

REPORT ON

BHARAT DARSHAN

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सत्यमेव जयते

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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 Trivandrum and Kochi 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."

- **SATENDRA SINGH B85**

1. Overview of Kerala as a tourist destination

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DAY 1 TRIVANDRUM

Overview of Kerala as a tourist destination

Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," is a state located in the southwestern part of India. Renowned for its stunning natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and diverse landscapes, Kerala is a popular tourist destination that attracts travelers from all over the world.

Backwaters: Kerala is famous for its intricate network of backwaters, consisting of lakes, canals, and lagoons, particularly in areas like Alleppey (Alappuzha), Kumarakom, and Kollam. Houseboat cruises along these serene backwaters offer a unique and tranquil experience, allowing visitors to witness the picturesque countryside, coconut groves, and traditional village life.

Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks: Kerala is blessed with abundant biodiversity, and its wildlife sanctuaries and national parks provide opportunities for wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers. Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Silent Valley National Park, and Eravikulam National Park are notable for their diverse flora and fauna, including elephants, tigers, and endemic species like the Nilgiri Tahr.

Cultural Heritage: Kerala boasts a rich cultural heritage reflected in its vibrant festivals, classical dance forms like Kathakali and Mohiniyattam, and traditional art forms such as Theyyam and Kalaripayattu (martial arts). Visitors can also explore historic sites like Fort Kochi, Mattancherry Palace, and the Padmanabhapuram Palace.

Visits to Padmanabhaswamy Temple

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple, located in the heart of Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), the capital city of Kerala, India, is one of the most renowned temples in the state and holds significant religious, cultural, and historical importance. Here's an overview:

Dedication: The temple is dedicated to Lord Padmanabhaswamy, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who is depicted reclining on the serpent Anantha (Adi Sesha).

The deity is enshrined in a unique reclining posture on the serpent coiled around Shiva Linga.

Architecture: The temple is a classic example of Kerala-style architecture with intricate carvings, gopurams (tower gateways), and a massive seven-tiered gopuram at the entrance. The temple's architecture reflects Dravidian and Kerala architectural styles and showcases exquisite craftsmanship.

Spiritual Significance: The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of the 108 Divya Desams, sacred Vishnu temples mentioned in the works of the Alvars, the Tamil poet-saints. It holds immense spiritual significance for devotees of Lord Vishnu and is revered as one of the holiest temples in India.

Legend and History: The origins of the temple date back to ancient times, with references found in various scriptures and historical records. Legend has it that the temple was established by Divakara Muni, a revered sage, and later renovated by several rulers, including the Travancore kings.

Travancore Royal Family: The temple has been historically associated with the Travancore Royal Family, who considered themselves as the servants (Padmanabhadasas) of Lord Padmanabhaswamy. The royal family played a significant role in the temple's administration and rituals.

Wealth and Treasures: The Padmanabhaswamy Temple gained international attention in recent years due to the discovery of enormous treasures within its vaults. The temple's vaults, including the mysterious Vault B, contained priceless treasures, jewels, gold, and artifacts, estimated to be among the largest treasures ever found in the world.

Administration and Rituals: The administration of the temple is currently overseen by a trust headed by the Travancore Royal Family. Daily rituals and ceremonies are performed according to traditional customs and rituals prescribed in ancient texts.

Devotees and Pilgrimage: The temple attracts devotees and pilgrims from across India and around the world, who visit to seek the blessings of Lord Padmanabhaswamy. The temple is especially crowded during festivals like Vishu, Navaratri, and Alpashy festival.

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple stands as a symbol of Kerala's rich religious heritage, architectural grandeur, and spiritual significance, drawing devotees, historians, and tourists alike to its sacred precincts.

DAY 2 ALLEPPEY

Alleppey: Backwater Bliss

On 2nd day of our journey we went to Alleppey from Trivandrum by bus. It took almost four hours to reach there.

Here is the whole of Kerala in one side, and then there is this heavenly tourist destination called Alappuzha or Alleppey. Esteemed as the 'Backwater Capital of India' or the 'Venice of the East', Alleppey is known for its silent backwaters and bountiful beauty.

Seated on the banks of the azure Vembanad Lake, it is in fact one of the most popular backwater destinations in Kerala and one of the highest sought-after tourist places in Kerala. Visited this paradise; enjoyed houseboat cruise and stay, village walks, Ayurvedic therapies and lot more.

The backwaters of Alleppey are dotted with charming villages and hamlets where traditional Kerala life unfolds at a leisurely pace. You can catch glimpses of everyday life as villagers go about their activities like fishing, farming, and coir-making, offering a glimpse into the authentic rural lifestyle of Kerala.

DAY 3 THEKKADY

After staying in the alleppey, next morning we went to thekkady,

Periyar Tiger Reserve: importance and conservation efforts

* Periyar Tiger Reserve is known for its rich biodiversity and stunning landscapes.

* It is a model that not only promotes sustainable tourism but also empowers local communities.

* Local people are a big part of this tourism. They work as guides, hosts, and caretakers of the environment.

- It facilitates cultural exchange between visitors and local communities

It is like a teamwork between nature, people, and visitors.

Management Effectiveness Evaluation:

1. Best Maintained Tiger Reserve

2. MEE (Management Effectiveness Evaluation): Rating: 94.3% (Excellent).

Mean MEE: 89.31% (Very Good).

3. Evaluation Cycle:

This assessment is from the 5th Evaluation Cycle.

4. Comparison with Other Reserves:

Periyar is ranked 1 out of the 51 evaluated reserves.

It is closely followed by the Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

5. Indicators Evaluated.

The evaluation considered 33 indicators across the 51 tiger reserves.

These indicators include aspects such as the Tiger Conservation Plan, availability of trained manpower, and population of threatened species.

6. MEE Rating Over Time:

Since its implementation in 2006, Periyar's MEE ratings have consistently improved:

2006: Good

2010: Very Good

2014: Very Good

2018: Very Good

2022: Excellent

In summary, Periyar Tiger Reserve stands out as a model for effective management and conservation efforts, setting a high standard for other reserves to follow.

Spice gardens and their cultural significance

A spice garden is a fragrant haven filled with a diverse array of aromatic plants, herbs, and spices. These gardens not only delight the senses but also serve as educational resources, showcasing the cultivation and uses of various spices like cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, and more.

Kerala is known for being "the spice garden of India". Located in the Western Ghats, Kerala is a coastal state.

The major locations where these spices are cultivated in Kerala are- Idukki and Wayanad.

History of Spices in Kerala

The people of Egypt and Babylonia were the first importers and door openers for Indian spices in the Middle East.

Subsequently, Arabs stepped into the business of importing and selling Indian spices in Arab countries.

Soon, the Arabs commenced direct trading of spices from Kerala to the Arab countries.

Later on, in 1498 Vasco Da Gama, a Portuguese traveller reached the shore of Calicut in the Western Ghats.

Types of spices

There is a wide variety of Spices grown in Kerala. Not only do these spices enhance the taste of the food, but they also help keep the body healthy and help cure many health-related problems. Ayurveda explicitly encourages the use of these spices for medicinal purposes.

Black pepper, also known as "the king of spices", is recommended to cure medical conditions arising out of deficiency of Vitamins as it is rich in Vitamins. Black pepper is the dried berry of Plant Piper nigrum. It requires a hot and humid climate to grow, exactly what Kerala has.

Cinnamon is beneficial for repairing damaged tissues and helps fight infections. It is extracted from the barks of *Cinnamomum Verum*. The oil extracted from this bark has immense medicinal value and essential components that help heal the wounds and fight fungal infections. Due to warming efficacy, Cinnamon is used as an aphrodisiac.

Turmeric is an extensively used spice which imparts beautiful colour to the food, also helps fight skin infections, acne and boosts our immunity. Turmeric is a natural antiseptic; blood purifier and its commercial uses include dying.

Cardamom “the queen of spices”, helps control blood pressure and improve digestion. It is called so because of its flavour and aroma. The High Ranges of Kerala is the home of Cardamom. Because of its pleasant aroma, it is also used in perfumery.

Similarly, spices like **ginger**, **clove** and **nutmeg** impart aroma and distinct flavour to the food and also helps increase metabolism and cure many skin infections. Nutmeg is used as an important ingredient in toothpaste, face creams and even soaps.

After this we went to Munnar by Bus, we reached there around 9 PM

DAY 4 MUNNAR

In the morning we went to Eravikulam National Park and later kalari kshetra

Eravikulam National Park:

Nestled in the foothills of the Nilgiris in southern India, Eravikulam National Park is a biodiversity hotspot and a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Spread in Kerala, this picturesque sanctuary is renowned for its diverse flora and fauna, including Tea Plantation Nilgiri Tahr, and a myriad of bird species.

The landscape of Eravikulam encompasses lush forests, rolling hills, and meandering streams, creating a perfect habitat for a rich array of wildlife. Visitors can explore the park through guided safaris, which offer a chance to witness the natural beauty and observe the fascinating behaviours of the resident animals.

Eravikulam is part of the larger Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, making it a crucial conservation area for several endangered species. The sanctuary's pristine environment, coupled with its accessibility, makes it a popular destination for eco-tourism and wildlife conservation efforts.

With its captivating scenery and thriving biodiversity, Eravikulam National Park stands as a testament to the importance of preserving natural habitats and provides a rewarding experience for those seeking a close encounter with India's diverse wildlife.

KALARI KSHETHRA MARTIAL ARTS

KALARIPPAYATTU

Kalaripayattu is the traditional martial art form of Kerala which originated around 3000 years ago. It is the oldest known combat style and is known to be the “Mother of martial arts”. Being a quintessential part of ancient Keralites healthy lifestyle, this martial art form perfectly embodies beauty, strength and agility.

The whole course of kalaripayattu can be categorized under 4 sections: -

Mey Payattu (Physical training)

Vadi Payattu (stick combat)

Ayudha payattu (weapon combat)

Adi thada (hand combat).

KATHAKALI

Kathakali is known to be the most eminent among India's classical art forms. The history of this vibrant dance form can be traced back to the 17th century. Kathakali was originated in Kerala. The first form of Kathakali was Ramanattam, which was created by the Raja of Kottarakkara, a princely state in ancient Kerala. This art form is rich with lively acting colourful costumes, soulful music and percussion. The show mainly features episodes from the ancient epics Ramayana and Mahabharatha.

DAY 5 MUNNAR

In the Morning we went to Mattupetty Dam, later on tea museum

Mattupetty Dam

Mattupetty Dam is a popular tourist destination located near Munnar in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. Mattupetty Dam was constructed in the late 1940s to serve multiple purposes, including water storage for hydroelectric projects, irrigation, and as a source of drinking water for nearby areas. The dam is built across the Mattupetty Lake, a reservoir formed by the damming of the tributaries of the Muthirapuzha River.

Adjacent to the dam is the Mattupetty Indo-Swiss Farm, also known as the Mattupetty Dairy Farm. This government-run livestock farm is famous for its specialized dairy farming techniques and the breeding of high-yield cattle, particularly Swiss cows. Visitors can explore the farm and learn about modern dairy farming practices. The area around Mattupetty Dam is home to diverse flora and fauna, including species of birds, butterflies, and small mammals. Birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts can spot several bird species in the vicinity, especially during the early morning and evening hours.

Overall, Mattupetty Dam offers visitors a serene retreat amidst nature's beauty, with its scenic landscapes, boating experiences, and opportunities for exploration and relaxation.

Tea Museum and Garden

The Tea Museum in Munnar is a popular attraction that offers insights into the history and production of tea in the region. We explored various exhibits showcasing the tea-making process, machinery used in tea production, and the history of tea plantations in Munnar. There's also an opportunity to taste different varieties of tea. It's a must-visit for tea enthusiasts and anyone interested in learning about the tea industry in Kerala.

From there we visited tea gardens where workers were plucking leaves of tea. Some tea plantations were being prepared for next term. The slope in the plantations made difficult for us to walk properly. The workers in the field were so cooperative. We had photos there and overall it was a great experience to see tea plants for the first time.

After this we went to Kochi in the evening.

DAY 6 KOCHI

in the morning we went to cherrai beach later we went Kochi fort and in evening Lulu mall.

Cherai beach

Cherai Beach is situated on the Vypin Island, which is one of the many islands forming the city of Kochi. It lies approximately 25 kilometres from Kochi city center and is easily accessible by road. Cherai Beach is renowned for its natural beauty, with pristine golden sands, clear blue waters, and swaying palm trees. The beach offers panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and is known for its tranquil and idyllic ambiance, making it a perfect retreat for relaxation and leisure. Cherai Beach is known for its frequent dolphin sightings, especially during the early hours of the morning. Tourists can take boat trips from the beach to venture into the sea and catch glimpses of playful dolphins frolicking in the waves, adding to the charm of the beach experience. Cherai Beach is known for its cultural diversity, with influences from various communities such as the fishing community, local villagers, and tourists from around the world. Visitors can explore the nearby fishing villages, interact with the locals, and experience the vibrant culture of Kerala's coastal communities.

Kochi Fort

The Kochi Fort is situated in the Fort Kochi neighbourhood, which is a part of the larger city of Kochi. It is located on the southwestern coast of India, overlooking the Arabian Sea. The Kochi Fort has a rich history dating back several centuries. It was originally built by the Portuguese in the early 16th century after they established a settlement in the region. Over the years, the fort

changed hands between the Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial powers, each leaving their mark on its architecture and culture. The architecture of the Kochi Fort reflects its colonial heritage, with influences from Portuguese, Dutch, and British styles. The fort features sturdy walls, bastions, and gateways, along with several historic buildings, churches, and colonial-era structures. Within the Kochi Fort, visitors can explore several notable landmarks and attractions. These include St. Francis Church, which is one of the oldest European churches in India and the burial place of the explorer Vasco da Gama. The Dutch Palace (Mattancherry Palace) is another significant attraction, known for its exquisite Kerala murals and architecture.

Lulu Mall

Lulu Mall is the largest shopping mall in Kerala and one of the largest malls in India, located in the city of Kochi. Lulu Mall Kochi boasts a massive retail space spread across multiple floors, covering an area of over 2.5 million square feet. The mall features a modern and spacious layout, with well-designed corridors, atriums, and concourses that house a diverse range of retail outlets, entertainment facilities, restaurants, and cafes. Lulu Mall Kochi is a premier shopping and entertainment destination in Kerala, offering a modern and upscale retail experience with a wide range of amenities and attractions to cater to the needs and preferences of diverse visitors.

DAY 7 KOCHI

In the morning we went to NGO later Kochi airport to return to Hyderabad

Theruvoram NGO

Theruvoram is an NGO founded by Murukan S Theruvoram, a social worker, for the rehabilitation of street people in Kochi.

It was established in the year 2007. Theruvoram had been in service in the past years without accepting fund or grants from Government and public. Even when our organization is operating in Kochi, we have made our services available all over Kerala. Theruvoram aims to reach out to the most marginalized children and old age people to provide interventions of shelter, medical, repatriation, rescue, death related, sponsorship, emotional support and guidance.

Theruvoram is located in Kochi, which is the commercial capital of Kerala and a major urban center in South India.

Focus Areas: Theruvoram works across various focus areas to address the multifaceted needs of the communities it serves. These include:

Education: Providing access to quality education and educational support programs for underprivileged children, including school infrastructure development, scholarships, and academic mentoring.

Healthcare: Promoting healthcare awareness and providing healthcare services to underserved populations, including medical camps, health screenings, and primary healthcare facilities.

Skill Development: Offering vocational training, skill-building workshops, and livelihood programs to enhance the employability and income-generating capacity of marginalized individuals and communities.

Women's Empowerment: Supporting women's empowerment initiatives through economic empowerment programs, gender sensitization, leadership training, and advocacy for women's rights and equality.

Environment and Sustainability: Promoting environmental conservation, sustainable development practices, and initiatives to address climate change and environmental degradation.

Award

National award for social welfare, in the year 2012 from Honourable President of India Shree Pranab Mukharjee for his honorary service.

Government of Kerala Department of Social Justice Award 2013 May 16 for Special Appreciation of Social Work.

Murukan S Theruvoram won amazing Indian award from the Honourable Prime Minister Of India Shri. Narendra Modi in 2015.

A.P.Asram Prathibha Puraskaram 2016 was presented by Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala on 4th January, 2017 at Muscat Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram.

Transparency and Accountability: The NGO operates with transparency, integrity, and accountability, adhering to best practices in

governance, financial management, and program evaluation. It maintains open communication channels with stakeholders and provides regular updates on its activities and outcomes.

Theruvoram NGO plays a significant role in promoting social justice, inclusion, and human development in Kochi and beyond, striving to create positive change and improve the quality of life for vulnerable communities in the region.

Learning's Carried Over from the visit

1. Tour Management play an important role in execution of a group inclusive tour, we learn how to manage things in a group tour.
2. The healthier familiar relation is the most important phenomenon for every Group inclusive tour. It is necessary to know the in between perception and views of tourists for the successful tour.
3. Learn about their tradition, culture, living style of the people of Kerala.
4. I learned how important it is to be together and maintain unity in order to achieve what we desire. This trip gave me a lifetime experience and shall be cherished for life.
5. I have also acquainted myself with the knowledge of climatic conditions prevailing in Kerala.
6. 14. While on trip we have the opportunity of interacting with different people which helps develop social behaviour and create a social network, contacts & references. It gives us an opportunity to inculcate the habit of travelling alone & in groups and making them more empathetic towards fellow students.

Conclusion

In summary, the Bharat Darshan/Study Tour to Kerala has proven to be a comprehensive and enriching encounter, seamlessly integrating educational aspects with the exploration of culturally vibrant and naturally captivating destinations. Munnar characterized by its tranquil landscapes, tea plantations, and lively gardens, served as a distinctive setting for delving into topics related to biodiversity and environmental conservation. The Tea Factory not only provided valuable insights into nature but also facilitated hands-on experiences, fostering a deeper comprehension of sustainable practices. Conversely, Kochi unfolded as a dynamic tapestry of history and architecture. The Kochi Fort stood as a symbol of the opulence of the Dutch History, while the bustling markets and cultural sites of the city showcased the rich heritage of South India.