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## ABSTRACT

This report addresses the effectiveness of the Fulbright program in India in 1996 from the participant's perspective. A detailed outline of pre-trip preparations, on-site experiences and post-trip expectations are described with suggestions made for further improvement.  
(EH)

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# Evaluation of the India Program —1996

by

Robin Weaver

A Curriculum Project Developed During the 1996  
Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad Program: India Seminar

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## **EVALUATION of the INDIA PROGRAM - 1996**

### **A. Before the start of the India Program**

1. I received the information in May and would have preferred it earlier; however, this past year was unusual due to the U.S. government shut down in the winter - every aspect of the pre-seminar Fulbright Program was delayed.
2. The orientation booklets were very helpful. It was wonderful to have the specific information about clothing, supplies, mail, etc. Attached please find the results of a survey I sent to 1995 Seminar in India participants; I sent the results to the participants of the 1996 group before leaving for India. In particular, the section on the gifts to bring was most helpful and might be an addition for USEFI to include in pre-seminar material sent to participants.
3. The Claridge's Hotel is wonderful for our "home base" - it is well located, the staff is supportive of the USEFI Teachers' Group, the choice of restaurants is fine (I ate most of my meals very happily in Dhaba), and the rooms were large and comfortable. The bookstore in the hotel is excellent - and they were able to order any book mentioned in a lecture and have it for us the following day. Transportation to/from Fulbright House was excellent - bus was always on time, air-conditioned and comfortable.
4. Other suggestions: At the briefing on the first day at the Claridges - consider giving us a packet of information about Delhi (brochures from the Tourism Office - maps, historic sites, taxi rates, etc.). Also consider offering for purchase by participants - the comic books (Ramayana, Mahabarata, etc. - for those who have not read the originals...) - may sound silly for Fulbright Scholars to read comics - but they were well done and were good background for those who may not have had experience earlier with the various Hindu gods, myths and legends.

### **B. Academic Program**

#### **(i) Lectures**

1. The lectures arranged by the Center for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) and the regional offices were excellent!! The information was vast, specific and insightful. All of the lecturers were well prepared and stimulating. Lectures went smoothly and for the most part, they were long enough. As I arrived knowing very little about India other than what I had read just prior to arriving, I now have a tremendous resource bank of information which I will be able to use as I share my experiences in the U.S. The schedule of lectures was demanding and rigorous - we were totally immersed in information gathering; time to reflect was not provided - our processing and reflection will be done now that the seminar is over.

2. In my opinion, the following topics/speakers were particularly informative (in chronological order):

- India and British Legacy - Dr. Narayani Gupta (positive yet specific);
- Law and Social Justice - Dr. Mool Chand Sharma (broad understanding of constitutional law in both U.S. and India);
- Grassroots Democracy - T.N. Seshan (very charismatic speaker - a wonderful experience for us);
- India - the Land and Its People - Dr. Anu Kapoor (I could have listened to her all day - she had broad knowledge of the political, social and cultural challenges throughout Indian history);
- Caste and Class in Indian Society - Prof. Dipankar Gupta (he helped me see caste from the India perspective rather than an American perspective);
- Introduction to the Visual Arts - Dr. Shobita Punja (particularly her discussion at the National Museum - I also bought and loved reading her book);
- Environmental Conservation Issues - Mr. Bittu Sehgal (particularly helpful for elementary/middle school students - and he is available through email); and
- Indo-U.S. Relations - Dr. Surjeet Mansingh (brilliant speaker and very provocative).

3. I suggest that additional time be given to the following: religious minorities; the Hindu/Muslim relationship and challenges; women in India (give the panel the entire morning); and (if possible) personal perspectives from the "backward classes" or more information on caste/class (we had an excellent introduction with Prof. Gupta but caste/class is so pervasive in Indian life).

4. The format (lecture/discussion) was effective as the lecturers were all experts in their fields and passionate about their work. The lecturers were comfortable in responding to questions from us which, at times, were provocative. I suggest that the panel format be used for the broader topics such as women in India and religious minorities; and when there is a panel scheduled, give enough time for (half day minimum).

5. Lecture outlines and bibliographies were not given routinely. However, each lecturer "spoke" in outline form (with the exception of T.N. Seshan - who needed no outline). And as titles of books were mentioned, we took down notes. One member of our group kept a running list of books mentioned in lectures and copied it for all of us at the end. The lecturers should be encouraged to use the blackboard frequently - particularly in the first two weeks when our understanding of the Indian/English was not fully developed.

(ii) Field Trips - scheduled by USEFI

a) Visit to City Monuments with Mr. Joshi was excellent - we covered a lot of ground, learned a great deal and were able to get a feel for the city of Delhi. Mr. Joshi was very knowledgeable about the sites we visited. It would have been helpful to have a city map (from the Tourism Office??) of Delhi. Consider adding the Red Fort to the schedule.

b) Crafts of India - too broad a topic to be covered adequately in a few hours. Consider offering mini-sessions based on individual interests (textiles, miniatures, mosaics and enamels, pottery...). Participants could select one craft to research/explore and then come back to the total group for a group sharing.

c) India International Dance Center - wonderful experience watching a dancer and her teacher/musician demonstrate the Odissi classical dance form. As the dancer had been a CCRT student we had the opportunity to speak with her after the performance.

d) Multimedia performance of the Ramayana - evening Odissi dance performance - I wasn't as well prepared as others in my group as I was not as familiar with the Ramayana story and characters.

Field Trips - scheduled individually or suggested for future groups

e) CCRT - I spent a fabulous afternoon with Dr. Puri and Mr. Joshi at CCRT. There was a dance demonstration for about 70 secondary teachers from all over India. The demonstration (all in English) was informative and applicable to classroom adaptation. The opportunity to meet teachers was wonderful. Dr. Puri's vision and Mr. Joshi's implementation of the cultural arts in education is motivating - and I suggest that a visit to CCRT be added to the field trips.

f) Gallery of Modern Art - excellent collection of artists from the 19th and 20th centuries (Tagore brothers, Gose, Roy, etc.) - the collection is well displayed, organized and well lit. I recommend that the Gallery be described for participants and told that it is very close to the Claridge's Hotel and India Gate (by three-wheeler). I visited the Gallery on a Sunday - and there were several groups of art students with their teachers - and I had the opportunity to meet more teachers and students.

g) R. K. K. Gyan Mandir School - Government school (grades 1-8) behind the Claridge's Hotel - Principal: Aruna Pathak. I made 4 visits to the school - one with Bharathi who helped me to interview two students for my project. The school is a Hindi medium school but the students are learning English and the teachers all speak English. The principal speaks English very well.

h) Fabindia (14 'N' Block Market, Greater Kailash - I - 645-2183) - This is a fabulous clothing store for American men and women to purchase clothing for the travel phase of the program and for bringing back to the US. The fabrics, sizes, and selection were the best we found - and the sales people were terrific. I am sorry I did not get there until the very end of the trip. An optional "field trip" with the USEFI bus before the travel phase would be a great addition.

(iii) Audio Visual Aids

a) Offer for participants to purchase from USEFI - the Road Guide To India map - readily available and only 35 rupees as a reference tool for the academic period - a notebook size map of India would also be helpful.

b) Consider a larger, more stable blackboard and plenty of chalk and erasers.

c) The slides shown by Dr. Puri and Dr. Punja were very helpful; consider showing a selection of the CCRT slide sets on the day that participants are reviewing the teaching aids for possible purchase.

(iv) Cultural Events (see above - Field Trips - c, d) - The Ramayana performance was particularly instructive - I suggest that an abbreviated Ramayana be required reading in the first week of the academic program... to help with much of the cultural experiences we had throughout the program.

### C. Travel Phase

During our program, there were questions from the USEFI staff about our recommendations on the number of cities traveled - was it too many? I feel strongly that as many cities as possible should be included in approximately the same duration for each city (2-4 days). Although the travel phase was rigorous, we came away from India with a sense of the differences and similarities within the nation - as a nation. It is one thing in New Delhi to hear that there are 15 (a few people said 18) national languages - it is much more powerful to really experience those language differences by traveling to several different states. We were able to begin to understand the challenges of the nation by seeing the different ways that states handled complicated issues; and yet there is a clear and undeniable connection among and between the Indians we met whether it was in the south or in the north or whether it was in a company (Godrej) community or in the center for street children in Madras. Yes, the days were long and filled with information and experiences - but I wouldn't have traded that experience for another where Fulbrighters went to fewer cities and stayed for a longer period in each city.

1. From an academic point of view the best planned were the cities where there are regional offices (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras) or a strong Fulbright connection (Varanasi). Having the support of the regional staff was extremely helpful. And in all 3 cities, we were scheduled for lectures with experts (as we had been in Delhi), which greatly extended the information given us by the local government of India Tourism Department.

Specific academic highlights:

a) Varanasi: The meetings with the Swami and the Maharaja were incredible experiences. And meeting Mother Teresa in Calcutta was a "once in a lifetime" experience. I know you can never count on meeting such important people - but we wouldn't have met them without the help of the Fulbright connections.

b) Calcutta: Seeing the dance drama, Tasher Desh by R. Tagore, was incredible. And I don't believe we would have had that experience without Uma Das Gupta's connection. She also arranged for us to see the documentary film by Satyajit Ray on R. Tagore - and then she also gave our group a copy of the video which we can share in our various communities in the U.S.

c) Bombay: The afternoon session at SNDT Women's University was an excellent opportunity for us to meet educators and to exchange ideas. **Recommendation:** shorten the formal "dialogue" (at the long tables with microphones) and lengthen the informal conversation period. (The session at SIET in Orissa was also very formal - and there was very little time for getting to know the professionals there in an informal way.)

d) Madras: Visiting SEEDS - was fascinating! and I also really enjoyed the morning with Professor Veena at the music school - not only for the music but to see how a musical "master" works with his students.

e) There were 2 tour guides (non-Fulbright staff) who were outstanding: Ms. Sequira (Bombay) and Sunithi Narayan (Madras) - if you can use them in the future - do. Both women were articulate and extremely knowledgeable.

Another academic highlight on the informal level:

Our trips to Jaipur and Agra were wonderful - not only because we had an elephant ride (I wouldn't have missed that for the world) and we visited the Taj - but more importantly because we got to know the USEFI staff on an individual and personal basis. Getting to know individuals over time (a long weekend) made a major impact on my understanding of the Indian "ethos" - all the USEFI staff who travelled with us opened their minds, hearts and lives to us.

They answered all our questions about the most personal topics in a frank and open manner. And one of the staff had family connections in Agra which made it possible for us to spend a few hours in a small village community where we actually went into homes, saw the Panchyat (up close), pumped water from a well and had the chance to meet a few people who we might never have had the chance to meet had we not been with Fulbright staff person.

2. Possible omissions and additions or modifications :

a) Modify the Orissa section:

- The day trip to Puri was terrific - beautiful country, very interesting stops (Asoka's tablets, Konark and the Jagannath Temple), and wonderful opportunity to walk along the beach.
- Consider the overnight stay at Puri and the travel back to the airport the 2nd day. Taking the city tour of Bhubaneswar (so many temples) and the trip to SIET (with such a formal presentation and no chance to really get to know the professionals there) were not as valuable as the time driving to and from Puri.

b) Calcutta:

- Omit Tollygunj Club.
- Be sure to include the Indian Museum (I walked to it by chance from the hotel - it is only a few blocks) and it has a great gallery which shows how Indians have used herbs and plants as income producers (indigo, cotton, hemp, etc. - in addition to medicinal uses for plants).

c) Cochin:

- Omit Chinmaya Ashram.
- Consider extending the stay in Cochin by one day. I enjoyed Cochin/Kerala a great deal; it is one of the places where I would like to teach - or at least re-visit. However, our days in Cochin were highly programmed.... and the setting was beautiful. It would be a great place to put a "rest day."
- Extend the time at Chinmaya Vidyalaya - that was a great spot! We could easily have spent the entire day there visiting classrooms, meeting students and teachers and observing the learning process in a public school.

d) Other possible additions:

- a day (or half day) in a government school;
- visits arranged for small groups or individuals to visit Indian homes;
- other visits to small villages or rural communities.

3a) Usefulness of travel phase: The USEFI staff has had much experience in designing and refining the entire Fulbright Teachers/India program. The balance between the academic and travel phase is very effective. The short, first travel experience to Jaipur and Agra was a great way for us to "get our feet wet" and to practice and apply some of our academic learning. As stated above, I do not recommend shortening the travel phase, nor reducing the number of cities.

3b) Problems - The travel phase days were very long and often highly scheduled. I recommend that every other day or every third day that there be a morning or afternoon with optional activities from which to select - including individual pursuits. (One does not need these "optional" activities in each city - just occasionally.) Even though our group was only 14 - we had different backgrounds and needs. For example, some of the group were interested in shopping and some of us were not as interested in shopping; some enjoy going to museums and some people do not enjoy museums. The tour bus may not be necessary each day (save some money?); Fulbrighters could be told of 2-3 places of interest and we could make our own way

there. Or the bus could pick up the group at the hotel, drop small groups off at two or three different places, and the Fulbrighters could make their own way back to the hotels for lunch.

#### D. Knowledge and Material Acquired in India

1. The program designed by USEFI is outstanding! I am embarrassed to say that before my acceptance as a Fulbrighter in India, I knew very little about India. Indian culture and contributions are not featured in our American educational programs, in our newspapers or in our experience in general. I vaguely knew that not all Indians spoke Hindi - but I had NO idea that there were so many language groups. Beginning the program with lectures in Delhi was extremely helpful in setting the context for our entire experience. We were never made to feel that our background was inadequate; all the experts were patient with our ignorance and receptive to our questions. As we learned more and more about Indian civilization, we were also collecting materials to bring back to the U.S. with us to use with our communities. And we were introduced to Indian writers (both historical and contemporary) - many of whom I had never heard; my reading list has been vastly enhanced and expanded.

2. Currently in Montgomery County Public Schools students are exposed to information about India only in grade 7. A unit on Indian Civilization (an historical survey) is a part of the grade 7 World History course. The unit was developed 4-5 years ago when two Montgomery County Public School teachers participated in the Fulbright Seminar in India.

3. I plan to review the current course with the system-wide coordinator in social studies based on my experience this summer to assess whether or not there are needed modifications, additions, deletions. However, I am appalled that teaching about India is only formally found at one grade level.

4. As I am involved in elementary schools (pre-school through grade 5 or 6), I hope to develop several mini-units for use in grades 3-5. The mini-units will be developed by integrating information and material suggestions with current curricular expectations. The mini-units will be made available through our electronic mail system for all to review and select.

5. Other aspects of utilization:

- I hope to establish links (either through the internet or with the regular mail system) between teachers and students in my school with teachers and/or students in India. I intend to contact both the principals at the Godrej (Bombay) and Chinmaya (Cochin) Schools for this purpose.
- I hope to extend my influence beyond the school by sharing what I learned with the community. The citizens of Montgomery County are highly literate and I expect there will be a great deal of interest from civic groups wanting slide presentations and discussions.

6. The materials from CCRT are excellent and I plan to schedule opportunities for the school librarians (who are responsible for purchasing materials) to come to my school to review the CCRT slides and packets. If others wish to purchase the materials, I will forward the orders through USEFI and hopefully the materials can be supplied.

## **E. General**

1a. Adequacies: The program was outstanding! I have made comments above about the program design aspects which I found most helpful, however there are a few additional comments I wish to make:

- The USEFI staff was extremely helpful at all times. It is not easy to be away from loved ones for 40 days and USEFI staff facilitated (for a reasonable cost) faxing from Delhi to our homes. A couple of people also used the USEFI email.
- The USEFI staff was also very helpful in suggesting where we should purchase books (Khan Market) and hard to find materials (such as the Indian flag). On occasion, USEFI staff actually purchased items for us when it would have been a challenge for us. For example, I am grateful for O.P.'s help in purchasing 150 pan masala packets which I want to give to my staff and students after a presentation.
- The USEFI staff was also very helpful in providing interpreting help. For example, Bharathi went with me to a government school and helped me interview two students - I could not have managed nearly as well without her help.
- The USEFI staff were a great help for those who wanted to extend their stay (assisting with travel agents) and for those who wanted to ship items purchased in India back to the U.S.

The USEFI staff was always willing to help us with our individual needs and they were also very good "problem solvers" - I can not tell you how much I appreciated how well organized and supportive the USEFI staff is.

1b. Inadequacies: NONE!! I have listed above some minor program modifications but overall there was no component of the program which I found lacking. I do wish there were a few more concrete ways we can use to keep "connected" with USEFI staff and the Fulbright Teachers in our group upon our return to the U.S. However, I do understand the challenge.

2. Helpful People: All USEFI staff and Mr. G. C. Joshi!!

- Also see: B(i)2
- Amil Das Gupta was a superior resource person. His English was impeccable and having been a student in the U.S. he was able to be an excellent liaison for us in Calcutta. You may be able to find other Indians who are students in the U.S. universities who return to India for the months of July and August and who may be able to serve as resource people.

3a. Free time:

- During the academic time the "free time" was well scheduled.
- During travel phase: see C2 and C3 (particularly C3b).
- In both the academic and travel phases, consider providing teachers with optional activities (one of which would be "individual pursuits") to which 2-3 people or small groups could attend.
- Use the model which evolved on the afternoon of Friday, July 19 as a possible scheduling method for at least 1 (possibly 2) half days EACH week. On July 19 (in the afternoon), several different options were available: some went shopping, some went to the music school and I went to CCRT to observe the teacher training program. Give 2-4 options from which to select. And consider reconvening the Fulbrighters at 1500 to share what each group did and learned.

3b. How I used my "free time:"

- Delhi: CCRT, Gallery of Modern Art, R. K. K. Gyan Mandir School, Gandhi's Smirti (2 blocks from Claridge's), Red Fort, India Gate, Parliament and Governor's House
- Jaipur - twilight walk through market area
- Calcutta - Indian Museum (our group did have the opportunity to go to this museum on the last day - as a "filler" activity)
- Bombay: Government of India Tourist Office (to get posters and pamphlets)
- Madras: walk through vegetable and flower wholesale market, walk along beach
- Just for relaxation: walks to Lodi Park, swimming in hotel pools, having a manicure (Delhi, Calcutta) in the hotel, palm reading.

3c. Contacts apart from academic program:

- Discussions with teachers in Cochin who were attending a training course at Chinmaya College (I met Bharathi's cousin who was terrific and stimulating).
- I spent a couple of hours with the manager at Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan (Delhi), Ms. Taramani Sharma - wonderful woman with 40 years of experience in the field of rural development and business.
- I spent a couple of hours with the headmistress of the R. K. K. Gyan Mandir School (near the Claridge's Hotel) and learned a great deal about the challenges of working in a government school.

4a. I had no problems with health - I attended every session (accept the movie in Madras - only 3 of the group went as it was the late evening show) and every event scheduled by USEFI and the regional offices. I did have stomach trouble (for about 4 days) beginning in Calcutta - but I had been given antibiotics by my doctor in the U.S. for this eventuality; it was not necessary for me to call a hotel doctor.

4b. I had no problems with money - when I returned to Delhi after the travel phase and wanted a little more cash to finish the trip, I took an auto rickshaw to CitiBank and was able to use my U.S. checking account/debit card (I didn't want to use my credit card).

5a. Hotels

- Claridge's Hotel: excellent. I miss Dhaba dinners and all the wonderfully fresh fruit in Pickwicks (I never ate in the Chinese Restaurant). The service personnel were very helpful and professional. I was also pleased that from time to time I could take my dinner in my room - a little private time was welcomed (and room service was excellent). Excellent location and easy to get around Delhi from Claridge's.
- Best Hotels: Rajputana Palace/Sheraton (Jaipur) - great pool and wonderful hotel entertainment, the Oberoi Grand (Calcutta) - one of the most elegant hotels I have ever visited with fresh flowers everywhere, Malabar Hotel (Cochin) - such a treat to be able to sit right by the busy waterway and watch the fishermen while drinking a cold beer and munching cashews.
- Ritz Hotel (Bombay) - great location!
- Worst Hotel: Chola Sheraton (Madras) - the toilet didn't work and couldn't get repaired easily - the hotel was under renovations which made staying there very difficult. (Bharathi did a great job in advocating for us here.)

5b. Transportation - not one problem. Thank you for securing large buses allowing us to stretch out and be VERY comfortable in the air conditioning....

5c. Food - I loved it!! The mangoes and bananas were the best I have ever eaten. I appreciated eating as much vegetarian food as I did - and wherever we had a buffet - we had a chance to sample local food (the most unusual selection of local food was in Cochin - I loved it). We also learned the benefits of choosing one day a week for a personal fast...

5d. Mail - see E1a Receiving mail was not a problem - and I was one of the lucky ones who received a lot of mail.

#### 6. Money

- \$400 was spent on purchasing books and materials to use in my school (I was given money from the PTA - this was not my personal money); I spent \$120 on CCRT materials.
- \$400 for personal necessities and incidentals such as laundry, beer, taxis, stamps/cards, books and magazines for pleasure reading.
- \$600 on gifts and luxuries for family and friends - I bought some wonderful jewelry and Moghul miniatures for myself; I bought textiles, clothing, lacquer ware for gifts.

#### 7. Who would most benefit from such programs?

Please continue to invite and include teachers/educators who work with young students (ages 7- 12). Attitudes are shaped early and educators who have a global perspective can set the course for motivating young learners.

#### 8. I anticipate using my experience in the U.S. by:

- continuing to gather information and understanding about India for my own personal growth;
- explore my community for opportunities to continue meeting people interested in Indian issues;
- teaching my grade 5 students about the people and contributions of Indian civilization;
- reviewing existing curricular materials currently used in the school system's grade 7 social studies program;
- writing a nine week, alternative unit for grade 3 (world cultures study);
- establish links between teachers in my school and teachers we met in India;
- establish links (hopefully) using the internet with Mr. Bittu Sehgal (Bombay) to continue the discussion on how American students can participate in improving the environment;
- contact the National Geographic Society and connect Mr. Sehgal with people there;
- sharing my experience with elementary principals in my school system; and
- showing my slides whenever and where ever I can.

### **F. Promotion of Mutual Understanding**

My understanding of Indian culture and civilization increased tenfold during this relatively short program. I feel as if I now have a focus and a vision for ways to continue my own learning and ways to open the doors for the teaching staff and the students at my school. I believe the U.S. Ambassador was right said, "We are on the thresh hold of a new relationship..." between India and the U.S. - we really do have so many experiences which link our value systems (political, economic and cultural). The road may be bumpy - but it is a road I wish to travel and to encourage as many folks as possible to join me.

I would like to see Indian teachers visit the U.S. and I would be able to provide a setting for teachers to visit schools and the American capital city. I intend to contact the U.S. Department of State and USIA/Washington to put my name on their lists of educators who would welcome the opportunity to host Indian teachers on school visits. I also plan to contact the Embassy of India (Washington) and let them know about my experience this summer and how I hope they will call me if Indian teachers wish to visit an elementary school.

I now understand how important it is to contact politicians and let them know how valuable the Fulbright Programs are - and particularly the program for teachers. I will do whatever I can to support continued funding for programs which foster mutual respect and understanding between the U.S. and other countries. I also understand my role in informing and encouraging other educators in applying for Fulbright programs; and I have already sent the application information on to others. The seminar in India has significantly broadened my appreciations and understandings about India. I thank you, thank you, thank you....

Robin Wearen      8/26/96  
Signature                      Date

1680 Oak Street, N.W.  
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June 6, 1996

Dear Fulbright (1996) Group:

Less than one month to go!! I've had my shots and I've sent off all the forms - now it's time to try to read.... Not always an easy task while trying to close out the school year.

I am sending along the results of my survey to the Fulbright (1995) group. I asked questions that were particularly interesting to me - but in many cases, I got more than I asked for... What I got, I have found very helpful.

I have decided NOT to take my lap top (Mr. Bhardwaj stated it had been somewhat distracting to speakers and participants...). But I am including that information for you to decide on your own.

It looks as if the Fulbright (1995) group traveled as a group to Mussourie in the Himalayan foothills at some point (at their own expense but arranged by Mr. Bhardwaj) - perhaps when they returned to Delhi (for us that is 8/7?) and before they returned, as a group, to the U.S. I have asked Mr. Bhardwaj if that junket would be a possibility for us. I'll let you know what he says - and be thinking if that is a side-trip you might like to take. (I am envious of those of you who will be extending your trip to travel a few more days - but it is not possible for me - I will be returning to the U.S. on August 12.)

Regarding gifts for speakers and hosts who help us: I was delighted with the specific information sent to me (by Christina - last page). I plan to follow her guidance - if any of you have other ideas - let us all know. I am a lousy package wrapping person - but I volunteer to bring the tissue paper, scotch tape, curling ribbon and tags - for all of us. I have also ordered from Oriental Trader pencils, erasers, etc. by the 2 dozens for students/kids.

Let's keep talking....

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## Questions for Fulbright-Hays Scholars (1995)

### 1. Technology

Did you or any in your group take a lap top computer to India. If "yes" -

a. Was there any security problem at the airport, hotel or while traveling in India?

- only departing Arungabad - minimal
- pretend you are in NYC - I carried my lap top in my back pack (I was the only one in our group to have one). The security is very good...an Indian who steals will lose his job and a hotel job is a very good one. I left many of the clothes I brought there and had to sign a release for each item so that the room people would not be accused of theft. The Claridges Hotel is great.

b. Was there any difficulty due to weather (heat, monsoons)?

- no
- There was always some difficulty but nothing major.
- I used a large zip lock back to carry it.

c. Did many of the Indians with whom you met use lap tops?

- none

d. Were lap tops used during meetings with educators, officials or at Fulbright meetings?

- yes
- "You may bring the lap top to the meetings but it is advisable to avoid it since its use may disturb other participants or speakers." (Mr. Bhardwaj)

e. Was there any difficulty with the electric current? What adapters or precautions were taken to keep the computer operable?

- "The power supply is usually 220-volts and 50-cycle AC. Step-down transformers will be required for American equipment." (Mr. Bhardwaj)
- every room has candles! There was little trouble in Delhi; Calcutta was a trip and a half. Even shopping at night on horrendously crowded streets all power would go off. Soon more prosperous stores along the street would power up with private generators.
- I did my writing on planes, trains and in airports. We sometimes waited while planes decided whether to land or not.

f. Was there access to the internet? I see that the USEFI Director has email, can access to the internet be gained through USEFI or the US Embassy?

- "You can get your messages through USEFI Offices or hotels either through fax or email as long as the message is clearly marked for you. However, you may not have individual access to email either through our offices or hotels." (Mr. Bhardway)

- no

- email was always a problem. Any connection would have been an Indian long distance call and would have defeated the cost. What I ended up doing was to save everything ascii on a disk and then send it from Fulbright House. The amusing thing was that my answers were held for a day or two sometimes.

g. Were there any unforeseen costs or problems related to the lap top?

- None; I took an extra battery and all my disks with me; I also had a Radio Shack power surge.

What type of camera equipment did you take - it has been recommended that we *not* bring video equipment (which is fine with me) but I would like to take a 35mm camera and I understand the manual type is best - not the computerized, automatic - do everything - cameras.

- Olympus Stylus - mine was fine
- old Pentax K-1000 (manual SLR) and 35-135 mm zoom telephoto lens

- only problem was fogging lenses, moving from AC to outside
- a. What type of film did you find was best?
  - 200
  - Kodak Ektachrome -400 Elite (slides)
  - 200 Ektachrome slide film - you might want 400 for the cave temples at Ajanta and Ellora (dark inside)
- b. How much film did you take?
  - 30 rolls & bring extra batteries
  - 22 rolls of 36 - all that could fit in a lead-lined bag
  - 6 rolls of 36 exp but I had to buy 2 more in India for the last weeks
- c. Did you have difficulty with the airport security systems with film and cameras?
  - no - use lead film storage bags
  - not any more difficult than in US - but keep extra batteries in suitcase, not carry-on.
  - no problem
- d. USEFI recommends 25 rolls for the duration of the program but guide books say there is a 6 film limit coming into the country? Any insights?
  - no problem - no restrictions
  - no limit were we were concerned; take as much as you like.
  - Most in my group brought more than 6 rolls without problem; I had only 6 but bought 2 rolls from other group members who had too many.

## 2. Weather

What was it really like being in the heat?

- You get used to it; it is hot!
- I didn't know your eyelids could drip !!!
- depends on what you're used to.
- a. Was it hot from 6 a.m. to midnight?
  - yes, especially pre-monsoon
  - mornings and evenings were a bit cooler.
  - I was rarely up at midnight, but yes it was hot almost always - 90+ at 10 p.m.
  - range 85-105; mostly very humid
- b. Did you ever need a sweater?
  - light jacket/blazer/or long sleeve shirt - TRAVEL LIGHT
  - only in the hill stations (Himalayas).
  - I did! I am always cold, plus some of the restaurants and buses were freezing with the AC.
  - only when you went up into foothills of Himalayas.
- c. Were the hotels all air-conditioned?
  - yes
  - every one - thank god.
  - almost all; some more so than others - a couple - barely (and damp)
  - yes; sometimes too much I thought
- d. Was it dusty heat or humid heat or did that depend on where you were?
  - humid heat and dry
  - humid heat except in Cochin & Madras where there were sea breezes.
- e. If it depended on where you were - what was Delhi like (as we will be there longest)?
  - Delhi - hot, dry, dusty - incredible, beautiful, ugly, high energy, auto rickshaws, teeming humanity, wonderful people!

- Delhi is a major capital with all the pomp and extreme of the Raj. Good shopping, sights, restaurants, etc. But it is not India.
- When you stepped out of the hotel each a.m., it felt as though you opened your oven door to take out a freshly baked pie; you'll get used to it, though.
- always carry your water bottle and umbrella.
- It seemed hotter in Delhi than anywhere else; perhaps it was the lack of ocean breezes, the dustiness and the pavement.

Did you actually experience the monsoons?

- Yes and you will too.
  - Monsoon sounds real bad, but it's basically heavy afternoon thundershowers; not much different from heavy thundershowers of Midwest or south; it did not rain every day; some days for 1/2 hr, other days for 3 hrs, other days not at all.
- a. How much warning did you get that it would rain - did you know in advance or were there bursts of heavy rain?
- you just knew and we took no precautions
  - The skies are gray; everyone talks of it.
  - both - we kept missing them as we traveled; forecasts are iffy; carry small foldable umbrella.
  - yes - waterproof sandals are a good idea and compact umbrella
  - some very impressive puddles and swollen gutters, but rarely above the shins
- b. Did you have any problem with flooding - was it easy or difficult to get your shoes and clothes dry after being out in the rain?
- Texas dry quickly - wash and wear hairdos - light cotton dresses/skirts.
  - In the rain sandals are best...no socks to dry. Clothes are no problem.
  - No flooding; drying depended on the hotel - but no it was not difficult - take 2 pr. of walking shoes at least.
  - clammy hotel rooms, but clothes dried overnight
- c. Did the rain cool the temperatures?
- a bit
  - slightly
  - sorry - only wet & hot as opposed to humid and hot
  - yes, until the next morning

### 3. Money

How much money did you take with you? Was it enough, too much? What do you recommend about money (USEFI recommends \$1200)?

- I brought about \$1200 and came back with some; I charged some things.
  - I bought & bought & bought; I took \$2000; I did bring some home; I'd rather have extra than not enough.
  - I travel frugally, but \$600 in travellers' checks and \$150 in cash were plenty for me. Everything is paid for except beverages - how many souvenirs do you want to buy?
- a. When you left Delhi, did you have to have your passport to cash traveler's checks?
- Yes
  - Always keep your passport when traveling. In Delhi we put it in a safe
  - Yes almost always.
- b. Did you use your credit card easily?
- No
  - In major hotels and shops.
  - I didn't use mine at all (You might want to for larger purchase - rugs,

paintings, etc.)

- I don't own one.

c. Was there a need for US dollars (hard currency)? If yes, what for?

- tips, bargaining for purchases in major city markets
- Always good to have some dollars
- I saved/used some for return to U. S. customs, otherwise, not really.
- no real need for US cash.

How did the tipping work?

- You tip for everything done personally when by yourself. We left something each day for hotel maids. I wanted to do it - it is not expected.
- Tip as you see fit; it's amazing how much one desk person did for me for a \$2 or \$5 tip!!
- Sometimes USEFI folks did the tipping, sometimes group members took a collection for bus driver, tour guide

a. USEFI says we will be giving "group tips" - how does that work? When were they given - only at the hotels we stay in? or does that include restaurants?

- Major things covered by us as a group.
- Both - but I'd advise a small tip also.
- individual tipping only for restaurants, bellboys, room service, etc. - Usually

we tipped too much - more than the folks at USEFI.

b. How did the individual tipping work - just as it does in the US (waiters, cab drivers, hotel personnel, tour guides?

- just as it does in US
- The same if you feel properly served.
- Yes - you'll get a feel for that when you've been there a couple of days - use good judgment.

#### 4. Travel

Were you able to travel to cities other than those scheduled by USEFI?

- No
- No
- Yes

a. Did you go to the Taj Mahal? If yes, how?

- Yes - we stayed overnight in Agra - no pollution
- Yes, in a group with a few friends.
- Agra was on our itinerary - we went as a group
- Yes, in Agra, as part of group tour and some of us went back individually during free time.

b. Did you travel on Indian trains? If yes, what class and how was it?

- yes - terrible
- yes, twice. Agra to Delhi was great. Calcutta to Benares was horrible.
- yes - better than Chinese trains! but it was an all-nighter so we couldn't see the country - secure your baggage.
- 2nd class travel for us - one step below Amtrak.

c. Are there any places you would highly recommend, if travel was possible?

- Rerala = Cochin/Goa
- Go to Nepal for a week after the India part.
- Mussoorie - Himalyan foothills! (our group went)
- At the end, during the 3 extra days, the whole group really enjoyed a trip up to Mussoorie in the Himalayan foothills.

Were the members of your group able to depart from India on different dates? USEFI says that we will be traveling on a "group ticket" and departure from Delhi is on August 12.

- We had several personalized departures - do it now!
- Yes, we were able to leave at different times if we told early enough.
- All but 2 of us returned with the group

What was it like for you - traveling in a group of 14 all the time?

- We were 16 and no problem except the women always wanted to shop.

a. Did you always travel in a group of 14?

- No - we went our separate ways - personal choices - evolve, be flexible
- Travel yes...within the cities, we could break up
- We had a fantastic group which got along very well! Everyone was willing to bend, give, take; we all chose a "job" to do (get water, be nurse, organize gifts, etc.)
- Yes between cities; no within cities

b. Does someone from USEFI travel with us when we leave Delhi or are we on our own?

- incredible wonderful "baby-sitters"
- Yes
- someone is always with you - hope you have Leela!

c. If someone from USEFI does go with us - did you tip him/her at the end of the travel?

- We purchased a person gift item
- We all bought one joint gift for the guide who was very good and who led us into great adventures.
- We bought a gift for those who "took care of us"; since we had gotten to know our guide(s) so well, we as a group selected gifts that we thought they'd like and appreciate (one American, one Indian) - they'd remember us by...
- No; they are colleagues and salaried professional. We gave most of them coffee table type books which we brought with us from US.

#### Miscellaneous Comments:

• This is sketchy... my number is 415-751-6221 if you want to call. As the oldest member of our group with Nehru-like hair, I was in the center of all the activity (translation: I was left to make all the speeches.) Calling about 6 p.m. Pacific Time on a week night is ok. Otherwise, goo luck; it was a great time.... Dick Curnow

• It was an incredible experience. India is both emotionally & physically difficult - but the results are incredible! One suggestion. I was the designated "gift" person, so I have some suggestions for gifts to take to India, if you'd like:

- one or two hardcover tabletop books (approx \$20-\$50): a history, geography, pictorial book;

a book of your section of the country/state; an American art book; an anthology of American poets/authors.

-one or two softcover books (approx \$7 - \$20): collection of American poetry, short stories, art; collection of American essays; women writers, American Indian writers; American customs, traditions, folk songs, dances; book on particular artist, author, historian, scientist; atlases, books of maps, picture books.

-one or two gentlemen's gifts & one or two ladies' gifts: cologne/after shave (stick kind), perfume (roll on kind); good pen or decorative pen; tin or box of wrapped assorted hard

candies or toffees; music cassette; suncatchers, figurine.

-one to three children's gifts: classroom atlas, wall-size folded map; story books, coloring books; bunches of pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils, balloons, bubblegum, etc.

When we arrived, Leela (our guide/mentor) help us select gifts for particularly speakers, hosts, etc. We had one Fulbright who had an empty suitcase, and all the "gifts" were put in there when we began our travels. Make sure to keep the best book(s) for Mr. Bhardwaj and Dr. Lavahare (if they'll be the Fulbright contacts in India) - or whomever you have.

Other gift suggestions:

- gift bags of various sized for the gifts brought;
- several tank you cards or blank cards
- tissue paper as opposed to wrapping paper
- gift tags if not attached to bags

Our group happed to have all of these things, but I know we were anxious and puzzled as to what to bring. Hope this helps... Christina Zawirecha

• Oh yes - and take Imodium. It really isn't a matter of if you'll get sick; it's a matter of when. Even the strongest of us went down for 2-3 days. It passes.... but be prepared.

• A couple of thoughts/feelings that stand out in my mind:

the group: It's great to be with a group of fellow teachers from the US; motivated, enthusiastic, talented, etc. but i can be too much. Being strangers in a strange land makes for a great bonding experience, but I think that the more one experiences of the "group" the less one experiences of India. My most stimulating, exciting, educational moments were those when I was either alone or with only one or two other group members, wondering through the streets and alleyways, bumping into Indians and scenes far from the tourist sights, with "the group" one is much more obviously a foreign tourist, a target of aggressive souvenir vendors, beggars, etc. dehumanizing everyone into simply "the poor" and the "rich". Alone, one can chat one on one, get invited into homes, relax, feel less threatened by India and more enchanted. But one has to make a special effort to get away from the groups, with so much of the schedule packed with group activities, and the need for cold bee, naps, quiet conversation, etc. during free time.

luxury: if you're worried about discomfort and hardship in a "third world" country, don't be. it's 4 star hotel the whole way. If you're used to backpacking, hitch-hiking, Lonely Planet-type individual travelling (as I was) then get ready for a little twinge of guilt or claustrophobia. I'm not really complaining. The hectic touring pace was made much more bearable (in good hotels). And you're on vacation, after all, But keep in mind that 99.9% of India is not air-conditioned rooms or buffet banquets. Stehpen Volz



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202- \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation Form for the  
Fulbright- Hays Seminars Abroad Program**

OMB Number 1840-0694

Expiration Date: 10/31/97

(Summer 1996)

The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average .25 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. *If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651. If you have any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:*

Center for International Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202-5332

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Robin Weaver

School/Institution and Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Montgomery County Pub. Schools

Harmony Hills ES, 13407 Lydia St. Tel: 301-929-2157

Silver Spring, Md 20906

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1680 Oak St NW

WASH, DC 20010-1818

Tel: 202-234-4331

Seminar Attended: Understanding  
India + Her Ethos

Dates: July 4 - Aug 12, 1996

Each selection criteria has a rating scale from 1 to 5, "1" being the lowest and "5" being the highest. Please refer to the following scale:

Poor

Weak

Adequate

Good

Very Good

1

2

3

4

5

(Please type or write legibly. Use additional sheets if more space is needed; be sure to identify the item number).

**A. THE PRE-DEPARTURE PHASE** (Please circle one)

1. The information you received about the seminar (e.g., itinerary advance reading list, etc.) prior to your departure was sufficient to prepare for travel to the host country(ies).

1

2

3

4

5

**Comments:**

*See Attached*

2. a. The pre-departure orientation (if any) was helpful (if no pre-departure orientation was held, please move to "2.d.").

1

2

3

4

5

**Comments:**

- b. What did you find most and least helpful about the pre-departure orientation?

- c. What would you add, change, and/or eliminate from the orientation?

- d. If you did not have a pre-departure orientation, please provide an assessment of the in-country orientation. Do you feel that it was sufficient in preparing you for the seminar?

1                      2                      3                      ④                      5

See Attached

## B. THE SEMINAR PHASE

3. The academic phase of the seminar was appropriate and satisfactory.

1                      2                      3                      4                      ⑤

### Comments:

The academic phase of the seminar was outstanding. In 2 1/2 weeks we were immersed in Indian culture, history, politics, economics and educational topics. All lectures were given by experts who were well prepared, informative and responsive to a myriad of questions from participants.

4. The travel phase of the seminar was appropriate and satisfactory.

1                      2                      3                      4                      ⑤

### Comments:

The travel phase was rigorous and very well orchestrated - nothing went wrong and we took 6 in-country flights and numerous bus trips. Moving 14 people and their luggage is not easy - and it went very smoothly. We were always met at the airports and transferred to hotels no matter what the hour of day. We traveled to several cities in both north and south India and that made for an excellent survey of the differences and similarities within the country.

5. **There was a balance between the academic and travel phases of the seminar.**

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**Comments:**

There was a good balance between the academic and travel phase - if there are any changes it would be to increase the academic/lecture component during the travel phase. Occasionally, we felt more like "tourists" than "scholars" during the travel phase. A half day city tour is sufficient to orient us and then visits to schools, villages or factories could take the place of some of the "tourist attractions."

6. **The housing arrangements and food were appropriate and satisfactory.**

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**Comments:**

Housing and food were excellent. The Claridge's Hotel was remarkably comfortable. It was great to have air-conditioned rooms, western style toilets, and a choice of three different restaurants. The hotels during the travel phase were all well located for the few hours we had to explore cities independently. All but three of our meals were eaten in the hotels where we were staying.

7. **The seminar met your expectations in regard to learning about the particular aspects of the society(ies) in which you were interested?**

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**Comments:**

The seminar surpassed my expectations in all areas. I was academically stimulated and challenged and physically VERY comfortable at all times. I met many gracious and wonderful Indians during the seminar and returned to the US with a commitment to bring some of that Indian spirit and ethos to my own community. I was humbled to learn how much Indians know about the US and how little most educators and certainly students know about the Indian history, culture and contributions to civilization.

8. **As a result of this seminar, you gained enough ideas and opportunities to incorporate the experience into your teaching, curriculum development, and other outreach activities.**

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**Comments:**

The USEFI staff was extremely helpful in supporting the individual projects of each participant. As an elementary school educator, it was important for me to spend time with students and teachers at my level; USEFI staff made those arrangements and even provided an interpreter when I wanted to interview a 12 year old who was learning English but was much more facile speaking in Hindi. Others in our group were secondary educators (in English and History) and individual sessions were arranged for meeting with writers, musicians, artists, etc.). I have a great deal of information from which to draw depending on the "audience" in the US to whom I will share.

9. **The administering agency in the host country(ies) provided sufficient assistance in the development of your individual curriculum projects and in the identification of resources for completing your project.**

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**Comments:**

The USEFI staff was very helpful in locating teaching resources and materials for us to purchase. In particular, the teaching aids and slides prepared and sold by CCRT are outstanding - and I will be sharing the materials and ordering information throughout my district. Most of us wanted to purchase materials to use in creating our own teaching aids and the USEFI staff was able to assist us by locating the markets, arranging for transportation (if necessary) and occasionally helping to negotiate a "fair" price.

10. **The length of the seminar was adequate to meet the purpose of the seminar.**

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As we began to feel that we were "only scratching the surface" in understanding India - the seminar was too short. However, after 40 days in India, most of us were ready to return to family - as contact between the US and India is not easy (telephones are expensive, electronic mail is not available, and faxing Indian hotels was not reliable). I know it is not possible - but it would be wonderful to have a follow up seminar in 6 months or a year...

11. The composition of the seminar group was satisfactory.

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Our group was very compatible. The age span was wide (26-60) but there was a great deal of intellect, sensitivity and humor in the group. However, I was surprised that there were no people of color in our group and that 10 of 14 people were from the east coast (with 5 from New York or New Jersey). Our group worked as a "high functioning" team from the very beginning.

12. The seminar you attended was administered for the U.S. Department of Education by the Department's overseas administering agency. Please provide us your suggestions and recommendations for improving our future seminars.

See attached evaluation which I completed for the USEFI staff.

### C. POST SEMINAR PHASE

Please let us know if you are interested in assisting the program in any capacity. Please check the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Disseminate program information;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Serve as an application reader. If yes, please send us a copy of your resume or curriculum vitae. The panel review is generally conducted in Washington, DC during the month of December.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop pre-departure materials;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist with the coordination of the pre-departure orientation.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Other ( please specify).

25

If Fulbright Scholars to the USA wish to visit a highly effect educational institution (any area), I can arrange/host the visit in Montgomery County Public Schools (Md.).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## Evaluation for Fulbright-Hays Seminar In India Summer 1996

### Comments/Attached

#### A. Pre-Departure Phase

1. The information I received from USEFI in advance of the seminar was excellent. Two booklets were air-freighted to me in May and both were specific and very helpful; the booklets had been written by both USEFI staff and by previous Fulbright scholars in India. I suggest that the reading list be copied and mailed/faxed to participants under separate cover as the list was in the back of the booklets and was overlooked on my first reading. The reading list was a great help. Due to government shut down in December, 1995 & 96 - information to us was delayed by a month or so - hopefully that will not be the case for future groups.

2d. There was no pre-departure orientation for our program. Had there been one, I would have happily paid \$200-300 for the orientation; however, I would not have wanted the orientation to take time away from the country visit. We were able to get a sufficient in-country "briefing" and I'm not sure what advantage a pre-departure orientation (other than to determine roommates) would have had for our group. Our "briefing" consisted of a two hour discussion with the host country staff about the "nuts and bolts" of living in Delhi for the first two weeks. The USEFI staff was informative, specific and very helpful. The adjustment for our group appeared to be relatively quick and throughout the seminar, the USEFI staff continued to prepare us well for any new program element or change.



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Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
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# U.S. EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION IN INDIA

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Date : March 18, 1997  
To : ERIC/ Ms. Rosalie Gendimenico, Program Officer, USED \*  
From : O.P. Bhardwaj, Director (Admin. & Finance), USEFI   
Subject : 1996 Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program: India Seminar

As per terms and conditions set forth in the award for the subject seminar, each participants is required to complete the curriculum project which is relevant to his/her school's/college's use on an individual or small group basis. As required, we are submitting herewith the following curriculum projects submitted by participants of 1996 Indian seminar:

Patricia Barry ✓  
Anne Holland  
Melissa Kantor  
Diana L. Raham  
Julia Rockett  
Kimberly Roen  
Robert G. Shamy  
Robin Weaver  
Ronald Wolfson

\*

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