



REPORT ON BHARAT DARSHAN

-By Namrata Kumari (B71)

(DOPT)

As someone has said, A change of latitude would help my attitude, and this is what I am going to tell about.

This report is a compilation of the events, places visited and activities of 7 days study tour i.e. from 28th April 2024 to 04th May 2024 to Kerala(God's own country), which was organized as a part of the training program at MCR HRD institute with a focus on gaining practical insights into the diverse aspects of regional development. I would like to convey my sincere thanks to Smt. Usha Rani, course director for providing every support and also to Mr. Saka Venkateswara Rao, senior faculty and Bharat Darshan coordinator for his guidance and supervision for making a wonderful memory of the trip.

Day 1

As our journey starts from 28.04.2024 at 3.00 am from MCR Hrd institute, we directed for Rajiv Gandhi International airport (4th busiest airport in India in FY 2023-24) to take flight for Thiruvananthapuram. We reached Thiruvananthapuram International Airport at 07:45 hours. The weather was pleasant and I was very excited for next destination.



i. Padmanabhaswamy temple:

With the great devotion I reached Padmanabhaswamy temple(A Hindu temple), a magnificent architectural marvel dedicated to Lord Vishnu. As the traditional dresses were required to enter into the temple I followed



the same by wearing saree.

The temple is located in the East fort of Trivandrum. The temple has 4 entrance- Kizakke nada(East), Padinjare nada(West), Vadakke nada(North) and Thekke nada(South).The main entrance is Kizakke nada (East Entrance). After entering east fort, there is pond, Padmatheertham on the right side and Kuthirmalika Palace on left side.The temple is built in an intricate fusion of the Kerala style and the Dravidian style of architecture, featuring high walls and a 16th century Gopuram. The Gopuram of temple is 100 foot(30 m) high, it has 7-tier and it is build in Pandyan style. The temple has a corridor with 365 and one-quarter sculptured granite-stone pillars with elaborate carvings.

As I reached in the Garbhagriha, I saw the main shrine which is made in such a way that glimpses of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva, all



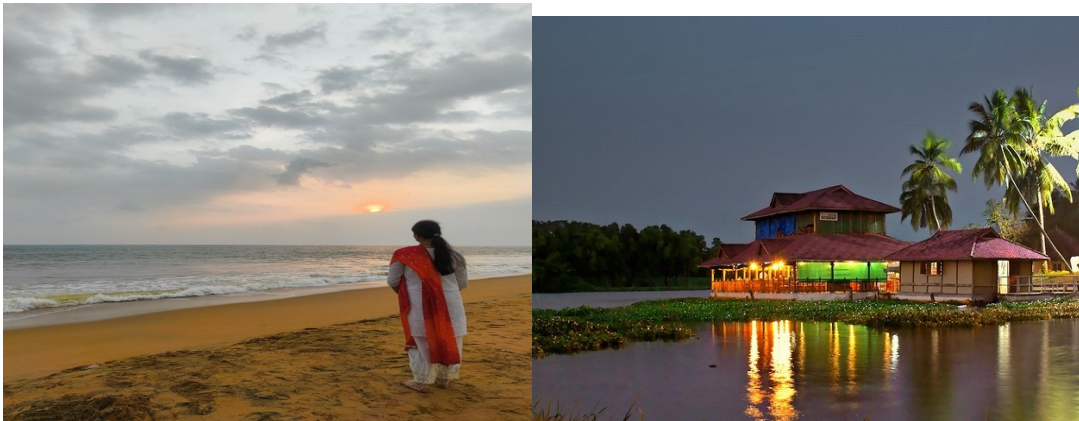
three can be seen.

Padmanabha(Lord Vishnu) reclines on the serpent Shesha who floats upon the primordial ocean, between the end of one cosmic era and the beginning of another, his right hand is touching the shivalinga and a lotus is blooming from his navel on which Lord Brahma is sitting that's why called Padma+ Nabha+swamy. The best beauty of this temple which comes out is from three gates which show different postures of lord Vishnu.

Inside the Temple, there were more important shrines also , Thekkedom and Thiruvambadi, for the Deities, Ugra Narasimha and Krishna Swami respectively.

This temple is of great importance in preserving culture, tradition and hindu beliefs not only in Kerala but all over the world. As per legends “this temple is not to create history but it itself a history”. After having darshan we went to our hotels.

(ii) Veli village



In the evening we proceeded towards Veli village. This village lies at the verge of meeting of Veli lake and the Arabian sea. It provides unique boating and enjoyable environment. I saw the mesmerizing sunset and i was about to lost in the beauty of nature filled with a combination of greenery and yellow dazzling light. We returned from Veli village by around 8pm and after having our dinner we took a good sleep.

Day 2

i. Kovalam beach

In the early morning we went to Kovalam beach which has got blue flag certificate, to see sunrise. The morning clean and clear environment with bright sunlight at the bank of the beach was like a feeling of other world. A massive rocky promontory on the beach has created a beautiful bay of calm waters ideals for sea bathing. The leisure options at this beach are plenty and diverse.



ii. **Alleppey(venice of the east)**

At around 9am we departed from Trivandrum to Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha. We reached our destination at 2pm. Alleppey is famous for its canals, backwaters, beaches and lagoons. We had booked a backwater cruise to see the scenic manmade islands and beautiful sights of coconut fringed backwaters and paddy fields. All the staffs on the cruise boat were local and they acted as our guide for the backwaters journey. The cruise started from Pamba river and went upto Vembanad lake. Total distance covered was around 15km (to and fro). The path traversed by us is part of national waterway 3. The scope of road and railways development in Alleppey is limited and that's why the development of waterway in this area has proved to be a boon for traditional industries such as coir, cashew and fishing. It is the first national waterway in the country with 24 hour navigation facilities along the entire stretch.



The economy of Alleppey is based on paddy farming, tourism and coir industry. Alleppey is part of Kuttanad region, this region has the lowest altitude in India, and is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried on around 1.2 to 3.0 metres below sea level. The region is known as the rice bowl of Kerala and it is also the part of second largest Ramsar site in India. To stop the saltwater intrusion into the Kuttanad, a

1252m long saltwater barrier, Thanneermukkom has been built on Vembanad lake.

Besides its backwaters, Alleppey is also famous for its coir industry. Coir is extracted from the outer husk of coconut and is used to make ropes, twine, brooms and brushes, doormats, etc.

After disembarking from the boat, we went to our hotel and later in the evening we went to some coir shops to see the coir products.

Day 3

- i. At around 8am we proceeded towards Thekkady to visit Periyar National Park. People-oriented and park-centered community-based ecotourism is the hallmark of Periyar Tiger Reserve.



These programmes are conducted by local people responsible for the surveillance of the vulnerable parts of the reserve. Community-based and protection-oriented ecotourism programmes (CBET) were initiated in PTR during the IEDP. These programmes were developed to ensure livelihood security and to reduce negative dependency on forests. Tickets for boating at Periyar lake were already booked by us. The boat journey was of 1 hour and during this boat journey we witnessed herd of deer, elephants, wild goats and wild buffaloes. As the tiger population is very counted i.e. 40, in this 925sq km reserve so encounter with tiger is very rare. The forests of Periyar tiger reserve are pristine and unaffected from all outside disturbances, even after accommodating thousands of tourists every year. This is because of the management effectiveness of Periyar tiger reserve. It also bagged first prize in the management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) of tiger reserves in India for the year 2022, released by ministry of environment, forest and climate change. From Periyar tiger reserve, we proceeded to our next destination Munnar and reached there by 11pm. On the way from Thekkady to Munnar we witnessed many tea, spice and rubber plantations.

Day 4

i. Eravikulam National Park

In the morning we departed for Eravikulam national park which was



15Km from our hotel. It is situated in the Kannan Devan Hills of the southern western ghats. The wildlife park has an area of 97 sq. km. and it is the first national park in Kerala. It is divided into three regions- the core area, the buffer area and the tourism area. Visitors are allowed only to the tourism area. After reaching main entrance of tourism area, a bus of Kerala forest and wildlife department took us to the starting point of Kurinji trail. The magnificent view of beautiful tea plantations on our way was a sight to behold. The trek from to kurinji is of one hour and the on the way one can witness herds of nilgiri Tahr, the endangered mountain goat, for which Eravikulam is a natural habitat. The national park has the highest density and largest population of NilgiriTahr.



The trekking journey also provides a mesmerizing view of the largest stretch of undisturbed montane shola-grassland eco system in the Western Ghats. Anamudy (2695m), the highest peak south of Himalayas, is also located within the park.

At the ending of the trek is the highly admired plant species *strobiliantheskunthiana*, which is locally known as Neelakurinji.



It is an endemic species of Western Ghats and it is under threat because of being plundered from the grasslands of High Ranges by ignorant/berserk people. It blooms once in 12 years. It last bloom in 2018 and hence it will bloom again in 2030. After spending some time on the top, we came back to the starting point of the trek and visited "story of the park". it shows brief history of the park and the flora and fauna which are found in the park with special attention to Niligiri Tahr.

2. Kathakali

Kathakali which originated 300 years ago from Kerala's shores is renowned art form. It combines devotion, drama, dance, music costumes and make up into a divine experiences for all who get to view it. The word Katha means story or a conversation and kali means performance or play.

The dance symbolizes the eternal fight between good and evil.



Day 5

1. Mattupetty Dam

In the morning we visited Mattupetty dam.



It is a gravity dam having a storage of 55.4 million cubic meters of water which has been a vital source of power and huge revenue for Idukki District. The reservoir (Mattupetty Lake) is also known to be one of the visiting grounds of elephants in the region.



2. Tata Tea museum

Tata Tea museum was established by Tata Tea in 2005 at Nallathanni estate. This museum shows the history and present of journey of Tea plantation in Munnar. Tea has played an integral part in the history of Munnar. This museum has many photographs and machines celebrating the legacy of the

plantations owners and workers who ensured the survival of tea



here for long.

Day 6

i. Cherai Beach



The cherai beach is located in the northern side of the Vypin Island Kerala. it is one of the most visited beaches in the state. The tranquil surrounding with amazing sound of the water on the shore makes anyone feels like in heaven.

ii. Fort Kochi

After visiting Cherai Beach, we moved towards Fort Kochi.



Fort Kochi takes its name from Fort Manuel of Cochin. It was the first European Fort on Indian soil and

was controlled by the Portuguese East Indies. The European architecture of many buildings and structures can still be seen in Fort Kochi. More than 30 communities co-exist here and more than 16 languages are spoken in the town. The influence of various European colonies can be seen here.eg-

- The Portuguese influence-it can be seen in Fort Manuel of Cochin and St. Francis Church(one of the oldest churches in India). Both these structures are extremely beautiful.



- The Dutch influence-it can be found in Dutch cemetery near St. Francis Church and Bolgatty palace.
- The British influence-it can be seen at Jew town and Princess Street.

3. **Mattancherry Palace**

This palace is popularly known as the Dutch Palace. It is a quadrangular structure built in Nalukettu style, the traditional Kerala style of architecture, with a courtyard in the middle. Certain elements of architecture, as for example the nature of its arches and the proportion of its chambers are indicative of European influence in basic Nalukettu style. There is large number of murals on the walls of the palace, executed in the traditions of Hindu temple art, which are religious, decorative and stylized.



4. Chinese fishing net



The Chinese fishing nets, which are called cheenavala in Malayalam, are believed to have been introduced to Kochi by the Chinese explorer Zheng He, from the court of the Kubla Khan. For the best view of the nets, head to Vasco da Gama Square, the narrow walkway that runs along the Fort Kochi beach.

Day 7

Theruvoram NGO:- Creating wave of wellness

This NGO, founded by Murukan S in 2007, has the noble mission of rehabilitating street people in Kochi, with a vision of making the world a better place for the entire human race.

This NGO has rescued nearly 30,000 homeless beggars and destitute. It has organized various drives in coordination with the

police and local authorities to rehabilitate the homeless.



This organization has a two storey building which accommodates more than 30 homeless individuals. it has received National Award for child welfare in 2011 from Hon'ble President, and Amazing India Award in 2017 from Hon'ble Prime minister. Besides having less fund and lack of proper infra the help provided by this NGO is outstanding and unbelievable.



This was the time to pack the bag and to return to our institute and so we directed for the Cochin International airport to take flight for Hyderabad.

Cochin International Airport

This airport started its operation in 1999 and this is the first greenfield airport in India built under PPP and this is World's first fully solar powered airport.

It acts as a link between India and middle east countries.



Conclusion

Reflecting on the Kerala trip, it's evident that every moment was a lesson in embracing simplicity, finding beauty in nature, and cherishing cultural diversity.

Throughout the trip numerous observations illuminated the essence of this captivating destination. The intricate network of backwaters symbolized the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, while the vibrant spice market showcased Kerala's historical ties to trade and diversity.

The warm hospitality of the locals served as a reminder of the importance of connection and community while the lush tea plantation highlighted the region's commitment to sustainable agriculture.

This journey was more than just sightseeing; it was a profound education in the art of living fully and appreciating the richness of our world.