

## **My experience and learning**

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I would like to thank you for giving us an opportunity to go to the recently organized trip to Ranganthittu and Anechowkur and other places. I would like to thank Mr. Bhaskar Sir for giving us a chance to attend this wonderful trip. I enjoyed the trip to the core. My review goes like this...

### **THE GIGANTIC MAMMAL - ELEPHANT**

On this trip we learnt a lot about mahouts and about elephants. First we visited the Ranganthittu bird sanctuary, where we saw many birds like open beak stork, spoonbill, Pelican, Storks, Egret etc. Sitting in a boat it felt wonderful to be amongst many colorful birds, chirping, feeding their young ones. We saw three crocodiles in the river. After this we headed towards the elephant camp, after having refreshed at Coorg Public School or COPS, which provided us with excellent food and accommodation.

In the camp we saw the huge elephants and we got to interview the mahouts who told us many things about the elephants. Elephants are bathed twice a day, their tusk is cleaned everyday, given paddy, jaggary and coconut every day. The elephants' legs are oiled with Neem oil as Neem is an antiseptic and heals the wounds made by the chain tied around their legs. Their head is oiled with castor oil to keep them cool. All these things are taken care by the mahouts who stay in forest with their families. These mahouts are basically tribal people who have been doing the work of training the elephants and taking care of them from many years. Their children can now stay at another place and study which was not a facility provided by the government earlier.

After a day of deep study about elephants and mahouts we learnt about the biodiversity of the region and the vast ocean of trees in the surrounding National park. In the talk we learnt that there are 28 different habitats in Coorg. They are evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous forest, woody forests, light forests, grasslands, sholas, hill slopes, cliffs, bamboo jungles, scrub jungles, open country etc. There are 1260 bird species in India and 520 in Karnataka and 312 of them in Coorg!

Next day we went to nisargadhama where we got to ride on an elephant! We also had a trip arranged to the coffee estate at Coorg. We learnt how coffee was grown and how they were picked washed and processed.

The most anticipated moment of our trip was the live connection to the Museum at North Carolina. Firstly it was great to see Madam Jane Goodall on the screen. Immediately after that Mr. Bhaskar connected with other three researchers and it was a great moment to listen to such interesting work from the farthest corner of the world. I was particularly lucky to be part of such a momentous occasion and adapting technology to collaborate.