

Report of Study Tour organised by the Department of English, 2024-2025

Exploring the Cultural Capital of India: Past Flanked by the Present

Introduction

On 26 March 2025, the Department of English, Netaji Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya organized a one-day interdisciplinary study tour to Kolkata for students of the 1st and 6th semesters. The tour, supervised by four faculty members and supported by one non-teaching staff member, aimed to enhance students' understanding of science, history, architecture, and cultural heritage through visits to three iconic sites: the Birla Planetarium, St. Paul's Cathedral Church, and the Indian Museum. The trip emphasized experiential learning and cross-semester collaboration. 7 students and 4 faculty members attended the study tour.

Objectives

1. To bridge classroom learning with real-world cultural, historical, and scientific contexts.
2. To expose students to Kolkata's architectural marvels and scientific heritage.
3. To foster mentorship and teamwork between senior and junior students.
4. To ensure safe and organized travel under faculty supervision.

Itinerary

- Departure: 7:30 AM from college campus via reserved transport (coordinated by Ratan da, non-teaching staff).
- Birla Planetarium 11:00 AM–12:45 PM (guided by Smt. Prama Bhattacharjee (HoD) and Smt. Shiuli Sarkar, faculty member of the department], Science-Literature interface discussion).
- St. Paul's Cathedral: 1:00 PM–2:00 PM (historical context provided by Sri. Jayanta Rana and Sri. Ranit Ray, faculty members of the department).
- Indian Museum: 2.30 PM PM–4:30 PM (art and archaeology session led by Smt. Prama Bhattacharjee and Smt. Shiuli Sarkar).
- Return: 7:30 PM to Ashoknagar.

Birla Planetarium

Under the guidance of Smt. Prama Bhattacharjee and Smt. Shiuli Sarkar, students attended a sky show on celestial mythology, followed by an interactive exhibit tour. Faculty members linked astronomical themes to literary works like *Paradise Lost* and modern sci-fi narratives, prompting discussions on science-fiction as a genre.

St. Paul's Cathedral Church

Sri. Jayanta Rana and Sri. Ranit Ray explained the cathedral's colonial-era architecture and its symbolic resonance in postcolonial literature. Students analyzed how physical spaces reflect cultural hybridity, referencing texts like *A Passage to India*

Indian Museum

Smt. Prama Bhattacharjee and Smt. Shiuli Sarkar led a curated walkthrough of the Archaeology and Art sections. The Gandhara sculptures and Egyptian mummies sparked debates on cultural exchange, paralleling themes in transnational literature.

Role of Faculty and Staff

- Faculty members designed site-specific learning activities and facilitated discussions.
- The non-teaching staff managed logistics, ticketing, and safety protocols, ensuring a seamless experience.
- Senior students mentored juniors during group tasks, fostering peer learning.

Key Observations

- Faculty expertise enriched site interpretations, linking museum artifacts and architecture to literary theory.
- The non-teaching staff's efficiency ensured punctuality and organization.
- Cross-semester interactions improved juniors' confidence in analytical discussions.

Learning Outcomes

- Interdisciplinary connections between literature, history, and science were critically examined.
- Exposure to Kolkata's heritage deepened contextual understanding of syllabi texts.
- Collaborative mentorship strengthened departmental cohesion.

The study tour successfully combined academic rigor with cultural exploration under the supervision of faculty and staff. The Birla Planetarium, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Indian Museum provided immersive platforms for students to connect literary studies with broader socio-historical narratives. The Department extends gratitude to the faculty, staff, and college administration for their invaluable support.

