

## **Significance of excursion as a Learning Outcome**

*SHRI SANDEEP KULKARNI*

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Environmental studies,  
K. J. Somaiya College of Arts & Commerce, Mumbai - 77*

Mob: 9920814378

sandeepkulkarnimiragi@gmail.com

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I would like to express my deep gratitude to Maharashtra Nature Park, Mumbai, for allowing our students to visit the park to gain outdoor knowledge about Environment.

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I would like to appreciate the student's enthusiasm and their volunteer participation.

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**Note:** I, Shri Sandeep Kulkarni declare that the paper is my original work and not submitted elsewhere for publication.

## Significance of excursion as a Learning Outcome

### *Introduction:*

Learning outcomes are statements of what students will learn in a class or outside class session. The statements are focused on student learning (What will students learn today?) rather than instructor teaching (What am I going to teach today?). These statements should include a verb phrase and an impact ("in order to") phrase -- what students will do/be able to do and how they will apply that skill or knowledge. (ACRL/IIL Immersion materials, 2015)

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (2001) gives us a way to express learning outcomes in a way that reflects cognitive skills.

- Knowledge/remembering
- Comprehension/understanding
- Application/applying
- Analysis/analyzing
- Evaluation/evaluating
- Synthesis/creating

Looking at these concepts we tried to conduct study tour at Maharashtra Nature Park, Mumbai and see what change can be observed in the minds of undergraduate students. Till late 1977 this park with area of 35 to 40 acre land was a pure garbage dumping area with no trees and just filth. Around 1980 when 3 active members of World Wildlife Fund and a known naturalist Dr. Salim Ali had a vision of having a beautiful Greenland right there where many local and migrant birds and others can bring in the charm and beauty and finally in 1994 the work to build this nature park started. The eye opening location of this park being on other side of road is the Dharavi slums and just opposite is this green heaven with a different climate and temperature you can feel, that's the beauty of mother earth. It will take about 2 to 3 hours completely to check every plant, bird, insects and those reptiles inside this green woodland. The Mahim nature park was ones full of garbage is now a green park with about thousands of trees and since it is in middle of city with

concrete high skylines around, it attracts varieties of local birds and also season migratory birds from far in the country, so don't forget to get along your binoculars to watch those beautiful birds. MNP attracts plant lovers too, with a wide range of about 300 varieties of plants with some rare having herbal qualities, explore this park with ranger who will guide you to each of this important plant as shown on his map. Official of Maharashtra Nature Park now grow the varieties of plant endemic in nature. All this plant with flora and faunas around attracts those tiny beautiful butterflies in group which is an unexpected experience in Mumbai city. Teak, Golden Apple trees, Lasora, Bottle brusck oak, flame of the forest, devil's tree, Kokk, Kadamba, Soccer ball are some of the about 13000 plants and trees found in this green park. From the point you enter inside the gate, you will be mesmerized with the varieties of trees seen. Some only heard in TV channels like Nat Geo and Discoveries, here are name of few trees like Soccer ball and Kadamba, Red Silk Cotton Tree, The Ashoka, Devils's tree (Sounds Scary right ?), Ballon Pant, Bottle Brusck Oak and Ficus Benjamin, Lasora, Teak, Golden Apple, Flame of Forest, etc. Enjoy about 35 to 42 different variety of butterflies flying in groups, rarely seen anywhere inside or near Mumbai city, you can see species of butterflies like Commander, Black Rajah, Blue Tiger, Blue Oak leaf, Lime Butterfly, White Orange tip, Common Rose, Psyche, The Pioneer, Baronet and some of those found at MNP. (ECOINDIA)

Maharashtra Nature Park is well known amongst students and people of the higher age group, however the essence of setting up an establishment of this sort, is being overlooked. For students, the purpose of visiting MNP is academic, where they study only one or two aspects of the environment- plants and animals. Thus their awareness about the environment is restricted to these factors only. More importance is being given to the 'floral-faunal conservation' aspect of the environment. Biodiversity studies are only a tip of the iceberg that we call the environment; there are many more aspects that should be given equal importance especially where education is concerned. The percentage of participants, who find MNP to have no importance or no role in environmental education, highlights the fact that MNP is not being used to its potential. Even though 7.9% is a small number, its value amplifies in terms of environmental awareness. This indicates a lack of or limited orientation to the park visitors during visits emphasizing on the inadequate teaching methodology as discussed earlier. A noteworthy percentage of survey participants feel that there should be more centers like MNP in Mumbai. This is supported by the

fact that a considerable number of people who took the survey experienced a change in them after visiting MNP. During an interview, Mr. Kubal stated that MNP has the potential of changing people's outlook not only towards the environment, but to life as well. Mumbai needs more centers like MNP. A few suggestions while setting up such centers would be to keep in mind that MNP is much more than just a garden. It is a result of natural selection over a period of many years. The trees planted should be those which can survive harsh conditions and help rejuvenate the land. Most trees in MNP exist as a result of natural propagation by insects, birds and mammals. The main idea of setting up a similar center should not be beautification, but to create a natural habitat within the city. Parks like MNP have the potential of changing the way people think. And changing people's thought process towards a better and secure future is what education and awareness are about. (Devyani et al, 2103)

*Origin of Research problems:*

Teaching to undergraduate level of Commerce is difficult, especially when there is less number of accessories and with limited supply of infrastructure. Moreover even if all such anthropogenic stuffs provided, the real understanding remains far behind. Due to lack of focus point the degree of concentration and churning of thought process even the subject like Environmental Studies seems to be dry.

*Rationale:*

From the observations for more than seven years, the need for analysis came in to picture. In order to explain the students about what is being taught and how does it look like. We planned for outing to Maharashtra Nature Park, Mumbai. Since the place was nearby and easily accessible.

*Objective:*

The objective was to study the outcome of the teaching about environment in the real world of the components of environment. The result of this learning method shall be noted by filling up feedback forms and verbal communication.

### *Methodology:*

On 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016 for one day a nature trail was organised by Dept. of Environmental Studies for students who are interested for the excursion. Out of 1200 students enrolled for first year B. Com level only 40 students participated. Even though the trail was open for all only few students (especially girls) with zeal took part. This constituted 3 % of the total, but all these participant students were benefitted 100 %.

The students were divided into three groups and were asked to follow the two staffs and one guide respectively. The students were asked to carry a note pad, binoculars and camera.

The students were told about the exotic and endemic species of the plants. Then information about insects, butterflies and birds were given.

The dependency of several birds and insects on single tree was shown for example by asking the students to stand close to trees of *Barringtonia racemosa* and observe each and every part of the tree and moment of birds visit.

### *RESULT & DISCUSSION:*

The students were asked to write the details which they got during the trail and express their views about the entire session. The following are the comprehensive report of what was submitted by the students as a result of feedback and one to one interaction during the trail.

- The subject Environmental Studies deals with learning of Environment and its aspects, the study tour helps the students to understand the significance of flora and fauna. Also the interdependency of these organisms.
- The trail also develops curiosity amongst students to know more about life of flora and fauna with respect to their economic importance, habit, habitat and ecological significance.

- During the session students develop more respect for their teachers because they understand that teachers are explaining more about facts and phenomenon by giving satisfactory answers to their questions, due to which they learn that teachers have experienced more than they expected also what they heard about something in the class is real. This idea was expressed by one of the student during feedback session.
- The students interact with teachers and they learn about them deeply about their work and understand caretaking attitude towards students. This helps students and teachers to deal with each other more friendly and develop conducive atmosphere for learning.
- The students learn how to work for the cause of protection of environment because idea develops in their mind seeing the beauty of flora and fauna.
- The students develop positive attitude about nature and people also feel like doing something for improving environment.

#### Conclusion:

The outcome of this trip was far more beneficial and beyond learning for us because with what intention it was planned, it offered too good experience. Also it worked with the concept of learning outcome through change in learning site from classroom to open space.

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