

Report on Bharat Darshan Study Tour Held from
28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024

Prepared by –

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Acknowledgement:

I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Department of Personnel and Training for granting us the valuable opportunity to take part in the compulsory training program at the MCRHRD Institute of Telangana. Additionally, sincere thanks are extended to Smt. Usha Rani, the Course Director at MCRHRD, for her unwavering support.

Our gratitude extends to Mr. Sukumar Rao, Senior Faculty and Bharat Darshan Coordinator, for his invaluable guidance, continuous supervision, and provision of essential project-related information, as well as for his assistance in project completion.

Participating in the group activities during the visit to Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karnataka was an enriching experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the study tour and gained valuable insights during the NGO attachment and the Tea-cum-Chocolate Factory Visit.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to the Director General of MCRHRD for their indispensable support in ensuring the successful completion of this study tour. I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff members of MCRHRD IT for their dedication and hard work that make my stay in MCRHRD IT comfortable and wonderful.

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 Tamil Nadu-Puducherry-Karnataka under the guidance of Dr. Sukumar Rao, 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: -

The objectives of a study tour typically include:

1. Learning Experience: To provide participants with an opportunity to gain practical knowledge and insights beyond what can be learned in a classroom or through traditional means.
2. Experiential Learning: To allow participants to engage in hands-on activities, visit relevant sites, and interact with professionals in their field of study, facilitating experiential learning.
3. Cultural Immersion: To expose participants to different cultures, traditions, and ways of life, fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity.
4. Enhanced Understanding: To deepen participants' understanding of theoretical concepts by observing real-world applications and case studies.
5. Personal Development: To promote personal growth, confidence-building, and independence by navigating new environments, overcoming challenges, and adapting to unfamiliar situations.
6. Skill Development: To develop practical skills, such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership, through participation in group activities and projects.
7. Critical Thinking: To encourage critical thinking and analysis by exploring diverse perspectives, challenging assumptions, and evaluating different approaches to issues and problems.
8. Evaluation and Reflection: To encourage participants to reflect on their experiences, evaluate their learning outcomes, and identify areas for further development or improvement.

Schedule of Study Tour & NGO attachment

The study tour organized by MCRHRD for as part of the mandatory ISTM Phase-1 Foundation Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) of 2023- Batch, from 28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024 at Tamil Nadu-Puducherry-Karnataka as per the following details:-

➤ **DAY 01: 28th APRIL 2024: HYDERABAD – CHENNAI (BY FLIGHT) – MAHABALIPURAM - PONDICHERRY**

10:00 AM: Depart from Hyderabad (27 OTs – BY INDIGO)

10:55 AM: Depart from Hyderabad (35 OTs – BY AIR-INDIA EXPRESS)

11:30 AM: Arrival in Chennai Airport (27 OTs – BY INDIGO)

12:15 PM: Arrival in Chennai Airport (35 OTs – BY AIR-INDIA EXPRESS)

12:30 PM: Depart For Mahabalipuram by Bus

01:30 PM: Enroute Lunch at Local Restaurant.

03:00 PM: Proceed to Mahabalipuram and visit Sea shore Temple, Five Rathas & Arjuna Penance.

06:00 PM: Proceed to Pondicherry and check in to the hotel.

08:00 PM: Dinner at the hotel & Overnight stay at Pondicherry.

➤ **DAY 02: 29TH APRIL 2024: PONDICHERRY**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Visit Auroville

12:00 Noon: Visit French Colonies.

01:30 PM: Lunch at Restaurant

06:00 PM: Pondicherry Beach

08:00 PM: Dinner & Overnight stay at Pondicherry.

➤ **DAY 03: 30TH APRIL 2024: PONDICHERRY – ADIYOGI - COIMBATORE**

07:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Check out & Departure to Pondicherry Mangrove Forest

10:00 AM: Visit Pondicherry Mangrove Forest

02:00 PM: Departure to Coimbatore

03:00 PM: lunch at Restaurant

11:00 PM: Check in to Hotel & Overnight stay in Coimbatore.

➤ **DAY 04: 01ST MAY 2024: COIMBATORE – COONOOR - OOTY**

06:00 AM: Visit to Adiyogi.

10:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel

12:00 Noon: Departure to Ooty.

02:30 PM: Lunch in Local Restaurant in Ooty

07:00 PM: Check in Hotel in ooty.

08:00 PM: Dinner & Overnight stay at Ooty with Party games & Dinner.

➤ **DAY 05: 02ND MAY 2024: OOTY**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Visit Dodabetta Peak

01:00 PM: Lunch at Restaurant

02:30 PM: Visit Tea Factory & Tea Museum

04:00 PM: Boating at ooty Lake.

07:00 PM: Back to Hotel. Dinner & Overnight stay at Ooty.

➤ **DAY 06: 03RD MAY 2024: OOTY – MYSORE**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Departure from Mysore

11:00AM: Enroute visit Pykara Lake & Dam.

01:30 PM: Lunch at Restaurant

06:00 PM: Arrive Mysore & Check in at Hotel.

07:00 PM: Free for Shopping in Mysore

09:00 PM: Back to Hotel. Dinner & Overnight stay at Mysore Hotel.

➤ **DAY 07: 04TH MAY 2024: MYSORE – BANGALORE (BY ROAD) / BANGALORE – HYDERABAD (FLIGHT)**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Visit Chamundi Hills, Mysore Maharaja Palace

01:00 PM: Lunch at Local Restaurant & Departure from Mysore.

06:30 PM: Arrive Bangalore & Drop in Airport (Full Group Departure in the Same Flight)

08:50 PM: Depart by Air-India Express Airlines to Hyderabad.

10:05 PM: Arrive at Hyderabad Airport.

Visit to Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu:-

Shore Temple (Mahabalipuram)

The Shore Temple is a remarkable example of ancient South Indian temple architecture located in Mahabalipuram, also known as Mamallapuram, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal in Tamil Nadu, India. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is considered one of the oldest structural stone temples in South India, dating back to the 8th century AD, during the reign of the Pallava dynasty.

The temple complex is primarily dedicated to Lord Shiva and Vishnu, with shrines dedicated to both deities. What makes the Shore Temple unique is its location right on the edge of the sea, with crashing waves of the Bay of Bengal providing a stunning backdrop. Over the centuries, the temple has endured the erosive forces of wind and water, adding to its mystique and charm.

Architecturally, the Shore Temple follows the Dravidian style of temple architecture, characterized by its pyramidal tower (shikhara) and intricate carvings. The temple is built using granite blocks, intricately carved with sculptures depicting various scenes from Hindu mythology, including gods, goddesses, and celestial beings. The temple complex also includes a large courtyard and smaller shrines surrounding the main sanctum.

Visitors to the Shore Temple can witness breathtaking sunrises and sunsets over the Bay of Bengal, making it not only a religious site but also a popular tourist destination. The temple's serene ambiance, coupled with its historical significance and architectural grandeur, continues to attract visitors from around the world, making it an integral part of India's cultural heritage.



Krishna's Butterball (Mahabalipuram)

The Krishna's butterball is a giant balancing rock, 5 meters in diameter, perched on a smooth slope, seemingly defying all laws of physics. It weighs over 250 tons and miraculously stands on an extremely small, slippery area of a hill.

This monolithic granite rock found in Mahabalipuram, India. Its original name is Vaan Irai Kal. In Tamil language, the original language of the land, it means "Stone of The Sky God".

The rock is balanced upon a 4 feet area of the hill and is perilously resting at an angle of 45 degrees. The base of the rock is firmly attached to the hill below. This rock is bigger and heavier than the monolithic stones of Ollantaytambo, Peru. It is also much bigger than the rocks found in the mysterious Machu Picchu.

In Hindu mythology Lord Krishna had an insatiable appetite for butter, and as a child, would often sneak a handful from his mother's butter jar. Situated on a hill slope near the Ganesh Ratha this massive natural rock boulder is attributed to a bolus of butter the young Krishna would steal.

It's a common sight to see visitors placing hands under the stone posing for pics, which looks as though they are holding it! The rock provides welcome shade if you dare to sit underneath it, and local kids have discovered that the slippery nearby hillside also makes a great natural slide.



Pancha Rathas (Mahabalipuram)



The Pancha Rathas (also known as Five Rathas or Pandava Rathas or Ainthinai kovil) is a monument complex at Mahabalipuram, on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal, in the Kancheepuram district of the state of Tamil Nadu, India. Pancha Rathas is an example of monolithic Indian rock-cut architecture. The complex was initially thought to have carved during the reign of King Narasimhavarman I (630–668 CE.) However, historians such as Nagaswamy attributed all of monuments in Mahabalipuram to Narasimhavarman II (c. 690–725 CE) with the discovery of new inscriptions. The complex is under the auspices of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage site inscribed by UNESCO as Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram.

Each of the five monuments in the Pancha Rathas complex resembles a chariot (ratha), and each is carved over a single, long stone or monolith, of granite which slopes in north–south direction with a slight incline. Though sometimes mistakenly referred to as temples, the structures were never consecrated because they were never completed following the death of Narasimhavarman I. The structures are named after the Pancha Pandavas and their common wife Draupadi, of epic Mahabharata fame. In order of their size, they include the Dharmaraja Ratha, Bhima Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Nakula Sahadeva Ratha, and Draupadi Ratha.

Visit to Puducherry:-

Auroville (Puducherry)

Auroville is a universal township in the making for a population of up to 50,000 people from around the world. The concept of Auroville - an ideal township devoted to an experiment in human unity - came to the Mother as early as the 1930s. In the mid 1960s, the concept was developed and put before the Govt. of India, who gave their backing and took it to the General Assembly of UNESCO. In 1966 UNESCO passed a unanimous resolution commending it as a project of importance to the future of humanity, thereby giving their full encouragement.

The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity – in diversity. Today Auroville is recognised as the first and only internationally endorsed ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness, also concerned with - and practically researching into - sustainable living and the future cultural, environmental, social and spiritual needs of mankind.



At the centre stands the Matrimandir, the "soul of the city", a place for individual silent concentration, in an oval shaped Peace Area surrounded by a lake. Radiating out beyond the lake are four Zones - the Industrial (north), Cultural (north east), Residential (south/south west) and International (west) - each focusing on an important aspect of the town's life. Surrounding the township will be a Green Belt consisting of forested areas, farms and sanctuaries.

Paradise Beach(Puducherry)

Paradise beach is a great spot to reach early morning and get a view of the sunrise on the eastern coast. A variety of water sports facilities are available here as well. The travellers can try fishing as well. Fishing rods and nets are easily available for rent.

It's a place for family picnics, solo travellers or if you looking for a quiet time by yourself.

The island is very well maintained, the shore is clean and water is calm, with soft waves. There is changing rooms and toilets on the island. Also few shacks serve quick bites and lunch. You can also carry home cooked food and beers.

The shore is quite vast, so do carry things to entertain, good place to play football, Frisbee or just a run. The place has lots of palm trees so one can relax and take out their picnic bags for lunch, can easily spend 3 – 4 hours. Best time to go is in the first half of the day.



Some other tourist places visited in and around the Pondicherry:-

- Mangrove Kayaking Forest
- French Colony
- Arts and Crafts Village
- Arikamedu (Historical Site)





Adi Yogi (Coimbatore)

Adiyogi Statue: The centerpiece of the premises is the 112-foot-tall Adiyogi statue, a mesmerizing depiction of Lord Shiva as the first yogi. The statue's striking presence captivates visitors and serves as a focal point for meditation and introspection.

Surrounding Landscape: The Adiyogi premises are surrounded by lush greenery and scenic landscapes, creating a tranquil atmosphere conducive to inner exploration and relaxation. Visitors can take leisurely strolls amidst nature or find quiet spots for contemplation.

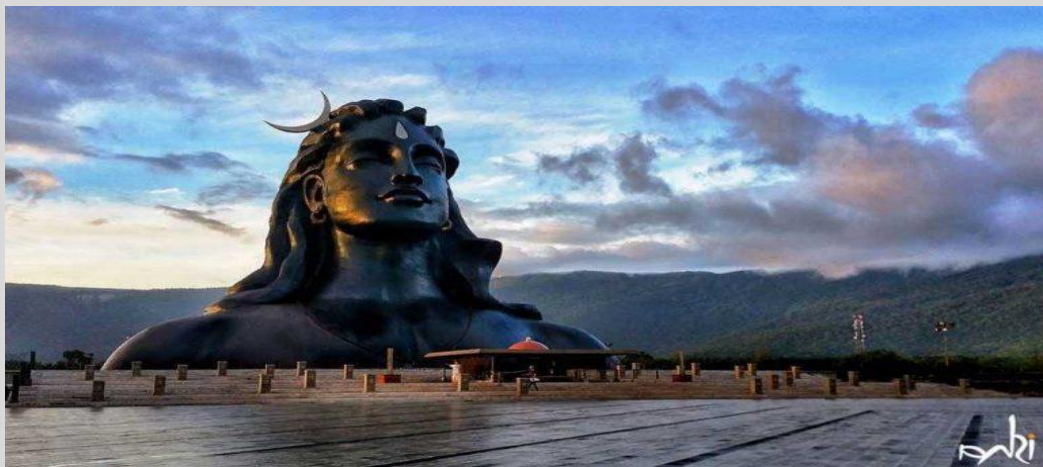
Yoga Spaces: The premises include dedicated spaces for practicing yoga and meditation. These may include open-air yoga platforms, meditation halls, and tranquil alcoves where visitors can engage in various yogic practices under the guidance of trained instructors.

Visitor Facilities: Facilities such as restrooms, seating areas, and informational displays are provided to enhance the visitor experience. Additionally, there may be amenities like cafes or souvenir shops where visitors can relax and purchase mementos of their visit.

Educational Resources: Informational displays, signage, and multimedia presentations may be available to educate visitors about the significance of Adiyogi, the history of yoga, and the teachings of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev.

Programs and Events: The Adiyogi premises often host a variety of programs, workshops, and events related to yoga, meditation, spirituality, and holistic well-being. These offerings cater to individuals of all ages and backgrounds seeking personal growth and transformation.

Overall, the Adiyogi premises provide a sacred space for seekers to connect with the essence of yoga, delve into their inner selves, and experience profound moments of peace and self-discovery amidst the beauty of nature.



Visit to Ooty:-

Doddabetta Peak(Ooty):-

Doddabetta Peak is the highest mountain peak in the Nilgiri Mountains at 2,637 meters (8,652 feet) .

It is located in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu, India, and is 9 km from Ooty on the Ooty-Kotagiri Road .

The term Doddabetta means Big Mountain in Badaga language. It is a combination of two words Dodda meaning big and Betta which means mountain

Cultural significance

The peak is frequently visited by travel aficionados interested in outdoor pursuits like trekking and is a top place to visit in Ooty for nature and adventure lovers.

Ecology and biodiversity

The slopes of Doddabetta are covered with thick shola thickets. Shola are a unique type of tropical montane forests that grow on higher mountain regions. These broad-leaved forests interspersed with montane grasslands are a retreat to the eyes of the visitors.

Tourism and recreation

Doddabetta Peak is a top place to visit in Ooty for nature and adventure lovers.

The peak is frequently visited by travel aficionados interested in outdoor pursuits like trekking.

Tourists move up to the summit to enjoy the inspiring sunrise and sunset. Bird watching is another activity visitors get engaged in provided they reach the peak early morning.

Telescope House- There is an observatory at the top of Doddabetta with two telescopes available for the public. It was opened on 18 June 1983 and is run by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC)



The Tea Factory & The Tea Museum

A Glimpse into the Past:

The Nilgiris is one of the pioneers in tea production and export. Railway lines were built to transport tea from Nilgiris to Cochin. A large number of Indians are ardent lovers of this beverage which originated in China.

Origin:

The Ooty tea factory situated four kilometres away from Ooty city also has a tea museum. By visiting the factory, you will get to learn on the history of tea in India and its evolution in the Nilgiris hills. It will also tell you about the origin of different kinds of tea leaves used across the world.

Where it Stands

The Tea Factory & Museum is situated on Doddabetta Road in Ooty, amidst the blue hills of Nilgiris.



Ooty Lake

A Glimpse into the Past

- Ooty Lake is an artificial lake constructed by John Sullivan in 1824.
- The lake was originally intended to be used for fishing with ferries being used to travel across the lake.
- The lake is an impressive spot in Nilgiris district.
- The lake spans over 65 acres.

Ecology and biodiversity

- **Flora**
 - i. The lake is surrounded by a variety of flora, making it a popular tourist destination.
 - ii. The region is part of the Western Ghats, which is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.

- iii. The lake has a variety of trees and plants, including tropical, semitropical, and temperate vegetation.
- iv. There are never-ending ranges of tea-gardens, grasslands, fine pine, eucalyptus, and Shola vegetation, serving domicile to some 650 species of plants and trees.

- **Fauna**

- i. The lake also has a variety of birds and animals, ranging from the sleepy Indian rock python to the majestic King cobra.
- ii. Among the mammals, the elusive panther is the most exotic you find here.
- iii. The forests are rumored to harbor the big cat, tiger, towards the Karnataka side of the forest
- iv. Some parts of the Ghats near Ooty form a critical section of one of the elephant corridors in South India. These parts are deemed protected and are out of bounds for visitors unless accompanied by forest officials

Tourist Attractions

- The lake has boating facilities, garden, amusement parks, and 7D cinemas.



Visit to Mysore:-

Mysore Palace:-

A Glimpse into the Past

Mysuru Palace, also known as Amba Vilas Palace, is a historical palace and a royal residence. It used to be the official residence of the Wadiyar dynasty and the seat of the Kingdom of Mysore. The first palace inside the Old Fort was built in the 14th century, which was set ablaze and reconstructed multiple times. The current structure was constructed between 1897 and 1912, after the Old Palace burnt down, the current structure is also known as the New Fort.

The Art of Building

The palace is a three-story, gray granite, Indo-Saracenic building capped by a five-story tower that culminates in a gilded dome. The construction cost was placed at Rs 41,47,913 (around \$30 million adjusted to inflation) and the palace was completed in 1912.

Strategic significance

The palace is in the center of Mysore, and faces the Chamundi Hills eastward. Mysore is commonly described as the 'City of the Palaces', and there are seven palaces including this one.

Origin

The land on which the palace now stands was originally known as mysuru (literally, "citadel").

Where the Monument Stands

Mysuru Palace is located in Mysore, Karnataka, India.

Cultural significance

Mysore Palace is one of the most famous tourist attractions in India, with more than six million annual visitors.

Era of construction

The palace was constructed between 1897 and 1912.

The Divine Connection

The palace has a temple dedicated to the Hindu goddess Chamundeshwari.



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!