

NATURE CLUB / HIKING CLUB

REPORT for the academic year 2018 - 2019

Nature Club of SIWS College has always intended to enhance our understanding about the interactions between human beings and environment through its activities. To sensitize and mobilize student's participation for preservation and conservation of environment, Nature club organizes nature trails, hikes, nature walks, etc. to educate the students about nature's beauty, diversity and the necessity to conserve the treasures of natural resources that are around us.

Activities of this academic year kicked off with a trek to at Palasdhari. It is a mountain trek in Karjat range of Western Ghat. Palasdhari name is derived from "Palas" tree and "Dari" means "Vally" in local Marathi language. The whole area is surrounded by waterfalls and greenery during monsoon. 35 students of our college accompanied by 4 teachers participated in the trek.

The nature club of our college organized a one-day nature trail to Matheran, near Neral on January 25, 2019. The nature trail comprised of 48 students from various streams and was accompanied by 4 teachers including a lady teacher.

Located at an altitude of 2,635 feet above mean sea level is this tiny hill station named Matheran. It is arguably the most famous and most visited hill station near Mumbai. The name Matheran means either "forest on top" or "mother forest". Matheran is an eco-sensitive region, declared by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. It is one of the few places in the world where vehicles are not allowed, which makes the place different from others. Matheran takes you over a hundred years back in time when there were no vehicles. Because of vehicles being banned in Matheran, the place is quite peaceful despite the thousands of visitors coming to visit throughout the year. It is a well-known ecotourism spot and is known for adventure tourism too. It is a perfect get-a-way and stress buster for people living in chaos of Mumbai.

To give a fun and learn experience to students by simultaneously taking them close to nature, Matheran was decided to be the spot for nature trail this year. Several meetings were conducted with the students to convey do's and don'ts to them. A safety undertaking containing contact details was taken from all the participating students duly signed by their parents.

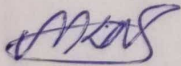
Early morning all the participating students reached Neral railway station by pre-decided train. There are several ways to reach Matheran from Neral, but we chose the fastest

one - by road. After completing the permission formalities, all the students trekked through the forest of Matheran. It was a pleasant experience to walk through the dense forest cover. Being a hill station, the town is full of monkeys who create nuisance of themselves. The students followed instructions of not feeding them or not to roam around with food as monkeys may try to snatch it.

The students enjoyed at the sightseeing points like Charlotte lake and nearby waterfall, gardens, echo point, one tree hill point, panorama point with the valley of Ulhas river at the bottom. The vada pav in Matheran along with thali and kokam juice was an addition to the charm of this pristine hill station.

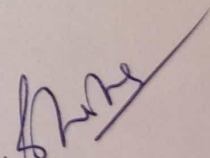
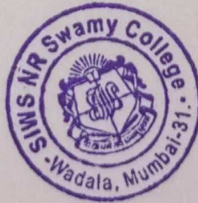
After completing this journey of few hours, all the students gathered at Matheran railway station to board a train. The students were surprised and equally enthusiastic to board in this hundred-year-old train. The Neral Matheran Light Railway, a brain child of the Late Honourable Mr. Abdul Hussein Adamjee Peerbhoy was duly constructed by his rare engineering skill from 1901-1907. The route is now excellently managed by Central railway division of Indian railways. Students enjoyed this heritage train ride. All of them returned home safely. All of them were determined to participate in more of such activities in upcoming years.

Date: February 18, 2019



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