



Study tour (Bharat Darshan)  
of FTP for ASO of 2023 Batch  
(28.04.2024-04.05.2024)

FOR  
ASSISTANT SECTION OFFICERS OF CSS

REPORT ON STUDY TOUR  
KERALA

Prepared by –

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**OT CODE: A30**

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

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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 Sri Saka Venkateswara Rao, Faculty-CLP 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.

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 Sri Saka Venkateswara Rao, Faculty-CLP.

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.

## 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 Kerala as per the following details:-

### **DAY 01: 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024: Hyderabad – Trivandrum (Flight) / Veli Village / Kovalam**

- 07:45 Hrs: Arrival in Trivandrum Airport
- 08:30 Hrs: Meet & Transfer to Padmanabha Swamy Temple
- 10:30 Hrs: Visit an NGO in Trivandrum
- 12:00 Hrs: Depart to Kovalam Hotel for Lunch & Check in
- 15:00 Hrs: Depart for Veli Village & back to Hotel
- 18:00 Hrs: Evening at Kovalam beach (Just behind the hotel).
- 20:00 Hrs: Dinner at Hotel & Overnight stay at Hotel.

### **DAY 02: 29TH APRIL 2024: Kovalam – Alleppey**

- 07:00 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel
- 08:00 Hrs: Depart to Varkala Beach from Kovalam
- 09:30 Hrs: Visit Varkala Beach
- 11:00 Hrs: Depart from Varkala Beach drive to Alleppey
- 13:00 Hrs: Alleppey Houseboat Cruise with Lunch
- 17:00 Hrs: Disembark the Cruise.
- 18:00 Hrs: Depart from Basilica & Drive to Hotel
- 18:30 Hrs: Check in to Hotel & Free at leisure
- 20:00 Hrs: Dinner at Hotel & Overnight stay at Hotel.

### **DAY 03: 30TH APRIL 2024: Alleppey – Thekkady – Munnar**

- 07:00 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel
- 07:30 Hrs: Proceed to Thekkady
- 12:00 Hrs: Lunch at Hotel Sandra Palace

- 13:00 Hrs: Depart for Periyar Lake for Boating (We Should be there at exactly @ 13:15 Hrs)
- 17:30 Hrs: Proceed to Munnar
- 20:30 Hrs: Arrive Munnar Hotel for Dinner  
Check in & Overnight stay at Hotel.

**DAY 04: 01<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2024: Munnar**

- 08:00 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel
- 09:00 hrs: Departure to visit Mattupatty Dam
- Drive around the tea estates of Munnar and tata tea museum,
- 13:00 Hrs: Lunch at local restaurant
- 14:30 Hrs: Depart for Pallivasal falls & free time for spice shopping.
- 17:00 Hrs: Evening visit the Kalari Shetra in the evening for Kathakali Show.
- (The entry to be borne by individuals directly)
- 20:00 Hrs: Dinner and overnight stay at Munnar.

**DAY 05: 02<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024: Munnar – Eravikulam National Park - Cochin**

- 08:30 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel
- 09:30 Hrs: Depart from Hotel and proceed for Eravikulam National Park in Munnar.
- 12:00 Hrs: Arrive back in Munnar. Lunch at a local restaurant in Munnar.
- 14:30 Hrs: Depart from Munnar.
- Enjoy the scenic drive through the Western Ghats and the beautiful tea plantation.
- 18:00 Hrs: Arrive at the Hotel in Cochin. Check-in.
- 19:30 Hrs: Dinner at the Hotel in Cochin. Overnight stay at Cochin.

**DAY 06: 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2024: Cochin – Guruvayur – Thrissur – Athirampally falls - Cochin**

- 07:00 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel.
- 08:00 Hrs: Depart for Guruvayur temple.
- 10:30 Hrs: Arrive Guruvayur temple. Have Darshan of Lord Krishna.
- 12:00 Hrs: Depart from Guruvayur for Trisshur. Lunch at a local restaurant.
- 14:00 Hrs: Depart for Athirapally falls.

- 15:30 Hrs: Arrive at the falls. Enjoy at the falls for an hour and half.
- 17:30 Hrs: Depart from Athirampally.
- 20:00 Hrs: Arrive at the Hotel in Cochin.
- 20:30 Hrs: Dinner and overnight stay at Cochin..

**DAY 07: 04<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024: Cochin – Hyderabad (Flight)**

- 07:00 Hrs: Breakfast at Hotel.
- 09:00 Hrs: Check-out your hotel rooms and leave the bags in the concierge.
- This morning, we will have a city tour of Cochin covering Chinese Fishing Nets, Jewish Synagogue, Fort Cochin, Mattancherry Palace etc.
- 13:30 Hrs: Lunch at a local restaurant in Cochin.
- Free time for shopping and back to Hotel.
- 17:00 Hrs: Collect your luggage from the Hotel.
- Depart from the Hotel to the airport to take your flight back to Hyderabad.



## Sight Seeing In Kerala



# SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

## 1. Introduction

- The Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, situated in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, stands as a symbol of architectural grandeur and religious significance.

## 2. History

- The temple's origins date back over a thousand years, with mentions in ancient texts like the Puranas and the Mahabharata.
- It was rebuilt in its present form in the 18th century by the rulers of Travancore.

## 3. Architecture

- The temple is a fine example of Dravidian style architecture, characterized by intricate carvings, towering gopurams (entrance towers), and a sprawling layout.
- The sanctum sanctorum houses the deity Padmanabhaswamy, reclining on the serpent Adi Shesha.

## 4. Religious Significance

- Devotees flock from all over the world to pay homage to Lord Padmanabhaswamy, considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
- The temple holds immense spiritual significance for Hindus, especially those of the Vaishnava tradition.

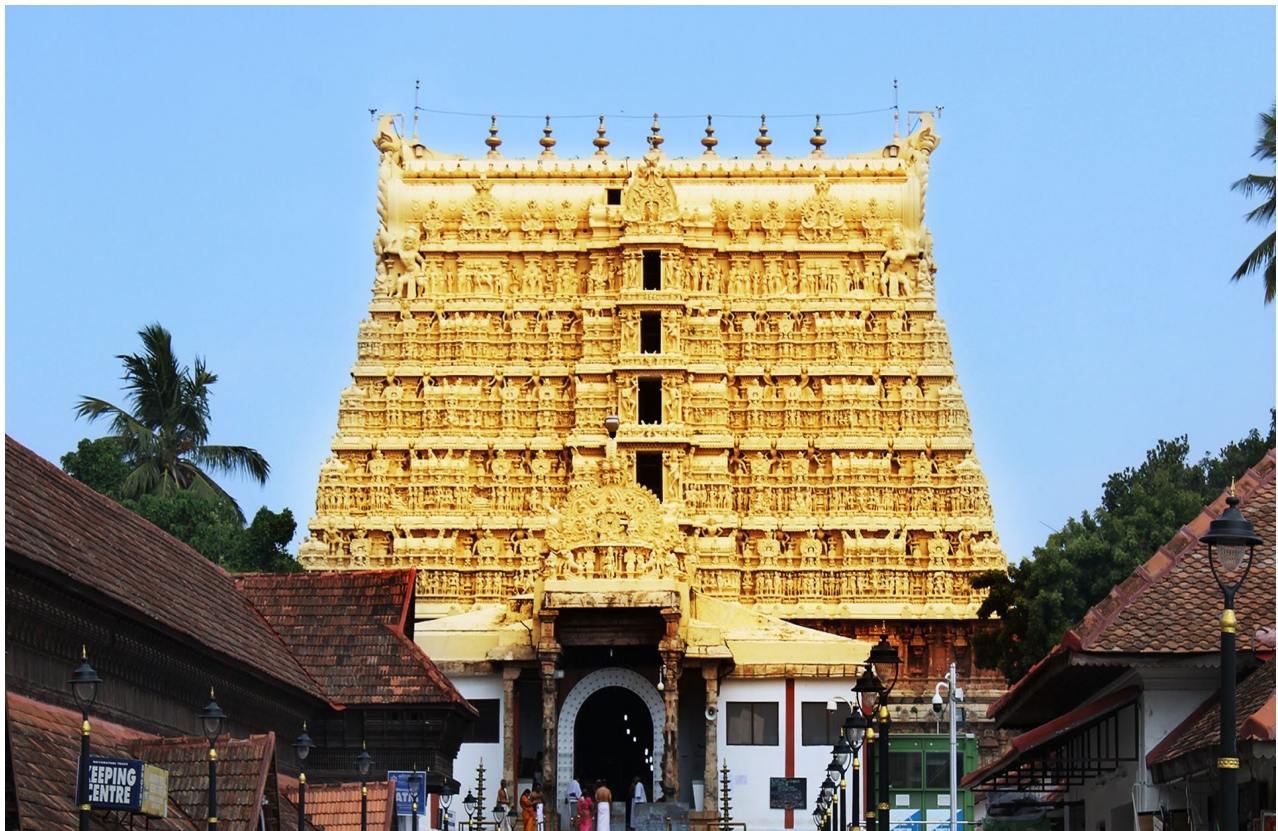
## 5. Cultural Heritage

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- Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple is not just a place of worship but also a repository of cultural heritage, preserving ancient rituals, music, and dance forms.
- The temple's festivals, such as the annual Arattu festival, attract thousands of pilgrims and enthusiasts, showcasing the rich cultural tapestry of Kerala.

## 6. Tourist Attraction

- Beyond its religious and cultural significance, the temple is a major tourist attraction, drawing visitors with its architectural splendor and spiritual ambiance.
- Visitors can marvel at the intricate sculptures, explore the temple's various chambers, and witness traditional rituals.



# VELI VILLAGE

## 1. Introduction

- Nestled amidst the lush greenery of Kerala, India, Veli Village is a serene haven that offers visitors a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.

## 2. Location and Setting

- Situated on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, Veli Village is blessed with picturesque surroundings, with the Arabian Sea on one side and the serene Veli Lake on the other.
- The village is characterized by its pristine beaches, swaying coconut palms, and tranquil backwaters, creating a captivating ambiance that soothes the soul.

## 3. Natural Attractions

- Veli Beach, with its golden sands and azure waters, is a popular spot for leisurely strolls, picnics, and water sports activities such as beach volleyball and kite flying.
- The Veli Lake offers opportunities for boating and kayaking, allowing visitors to explore its tranquil waters and admire the surrounding mangrove forests and birdlife.

## 4. Cultural Heritage

- Veli Village is steeped in cultural heritage, with its quaint fishing villages, traditional Kerala architecture, and vibrant local markets showcasing the rich tapestry of Kerala's cultural traditions.
- Visitors can immerse themselves in the local way of life, interacting with friendly villagers, sampling delicious Kerala cuisine, and witnessing traditional art forms such as Kathakali dance and Theyyam rituals.

## 5. Tourist Attractions

- The Veli Tourist Village, located at the confluence of the Veli Lake and the Arabian Sea, is a major attraction in the area, offering facilities for boating, fishing, and water sports, as well as scenic walking trails and landscaped gardens.
- The Veli Floating Restaurant, shaped like a giant lotus flower, is a popular dining destination where visitors can savor fresh seafood delicacies while enjoying panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.



# ALLEPPEY

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# PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE VEGETATION

## 1. Introduction

- Nestled in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India, the Periyar Tiger Reserve stands as a testament to the state's commitment to wildlife conservation and biodiversity preservation.

## 2. Location and Landscape

- Spread across the districts of Idukki and Pathanamthitta, the reserve encompasses a vast expanse of tropical rainforests, grasslands, and moist deciduous forests, interspersed with glistening streams and serene lakes.
- The centerpiece of the reserve is the majestic Periyar Lake, which serves as a lifeline for the region's flora and fauna.

## 3. Wildlife Sanctuary

- Periyar Tiger Reserve is renowned for its diverse array of wildlife, including the majestic Bengal tiger, which serves as the flagship species of the reserve.
- Other iconic inhabitants include elephants, sambar deer, bison, leopard, and a rich variety of bird species, making it a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

## 4. Tiger Conservation

- The reserve is a vital stronghold for the critically endangered Bengal tiger, with conservation efforts focused on protecting their habitat, mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, and monitoring their population dynamics.



- The Periyar Tiger Reserve plays a pivotal role in the larger landscape conservation efforts aimed at ensuring the long-term survival of this iconic species.

## 5. Cultural Heritage

- The reserve is not only a haven for wildlife but also home to indigenous communities such as the Mannan and Oorali tribes, who have coexisted harmoniously with nature for centuries.
- Visitors can learn about the rich cultural heritage of these tribes through immersive experiences such as tribal village visits and interactive sessions showcasing traditional art forms and lifestyles.



# THE SPICE ROUTE

## 1. Introduction

- Kerala, known as the "Spice Garden of India," has a rich history deeply intertwined with the Spice Route, which played a pivotal role in shaping its culture, economy, and identity.

## 2. Historical Significance

- Kerala's strategic location on the southwestern coast of India made it a natural hub for the spice trade, attracting merchants from across the globe since ancient times.
- The region's abundant flora, including spices such as pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, made it a treasure trove coveted by traders from distant lands.

## 3. Key Spice Trade Hubs

- Historic ports along Kerala's coastline, such as Calicut (Kozhikode), Cochin (Kochi), and Alleppey (Alappuzha), served as bustling trade hubs where merchants from Arabia, Europe, China, and beyond converged to trade spices and other commodities.
- These ports were pivotal in facilitating maritime trade along the Spice Route, connecting Kerala with the rest of the world and fueling the region's economic prosperity.

## 4. Cultural Exchange

- The Spice Route brought not only spices but also a rich tapestry of cultures, religions, and traditions to Kerala's shores, leading to a vibrant exchange of ideas, languages, and customs.
- Influences from Arab, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and British traders can be seen in Kerala's architecture, cuisine, art, and festivals, reflecting the region's cosmopolitan heritage.

## 5. Tourism and Conservation

- The legacy of the Spice Route continues to attract tourists from around the world, who flock to Kerala to experience its rich cultural heritage, pristine landscapes, and aromatic treasures.

- Efforts are underway to preserve Kerala's spice heritage through sustainable tourism practices, conservation initiatives, and community-based development projects that empower local communities while protecting the region's natural resources.



# ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

## 1. Introduction

- Eravikulam National Park, located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India, is a pristine wilderness area renowned for its rich biodiversity, stunning landscapes, and unique ecosystem.

## 2. Geographical Location and Features

- Situated in the Idukki district of Kerala, Eravikulam National Park spans an area of approximately 97 square kilometers, encompassing a diverse range of habitats including grasslands, sholas (tropical montane forests), and evergreen forests.
- The park is home to the Anamudi Peak, the highest peak in South India, which towers majestically over the surrounding landscape, offering panoramic views of the Western Ghats.

## 3. Flora and Fauna

- Eravikulam National Park is renowned for its rich floral diversity, with over 750 species of flowering plants, including many endemic and rare species.
- The park is particularly famous for the Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*), an endangered mountain goat species found only in the Western Ghats. Eravikulam is one of the few places where visitors can observe these majestic creatures in their natural habitat.
- Other notable wildlife species found in the park include Asian elephants, gaur (Indian bison), sambar deer, lion-tailed macaques, and a variety of bird species such as the Nilgiri pipit and the Malabar whistling thrush.

## 4. Visitor Experience

- The park offers visitors a range of ecotourism activities, including guided nature walks, trekking trails, and wildlife safaris, providing opportunities to explore its pristine landscapes and observe its diverse flora and fauna.
- The Rajamalai region of the park, known for its lush grasslands and Nilgiri Tahr population, is a popular tourist destination, attracting nature enthusiasts, wildlife photographers, and trekkers from around the world.

## 5. Cultural Heritage

- Eravikulam National Park is not only a biodiversity hotspot but also a cultural heritage site, with indigenous tribes such as the Muthuvan and Malayarayan communities having coexisted with nature in the region for centuries.
- Visitors can learn about the rich cultural heritage of these tribes through immersive experiences such as tribal village visits and cultural performances showcasing traditional art forms and lifestyles.





## **KALARIPAYATTU**

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.



## **MATUPETTY DAM**

### **1. Introduction**

- Matupetty Dam is a picturesque reservoir nestled amidst the lush hills of Munnar, a popular hill station located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India.
- Built in the late 1940s, the dam serves multiple purposes, including hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, and tourism.

### **2. Location and Surroundings**

- Situated approximately 13 kilometers from Munnar town, Matupetty Dam is surrounded by rolling hills, verdant tea plantations, and dense forests, offering visitors breathtaking views of the natural landscape.
- The dam is located in close proximity to popular tourist attractions such as the Kundala Dam, Echo Point, and the scenic Mattupetty Lake.



### **3. Reservoir and Hydroelectric Power**

- Matupetty Dam is built across the picturesque Matupetty Lake, which is formed by the waters of the Muthirapuzha River.
- The reservoir not only serves as a source of water for irrigation purposes but also generates hydroelectric power, contributing to the region's energy needs.

### **4. Tourist Attractions and Activities**

- Matupetty Dam is a favored destination for tourists seeking tranquility amidst nature's beauty. Visitors can enjoy leisurely walks along the dam's embankments, soaking in the panoramic vistas of the surrounding hills and the shimmering waters of the reservoir.
- Boat rides are a popular activity at Matupetty Dam, allowing visitors to glide across the serene waters of the lake and admire the lush greenery and wildlife along the shores.

### **5. Flora and Fauna**

- The area surrounding Matupetty Dam is rich in biodiversity, with dense forests teeming with a variety of flora and fauna.
- Visitors may spot indigenous species of birds, butterflies, and small mammals amidst the verdant vegetation, adding to the charm of the natural surroundings.



## TATA TEA MUSEUM

The Tata Tea Museum, located in Munnar, Kerala, India, offers a captivating journey through the history and evolution of tea production. Visitors explore the origins of tea cultivation in India, learn about the intricate process of tea-making, and gain insights into the socio-economic impact of the tea industry. The museum showcases vintage tea-making machinery, photographs, and

exhibits detailing the cultural significance of tea in India. It's a delightful destination for tea enthusiasts and anyone curious about the story behind their cup of tea.



## **CHERAI BEACH**

Cherai Beach, nestled in the picturesque state of Kerala, India, is a serene and pristine stretch of coastline renowned for its golden sands and tranquil waters. Fringed by swaying coconut palms and lush greenery, this idyllic beach offers a

perfect blend of natural beauty and tranquility. Visitors can unwind on the soft sands, take leisurely walks along the shore, or indulge in thrilling water sports like surfing and swimming. With its breathtaking sunsets and warm hospitality, Cherai Beach is a popular destination for both locals and tourists seeking a rejuvenating seaside retreat.



## **FORT KOCHI**

Fort Kochi is a historic neighbourhood in Kochi (Cochin), Kerala, India, known for its rich cultural heritage and colonial architecture. It was once a bustling trade port frequented by European powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, leaving behind a legacy of diverse influences evident in its landmarks and traditions.



## MATTANCHERRY PALACE

Also known as the Dutch Palace, Mattancherry Palace is a magnificent structure in Kochi renowned for its stunning Kerala-style architecture and vibrant murals. Originally built by the Portuguese and later renovated by the Dutch, it houses a remarkable collection of art, including intricate Hindu temple murals depicting scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.



## **ST FRANCIS CHURCH**

St. Francis Church stands as a testament to Kochi's rich colonial history, being one of the oldest European churches in India. Constructed by the Portuguese Franciscan friars in the 16th century, it later became the final resting place of the renowned explorer Vasco da Gama, making it a significant pilgrimage site for Christians worldwide.



## **SANTA CRUZ BASILICA**

Santa Cruz Basilica is an iconic Roman Catholic church located in Fort Kochi, Kerala, renowned for its breathtaking architecture and intricate detailing. Constructed by the Portuguese in the 16th century, it boasts elegant Gothic-style arches, vibrant stained glass windows, and elaborate interior decorations, drawing visitors with its spiritual ambiance and historical significance.



## **MARITIME MUSEUM**

The Maritime Museum, located within the premises of INS Dronacharya in Kochi, Kerala, offers a fascinating journey through India's maritime history. Showcasing a diverse collection of ship models, navigation instruments, artifacts, and exhibits related to naval warfare, it provides insights into the country's seafaring traditions, technological advancements, and maritime heritage.



## **THERUVORAM**



- Theruvoram, was founded by Murugan s in 2007 with the noble mission of rehabilitating street people in Kochi.
- It has operated independently foregoing government funding or public grants, while steadfastly serving the community over the years.
- It extends a compassionate hand to those abandoned on the streets and individuals afflicted with diseases such as leprosy, regardless of age.
- It welcomes individuals of all ages and backgrounds, including children women and men facing various disabilities, both physical and mental.
- Murugan s, hails from the town of Peerumedu in Idduki district of Kerala
- In initial years he worked at Don Bosco Snehabhavan where he fostered love and compassion for others amid life's challenges
- Later he started rescuing people on his own and he financed these efforts through late night auto rickshaw shifts
- In 2007, Murugan founded Theruvora Pravarthaka association NGO, dedicating to rehabilitating street people with 24/7 assistance.
- He has received national award for child welfare-2011 from president
- In 2017 he was awarded by hon. Pm
- In 2020 he was awarded by president for community development and women empowerment
- The NGO has rescued nearly 30,000 homeless beggars and destitutes. Upon encountering beggars on the streets, the NGO promptly engages with local authorities, obtaining necessary permissions via police letters
- It has organized various drives in coordination with the police and local authorities to rehabilitate the homeless and mentally unstable.
- The NGO has mainly focused on accommodating individuals with psychiatric disabilities, bedridden, and elderly individuals.
- The Organisation has a two storey building spanning 1600 sqft, which includes a small kitchen. It accommodates 30 homeless individuals.



## 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!