altitude lakes. The reflections of the neighbouring hills on the frozen water made the lake even more appealing.



On our way back from the Natula pass we got to visit Baba Harbhajan Singh Temple. It was a sight to behold. We all felt so overwhelmed with pride and a feeling of Nationalism while listening about the great martyr, who continued to serve the nation even after his death. The respect that the army and his fellow soldiers gave him was exemplary.



Got to see a few villages like Chipsu, Kumbuk and lakes like Madhubala, Manju, Elephant etc along the way. The other attractions were 15 miles Kiangshola market, Transit camp, Gunju war memorial, Alpine sanctuary and Sherthang trade centre. The day turned out to be exceptionally good. Not only did we get to see the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the state but learnt about its geopolitical importance too.

DAY 5:

It was the 5th day of tour being introduced with Sikkim, Its people, Its cultural richness, Its languages, professions, dresses and way of living, we learnt a lot about all the aspects of the Sikkim. During four days journey we found all social, cultural and economic aspects enriching our knowledge regarding Sikkim state.

On 19th January 2023, we woke up early in the morning at Gangtok. We had our breakfast and packed our luggage, we left for “Namchi” (South Sikkim) it was 78 KM away from the state capital Gangtok. Namchi is situated at an altitude of 1675 M above sea level and lies off the road between Melli and Jorethang. After two hours journey, we stopped on mid-way on the bank of Teesta River. We were very excited and clicked some pictures of “Holy River



TEESTA”. The beauty of the huge rocks and valley under the thundering water was impressive. After enjoying about half an hour, we were back in our cabs. On the way the road was very dangerous and both side we saw mountains with pine and devdar trees.



After 04 hours journey finally, we reached Namchi, we took tickets for “CHHAR DHAM”. There are replicas of the “DWADASH JYOTIRLINGS” surrounding the statue of Lord Shiva. We took a group picture there and enjoyed a lot. Namchi is rapidly becoming a tourist spot and pilgrimage center. We saw one of the biggest stadiums – “THE BHAICHUNG STADIUM OF FOOTBALL” which was built by Sikkim government in honour of famous footballer BHAICHUNG BHUTIYA. Football teams from all over INDIA come and play “The Gold Cup” every year.

Char Dham, the four most revered Dhams of Hindus have been replicated in the fantastic campus/complex to benefits the devotees and tourists. We stayed there around three hours.







DAY 6:

It was the sixth day of the trip to Sikkim. With a thankful notion to the Director SCERT, directorate of education and Delhi government we had reached Darjeeling. The effect of the tedious journey to Darjeeling was going to end soon with the new hope to devour more beautiful scenery with our eyes as today we were going to tiger hills to witness the mighty and pre requisite rising Sun.



We reached the tiger hills 2 hours before the sunrise with eagerness and a new hope to enjoy the unprecedented scene. Finally, at 6:30 in the morning the golden sunrise reflected on the Kanchenjunga and the whole mountain began to shine like gold, which reminded us of our students when they are waiting for us like Kanchanjunga to shine with the Sun of education and knowledge of the worthy teacher.

After witnessing this extraordinary and unprecedented scene, we moved forward to the Buddhist monastery and enjoyed the Holy environment there.



Then we proceeded to assimilate the emotions of nationalism and martyrdom at the Gorakha Martyrs Smarak, the names of the Martyrs and our national flag Tiranga infused us with the previous memories of Indo China border at Nathula and the service of our respected soldiers in the difficult conditions.

These places made us feel proud of our respected chief minister and education minister on including the Desh Bhakti curriculum in Delhi schools which further strengthened our morale when we met respectful and honourable group leader Shri Major Jai Kishan, the principal of Himalayan mountaineering institute at Darjeeling who has trained more than 25000 mountaineers till now and has held the world record of sky jumping at two hundred miles per hour speed from 25000 feet high in the sky.

Mr. Jai Kishan shared his mental toughness and perseverance with will power which made him unfurl the national flag in Antarctica celebrating 75 glorious years of our independence.



Next move was to visit the HMI Museum which showed the success stories of many famous national and international mountaineers like Santosh Yadav and Tenzing Sherpa.



The sixth day visit was accomplished by watching Tea estates having winding paths and eye soothing greenery everywhere and finally the toy train riding reminded us Happiness Curriculum in our Delhi Government schools. Witnessed everything about Sikkim, sweet and friendly people, the places showing the records in our books and especially the feelings of EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT.



RETURN JOURNEY – An Experience Well Deserved

It was the 7th or the last day of the trip or in other words we can say that it was the concluding day. Being introduced with Sikkim, its people, its cultural richness, its languages, profession, dresses, way of living, flora and fauna and beautiful weather conditions; we deepened our

understanding of all the aspects of the state of Sikkim. Main points of visit or the new social, cultural and economic aspects we got to be acquainted with during these 6 days, we found them very fruitful, didactic and worth enriching our knowledge and education regarding the state of Sikkim.



On this day, we woke up early in the morning at Darjeeling. We went for an early morning walk. It was refreshing and enlivening. During our morning walk we took some photographs of beautiful tea gardens of Darjeeling spreading their fragrance all around. We were provided with healthy but delicious breakfast with the aroma of local menu. We grasped everything more keenly as it was the day when we were ready to say goodbye to Sikkim and Darjeeling and returning back to our Delhi.



We packed our luggage and left for airport. On our way to airport, we again relished the scenic beauty of world-renowned tea garden of Darjeeling. We interacted with the local people who helped us know about their culture, history, local cuisine, local flora and fauna and other aspects of their culture. Thus, interaction with friendly people of the state of Sikkim deepened our overall understanding. We also wondered at bamboo trees which we North Indians are alien to. On the way to Bagdogra we again enjoyed some wonders of nature which left all of us with lifetime of memory. As we were lost in the beautiful valley of Darjeeling, without even realization we reached our destination of Bagdogra Airport. Here, all of us were brimming with new memories, optimism and enthusiasm as it was such a fulfilling journey. All of us got together at airport. as we waited for our flight, we engaged in rich interaction with each other. All of us shared our thoughts, ideas and memories we were carrying along. then, we dispersed in to different sections of airport to engage into our own individual activities like reading books, relishing coffee, buying some useful articles etc.

Then, we zoomed into sky with rich experience of visiting one of the seven sister states. Here, we felt deeply motivated to share this experience with our students, colleagues, family members and even neighbours. We are deeply grateful to the initiative taken by our worthy Director.