

Reaching your Roots – Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Reaching your Roots is a 2 week cultural tour programme by Government of Tamil Nādu for Tamil Diaspora Youth to help reconnect the present with the past and establish the umbilical link between generations. The programme envisages to generate curiosity and pride about their glorious cultural heritage by taking them through a guided tour of architectural and archaeological marvels of ancient Tamil Nādu. Further it will also showcase the various facets of Tamil history that includes visual and performing arts forms like dance, martial arts etc. The programme also will have a component for the youth to interact with the leaders and scholars of various fields. At the same time, the programme envisages to introduce them to modern Tamil Nādu and help them develop closer bonds with their heritage.

BACKGROUND

The Commissionerate for Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non Resident Tamils was established in the year 2010 and an Act specially for the Welfare of Non – Resident Tamils was also enacted in March 2011. The reason was due to the fact that due to globalization of the economy, the number of people going abroad has increased. For more than 40 years, many Tamils have gone to various countries for work. Many of them are not citizens of those countries and often they leave their families in Tamil Nadu when going abroad. Therefore, it was pertinent to ensure that their welfare needs are taken care of. Keeping that in mind, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil

Nādu , has ensured the effective implementation of the Act by establishing the Non Resident Tamils Welfare Board and has also announced various welfare schemes. The department has also been reoriented with special focus on Non-Resident Tamil welfare with a separate Minister for the Department.

At the same apart from the recent migrations , historically, the Tamils from Sangam period itself had migrated to East Asian countries at various times through ports like Poompookar, Korkai, Musiri, Cauverypatnam for trade and to protect the trade routes due to invasion. This migration continues till date wherein Tamils continue to go abroad for economic reasons. Also, in the 18th and 19th centuries, they were instances of forceful migration when they were sent by the British to East Asian countries for plantation work. These Tamils who had gone to foreign countries, have settled there by obtaining citizenship and have been living there with their families for many generations. They have not only improved the economy of those countries but also contributed to the development of their culture with some of them having established themselves in high positions. But at the same time, there are several instances when the young Tamil Diaspora have lost their ancestral linkage and although they are Tamils, they are living without any connection to their roots in Tamil Nadu. In order to bridge this, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has announced during the Tamil Diaspora Day celebrations on January 12 , 2023 that a scheme will be initiated for a cultural tour for the young Tamil Diaspora to ensure that they are always connected to their rich cultural heritage.

SCHEME

1. Reaching your Roots is for the Diaspora youth between the age of 18-30 years.
2. The applicant should be a second generation emigrant (he/she should be born outside India) or the family has been living in the foreign country for more than 50 years.
3. Preference would be given to the applicant who is a first-time visitor to India.
4. Every year 200 participants will be selected worldwide and it would be planned as five groups of 40 members each visiting Tamil Nādu.
5. The applicant may also indicate their preference for the month during which they would like to participate in the tour.
6. The participants can be also be grouped into 19 students and a coordinator if they are coming from a particular country/university.
7. Duration of each tour will be of 15 days including day of arrival and departure.
8. The total cost of international airfare will be borne by the government including the visa charges.
9. Local hospitality including hotel accommodation on twin sharing basis, all meals and local transportation will be provided by the government.

10. The Government will take care of participants only for the duration of the program. If participants wish to stay extra, they will have to make their own arrangements.
11. All participants should provide a medical fitness certificate.
12. International travel and medical insurance will be taken for all the participants. Any other add-ons or specific insurance should be borne by the participant.
13. The participants will be termed as” cultural ambassadors” and will be required to share the knowledge gained by way of a report which will be published subsequently.

ZONE WISE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Based on the proportion of Tamil population who have migrated to the foreign countries , the following tentative number is allocated for the 200 students.

Sl. No	Zone	Number of participants
A	South East Asia & East Asia	80
B	African continent	20
C	Australia and Oceania	40
D	American continents	20
E	Europe and middle Eastern countries	40

	Total	200
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The allocation is made tentatively and can be modified subject to applications received worldwide.

Tour Itinerary:

In this two-week tour program, the itinerary will be made in such a manner that the participants will be taken to any of the following ancient and cultural destinations of Tamil Nadu:

1) Places showcasing Architecture / Sculpture

- a) Mahabalipuram
- b) Thanjavur – Thanjavur Big Temple, Thanjavur Palace
- c) Madurai- Meenakshi Amman Temple
- d) Tirunelveli- Nellaiappar temple
- e) Gingee Fort
- f) Thiruvannamalai Temple
- g) Vellore Fort
- h) Tharangambadi Fort

l) Karaikudi Chettinad Palace

j) Gangaikonda cholapuram

k) Kanchipuram temples

2) Engineering Marvels- Ancient Water Management

a) Kallanai- Trichy

b) Veeranam Lake- Cuddalore

c)Kalingarayan Dam-Erodu

d) Poombukar-Nagapattinam

U) Tuticorin – V.U.C. port

3) Places showcasing the Clothing and ornaments

a) Kanchipuram

b) Erode

c) Tirubhuvanam

c) Tirupur

4) Places showcasing various art forms

a) Madurai

b) Thanjavur

c) Chidambaram

d) Mahabalipuram

U) Gudimiyan hill

f) Siddhanavasal

5) Places showcasing the Archaeological Surveys

a) Keeladi

b) Arikhamedu

c) Tiruvallur

d) Adhicha Nallur and other places

Apart from the guided tour of cultural locations, the participants will also have the opportunity to interact with eminent Leaders and scholars in the cultural field. Also short workshops on various dance/music and martial art forms will also be planned for them to gain first-hand knowledge of their rich cultural heritage.

MODALITIES OF SELECTION

- 1) The applicant should first register themselves through an Online portal in www.nrtamils.gov.in.
- 2) They will be selected based on their proof of connection to their roots in Tamil Nadu, through PIO/OCI cards or any other documents of their parents or ancestors to prove their connection.

- 3) In case this is not available, they may justify their connection by providing necessary details in the declaration annexed and decision of the office of the Commissioner for welfare of Non Resident Tamil, Government of Tamil Nadu will be final in this regard.
- 4) Minimum qualification required for participating is junior graduate/ diploma holders /graduation from a recognized University /Institute/ Polytechnic or enrolled in the same.
- 5) The applicants should be able to speak in English / should have studied English as a subject at the High School level if they are not able to converse in Tamil.
- 6) The participant should be between the age group of 18-30 years.
- 7) The selection will be on 'first come first serve basis 'of all eligible applicants.

CONCLUSION

The programme through guided cultural tour will help the Tamils world wide to strengthen their bond with their roots and kindle their interest in seeking knowledge and understanding of their rich cultural heritage.