

Educational visit to Kerala, Auroville and Learning Network (May 23 – June 4, 2018)

In the month of May this year, I went for two week-long educational tour covering rural Kerala, Auroville and Learning Network conference in Bangalore.

Experience of Kerala's Panchayat: The Director of Lok Chetna Samiti Varanasi, Dr. Niti Bhai, is a resident of the Wayanad Pulpalli district in Kerala. He invited me to his village. During my three-day visit to Kerala, I got a chance to see few things close like how the village of Kerala functions and how does the Panchayat system work there. There was not any discrimination in the freedom of the girls' education. I also got opportunity to visit some Panchayats and meet their Sarpanch (village head) and other officials working in the Panchayat to get information about the rights and functions of the Panchayat. Then I came to know that Kerala's Panchayat system is very strong and independent compared to Uttar Pradesh.

Auroville's experience: After that, I went to Auroville Ashram in Pondicherry for three days. Ex-president of Asha for Education, Sanjeev Ranganathan and his wife Anita are working for children at Isai Ambalm School. There I got a chance to watch various activities of the school and new experiments regarding education on children along with teachers. It is very nice to see Sanjeev Bhai's unique innovative ways of teaching mathematics and science to the children. Apart from this, I also went to some other groups in Auroville who are working with women and girls in making of sanitary pad and handicraft.

I also visited Aurobindo Ashram in Auroville accompanied by Anita. There I got an opportunity to understand the biography of Mataji and Arvind, his thoughts and philosophy. During the Auroville tour, I felt that it is very important for us to have a blend of humanistic education and modern education.

Participation in the Learning Network Conference in Bangalore: This year the Learning Network Conference was held from May 31 to June 2 at the Creative School of Bangalore. I participated in this conference and in different sessions during the workshop. There was some good information like how should be our education and how children could be taught different subjects in an interesting way. It was a great opportunity to see the activities of the creative school that was very good.

After the conference, meeting with Asha Bangalore chapter took place, where people shared information about their own work. We all shared our experiences on social work and discussed about future plans.

During my visit, I got an opportunity to meet senior members of Asha like Jaishree, Ashok Bhai, Sanjeev Bhai, Padmanabh ji, Rajiv, Ravi, Balaji, Anita Sister, Sirish etc. and discussed about the ongoing programs of Asha and future plans.

Overall, this educational tour was very informative, pleasant and nice.

- **Nandlal Master**