



TWO-DAY WOMEN'S RETREAT PROGRAM REPORT ON THE OCCASION OF MOTHER'S DAY 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION

Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria (DBSV) organized a two-day Women's retreat program from 27 to 28th May 2022 in honor of Mother's Day. A total of 56 enthusiastic Nepalese sisters participated in the program including the DBSV program organizing committee team members. The program involved one night stay at Halls Gap, which is a village in Victoria, Australia. It is a gateway to Grampians National Park, known for its sandstone mountains, wildflowers and wildlife including echidnas and wallabies. Park trails lead to waterfalls, such as MacKenzie Falls, Silverband Falls and Clematis Falls Walk. This landscape of Halls Gap was similar to our country, Nepal. Each participants contributed 50 AUD to support the cost for food, transportation, and accommodation. The main theme of this year's retreat program was **"Beyond Happiness"**.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The main objectives of a two-day retreat program were:

- ❖ To promote well-being and self-care strategies among sisters through Meditation, and thematic talks.
- ❖ To build network and connection among diverse Nepalese sisters living in Victoria.
- ❖ To provide recreation and entertainment through activities such as dancing, cooking sessions, social media engagement and fun activities sessions.
- ❖ To understand and highlight the importance of nature by engaging in activities such as forest walking, nature trails and fire camping sessions.
- ❖ To empower independence in sisters by engaging in meaningful conversations, team building exercise and through the Beyond Happiness sessions.

3. PROGRAM ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The members of the DBSV's Organizing Committee of the program were:

1. President Dr Jamuna Parajuli
2. Vice President Prabha Shrestha
3. Roshani Shrestha and
4. Barsha KC

The expression of interest for the program was posted in Facebook and other social media pages. There was high amount of interest in registration for this program. 53 enthusiastic sisters participated from different parts of Victoria including Geelong, Shepparton, and Ballarat.

The most fun part of the program was task allocation to the members as per their room allocation. Allocation of the tasks were to arrange logistics, prepare breakfast, snack, dinner, and cleaning. Overall, the kitchen lead was DBSV's Organizing Committee member Roshani Shrestha. The President and Vice President had overall oversight and all organizing team members and volunteers/participants were equally responsible for overall management and implementation of the program.

4. PROGRAM DETAILS

The event was scheduled for 2 days and 1 night i.e., 27th and 28th of May 2022 at Halls Gap we travelled by bus. Pick up was organized at three different places, 1. Glenroy Uniting Church, 2. Werribee and 3. Ballarat. Below were the main activities planned for the program:

- a. Introduction session
- b. Presentation by DBSV's President on Happy Hormones
- c. Happiness session
- d. Camping/ campfire
- e. Walk to Clematis Falls followed by meditation and
- f. Meditation session and

5. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

There were several activities planned for the program as mentioned above. This section will provide summary of each activity that was held during the program.

Day 1: Friday 27th May

The very first day of the program started with participants gathering at Glenroy, Uniting Church where sisters arrived before 8:30 am for the event. The remaining two pick up points were at Werribee and Ballarat. All required backpacks, kitchen utensils, food and logistics were loaded in the bus. Our destination for the day was Halls Gap.

❖ Breakfast break

When the bus stopped at Werribee for pick up, breakfast was provided. The menu was Nepalese's special snack called Donut and homemade milk tea. It was a short break to get introduced with new friends, enjoy refreshing air and load logistics to the bus. Although the weather was chilly, a little bit of sunshine cheered us up. Few sisters made some videos, took pictures, and also went for a quick walk.



❖ Arrival in Halls Gap: Check In / Room Set- up and snack

After having few stops in between for short break and four hours travel, we reached in one of the motels at Halls Gap. In between, sisters did a bit of fun introducing each other, singing and taking pictures/videos in the bus. The four hours travel seemed so short. All sisters were excited to get off the bus, get things sorted and have a look around. The motel had various bunk rooms, flat rooms, a big hall and a kitchen and dining room. The motel was very spacious and sufficient for our team. While we were getting logistics out of the bus, there was a big surprise from Graeme Kent. He is a Director at The Aussie Actions Abroad who also helped coordinating for this event with DBSV's Organizing Committee, and payed us a visit to welcome us. That was incredibly thoughtful of him not only because he travelled long distance to see us but also, he shared some gifts with sisters.



After having quick chat with Graeme, we finalized unloading logistics from the bus and had our room set-up at allocated rooms. Sisters got to meet new friends in the room and their interesting background in relation to where they came from and what were they currently doing. After room set-up was finalized, sisters enjoyed the mesmerizing view of green landscapes and forests right in front of their rooms. Team allocated for snack preparation prepared fresh snack

for the team. The delicious menu was popcorn, pickles, and bitten rice. As all were very hungry, home-made fresh snack made everyone happy and full. During this time, all sisters had a bit of chit-chat with each other, shared their stories, took pictures/videos, and had fun.



❖ Introduction session

After all sisters refreshed themselves, we all met in the hall for introduction session. This session was led by DBSV President where sisters were asked to make a pair. The other pair had to introduce their friend stating the synonym of their name that they thought would resonate themselves. For example, if Sita and Rita were made a pair, Sita had to introduce Rita as Resilient. It took more than an hour to introduce each other as we were big group. It was great to know each and every one very closely. This introduction session was followed by another group activity where seven groups were formed. Each group were provided with the theme related to DBSV in the sticky note to discuss with the team to later share with the whole team. The themes included “Aims and objectives of DBSV”, “Values of DBSV”, “Guiding Principles of DBSV”, “DBSV Strategic Direction”, “Focus of DBSV”, “Approaches of DBSV” and “Main areas of involvement”. This activity reminded us that DBSV uphold a commitment to:

- ❖ Address gender inequality to ascertain women empowerment
- ❖ Celebrate diversity and enabling inclusion and social cohesion
- ❖ Evidence-based practice
- ❖ Need based service development and group-based interventions
- ❖ A social model of health and addressing health inequality and achieving equity
- ❖ Promoting women’s rights/human rights.
- ❖ Involving in prevention of family violence

❖ A partnership and collaborative approach



During this session, DBSV President also explained the importance of ‘Happy Hormones’ (Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin and Endorphin). Overall, it was discussed that Dopamine enables motivation, learning and pleasure; Oxytocin motivates us to build and sustain relationships; serotonin makes us feel significant or important among peers and Endorphins release a brief euphoria to mask physical pain. The release of these hormones was discussed in relation to how the DBSV activities had shared the love/trust, calmness, good feeling and will power through various activities and enhanced the release of happy hormones.



❖ Dinner followed by online session about ‘Happiness’

The team responsible for making dinner were in the kitchen earlier. It was so much fun and entertaining to have cooked fresh dinner together for the entire group. The menu for the dinner was rice, lentil soup and pickle. It was amazingly yummy. After the dinner, entire group participated in the online session ‘Spiritual and Motivational talk’ facilitated by Brahma Kumar Vijaya Raj Sigdel where Brahma Kumar Vijaya and Brahma kumari Rewati delivered spiritual and motivational talk on the ‘Happiness’ for one and half hour. The session was very interactive where the motivational speaker Brahma kumar Vijaya shared as to how happiness is defined

and perceived. It was discussed that happiness is the result of opportunity and choices made. The session was followed by Q&A session which was very informative and interactive. Sisters were highly satisfied with the session and were motivated to remain happy.



DAY 2: SATURDAY 28TH MAY

❖ Breakfast and activities

The Second day started with breakfast prepared by a lovely lady, Roshani Shrestha with the help of other participants. After Breakfast, we got ready for our hike towards Clematis Falls, allowing two hours to go and return.



On the way we enjoyed the stunning sceneries, interaction with other participants and took lots of photos. When we reached the top of the Clematis Falls, we were inspired to meditated to connect with our mind, body and spirit. Mrs Prabati Pahari gave us a short introduction on the importance of meditation and how to open all our chakras.

It was a unique experience meditating on the hill in the open environment. Afterwards we did some photoshoots before heading back to our motel.



❖ Lunch Time

On arrival at the motel, we were tired and hungry and Roshani's delicious lunch was very much appreciated.

We all then pitched in to clean up the kitchen and then packed up our belongings.



❖ Some other activities before we left the venue

We then had our last meaningful activities and engagement by making the DBSV logo a human sign by sitting on the floor forming the letters and wearing pink and orange colour clothes to encourage participants to join the DBSV family.



❖ Leaving the Venue

At 3 pm it was time to depart and we took our last group photo before boarding the bus.

Lunch had re-energized us and surprisingly we sang, danced and laughed in the bus on the way home. The team was enthusiastic and there was a very positive vibe.

The first drop off point for some members of the team was Ballarat followed by Glenroy and lastly Werribee. We all got home with good memories and positive enthusiasm.

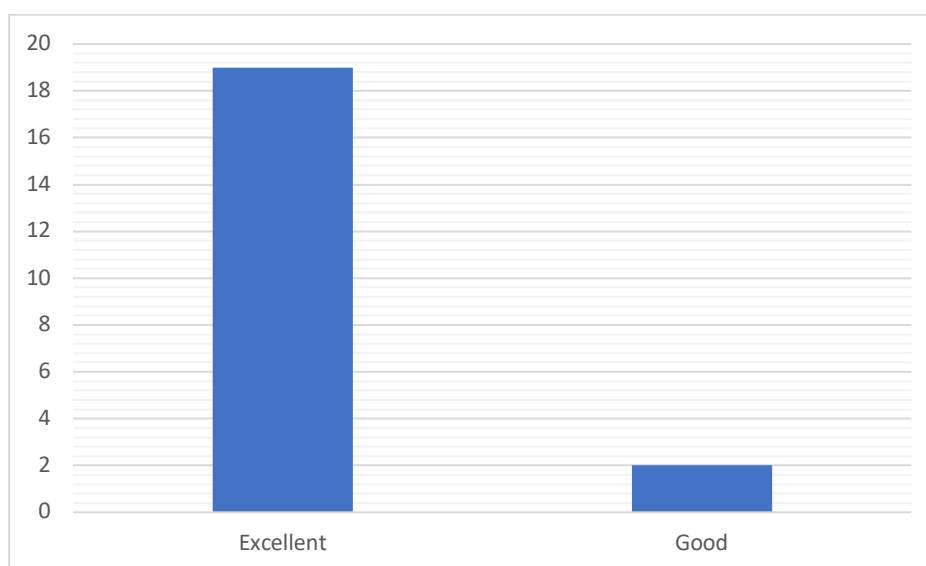
The program was concluded with very positive and good memories for everyone.

6. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

An evaluation was carried out to obtain the views of participants on the positive aspects of the retreat and the aspects that could have been improved. The evaluation form was created after the retreat program and sent to each participant.

The results of the survey are presented below:

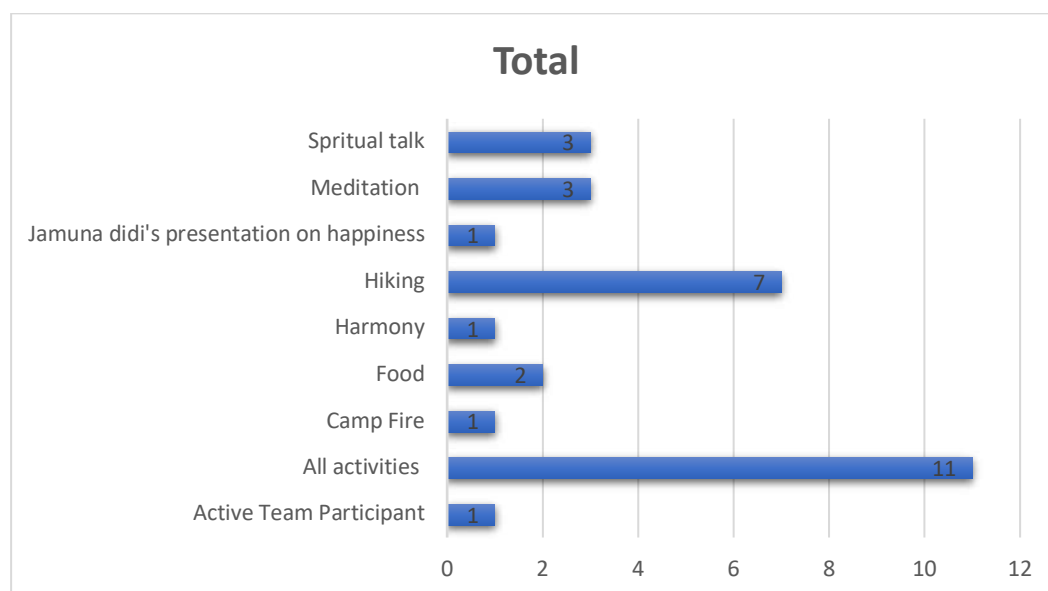
Q. Overall, how would you rate the well-being retreat program?



R. Q. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the two-day retreat program?



S. Q. What part of the retreat program was most useful?



S

7. CONCLUSION

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their time away in the Australian bush and participation in the activities. It reaffirmed DBSV's commitment through activities to its objectives, values and guiding principles for focusing on its endeavors.

The three survey results show how much participants enjoyed and benefited from this trip.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria would like to acknowledge the supporter of the retreat program. This retreat would not have been possible without their collaboration and support.
- We are grateful to all the program coordinators and facilitators for their constant motivation and supportive guidance throughout the retreat program.
- We also thank all the participants, beautiful sisters, for their wholehearted cooperation and powerful engagement during the two-day retreat program.
- We also express heartfelt gratitude to all DBSV team members for their cooperative support and hard work throughout the retreat program.
 - ❖ President Dr Jamuna Parajuli and Vice-president Prabha Shrestha, Barsha KC and other DBSV teams
 - ❖ Program Coordinator Barsha KC for facilitating the program.
 - ❖ Roshani Shrestha (Coordinator DBSV west team) and the West Team for the management of the kitchen department
 - ❖ Mr Graeme Kent, Director, Aussie Action Abroad for his support

Some Snapshots:



