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Development Institute of Telangana**

BHARAT DARSHAN REPORT

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Acknowledgment

At the outset, I extend my sincere appreciation to the esteemed faculty of MCR HRD Institute for affording me the valuable opportunity to participate in the Bharat darshan program. Gratitude is also extended to Mr. Vinod Gaude group Coordinator, for their unwavering guidance and support throughout this educational endeavour. The experience gained during this period has been truly enlightening for me.

Additionally, I would like to convey my thanks to the Director of MCR HRD Institute for their indispensable support, which contributed significantly to the successful completion of this study tour.

Overview

Days	Places Visited
Day 1	Mudumalai Tiger Reserve
Day 2	Dodabetta Peak, The Tea Factory, The Tea Museum & Ooty Lake
Day 3	Government Botanical Gardens & Pykara Waterfalls
Day 4	Edakkal Caves & Kappad Beach
Day 5	Tibetan Monastery at Kushalnagar, ODP NGO & Mysore Palace

Let's Commence!!

Day 1:

MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE_



on my Bharat Darshan tour, the first day unfolded with a captivating journey through a wildlife extravaganza. While we couldn't embark on a safari, the surroundings still offered glimpses into the natural beauty and biodiversity. The reserve, nestled at the foothills of the Nilgiri Hills, teased with rustling leaves and occasional wildlife sightings.

The visit to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve became an education in conservation. Knowledgeable guides shared insights into the challenges faced by these ecosystems and the importance of preserving them. It emphasized the delicate balance required for the coexistence of humans and wildlife.



The absence of a safari did not diminish the experience. Instead, it allowed for a more contemplative appreciation of the reserve's role in maintaining ecological equilibrium.

Day 2:

DODABETTA PEAK

On the second day of my Bharat Darshan journey, I went to the amazing Doddabetta Peak, the tallest mountain in the Nilgiri Mountains, standing really high at 2,637 meters (8,652 feet). Found in Tamil Nadu, just 9 km from Ooty on the Ooty-Kotagiri Road, Doddabetta means "Grand Mountain" in the local Badaga language, capturing its majestic vibe.



Culturally significant and a sanctuary for nature and adventure enthusiasts, Doddabetta Peak beckons travel aficionados keen on outdoor pursuits like trekking. The slopes are adorned with luxuriant shola thickets, distinctive tropical montane forests that lend a captivating backdrop to the landscape. Visitors are treated to the allure of broad-leaved forests interspersed with montane grasslands, crafting a mesmerizing visual spectacle.



As a premier destination for nature and adventure enthusiasts, Doddabetta Peak not only offers panoramic vistas but also opportunities for invigorating trekking and bird watching, particularly during the captivating moments of sunrise and sunset. The summit hosts the Telescope House, an observatory inaugurated on June 18, 1983, and overseen by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), providing visitors with an intimate view of the surrounding natural wonders.

THE TEA FACTORY & THE TEA MUSEUM



The Tea Factory & The Tea Museum in Ooty, the Afternoon was steeped in the aromas of freshly plucked tea leaves. The guided tour unfolded the art of tea-making, from leaf to cup. The museum, adorned with antique equipment and historical photos, shared the fascinating story of tea cultivation in the region. The structure was so fascinating and all of got so mesmerized that most of the Ots bought 4-5 kgs of tea from the tea factory for their families and friends.

OOTY LAKE

Now this was the evening of second day of our Bharat Darshan Tour and we already travelled 1 city from Mysore to Ooty. In Ooty, I ventured to the enchanting Ooty Lake, a reservoir of tales dating back to 1824 when it was meticulously constructed by **John Sullivan**. Originally intended for fishing, the lake transformed into a picturesque water body with ferries facilitating travel across its expansive surface. Spanning over 65 acres, Ooty Lake stands as a remarkable highlight in the Nilgiris district.



Delving into the ecological marvels surrounding the lake, the flora encapsulates a rich diversity, thanks to its location in the Western Ghats—one of the world's most biodiverse regions. The lake is adorned with an array of trees and plants, featuring tropical, semitropical, and temperate vegetation. The landscape is adorned with tea gardens, grasslands, pine, eucalyptus, and Shola vegetation, providing habitat to an impressive 650 species of plants and trees.

Beyond the vibrant flora, the fauna of Ooty Lake adds a layer of intrigue. Diverse birds and animals, from the sleepy Indian rock python to the majestic King cobra, inhabit the region. The elusive panther and the rumored presence of tigers towards the Karnataka side of the forest add an exotic allure. The forests surrounding Ooty Lake also play a crucial role as part of an elephant corridor, emphasizing the need for conservation.

As a tourist, Ooty Lake offered not only the beauty of nature but also recreational delights. Boating facilities, gardens, amusement parks, and 7D cinemas added a touch of leisure to the exploration of this natural marvel. The second day of my Bharat Darshan tour unfolded with a perfect blend of natural wonders and leisurely pursuits, leaving me eagerly anticipating the continued discoveries that lay ahead.



Day 3:

GOVERNMENT BOTANICAL GARDEN



My day three exploration on the Bharat Darshan tour, we visited the Government Botanical Garden in Ooty. Established in 1848 on a 55-acre expanse, it was initially a private garden owned by the Marquis of Tweeddale before being taken over by the Government of Tamil Nadu. With a terraced layout, the garden serves the dual purpose of promoting horticulture and conserving biodiversity. Hosting a rose garden, a fern house with 127 species, and a sanctuary for various bird species, the garden also features an Italian Garden crafted by World War I Italian Prisoners of War. Notable attractions include a Conservatory, nurseries with exotic plants, a twenty-million-year-old Fossil Tree trunk, and the Toda hill. The garden comes alive during the Flower Show as part of Ooty's Summer Festival, offering a delightful mix of history, biodiversity, and cultural richness.

PYKARA WATERFALLS



After exploring botanical garden we started our journey towards Wayanad in between we got a chance to visit the Pykara waterfalls. The Pykara is the largest river in the District. It is considered very sacred by the Todas. The Pykara river rises at Mukurthi peak. It passes through hilly tract, generally keeping to North and turns to West after reaching the Plateau's edge. It gets down majestically in a series of cascades; and the last two falls of 55 meters and 61 meters are known as Pykara falls. They are about 20 kms from Ooty.

The Pykara Lake is about 21 kms from Ooty on the Ooty-Mysore road. Boating on the Pykara lake is enjoyable but we don't had that much time to enjoy Boating. Pykara is a favourite picnic location and is very popular with the movie makers of this country.



Day 4:

EDAKKAL CAVES



Day four started with lots of excitement and energy our next destination was the Edakkal caves. The Edakkal caves are two natural caves at a remote location at Edakkal, 25 km from Kalpetta in the Wayanad district of Kerala in India. They lie 1,200 m above sea level on Ambukutty Mala, near an ancient trade route connecting the high mountains of Mysore to the ports of the Malabar Coast. Inside the caves are pictorial writings believed to date to at least 6,000 BCE, from the Neolithic man, indicating the presence of a prehistoric settlement in this region. The Stone Age carvings of Edakkal are rare and are the only known examples from South India besides those of Shenthurini, Kollam, also in Kerala. The cave paintings of Shenthurini forests in Kerala are of the Mesolithic era.

The carvings belonging to Neolithic and Mesolithic Age include ancient stone scripts, ancient weaponry figures, symbols, figures of various animals and human beings etc.

KAPPAD BEACH



After getting memories from Eddakal Caves we move to kappad beach. Kappad Beach has historically played an important role in the history of Kerala. On these shores, over 500 years ago in 1498, 170 men led by Vasco- da-Gama first stepped onto Kerala. The entire State, especially the Malabar Coast, would never be the same again. A visit to Kozhikode is incomplete without a visit to this legendary site. The spice route flourished through this Beach. A walk in and around the place gives one an idea of its historical relevance. The rocks and small hills add to its charm. The nearby shacks are always stocked with excellent local delicacies and tea. Migratory birds can be spotted occasionally as well. Kappad Beach is a truly majestic destination, which will always hold an important place in our history



A stone monument installed by government commemorates the "landing" by Vasco da Gama with the inscription, 'Vasco da Gama landed here, Kappakadavu, in the year 1498' near kappad beach. When we arrived there we were elated by the view because it was the time of sunset. After spending hours in waves of sea water we captured a group photo and started of journey to our next destination.

Day 5:

TIBETAN MONASTERY AT KUSHALNAGAR



Day 5 started with the peace of Tibetan Monastery at Kushalnagar which is at a distance of 5 km from Kushalnagar the Golden Temple or Namdroling Monastery is a beautiful Buddhist Monastery situated in Bylakuppe, Karnataka. Bylakuppe is the second-largest Tibetan settlement in India after Dharamshala and is among the most popular places to visit in Coorg. Bylakuppe is a Tibetan refugee settlement area established by Lugsum Samdupling in 1961 and Dickyi Larson in 1969. It was an amalgamation of about twenty villages that came together to be called the town of Bylakuppe. The main tourist attraction here is the magnificent Namdroling Monastery. Popularly called as Golden Temple, the Namdroling Monastery was established by Drubwang Padma Norbu Rinpoche in 1963. This is the largest teaching center of Nyingmapa, a lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, in the world and is home to a sangha community of over 5000 monks and nuns.



The Golden Temple complex is huge and it houses 40 feet high-gilded images of Guru Padmasambhava (also known as Guru Rinpoche), Buddha Sakyamuni, and Amitayus. The temple tower is highly ornate. The outer walls flanking the doorway are decorated with huge colorful murals. The doors, red in color, have huge gold knockers and a thick plaited rope with tassels hanging from it. The walls are adorned with colourful paintings depicting gods and demons from Tibetan Buddhist mythology. The monastery not only attracts a large number of young Tibetans seeking enlightenment and education but also draws a large number of tourists from all over India and abroad.

ORGANIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE (ODP) IN MYSORE



We feel fortunate to have got the chance to visit Organization for Development of People (ODP) in Mysore. The Organization for Development of People (ODP) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Mysore, Karnataka. Established in 1984, ODP has been dedicated to promoting social justice, sustainable development, and human rights in the region.

ODP had arranged a knowledgeable session for all of us through which they share their experience. ODP implements various programs aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of marginalized communities, including skills training, entrepreneurship development, and access to microfinance initiatives.

Education and Literacy: Recognizing the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, ODP runs educational initiatives such as non-formal education centers, scholarships for underprivileged students, and adult literacy programs.

Healthcare Services: ODP operates healthcare programs focusing on preventive healthcare, maternal and child health, and awareness campaigns on hygiene and sanitation to improve the overall health status of the community.

Community Development: ODP promotes community participation and empowerment through the formation of self-help groups, village development committees, and capacity-building workshops on leadership and governance.

Natural Resource Management: ODP advocates for sustainable management of natural resources through awareness campaigns, training on eco-friendly practices, and initiatives for conservation and restoration of biodiversity.

Collaborations and Partnerships:

ODP collaborates with government agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, and other NGOs to leverage resources, share best practices, and maximize the impact of its interventions. These partnerships enable ODP to reach a wider audience and implement more comprehensive development programs.

MYSORE PALACE



the last day unfolded with a captivating journey through the pages of history at the Mysuru Palace, also recognized as Amba Vilas Palace.

Serving as the erstwhile official residence of the Wadiyar dynasty and the epicentre of the Kingdom of Mysore, this historical marvel takes visitors on a mesmerizing journey through time. Originally established in the 14th century within the Old Fort, the palace witnessed the ebb and flow of history, enduring reconstruction after being set ablaze multiple times. The present structure, often referred to as the New Fort, stands tall as a testament to architectural brilliance, having been meticulously reconstructed between 1897 and 1912 after the Old Palace succumbed to flames.

As I marvelled at its intricate design, I couldn't help but appreciate the grandeur that was brought to life at a cost of Rs 41,47,913 (approximately \$30 million adjusted for inflation) with the palace's completion in 1912.



Further enhancing its appeal, Mysuru Palace transforms into a luminous spectacle during the Hindu festival of Dasara, symbolizing a radiant celebration of cultural and religious festivities. This confluence of history, culture, and festivity positions Mysuru Palace not merely as a monument but as a living testament to India's vibrant heritage, making it an ideal ending point for my Bharat Darshan journey.

CONCLUSION

In reflection, my Bharat Darshan journey has been a captivating odyssey through the heart of South India, a tapestry woven with threads of history, culture, and the untamed beauty of nature. Each day unfolded a new chapter, revealing the diverse facets that make this region a treasure trove of experiences.

From the tranquil landscapes of Ooty to the regal elegance of Mysore Palace, the journey took me through the corridors of time and the soothing embrace of nature. Dodabetta Peak and the Ooty lake painted a canvas of natural wonders, while The Tea Factory & The Tea Museum in Ooty brought to life the cultural significance of tea cultivation. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, despite missing the safari, provided a profound insight into the delicate balance required for the coexistence of wildlife and humanity. The diverse flora and fauna underscored the need for responsible conservation practices.

The grand finale on Day 5, with Mysore Palace This confluence of history, culture, and festivity positions Mysuru Palace not merely as a monument but as a living testament to India's vibrant heritage, making it an ideal ending point for my Bharat Darshan journey.

As I conclude my Bharat Darshan, I am left with indelible memories of panoramic views, regal palaces, fragrant tea plantations, and the harmonious coexistence of tradition and modernity. This journey has not merely been a sightseeing adventure; it has been a profound exploration, a celebration of the myriad hues that paint the cultural and geographical landscape of South India. Each destination, with its unique narrative, has contributed to a richer understanding of the diversity and beauty that define the soul of our incredible country. Bharat Darshan has been more than a trip; it has been a transformative experience, leaving an everlasting imprint on my heart and mind.