

For the girls, it was a dream come true

Banjaras' all-girls staff share their memorable trip and off-site training in Goa, and how it has given them an opportunity to better understand customer care, client relationship and time management. **Tania Roy** gets you the details



Parag Jadhav



ALL SMILES: Nidhi Deshpande with the all-girls staff at Banjaras in Aundh and (right) chilling out on the beaches of Goa

The radiant smile, buoyant mood and excitement in the voice say that the 'Banjaras gang of girls' had an experience of a lifetime at the fun-filled Goa trip earlier this month. For most of them, a candle-light dinner at a beach shack, a water scooter ride, dolphin watching, a visit to the church and, most importantly, a flight back home from Goa to Pune, was a first-time experience.

Kalyani Bhalerao, who has been working at the natural fabrics store in Aundh for the past three years, says, "Besides having loads of fun, I learnt

how to respect time during the trip."

Senior staff Madhavi Bagellu, who is otherwise comfortable in Indian attire, did not mind donning three-fourths and kurtis on the beaches of Goa. "I have been attending Banjaras' off-site training programmes for the past few years. Initially, I was reluctant to leave my kid behind at home. But thanks to Didi and Sir (Neeta Deshpande, founder of Banjaras, and her husband Girish), I have learnt to enjoy myself without feeling guilty," says Madhavi adding, "Prior to this trip, I had only seen an airport on TV or movies, but here I was taking a

flight myself. I felt so privileged."

Assamese girl Mercy Newme can't stop gushing about the tour. "We went on a sunset cruise, danced at a disc on the boat, had candle-light dinner on a beach shack, wore a one-piece dress... It was an amazing experience," says Mercy who can't but thank Neeta and her daughter Nidhi (who accompanied the girls on the trip) for giving her an opportunity to explore the world beyond her home.

Nidhi Deshpande, along with Sarigeeta Pungaliya, had organised the whole trip and took the girls around Goa to make the visit as memorable

as possible. They were later joined by Girish and Neeta, who organised a training workshop for the staff.

Banjaras' main designer Amruta Sangawar says the trip gave her a bet-

ter understanding of customer care and client relationship. "The airport experience was superb. We handled everything independently. There was no group checking for us. Initially, we were apprehensive but Nidhi guided us. I also want to mention that Nidhi, Didi, Sir and Sangeeta ji were very warm. We never felt we were interacting with the management. They were one of us," says Anuruta and smiles.

Neelam Sonawale, Priyanka Ohal, Ashwini Awale and Rajashri Shinde, who are part of the staff and went for the trip, thoroughly enjoyed the sight-seeing and visits to the Portuguese

House, St Francis Xavier Church and Zanzibar restaurant. "We ordered our own mocktails and food. Some of us tried non-veg dishes like Goan fish curry and rice, which was delicious. We shopped a lot for our families. We also observed the liberal Goan culture, women in bikinis, non-reluctant shoppers who were eager to show their stuff even if we didn't pick up anything. It was a huge learning experience for all of us," say the girls.

"There were so many firsts for the girls that they were overwhelmed and started weeping," says Nidhi who too enjoyed a lot with the girls.