

# In the outdoors

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Who doesn't like to see sun rays passing through a dew drop on the leaf?

Who doesn't like to run after a butterfly in the garden?

Who doesn't like to play with a calf or kid in a village?

Who doesn't like to bathe in a river?

Who doesn't like to travel by a bullock cart?

*How much scope does our curriculum give our students to have these experiences?*

I am waiting for the day I am to travel by the Coromandel Express, which runs between Chennai and Howrah. It suddenly dawned on me as to why this train is called so. The coast along which this train runs is called the Coromandel Coast and in the same way the coast on the other side of our country is called the Konkan Coast. I came to know the trains first and then the significance of their names.

Taking students on an adventure camp to Pachmarhi in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh gives them an opportunity to spend time in the lap of the Vindhya ranges. The Vindhya and Satpura ranges have reference in the Ramayana. Travelling to Ranakpur in Rajasthan helps us come closer to the Aravali ranges. The birth of Kerala is associated with Lord Parasuram in Indian Heritage. Sri Lanka is part of the Ramayana and Dwaraka in Gujarat is the Yadava Kingdom of Lord Krishna in Mahabharat. The list is endless.

The best way to make young students find geography interesting is to establish a connection between present day sites and situations with the rich cultural heritage of India. It is best to have a dedicated place in the school with the map of India painted on the floor. In the case of the senior students, they should be taught to draw the maps using the concept of representative fraction. Teachers have to carry a globe to class regularly. Map pointing too should be a part of the teaching-learning process.

While teaching agriculture in senior classes, it is advisable that students take up project work in a nearby village. Let the students be a part of the team of farmers and learn how the field is ploughed, seeds are sown, irrigation is done, the weeding process, supply of manure to the crop, harvest, etc. Let them realize the difference in the taste of a ripened mango directly plucked from a tree to that which is available in supermarkets.

With the advancement of technology, it is not difficult for teachers to discuss about various flora and fauna through youtube videos from Animal Planet and National Geographic channels.

The concept of monsoons can be best taught by organizing a visit to the nearest meteorological station. If possible a mini meteorological station can be installed in the school, where students can be encouraged daily to go there

and take the readings of both the minimum and maximum temperature. At the end of each month, they can study the variation in the temperatures.

When it comes to oceans, at least they should spend some time on the beaches of Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean. This is possible through excursions. These trips should be planned on special days like Purnima or Amavasya to experience high or low tide.

Travelling across the country to various places of importance is one way to know about the climate, customs and traditions of various places in India. They should be given the first hand experience of crossing a river by boat, staying in a tent in a forest, hear the roars of wild animals and chirping of birds early in the morning.

Every teacher of geography has to be passionate enough to explore the resources available and be able to bring them to the experience of the students. I strongly believe that the closer we bring our students to nature the more sensitive they become and it helps them value the natural resources provided by Mother Nature.

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