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Ref No: AU/2025/O/FV/Geog/3005

Date: 12th November 2025

Field Visit Report on

“Economic Significance of Tea Industry in Darjeeling; A Case Study of Happy Tea Valley”

Organized by: Department of Geography (AU)

Venue: Darjeeling, West Bengal

Date: 4th to 11th November 2025

❖ **Topic:**

“Economic Significance of Tea Industry in Darjeeling; A Case Study of Happy Tea Valley, Darjeeling, West Bengal”.

1. Introduction:

As part of the prescribed curriculum of the Department of Geography under the paper **3rd Semester, MAGEOG 305P – Field Work and Project**, a field trip was organized to Darjeeling, West Bengal. The primary objective of the visit was to provide students with practical exposure to geographical, environmental, and socio-economic conditions of a hill region. The field study aimed to supplement classroom learning with on-site observation and data collection related to economic geography, physical landscape, cultural diversity, and tourism potential of the region.

During the course of the field excursion, the team visited the following prominent locations:

- a) Happy Tea Valley.
- b) Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park
- c) Tiger Hill
- d) Japanese Peace Pagoda
- e) Ghoom Monastery
- f) Tenzing Rock
- g) Lamhata
- h) Tinchuley Tea Garden

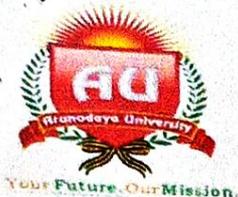


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2. Objectives of the Field Study:

- a) To study the economic importance of tea cultivation in the Darjeeling region. To observe and analyze the physical, cultural, and environmental features of the selected sites.
- b) To gain insight into the role of tourism and local industries in the hill economy and to enhance the students' field observation, recording, and analytical skills.

3. Places Visited and Observations:

a) Happy Tea Valley:

The field team began its study at Happy Tea Valley, one of the oldest tea estates in Darjeeling. Students observed the process of tea cultivation and production, including plucking, withering, rolling, fermenting, drying, and packing. The estate manager explained the economic contribution of tea cultivation to local livelihoods and export earnings. It was noted that tea production provides significant employment, especially to women workers, and forms the backbone of Darjeeling's economy.

The Happy Tea Valley Tea Estate is renowned for its specialization in the cultivation and production of high-quality Darjeeling tea, which is globally acclaimed for its unique flavour, aroma, and light liquor. Situated on the gentle slopes of the Eastern Himalayas at an altitude ranging from approximately 4,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, the estate benefits from a cool and moist climate, fertile loamy soil, and frequent mist—all of which contribute to the distinctive character of its tea.

Happy Tea Valley specializes in orthodox tea production, following traditional methods of withering, rolling, fermenting, drying, and sorting by hand or semi-mechanical processes. The estate primarily produces premium first flush and second flush teas, known for their floral fragrance and muscatel taste. Sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of organic manure, minimal chemical input, and shade management, are adopted to maintain soil health and ecological balance.



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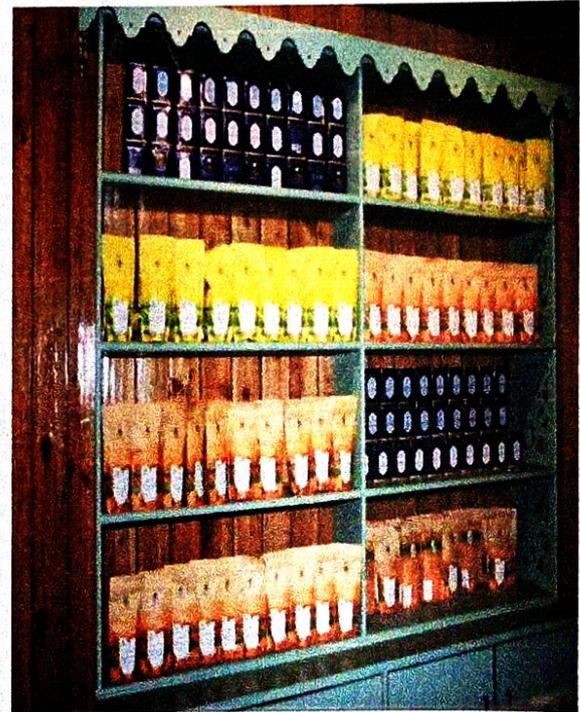
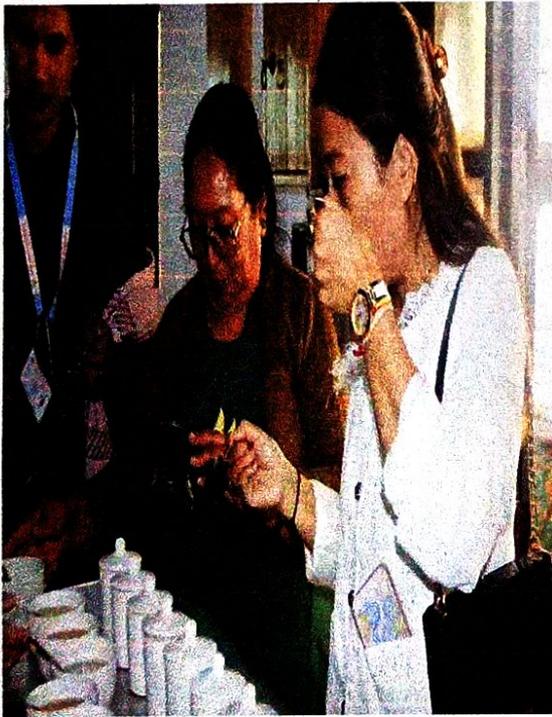
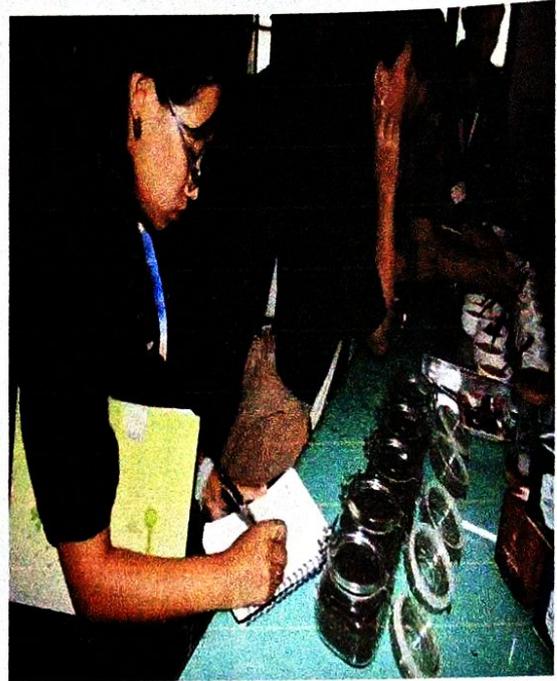
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Source: Demonstration of varieties of Tea by the Tea manager and Tea-Tasting at Happy Tea Valley (Field Trip, 2025).

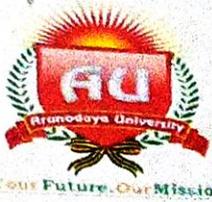


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In addition to its high-quality tea, the estate also focuses on eco-friendly production and fair employment practices, offering livelihood opportunities to local communities particularly women workers. Through its combination of traditional craftsmanship and environmental stewardship, Happy Tea Valley has established itself as one of the specialized producers of authentic Darjeeling Tea, contributing significantly to the region's economy and global reputation.



Source: Happy Tea Valley (Field Trip, 2025).



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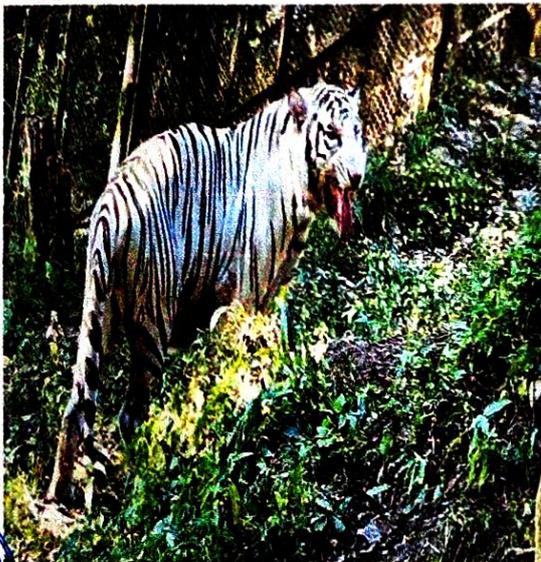
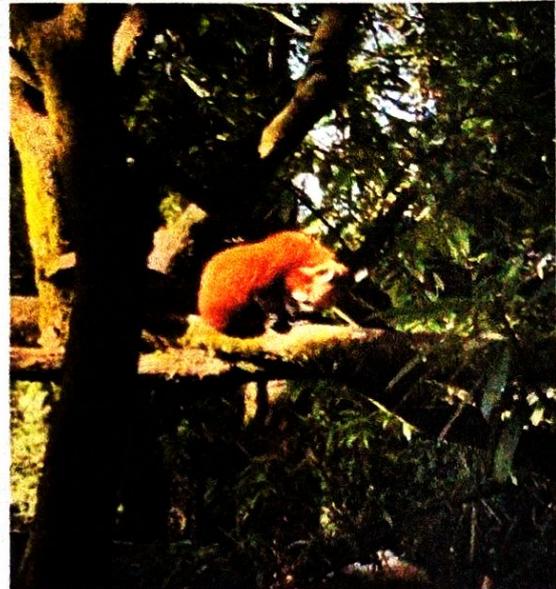
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b) Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park:

The next visit was to Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, which is renowned for the conservation and breeding of endangered Himalayan species such as the Red Panda, Snow Leopard, and Himalayan Wolf. The park serves as a center for biodiversity conservation, research, and environmental education. Students learned about habitat management, animal adaptation to high-altitude environments, and conservation challenges in fragile mountain ecosystems.



Source: Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (Field Trip, 2025)

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c) Tiger Hill:

An early morning observation was conducted at Tiger Hill, situated at an elevation of approximately 2,590 meters. The site is famous for its spectacular sunrise view over Mount Kanchenjunga. The location provided a valuable opportunity for students to study topography, altitude effects, and climatic variations of the Eastern Himalayan region. The panoramic landscape offered an understanding of how relief features influence local climate and vegetation.



Source: Tiger Hill (Field Trip, 2025).



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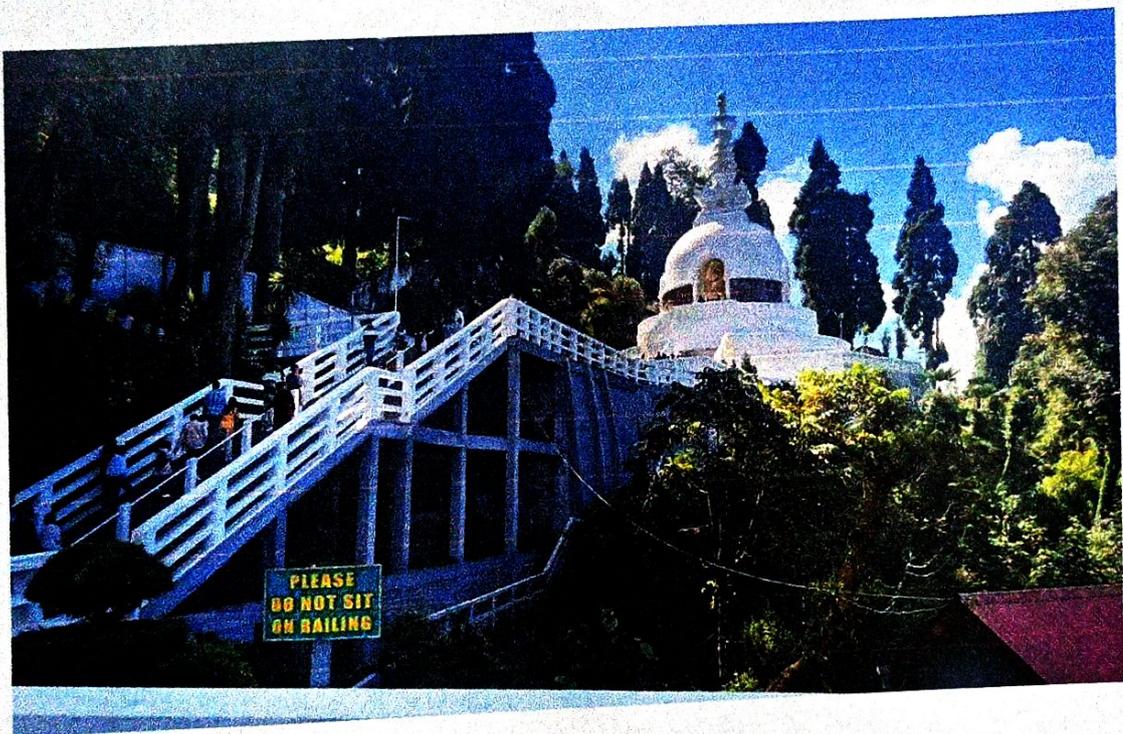


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d) Japanese Peace Pagoda:

The field team then visited the Japanese Peace Pagoda, a symbol of universal peace and harmony, constructed under the guidance of Japanese Buddhist monk Nichidatsu Fujii. The structure exemplifies Buddhist architecture and spiritual philosophy, reflecting cultural integration in the region. From this site, students also observed the urban layout of Darjeeling town and surrounding valleys, gaining insights into settlement geography and land use patterns.

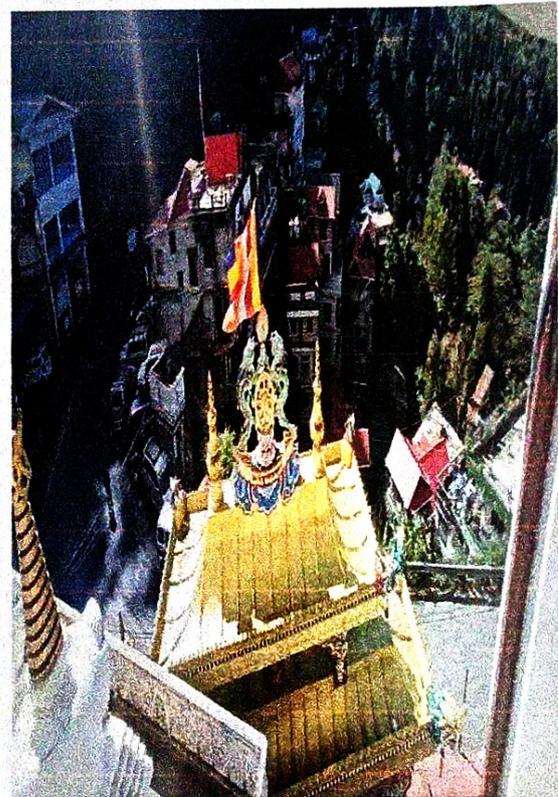
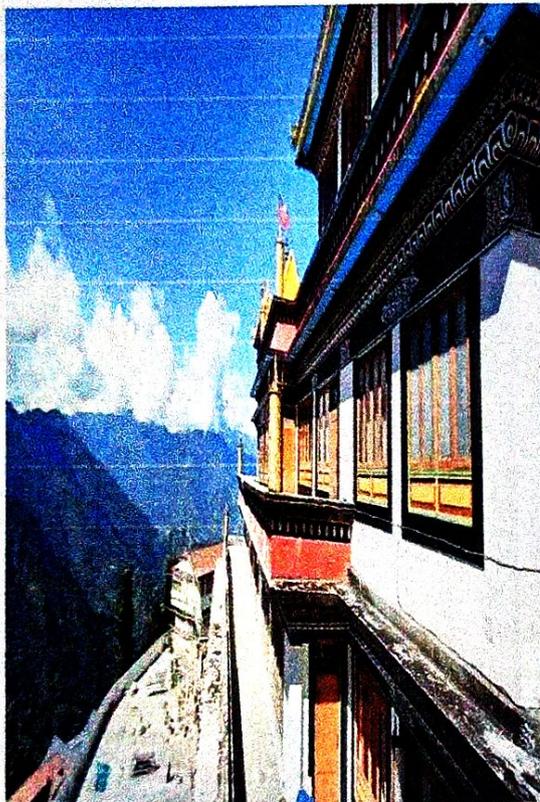


Source: Japanese Peace Pagoda (Field Trip, 2025)



e) Ghoom Monastery:

Located near the highest railway station in India, the Ghoom Monastery (Yiga Choeling Monastery) is one of the oldest Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the Darjeeling hills. The monastery houses a large statue of Maitreya Buddha and several ancient manuscripts. The visit helped students understand the religious and cultural geography of the region and the influence of Tibetan Buddhism on local traditions and social life.



Source: Ghoom Monastery (Field Trip, 2025)



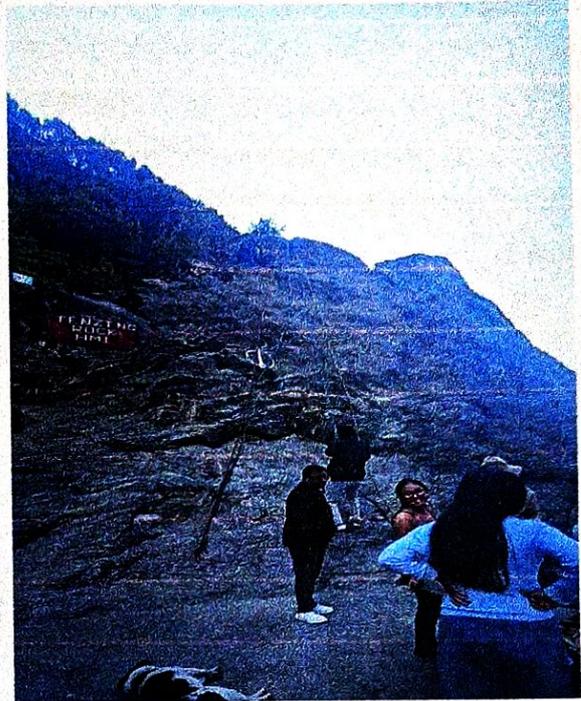
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f) Tenzing Rock:

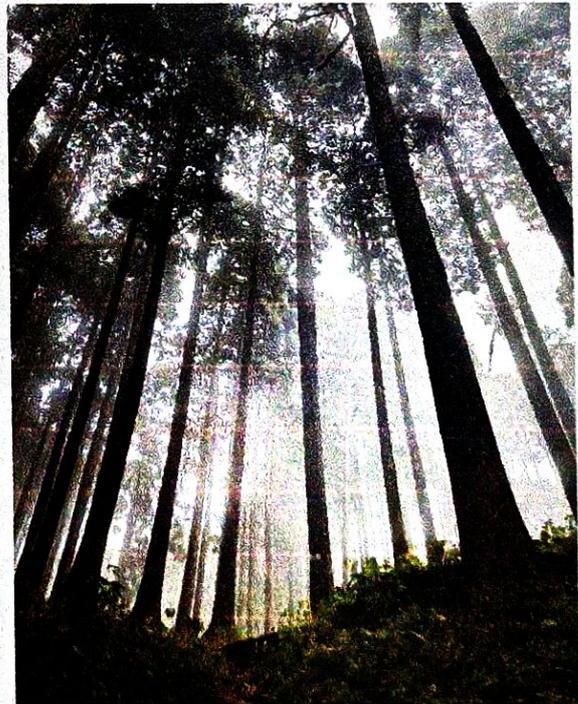
The final site of observation was Tenzing Rock, a natural rock formation named after the legendary mountaineer Tenzing Norgay. It serves as a training site for rock climbing and mountaineering under the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. Students observed demonstrations of climbing techniques and discussed the role of adventure tourism in promoting physical geography education and economic development in the hills.



Source: Tenzing Rock (Field Trip, 2025).

g) Lambhata:

Lambhata Lake, situated in the picturesque state of Darjeeling, West Bengal, India, is a sought-after destination for field trips and treks. The following information pertains to the lake and its surroundings. The lake is nestled in the Himalayan Mountain range and is accessible via a moderate trek.



Source: Lambhata (Field Trip, 2025)



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h) Tinchuley Tea Garden:

The Tinchuley Tea Garden, located approximately 32 kilometres from Darjeeling town, is a small yet significant tea-producing area that has gained attention for its focus on organic and community-based tea cultivation. Situated at an elevation of about 5,500 feet above sea level, Tinchuley enjoys a humid temperate climate, fertile loamy soil, and moderate rainfall ideal conditions for producing fine-quality Darjeeling tea.

The field study conducted at Tinchuley Tea Garden aimed to analyze the economic significance, sustainable practices, and livelihood impacts of tea cultivation in the region. The garden opThe Tinchuley Tea Garden, located approximately 32 kilometres from Darjeeling town, is a small yet significant tea-producing area that has gained attention for its focus on organic and community-based tea cultivation. Situated at an elevation of about 5,500 feet above sea level, Tinchuley enjoys a humid temperate climate, fertile loamy soil, and moderate rainfall—ideal conditions for producing fine-quality Darjeeling tea.

The field study conducted at Tinchuley Tea Garden aimed to analyze the economic significance, sustainable practices, and livelihood impacts of tea cultivation in the region. The garden operates largely under organic farming principles, avoiding chemical fertilizers and pesticides, thereby promoting eco-friendly production and soil conservation. The estate is managed in collaboration with local families, forming a model of rural self-reliance and cooperative management.

Tinchuley's tea is primarily hand-plucked and processed in small batches, maintaining high quality and authenticity. The produce caters to both domestic and export markets, with particular demand for its first flush and second flush varieties characterized by a delicate aroma. Apart from tea production, Tinchuley has developed a strong linkage with rural tourism, where visitors can experience tea processing, homestays, and local organic farming activities.

During the field observation, students interacted with tea workers and local residents to study the socio-economic transformation brought about by sustainable agriculture and tourism integration. The findings revealed that the Tinchuley Tea Garden serves as an exemplary model of how small-scale organic tea farming can contribute to environmental preservation, women's employment, and community empowerment in the Darjeeling hills.



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Source: Tinchuley Tea Garden (Field Trip, 2025)

4. Analysis and Discussion:

The field study provided a comprehensive understanding of how economic activities, natural environment, and cultural elements coexist in the Darjeeling region. The tea industry emerged as the dominant economic sector, contributing to employment, exports, and landscape management. Conservation efforts observed at the zoological park highlighted the importance of environmental awareness and biodiversity preservation.

Tourism, both religious and adventure-based, was identified as a significant source of income and infrastructural development. The geographical features—steep slopes, varied elevations, and rich vegetation—reflect the dynamic interaction between natural and human systems in the Himalayas.





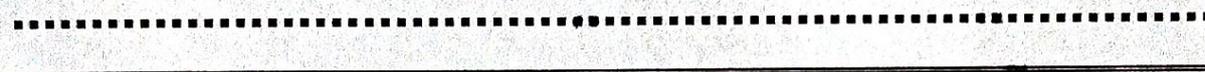
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6. Conclusion:

The field trip to Darjeeling proved to be highly informative and academically enriching. It successfully bridged the gap between theoretical learning and practical exposure. Students gained first-hand experience in field observation, data recording, spatial analysis, and socio- economic understanding. The visits to industrial, ecological, and cultural sites provided a holistic perspective on the geography and development of a mountain region.

Such field exercises enhance geographical understanding and help students appreciate the complexity of human-environment relationships. The Department acknowledges the cooperation of faculty members, local authorities, and estate officials who extended their support during the study.



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