

**FOUNDATION TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ASOs IN THE
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT SERVICE FOR THE CGLE-2023**

**A STUDY TOUR REPORT
ON
BHARAT DARSHAN**

Submitted by

**AJUMAL. A (A-14)
ASO IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

Under the guidance of

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NABET Accredited Excellent (उत्कृष्ट) Institute

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Acknowledgement:

At the outset, I would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the Department of Personnel and Training for giving this unique opportunity to participate in the mandatory training programme at the MCRHRD Institute of Telangana. I would also like to convey my sincere thanks to Smt. Usha Rani, Course Director, MCRHRD for giving great support.

We are highly indebted to Mr.SakaVenkateshwaraRao, Senior Faculty and Bharat Darshan Coordinator for his guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the project & also for his support in completing the project.

This was a unique experience to work as a group during the visit to Kerala. I enjoyed the study tour and learned many things during the NGO attachment and Tea Factory Visit as well.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director General, MCRHRD for providing all necessary support for successful completion of this study tour.

Objective of the Tour:

As part of the mandatory ISTM Phase-1 Foundation Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) of 2023 Batch, 01-week Bharat Darshan was organized from 28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024 at Kerala under the guidance of Dr.SakaVenkateshwaraRao, Senior Faculty (FTP).

There were 61 participants from different Ministries participating in this Training Programme. This study tour was part of the Training Programme and has following objectives: -

- **To expose the Trainees to research and development work being done by the NGO;**
- **To familiarize the trainees with India's rich cultural heritage and arts;**
- **To develop team spirit, time management, management of crisis and adaptability to various odd situations.**

Bharat Darshan Group-3

(Hyderabad -Thiruvananthpuram-Alleppy-Veli village- Munnar-Kochi-Hyderabad)

Day 1 (28th April,2024)

- Reached Thiruvnananthpuram airport at 7.30 A.M
- From the Airport directly travelled to Padmanabhaswamy temple and reached at 8.15 A.M
- Visited the diety and the shrine till 2.30 P.M
- Reached the Hotel at around 3.00 P.M
- Visited Velli village at around 6.00 P.M
- Reached Back Hotel at 8.00 P.M

Day 2 (29th April,2024)

- Left the Hotel for Alleppy at 8.30 A.M
- Reached Alleppy (Allapuzzha) at 1.30 P.M
- Cruise started at 2.00 P.M
- Tour ended at 5.30 P.M
- Reached the pagoda Resort at 7.00 P.M

Day 3 (30th April,2024)

- Departed from Alleppy at around 8.00 A.M
- Reached Thekuddy in the Afternoon
- Visited Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary by Boat in the afternoon
- Visited Spice Plantation area in the Evening
- Left for Munnar at 6.00 P.M
- Reached Munnar at 10.00 P.M

Day 4 (01st May, 2024)

- Depart for sightseeing around Munnar at 8.00 A.M
- Visited Eravikulam National Park
- Visited Kurinji Trail
- Visited the tea estates plantations in Munnar
- Watched the local Martial Arts Program “kalaripattu”

- Reached Back to the Hotel

Day 5 (02nd May,2024)

- Departed from Munnar early Morning
- Visited Matupetty Dam
- Visited Tata Tea Museum
- Drive to Thrissur and reached The Hotel
- Visited Trichur Krishna Temple and Church
- Visited Gurvayur Temple in the evening
- Night Stay at Thrissur

Day 6 (03rd May,2024)

- Depart from Thrissur for Kochin
- Arrived Kochin at afternoon
- Visited Kochi Fort
- Visited Mattancherry Palace

Day 7 (04th May, 2024)

- Checked out from the hotel in the early Morning after the visit of Ngo Members
- Visited Therovuram
- Met the Members and learnt about the working of the NGO
- Left the NGO and reached a Local market and learnt about the local things
- Reached the Kochi Airport at 6.00 P.M
- Arrived Hyderabad MCR HRD IT at 12.30 A.m at 5.00 P.M

1.ShreePadmanabhaswamy Temple

Located inside the East Fort in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of the State of Kerala in India is the SreePadmanabhaSwamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. This temple is a blend of the Kerala and Dravidian styles of architecture. It is believed to be the world's richest temple.

The history of SreePadmanabhaswamy Temple dates back to 8th century. It is one of the 108 sacred Vishnu temples or *DivyaDesams* in India. *DivyaDesams* are the holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu that are mentioned in the works of the Tamil Azhvars (saints). The presiding deity of this temple is Lord Vishnu, reclining on *Anantha*, the hooded Serpent.





2.Veli Village

The Veli Tourist Village which lies where the Veli Lake meets the Arabian Sea provides for unique boating and picnicking opportunities. Visitors can hire pedal boats or paddleboats as per their convenience. One can also roam the gardens and have a nice picnic or choose to employ the boats for the entire duration of the trip.

Veli Village is a famous tourist destination located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. It's renowned for its picturesque beauty and serene surroundings. One of its main attractions is the Veli Lake, which is surrounded by lush greenery and offers boating facilities.



3. Alleppey Lake Backwaters

Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha, is a picturesque town in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Known for its intricate network of backwaters, lagoons, and canals, Alleppey offers a unique glimpse into the traditional lifestyle of Kerala. Here are some observations one might make while exploring Alleppey:

1. **Backwater Tranquility:** One of the most striking features of Alleppey is its serene backwaters. Visitors often observe the calmness of the waterways, with traditional houseboats gently gliding through the labyrinth of canals, surrounded by lush greenery and coconut palms.
2. **Houseboat Culture:** Houseboats are an integral part of Alleppey's tourism. Travelers may notice the variety of houseboats, ranging from luxurious to budget-friendly options, each offering a chance to experience life on the water.
3. **Vibrant Flora and Fauna:** The backwaters of Alleppey are teeming with life. Observers may spot a wide array of bird species, including kingfishers, herons, and egrets, as well as fish and other aquatic creatures thriving in the ecosystem.
4. **Traditional Architecture:** Alleppey showcases traditional Kerala architecture, with many homes and buildings featuring sloping roofs, wooden exteriors, and intricate carvings. Some visitors may choose to stay in heritage homestays to experience this authentic architecture up close.
5. **Cultural Richness:** The town is also rich in cultural heritage, evident in its temples, churches, and festivals. Observers may witness local rituals, music, and dance forms that reflect the vibrant culture of Kerala.
6. **Thriving Markets:** Alleppey's markets are a bustling hub of activity, offering a wide range of goods, including fresh produce, spices, handicrafts, and souvenirs. Visitors often enjoy exploring these markets to get a taste of local life and to pick up unique items.
7. **Relaxing Beaches:** Alleppey is also known for its beautiful beaches, such as Alappuzha Beach and Marari Beach. Observers may notice the soft golden sands, swaying palm trees, and gentle waves, providing the perfect setting for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Overall, Alleppey offers a blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and leisure activities, making it a must-visit destination for travelers seeking an authentic Kerala experience.





4. Periyar Tiger Reserve

Periyar Tiger Reserve, located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India, is a haven for wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers. Here are some observations one might make while exploring this pristine wilderness:

1. **Lush Forests:** The reserve is characterized by dense evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, creating a lush green canopy that stretches as far as the eye can see. Visitors may marvel at the biodiversity of plant species, including towering trees, exotic ferns, and colorful orchids.
2. **Wildlife Encounters:** Periyar is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including the majestic Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, sambar deer, gaur (Indian bison), langur monkeys, and Malabar giant squirrels, among others. Observers may have the opportunity to spot these animals in their natural habitat during safaris or guided nature walks.
3. **Scenic Beauty:** The landscape of Periyar Tiger Reserve is stunning, with rolling hills, cascading waterfalls, and meandering rivers adding to its scenic beauty. Visitors may observe breathtaking vistas from vantage points within the reserve, offering panoramic views of the surrounding wilderness.
4. **Periyar Lake:** The centerpiece of the reserve is Periyar Lake, a large artificial lake created by the construction of the Mullaperiyar Dam. Observers may see the tranquil waters of the lake reflecting the lush greenery of the surrounding forest, while also serving as a vital water source for wildlife.
5. **Boat Safaris:** One of the unique experiences offered at Periyar Tiger Reserve is boat safaris on Periyar Lake. Visitors can observe wildlife from the comfort of a boat, with opportunities to spot animals coming to the water's edge for drinking or bathing, as well as numerous bird species inhabiting the lake and its shores.
6. **Conservation Efforts:** Observers may notice the conservation initiatives undertaken within the reserve, aimed at protecting its rich biodiversity and ensuring the sustainability of its ecosystems. These efforts may include anti-poaching measures, habitat restoration projects, and community-based conservation programs.
7. **Cultural Experiences:** Periyar Tiger Reserve is not only a wildlife sanctuary but also a cultural melting pot, with indigenous tribal communities living in the surrounding areas. Visitors may have the chance to interact with these communities, learning about their traditional way of life, cultural practices, and unique relationship with the forest.

Overall, Periyar Tiger Reserve offers a captivating blend of wildlife, natural beauty, and cultural heritage, providing a memorable experience for anyone venturing into its pristine wilderness.



5. Eravikulam National Park

Eravikulam National Park, located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India, is renowned for its biodiversity, particularly its population of endangered Nilgiritahr, an endemic mountain goat species. Here are some observations one might make while exploring Eravikulam:

1. **NilgiriTahr:** The park is home to the largest population of Nilgiritahr in the world, and visitors are likely to spot these agile creatures grazing on the grassy slopes of the hills. During the breeding season, observers may witness male tahr engaging in impressive displays of dominance.
2. **Grassy Hillside:** Eravikulam is characterized by vast expanses of grasslands interspersed with shola forests, creating a unique ecosystem known as 'grass hills'. Visitors may enjoy the panoramic views of these rolling hillsides, which are especially scenic during the monsoon season when the landscape turns lush green.
3. **Floral Diversity:** The park is also home to a rich variety of plant species, including rare orchids, rhododendrons, and endemic flora such as Neelakurinji, which blooms once every twelve years, covering the hillsides in a breathtaking carpet of blue-purple flowers.
4. **Wildlife Sightings:** Apart from Nilgiritahr, Eravikulam is inhabited by other wildlife species such as sambar deer, Indian muntjac, langur monkeys, and a variety of bird species including the Nilgiri pipit and the black-and-orange flycatcher. Observers may have the opportunity to spot these animals during treks or safaris within the park.
5. **Anamudi Peak:** The park is crowned by Anamudi, the highest peak in South India, which stands at an elevation of 2,695 meters (8,842 feet). Observers may catch glimpses of this majestic peak towering over the surrounding landscape, providing a stunning backdrop to the park's natural beauty.
6. **Conservation Efforts:** Eravikulam National Park is actively involved in the conservation of its unique biodiversity, particularly the Nilgiritahr. Observers may notice the park's conservation initiatives, including habitat restoration, anti-poaching measures, and community-based conservation programs aimed at safeguarding the park's fragile ecosystems.
7. **Visitor Facilities:** The park offers well-maintained trekking trails and visitor facilities, including an interpretive center where visitors can learn more about the park's flora, fauna, and conservation efforts. Observers may also appreciate the efforts taken to minimize the ecological impact of tourism within the park.

Overall, Eravikulam National Park offers a fascinating blend of biodiversity, scenic beauty, and conservation efforts, making it a must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts and wildlife lovers alike.





6. Kurunji Trail

The Kurunji Trail is a trekking route located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India. It's named after the Kurinji flower (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), which blooms in abundance along the trail once every twelve years, painting the hillsides with a mesmerizing shade of blue.

Overall, the Kurunji Trail offers a memorable trekking experience that combines natural beauty, biodiversity, and cultural immersion, making it a must-visit destination for adventurers and nature lovers alike.



7. Tea Estates of Eravikulam National Park

The tea estates around Eravikulam National Park are part of the Munnar region, which is famous for its tea plantations. Munnar is one of the largest tea-producing regions in India, and its picturesque tea estates attract tourists from all over the world.

Visitors to Eravikulam National Park often combine their trip with a visit to the nearby tea estates to experience the tea-making process firsthand and enjoy panoramic views of the rolling hills carpeted with tea bushes. Many estates offer guided tours where visitors can learn about the cultivation, plucking, and processing of tea leaves, as well as sample different varieties of freshly brewed tea.

8. Kalaripayattu Martial Arts

Kalaripayattu is an ancient Indian martial art that originated in Kerala, South India, and is often regarded as one of the oldest fighting systems in existence. The name "Kalaripayattu" is derived from the Malayalam words "Kalari," which means battlefield, and "Payattu," which means training or practice. It encompasses a comprehensive system of physical training, self-defense techniques, and weaponry skills.

In addition to its martial aspect, Kalaripayattu is also considered a form of cultural heritage and spiritual practice in Kerala. It is often performed as part of religious festivals, cultural events, and theatrical performances, showcasing its rich cultural significance and artistic expression.

Today, Kalaripayattu continues to thrive as both a martial art and a fitness regimen, attracting practitioners and enthusiasts from around the world who seek to learn its techniques, philosophy, and traditions.



9. Spice Plantation

One of the most famous regions for spice plantations is Kerala, India, known as the "Spice Garden of India." Kerala's rich soil and favorable climate make it ideal for growing a wide variety of spices, including pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and turmeric, among others.

Spice plantations are agricultural areas where various spices are cultivated, typically in tropical or subtropical regions around the world. These plantations are not only places of agricultural production but also serve as tourist attractions, offering visitors an opportunity to learn about the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of spices while immersing themselves in the lush greenery and aromatic atmosphere of the plantations.



10. Matupetty Dam

Matupetty Dam is a popular tourist destination located near Munnar in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. It is situated at an altitude of about 1,700 meters above sea level and is surrounded by picturesque hills, lush tea gardens, and dense forests, offering breathtaking views of the Western Ghats.

The dam was constructed in the late 1940s for hydroelectric power generation and water storage purposes. It is built across the Matupetty River, a tributary of the Periyar River, and is a key source of water for irrigation in the region.



11.Tata Tea Museum

The Tata Tea Museum is a popular tourist attraction located in Munnar, Kerala, India. It is situated within the Nallathanni Estate, which belongs to the Tata Group, one of India's largest business conglomerates. The museum provides visitors with insights into the history and evolution of the tea industry in the region, particularly focusing on the cultivation and processing of tea.

Apart from the exhibits, the museum offers panoramic views of the surrounding tea estates and the picturesque landscapes of Munnar. Visitors can stroll through the lush tea gardens surrounding the museum and enjoy the tranquility of the surroundings.



12.Sadya (Recipe):

Sadya is a traditional vegetarian feast from the South Indian state of Kerala, often served on special occasions like weddings, festivals, and other celebrations. It's a grand meal that typically features an array of dishes served on a banana leaf.

The centerpiece of a Sadya is usually rice, served with a variety of accompaniments, both savory and sweet. Here are some of the key dishes commonly found in a Sadya:

1. Rice (usually served in the center of the banana leaf)
2. Parippu (lentil curry), made with moong dal or toor dal, flavored with spices like cumin, mustard seeds, and curry leaves.
3. Sambar, a tangy and spicy lentil-based vegetable stew, often containing drumsticks, pumpkin, carrots, and other vegetables.
4. Rasam, a spicy and tangy soup made with tamarind, tomatoes, and spices like pepper, cumin, and garlic.
5. Avial, a mixed vegetable curry cooked in coconut paste and seasoned with curry leaves and coconut oil.
6. Thoran, stir-fried vegetables (often cabbage, beans, or carrots) mixed with grated coconut and spices.
7. Olan, a mild and creamy curry made with ash gourd (white pumpkin), coconut milk, and black-eyed peas.
8. Pachadi, a yogurt-based dish made with vegetables like cucumber or beetroot, seasoned with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and green chilies.
9. Pickles and chutneys, typically mango pickle, lime pickle, or ginger pickle, along with coconut chutney.
10. Payasam, a sweet dessert made with vermicelli, rice, or lentils cooked in milk or coconut milk, sweetened with jaggery or sugar, and flavored with cardamom, saffron, and nuts.



14. Kochi Fort

Kochi Fort, also known as Fort Kochi, is a historic fortification located in the coastal city of Kochi (Cochin), in the state of Kerala, India. It holds significant historical importance due to its strategic location and its role in the colonial history of India.

. Some of the key attractions within the fort include:

1. St. Francis Church: Built by the Portuguese in 1503, this church is one of the oldest European churches in India and is famous for being the burial place of the explorer Vasco da Gama.
2. Vasco da Gama Square: A historic square named after the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, featuring a prominent statue of him.
3. Dutch Cemetery: Located near St. Francis Church, this cemetery is a testament to Kochi's Dutch colonial past and contains the graves of several Dutch settlers.



15. Organisation for the Development of People, NGO (Theruvoram)

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

THERUVU VELLICHAM has rehabilitated around 1,356 people since inception, which would amount to a year and a half in time span.

THERUVU VELLICHAM is the only organization which provides shelter for the destitute as well as the homeless; regardless of age, gender or any other form of discrimination even when there are 194 other orphanages and shelter homes located in Ernakulam district.



16. Kochin Market

Look for spicy dishes flavoured with tamarind and coconut in Kochi, and don't be surprised if your dinner is served up on a banana leaf. The region is a major banana-growing area, and traditional Kochi cuisine employs the fruit in many dishes, both sweet and savoury. Coconut water provides a refreshing and sweet contrast to the piquant food.



Conclusion and Learnings

The study tour was a memorable and enriching experience for all of us. We learned a lot about the diversity and unity of India, the history and culture of different regions, the ecology and biodiversity of different ecosystems, the development and governance of different states, and the challenges and opportunities of different sectors. We also developed our skills and competencies in team work, time management, crisis management and adaptability. We also made some lifelong friends and memories.

Some of the key learnings from the tour are:

- India is a land of contrasts and contradictions, where the ancient and the modern, the rural and the urban, the rich and the poor, the traditional and the contemporary coexist and interact.
- India has a rich and glorious history and culture, which is reflected in its monuments, temples, forts, palaces, museums, art, literature, music, dance, festivals, cuisine and customs.
- India has a diverse and rich ecology and biodiversity, which is manifested in its forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, deserts, islands, coasts, wetlands, grasslands and wildlife.

The study tour was a valuable and enjoyable part of our cadre training programme. We are grateful and thankful to the MCR HRDIT, the Course Director, the Study Tour Committee, and Officials for making this tour possible and successful. We are also thankful to our fellow participants for making this tour fun and friendly. We hope to apply and share our learnings and experiences from this tour in our future work and life. We also hope to visit these places again and explore more of our

incredible India

Jai Hind!