

**EXPOSURE VISIT OF STUDENTS FROM THE FRANCIS PARKER SCHOOL,
SAN DIEGO, USA**

17th March 2018



**Organized by
The Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU)
and
Sangam, Bangalore**

**The Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU)
74/2, Jarakbande Kaval, Via Yelahanka, Attur P.O., Bangalore – 560064, Karnataka, India
Ph: 91 80 28568006**

Background

About TDU

The Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU) was established as an innovation centered University focused on designing and delivering research, outreach and education focused on social transformation aligned to emerging and futuristic needs. It inspires minds to design and execute socially impactful research, education and outreach programs in Integrative Health Sciences and other fields of knowledge. Also TDU provides uncommon opportunity to students and researchers to learn and undertake research in areas that correspond to its core strengths and that of its knowledge partners in fields such as conservation, life sciences, integrative health sciences, policy, education, bioinformatics, cinema, public health, ethno-veterinary science, information technology, art and design.

About Sangam

Sangam is an education group which runs study tours and education projects in India, managed in the UK by SEC. It runs educational projects which relate to India, and a residential study centre located in a semirural village close to the city of Bangalore in South India. Sangam therefore functions as a space where people from different cultures and backgrounds can meet, dialogue and learn from each other. Our backgrounds and interests mean that we are well placed to be able to help to interpret between cultures and facilitate respectful discussion. Much of the work we do here is creative in some way, and our location and background also has made it possible for us to share a body of ideas and information about India, facilitate learning programmes, and organize journeys of exploration. We are committed to enabling a safe, supported and authentic understanding of our locality through experiential and participatory activities which encourage and enable enquiry based, questioning pedagogies.

About Francis Parker School, San Diego, USA

Francis Parker School is committed to graduating students who embody those qualities essential for academic success and personal fulfillment — intellectual curiosity, creative thinking, passion for learning, ethical responsibility, self-reliance, community engagement, and global competence — by offering a balanced, challenging and integrated Junior Kindergarten - Grade 12 educational program in academics, athletics and the arts, all in a vibrant and diverse school community.

Sessions:

The Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU) had a group of visitors comprised of teachers and students from the Francis Parker School, San Diego, on the 17th of March 2018. They were interested in understanding the relevance of Local Health Traditions in the contemporary world.

YATHRA (A JOURNEY OF INDIAN TRADITION)

Session 1: Introduction to Local Health Traditions:

Dr M. Abdul Kareem, Associate Professor at TDU informed that two streams of knowledge flows viz, codified and non-codified systems of medicine. While the codified system comprise Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy, which are well documented, the non-codified stream comprises collective knowledge, practices and beliefs of communities in relation to health that are culture and region specific and is an oral tradition. Dr Kareem mentioned that about 80% of India's population depend on the traditional systems of medicine for managing their primary health issues practiced by folk healers and knowledgeable women, who have acquired the traditional knowledge from their forefathers. This is termed as Local Health Traditions (LHT). In the advent of the modern medical practices, such traditions have remained dormant.



Session 2: Devarakadu (Tradition of Conservation practices)

Dr. Chetan, Assistant Professor, informed that India has the richest biodiversity among the developing countries. One of the reasons for this can be attributed to conservation of flora and fauna in the form of sacred groves or Devarakadu. It was part of the traditional practice to declare a particular forest as sacred grove, the one where God lives so that people would fear to tread the forest let alone destroy it. It is also true that many animals and birds attained importance as they were cited as godly in Hindu mythological scriptures and ensured their

protection in wild. Today, one will find many rare, endangered and threatened species in these sacred groves that are part of the larger ecosystem. The local communities have documented the bio-resources and vowed to protect them since they are also a cultural identity for them. There is a need to have an inventory of such sacred groves across the country.



Session 3: Preservation of Manuscripts:

There is no second opinion about preservation of manuscripts for posterity. Dr Abdul Kareem, explained about the work that is underway at the TDU for deciphering and digitisation of medical manuscripts. The texts are translated from Sanskrit to English and brought out in a book format as well.



Session 4: Vriksha Kathe (folk story of a tree):

Storytelling was done by Mr. Nishanth Gurav, a student of master's program in Conservation Future at the University, wherein he performed a folk story that dwelt on the uses of peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). The peepal tree was used as a metaphor to describe the universe as it were and highlight the bounty that it offers.



Session 5: Dhvani (Cultural Program)

Mr. Nishanth Gurav, followed it up with a folk song called "lokada Kalaji" written by Shishunala Sharif. He used `damaru` a traditional musical instrument, to the amazement of the audience to understand the Indian tradition in terms of music.



Concluding remarks

Shri, Darshan Shankar, Vice- Chancellor, in his concluding remarks elaborated on the vision of TDU and the University health care centre. He opined that many programs have been conceived in the past to revitalise India's health traditions that are prevalent even today in various pockets of the country. The group was treated to traditional south Indian delicacies.



List of Faculty

1. Dr. Abdul Kareem, Associate Professor, TDU
2. Dr. Chetan, Assistant Professor. TDU
3. Nishanth Gurav, Student, TDU
4. Catherine Barnes, Francis Parker School, San Diego, USA
5. Annie Sawyer , Francis Parker School, San Diego, USA
6. Steve Cook , Francis Parker School, San Diego, USA
7. Roshan Sahi, Sangam, Bangalore

List of Students

1. Anna Stanton
2. Brianna Whalen
3. Claire Struyk
4. Gabi Levitt
5. Gabi Elle Whit
6. Gia Marino
7. Julia Lafferty
8. Maria Burritt
9. Olivia Dangelo