

REPORT ON

BHARAT DARSHAN

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CONDUCTED BY:-



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PRESCRIBED BY:-



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Acknowledgement

"I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to ISTM and MCR HRD IT for orchestrating an exceptional educational excursion, the Bharat Darshan tour in Kerala. This incredibly enriching experience stands as a testament to the meticulous planning and dedicated commitment exhibited by both institutions.

A special acknowledgment goes to Dr. K. Usha Rani, our Course Director, whose steadfast support ensured a seamless and enlightening journey.

I'm immensely grateful to the organizing committee and tour coordinators whose unwavering dedication, meticulous planning, and flawless execution contributed to the tremendous success of this tour.

Beyond its intellectual pursuits, the Bharat Darshan/study tour fostered enduring memories and fostered camaraderie among us. It wasn't just an educational journey; it was a platform that created lasting bonds and cherished moments.

The thoughtfully curated tour and immersive experiences have significantly broadened our horizons. Exploring the historical marvels of Kerala and the natural beauty of Munnar has enriched our understanding of the subjects we've been studying.

Once again, my deepest gratitude to ISTM and MCR HRD IT for granting us this invaluable opportunity to learn, explore, and forge indelible connections."

- **Nishu Kumar (B66)**

Objective

The primary objective of our study tour to Kerala was to immerse ourselves in the rich cultural diversity of India and gain insights into how various policies are implemented and their impact on the local population. Our journey across this beautiful state allowed us to explore the interplay between cultural heritage, natural beauty, and the evolving socio-economic landscape.



Day – 1: Hyderabad to Trivandrum – Veli Village

Our journey began with an early morning arrival in Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala. We were greeted by the humid tropical air and the vibrant energy of the city. Our first stop was the majestic ***Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple***.

Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple: Entering the temple complex felt like stepping back in time. The towering gopuram (entrance tower) adorned with intricate sculptures was our first glimpse into the architectural grandeur that lay within. We learned that the temple is one of the 108 sacred Vishnu temples, making it a significant pilgrimage site for Hindus. The temple's architecture is a blend of Kerala and Dravidian styles, with ornate carvings, expansive courtyards, and a seven-tiered gopuram. The atmosphere inside was serene and spiritual, with the scent of incense and the chanting of mantras filling the air. We witnessed devotees offering prayers and performing rituals, gaining insight into the temple's profound religious significance.



Veli Village: In the afternoon, we escaped the city bustle and traveled to the tranquil Veli Village. Here, the Veli Lake meets the Arabian Sea, creating a picturesque landscape. We spent time observing local fishermen casting their nets and enjoying the refreshing sea breeze. As the sun began to set, the sky transformed into a canvas of vibrant colors, casting a golden glow over the water. The peaceful ambiance and stunning sunset views provided a perfect end to our first day in Kerala.

Day 2: Alleppey

Our second day was dedicated to exploring the famed backwaters of *Alleppey*. We boarded a traditional Kerala houseboat, excited to experience life on the water.

Houseboat Cruise: The houseboat was beautifully crafted with wood and bamboo, offering comfortable interiors and a spacious deck. As we gently cruised through the narrow canals, we were surrounded by swaying palm trees, lush paddy fields, and charming villages. We observed local life unfolding along the waterways; children playing by the banks, women washing clothes, and fishermen skillfully navigating their canoes. The backwaters ecosystem was teeming with life – we spotted colorful kingfishers, graceful herons, and vibrant dragonflies. The meals served on board were delicious, featuring fresh fish and local Kerala specialties. We learned that these houseboats provide a livelihood for many locals, from the boatmen and cooks to the artisans who craft the boats.



Backwaters Ecosystem: During our cruise, we learned about the unique ecology of the backwaters. This intricate network of canals, lagoons, and lakes acts as a natural irrigation system for the surrounding paddy fields and coconut groves. It also supports a diverse range of flora and fauna, contributing significantly to the region's biodiversity.

Day 3: April 30th, 2024 - Periyar Lake & Munnar

Our third day began with a journey towards the highlands, starting with a visit to Periyar Lake.

Periyar National Park: We arrived at Periyar National Park, a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Our boat ride on Periyar Lake offered stunning views of the surrounding hills draped in dense forests. We were fortunate to spot a herd of wild elephants grazing by the water's edge, a truly awe-inspiring sight. The park's role in conservation became evident as we learned about its efforts to protect endangered species like tigers, elephants, and Nilgiri tahr.



Journey to Munnar & Traditional Food: After our wildlife encounter, we began our journey to Munnar, a hill station renowned for its tea plantations. During the drive, we stopped at a local restaurant to savor a traditional Kerala meal. The food was a sensory delight, with aromatic spices, fresh coconut, and a variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. We enjoyed the flavors of appam, stew, curry, and the sweet delicacy, payasam.



Day 4: - Munnar

Our exploration of Munnar's natural beauty continued with a visit to Eravikulam National Park.



* Eravikulam National Park & Nilgiri Tahr: Eravikulam National Park is a haven for biodiversity and is most famous for being home to the endangered Nilgiri Tahr. The Nilgiri Tahr is a type of wild goat endemic to the Western Ghats and is a symbol of the park's conservation efforts. We learned about the park's successful breeding programs and habitat restoration projects that have helped to increase the tahr population. The park's rolling hills and vast grasslands provided breathtaking views, and we were fortunate to observe the tahr grazing in their natural habitat.

Exploring Munnar's Valleys: In the afternoon, we explored the valleys surrounding Munnar, which are carpeted with tea plantations. We witnessed the tea plucking process and learned about the different varieties of tea grown in the region. The lush greenery, misty hills, and the aroma of fresh tea leaves created an unforgettable sensory experience.



Day 5: Munnar

Our fifth day began with a visit to the Mattupetty Dam before heading to Cochin.

Mattupetty Dam: The Mattupetty Dam, located amidst the rolling hills of Munnar, is a popular tourist attraction. We took a leisurely boat ride on the serene waters of the dam, surrounded by the lush green landscapes. The dam serves as a source of hydroelectric power and irrigation for the region, highlighting the importance of sustainable development.

Tata Tea Museum: Our next stop was the Tata Tea Museum, where we delved into the history and art of tea production. The museum showcased the evolution of tea plantations in Munnar, from the early days of British colonialism to the present. We learned about the different varieties of tea, the processing techniques, and the socio-economic impact of the tea industry on the region.



Journey to Cochin: In the afternoon, we bid farewell to the hills of Munnar and embarked on our journey to Cochin, the vibrant coastal city of Kerala.

Day 6: May 3rd, 2024 - Cochin

Our sixth day was spent exploring the historical and cultural treasures of Cochin.

* Fort Kochi: We started our day in Fort Kochi, a charming seaside area with a rich colonial history. The narrow streets lined with colonial-era buildings, art galleries, and cafes exuded an old-world charm. We visited the iconic Chinese fishing nets, which have been a symbol of Cochin's fishing heritage for centuries. The sight of the giant nets being lowered into the water and the fishermen skillfully maneuvering them was a fascinating spectacle.

* St. Francis Church: Our next stop was the St. Francis Church, the oldest European church in India. This historic church holds the remains of the famous explorer Vasco da Gama, who died in Cochin during his third visit to India. The church's architecture, with its simple yet elegant facade, is a testament to the early Portuguese influence in the region.

* Marine Drive: In the evening, we took a leisurely stroll along the Marine Drive, a picturesque promenade overlooking the Arabian Sea. The sea breeze, the sound of waves crashing against the shore, and the twinkling lights of the city created a magical ambiance. We witnessed locals and tourists alike enjoying the lively atmosphere, with street vendors selling delicious snacks and children flying colorful kites.

Day 7: May 4th, 2024 - Cochin & Departure

Our final day in Kerala began with a visit to Theruvoram, an NGO dedicated to serving vulnerable communities in Cochin.

* Theruvoram NGO: Theruvoram's mission is to provide care and support for individuals with psychiatric disabilities, bedridden individuals, and the elderly. We witnessed firsthand the organization's commitment to improving the lives of those in need. Their work highlights the importance of social welfare programs and community-based initiatives in addressing societal challenges. We learned about the various services offered by the NGO, including residential care, rehabilitation, and skill development programs. We were inspired by their dedication and the positive impact they have on the lives of their beneficiaries.

* Departure: After our visit to Theruvoram, we proceeded to Cochin International Airport for our flight back to Hyderabad.

Conclusion

Our seven-day study tour to Kerala provided an unforgettable experience and valuable insights into the state's unique culture, stunning landscapes, and diverse communities. We witnessed the harmonious coexistence of tradition and modernity, the importance of conservation efforts, and the impact of social welfare initiatives. From ancient temples and serene backwaters to bustling cities and verdant tea plantations, Kerala showcased the richness and complexity of India's cultural tapestry. This study tour has enriched our understanding of India's diversity and the challenges and opportunities faced by its people.