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# THROUGH HILLS & VALES

**Kavitha Reddy and 14 others explore little-known areas of Coorg**

**T**hree boys, three men and nine women set out on the Greater Coorg Adventure Trails, a trek of around 70 km, starting from the base of Kotebetta (1,620 metres) to Vanachalu, which is about 255 km from Bangalore.

This eclectic bunch of trekkers, with loaded backpacks, faced many an obstacle - hills, slopes, rocks, streams, rain forest, plantations and water falls - before they accomplished their task in four days.

We began the trek at 10 am, and after an arduous climb, around 2.30 pm, we scaled the beautiful and rocky Kotebetta, the third highest peak in Coorg.

After a well-deserved lunch break, we headed down to our first night camp. While the steep descent sent shivers down our spines, the pressure on our knees slowed us down. As it got darker, we decided to camp atop a small hillock, where we had hot khichdi by the campfire. A good night's sleep was all everyone needed.

Chill winds woke us out of our slumber in the morning. Most of us were unprepared to trek, blame it on the gruelling walk the previous day. The target was to reach the Kaloor camp area by 3 pm, but we managed to arrive there only at 6



pm. Both hungry and tired, we had thought of having lunch en route, but reaching a camp site before nightfall was our priority.

Covered by mist and surrounded in green, Kaloor campsite, which was by a stream, was a beautiful sight to behold in the morning. As Meg, one of the teammates, said, it looked more like Scotland. Indeed! Camping at Kaloor was fun. While the morning dew made the tents wet, it became even more colder as the day progressed.

Since all of us were exhausted, we decided the next day would be the last day of our trek. We began early, climbed some seven hillocks and trekked through the dense jungle downhill despite our knees and shoulders protesting.

Yet, we had smiles on our faces and the patience to click

pictures or crack jokes. I guess that is what adventure is all about - driving yourself to the extreme, living on the edge and enjoying the adrenaline rush.

As we reached the day three campsite, we felt greatly relieved. There was also a sense of achievement that we could push ourselves through a tough terrain and inhospitable conditions. After bullying our guide Kumar to get some eggs and all that we could not have in the last few days, from the market that was 10-15 km away, we prepared for the final camp. Some of us braved the freezing waters and had a shower under the falls nearby. After a long campfire, dinner and a session of jokes, we retired only to wake up next morning to say goodbye.

A special mention must be made of Oscar who helped us carry the garbage back from each camp till the final camp, where it could be properly disposed, making the entire trail clean.

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