



## **Brief Report on Educational Tour of Students of Integral Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology (IIAST), Integral University, Lucknow to Chandigarh, Kullu and Manali from 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025**

Educational tours are an integral component of the ICAR curriculum, designed to provide students with hands-on exposure to real-world agricultural practices, innovative technologies and regional agricultural diversity. Such visits enhance practical learning and help develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills among agriculture students. These tours offer networking opportunities with professionals, researchers and experts, laying the foundation for future collaborations and career opportunities. In accordance with this, the Department of Agriculture, Integral Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology, Integral University, Lucknow, organized a tour for the students of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture 3<sup>rd</sup> Year to Chandigarh, Kullu and Manali from 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025. The tour was observed under the guidance of Prof. Mohd Haris Siddiqui, Director, Integral Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology and Prof. Saba Siddiqui, Head, Department of Agriculture, IIAST. The faculty coordinators Dr. Usman Sayeed, Mr. Nadeem Khan, Dr. Akanksha Singh, Dr. Ruquaiya Bano and Dr. Nitish Kumar along with supporting staff Mr. Sandeep, Mr. Said, Mr. Suraj Awasthi and Mr. Rajendra Maurya accompanied the students on the tour ensuring a seamless and enriching experience for the students.

The students visited ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Chandigarh and gained in-depth knowledge about sustainable soil and water management practices. The visit commenced with an informative session introducing students to the mission, vision, and ongoing research activities of ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Chandigarh. Dr. R. Prasad, Principal Scientist (Horticulture), ICAR- IISWC explained the students about advanced soil conservation techniques, watershed management methods and erosion control measures. Students learned about innovative research in climate-resilient agriculture and its application to ensure long-term agricultural productivity. Students were also given an insightful guided tour of the farms at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Chandigarh, by Shri S.K. Yadav, Assistant Chief Technical Officer. He explained the cultivation practices of various crops, including mustard, and highlighted their adaptability to saline soils. Students learned about innovative farming techniques used in saline regions, such as salt-tolerant crop varieties, soil amendments, and efficient water management practices. Shri Yadav also demonstrated methods for improving soil fertility and reducing salinity through organic and mechanical interventions. The tour deepened their understanding of sustainable agricultural practices in challenging environmental conditions.



The students also visited Sukhna Lake and Rock Garden in Chandigarh, where they observed the role of Sukhna Lake as an urban ecological hotspot supporting biodiversity and providing recreational space. At the Rock Garden, they were inspired by its unique artwork and sculptures crafted from industrial and household waste, emphasizing the value of resourcefulness and creativity. The tour offered a unique blend of technological, environmental and geographical learning, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in executing large-scale infrastructure projects in challenging terrains. Students also traversed local farms in the Manali region and gaining hands-on experience in agricultural activities amid hilly terrains. The students explored the local market, gaining insights into the marketing and trade of locally produced agricultural products, including handicrafts and organic food items. At Solang Valley, they observed how tourism supports the regional economy and learned about the interplay between agriculture and allied sectors in promoting sustainable livelihoods in hilly terrains.

In Kullu, the students visited a shawl factory “Shree Sai Shawl Factory Outlet” where they observed the traditional process of shawl weaving, blending modern techniques with cultural heritage. They learned how the local wool industry supports rural livelihoods and entrepreneurship. During their camp stay in Kullu, students engaged in discussions on high-altitude farming practices, understanding the challenges of cultivating crops in mountainous regions. They discussed about innovative farming methods suited to such terrains. This immersive experience enriched their knowledge of agro-ecology and community-driven farming techniques.

The tour provided students with a holistic understanding of soil and water conservation, regional agricultural practices, local marketing strategies, and the socio-economic dynamics of hill agriculture. It fostered their appreciation for cultural diversity, sustainable tourism, and community-based resource management. This exposure to different aspects of agriculture and rural development will contribute significantly to their academic and professional growth.

### **Glimpses of the tour**





