

Report for JENESYS 2.0 Cultural Program University *Students from SAARC Countries*



Cultural exchange program was very much useful and fruitful for all guys, full of experiences and knowledge. It is not due to spending the days wherever we visited, but it is due to the fact also that we got the opportunity of meeting with the people of different races, ethnicities, cultures, nations, religions, talents, thoughts and natures. Though, this fact is there yet it can't be denied that one has to go through everything practically which helps one a lot in making and casting the on-ground analyses and descriptions. This is what the cultural exchange programs deliver to the visitors. Similarly, I have had the understanding and perception of the JENESYS2.0 Cultural Programs from SAARC Countries.

While I was, with all my other team members, water reclamation center, I have many reservations and different kinds of thoughts regarding the program. But, I was sure that it being the cultural exchange program would disclose the new parameters of different aspects the Japan, be it its culture, economy, politics, society, norms, mores, standard of living or social or industrial structure. I was true to my thinking as I could have the chance of observing all the aspects of Japan clearly.

It was 10th of June when our delegation reached Japan's Narita airport. Suddenly a change was felt as soon as I stepped down the airplane. Not only the people but even the environment, climate, cities, roads, streets, hotels, shops and restaurants were looking to be different. Culturally, Japan seemed to be more intact. The historical places are well-manneredly taken care by the Japanese people. Traditional houses were made of wood but class system was also observed as the well-to-do people have big and decorated houses while the less privileged have the houses less big and less decorated. The beauty lies in their well system of building the houses in the line-up style. Heritage is taken care properly but the people were seen having worn the western dresses or clothes rather their own cultural dresses which shows the western influence. The more dynamic activity was of making the "Indigo- Dying Experience" at Nihonminkaen. We prepared the handkerchiefs out of the white-colored pieces of cloths and converted it into the indigo color. The peculiarity of this color was told that if a person goes into the jungle wearing this color, the animals like snake do not sting as this color cannot be seen by the snake. Indigo color is more liked and preferred by the Japanese that the dress of their football team is of indigo color. Though their dress is westernized but their style of greetings is yet the cultural one. They meet or greet the guests with the nice style of bowing themselves with the palms of hands joined together. The hard work is largely imbedded in their culture.

Religiously, they believe in two gods: Bhudha and Asakusa. One is for life and the other is with the authority of causing death. They perform their religious prayers by going into temples and praying before the idol.

Japanese have, after a huge struggle, come out the feudalism and, now, they mostly have drifted to giving a prime value to the labor class. The rights of the labor class are values much and, this is why, the things are very much costly there. We visited to Shibaura Water Reclamation Center. The drainage or used water is recycled and purified there and it was the interesting part of the learning as for me. This showed Japan's far-sightedness and meeting with the need assessment; as, in future, the wars are said to be fought on the water rather than on the oil or such other resources plus Japan is a mountainous country which lacks the water facility. Therefore, Japan has depended on such projects to meet the needs. Pakistan can also learn from this as the clean water scarcity is going to be the emerging problem over here.

"Study tour of Disaster Prevention" was of good learning too. Mainly three types of learning were: Video Simulation of various Disasters, Earthquake experience, how darkness restricts the moment and how to cope with the noxious smoke. This showed the technological development of the Japanese people and their advancement in dealing with the threats and dangers. All of them the segments like "Earthquake experience, how darkness restricts the moment and how to cope with the noxious smoke" were new to me which I have started to share with my colleagues over here.

As were the university students, the best experience was of visiting Amanuma Elementary School which was based at Suginami Municipal. Mr. Harukazu Fukuda's warm welcome impressed me much. The building was clean and well-equipped with the cooperative staff. The classes were modernized where education is provided with liberal perspectives which also include the education of moral values just to mould the small minds into a good civic sense. I observed that the children, over there, are encouraged to study in their own native language rather than English. Finally, one of students from each delegation representing his/her country delivered the presentation on his/her educational and cultural facets.

On the whole and last but not least, it was a tour which I can never ever forget. I think such tours help one learn and teach others concerning the methods of how the countries have developed themselves. The bottom-line learning of the tour was, "Japan has taught me that the countries develop not from the nothingness but from the ashes like the Phoenix". Hopefully, our dear homeland would catch the cards of encouragement, toil, hard work, commitment and loyalty from the Japan and turn these characteristics into the garb of development and advancement.

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