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GOVARDHAN ECO VILLAGE STUDY TOUR

A.Y.2025-26

REPORT

Some journeys are remembered not for the distance travelled, rather for the shift they bring within us. Our study tour on 12th and 13th September 2025, was a prime instance for this. On paper, it was an academic visit – understanding sustainability, rural development, even ecological practices. In reality, it became much more; an immersion into a way of living that balances tradition and modernity, devotion and discipline, simplicity and innovation.

On 12th September, at half past seven, our bus arrived at the college gate and we set off with sleepy faces that slowly transformed into cheerful ones as the road stretched on. What could have been a dull day, delayed journey, became instead a series of songs, dancing and the timeless conversations inspired by travel. We were impatient at once to reach, although as the conversations deepened the destination seemed less important than the journey itself. Thus, before we stepped foot inside the Eco village, we had already begun to experience what it meant to live differently – a readiness to take in whatever the road and days ahead of us had to offer.

We reached Govardhan Eco Village at 6.15Pm (approx.) and the journey had yet just begun. Though the hour was late, our coordinator; a woman with calm presence greeted us with the patience of someone who understood that schedules may falter, but experiences must not be lost. She assured us that what was missed on the first day, the next would give in fullness. Further, the evening was not wasted. We were handed the keys to our rooms, freshened up, we were led for a short tour of the Goshala. The cows were resting peacefully, instinctively leading for us to whisper and not disturb their stillness. There we learned that everyday the Goshala gathers nearly a ton of cow dung, of which about five to six hundred kilograms are turned into vermicompost. From there, we walked towards the Vermicompost shed. It was explained to us how red worms; working in darkness, discarded the matter into rich compost. The shed remained covered even in daylight, for these creatures thrive only in shadows. Dinner followed, it was made available to us in our respective rooms. We were aware that the next day would bring more learnings and adventures with peaceful spiritual experiences waiting for us.

The next morning began before sunrise. It was yet dark when a few among us, awake and fresh, attended the *aarti* at 4.30am at the Vrindavan Bihari Temple. At 5.15am, another *aarti* awaited us at the Madan Mohan Temple. By the time we reached Nandgaon at 5.45am for the Yagnya, it had already begun. The ceremony was unlike any other spiritual experience we might have had. By 7am, during the Shringar Darshan, the atmosphere had changed. The temple filled with

chants and this time the music was not something to listen to but something to dance along with. The *kirtan* of *Hare Krishna*, *Hare Rama* rose in waves, and many of us found ourselves dancing in joy – not rehearsed, not planned, but natural – a form of prayer. At 8.45am we began our Biodiversity Tour of Mini Vrindavan. This was no ordinary garden or exhibit, but a story carved at every corner of the pathway we walked (Parikrama). They had recreated here a mini-Vrindavan, complete with the **seven main temples**, each with its tale. We were told the curious story of a **watch that runs on heartbeats**; challenged long ago by a Scottish visitor, placed in the hands of an idol, and still ticking to this day. Walking further, we met not just statues but stories; Krishna's birth in prison, of Radha Kund – said to be the most beloved place of Krishna on earth – and of Radharani's jewellery, worn differently each day to signal Krishna where they were to meet. We clicked pictures, of course, but more than that we collected impressions.

The plants ought to have a specific mention, as they became a vital and consistent part of storytelling. We tasted the Insulin Plant, called a cure for so many ailments, and smelled the spice plants that released fragrances richer than any bottled perfume. The Bakul Tree was introduced to us as a weather forecaster; exactly 45 days later of its blossom, rain follows. The walk through Mini Vrindavan was not merely educational; it was enchanting.

Around 10.30 am we started our tour to visit the Goshala, Prem Sarovar, Animal Shelter, Birni Compost, Biogas Solar and Green Buildings. At the Goshala we could brush the cows and pet them. Before petting the cows, we did not miss our chance to see Ashwinikumar, the first horse they had over from Pune's Race Course. At the Prem Sarovar we learned that they had built it in a way where the pond would be natural and we were all amused to know that it took only 5 days of heavy rainfall to fill the entire 12-meter-deep pond. We were shown the process of making bricks. To mention these bricks were made of a mixture which consisted only 2% of cement and they were kept in the sunlight to dry instead of being burned. The green buildings were capable of adjusting the temperatures inside the rooms about 5 to 6 degrees Celsius. It increases during winter and decreases in summer.

At sharp 11 am we gathered at the Satsang Bhavan for a session by Caitanya Dasa, a speaker whose presence was both warm and commanding. What followed was not a lecture in the usual sense but an interaction that drew every one of us in. He spoke on the idea of *earned success*—the kind of fulfillment that comes not from shortcuts or mere recognition, but from effort, persistence, and the dignity of doing one's best. His words left us thoughtful even as we had a calming lunch, and at 4.30pm we departed from the Sustainable village, with hints of spiritual lessons and tons of memories.

In a nutshell, the tour to Govardhan Eco Village was not just a two-day academic trip, but an eye-opening journey into sustainable living, spiritual practices, and the harmony of tradition with innovation. It gave us knowledge that can be applied in classrooms and beyond, while also giving us experiences that touched the heart.

What began as a study visit ended as a memory the students will carry, one that shaped not just what we learned but how we felt, thought, and looked at the world around us.

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