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Bharat Darshan Report

(April 28, 2024 to May 04, 2024)



(Kerala Group)

Foundation Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers
(Probationer), CSS of 2023 Batch.

Submitted by: -

Sd/-
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Summary

This report is a compilation of the events, places visited, activities, our learning and findings during one week study tour of Kerala, organized and funded by Govt. of India under veteran umbrella of ISTM & Dr. MCR HRD institute of Telangana. This tour was scheduled from April 28, 2024 to May 04, 2024. We were a group of 61 Officer Trainees (OTs) and one wonderful Faculty namely Sri Saka Venkateswara Rao. For efficient communication and streamline decision making, five OTs from us were selected as Group Leaders. We selected Akshaya India Tours & Travels (P) Ltd. package due to their expertise in crafting comprehensive itineraries and ensuring a hassle-free experience for all of us without worrying about logistics.

Aim & Objectives of this tour

- ❖ Understanding Diversity
- ❖ Insight into Local Issues
- ❖ Assessment of Government Schemes
- ❖ Promoting Collaboration
- ❖ Building Empathy
- ❖ Cultural Exchange
- ❖ Personal and Professional Growth

Day 01 (28 April, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- Departed from Dr. MCR Institute of Telangana at 3 AM.
- Arrived Hyderabad Airport at 4:30 AM.
- Arrived Trivandrum Airport at 7:45 AM.
- Took Tours & Travellers (T&T) Bus and went to Padmanabha Swamy Temple at stayed there at around 2 PM.
- Arrived Hotel namely Country Club Resort Kovalam at 3 PM.
- Took rest, had our lunch and departed for Veli Village at 5 PM.
- Returned to our hotel at 8 PM, had our dinner followed by team discussion and went to Bed.

Places Visited and their importance

- Padmanabhaswamy Temple: - The Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala, dedicated to Lord Vishnu, epitomizes Dravidian architecture with its intricate carvings and towering gopurams. Revered in Vaishnavism, it holds historical significance dating back centuries, patronized by dynasties like the Travancore royals. Its underground vaults, holding immense treasures, gained global attention. The temple hosts strict religious practices and grand festivals, attracting devotees worldwide. A spiritual hub, it offers solace and blessings. Yet, legal controversies have surrounded its wealth management. Adhering to a strict dress code, visitors immerse in its spiritual aura, experiencing both its divine allure and

historical legacy in the heart of Kerala.



- Veli Village: - Veli Village in Kerala holds importance as a picturesque coastal destination, renowned for its tranquil backwaters and lush greenery where Veli lake meets Arabian sea.



My personal observations and learnings

- Most of the OTs that always find it difficult to wake up at morning for yoga and PT session at 6:30 AM, it was completely surprising that all are present at 2:50 AM with proper sleep at night and with great energy. This tour served as a catalyst for change and showed we have potential to do anything if ***we have motivation, determination, and a clear sense of purpose, we have the***

potential to overcome difficulties and tackle tasks that seem challenging and tedious.

- Padmanabhaswamy Temple reminds me the richness of our cultural heritage and the importance of preserving ancient traditions like strict dress code to enter the temple premises, which includes wearing traditional attire like dhoti for men and saree or salwar kameez for women. We were completely mesmerized by temple's architectural splendour reflects the skill and craftsmanship of our ancestors, inspiring reverence for our historical legacy.

Another event, at temple when 04 OTs including me struck in a line separated by fellow OTs due to an hour-long Aarti, I as an introvert person, ***sensed the beauty of our diversity*** when I started talking to children and their family members. They didn't know Hindi and English but I communicated with them more than 45 minutes and learned a little bit Malayalam with the help of two little girls.

- Veli Village- Everyone enjoyed there as we had our good lunch followed by a nap. Seeing merging of Veli lake into Arabian sea was a memorable experience for all of us.

Day 02 (29 April, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- At 5:30 AM, around 20 OTs including me went for Kovalam beach.
- After Breakfast, we departed for Alleppey by T&T Bus at 9 am and reached there around 2 PM.
- We boarded on our backwater cruise and returned at 5:30 PM.
- Departed for hotel and reached hotel namely Pagoda Resorts Alappuzha at 8PM had our dinner there and go for our bed.

Places visited and their importance

Kovalam Beach: - It is renowned for its pristine sands, azure waters, and picturesque setting. The lighthouse overlooking the beach provides panoramic views. Vibrant local culture, seafood delicacies, and Ayurvedic treatments enhance the beach experience.

Alleppey: - Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha, is famous for its mesmerizing backwaters, intricate network of canals, and lush greenery. Renowned as the "Venice of the East," it offers serene houseboat cruises amidst picturesque landscapes, allowing visitors to immerse in Kerala's tranquil beauty. The annual Nehru Trophy Boat Race attracts thousands, showcasing traditional snake boat races. Alleppey's vibrant coir industry, producing coir products from coconut husks, adds to its allure.

My personal observations and learnings

- Seeing sun rise at Kovalam beach with our faculty and fellow OTs was a memorable experience for all of us. Helping fishermen when they asked for help from all of us with pulling their boats from Sea was also a memorable and soothing experience for us. During casual conversation, we noticed difficulty faced by these fishermen before this I judged them; they are exploiting free gifts of nature.



- Cruise booked by us at Alleppey started from Pamba River and went upto Vemband Lake, which is a part of National Waterway 03 was totally wonderful experience for us. Before this, ***I never thought we have nature gifted beautiful places like Venice in our own India.*** We enjoyed there by dancing on DJ, having sea food. Local staff of Cruise boat guided us with their traditions, customs, culture, difficulties from day-to-day life.



Day 03 (30 April, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- At 8 AM after breakfast, we proceeded towards Thekkady to Visit Periyar National Park (PNP).
- We reached PNP around 1PM.
- Left PNP 4PM for Munnar meanwhile this we went to Spice Garden
- Reached Munnar at Hotel Green Ridge around 11 PM.

Places visited and their importance

- PNP: - It is a biodiversity hotspot renowned for its lush forests and diverse wildlife. Home to elephants, tigers, and rare species like the Nilgiri langur, it offers thrilling jungle safaris and boat rides on Periyar Lake.

My personal observations and learnings

- On reaching Thekkady, a but of national park took us from our stop to PNP. We boarded on a double-decker boat and travelled around 1 hour and witnessed herd of deer, elephants, wild buffaloes. On inquiring about, no sights of tiger from forest officials, they said that it is a rare sight and in his 24 years of service, he has witnessed tiger only 12 times. The reason for this 925 sq km of PNP is home to only 40 tigers. During our visit to Munnar, we witnessed a Spice Garden and gained knowledge about harvesting of different kind of spices.



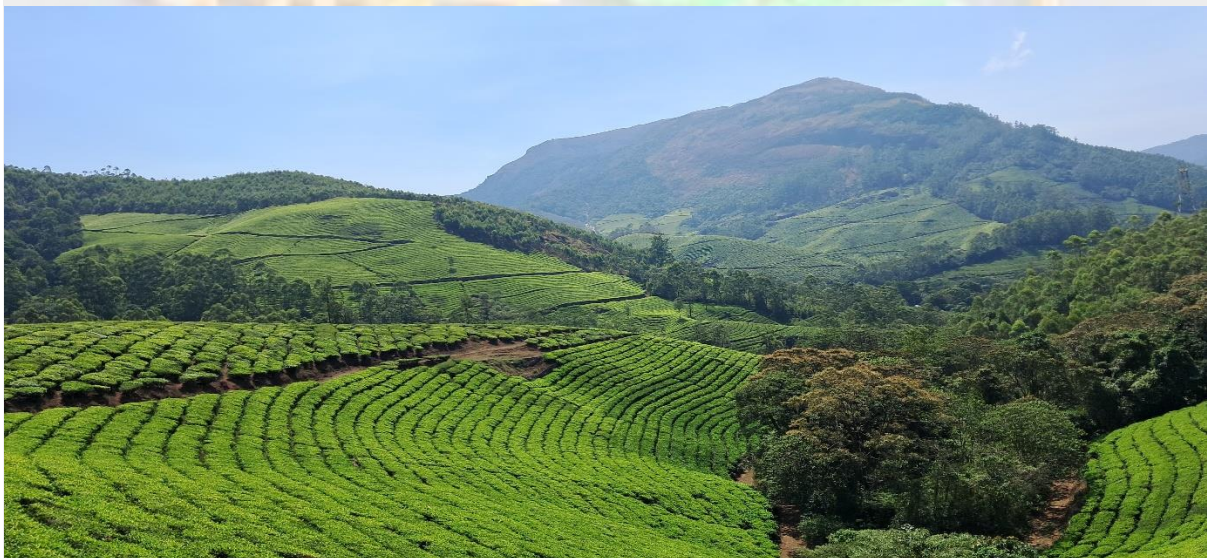
Day 04 (01 May, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- Around 8 AM after breakfast, we departed to Eravikulam National Park (ENP) from Hotel.
- Arrived Eravikulam at 9 AM and departed at 2 PM.
- After lunch at Hotel, we departed for Adventure Park and reached there 4PM.
- After that, we went to see "Kalaripayattu" dance performance and arrived our hotel at 8 PM.
- Go for some shopping at Munnar after dinner and finish our day.

Places visited and their importance

ENP: - It is nestled in the Western Ghats of Kerala and famed for its biodiversity and the endangered Nilgiri Tahr. The park's rolling hills, lush grasslands, and shola forests offer a habitat for various flora and fauna. Visitors enjoy trekking amidst stunning landscapes while contributing to conservation efforts.



Adventure Park: - For Zip line adventure Only



Kalaripayattu Dance Show: - Kalaripayattu, a traditional martial art form originating in Kerala, combines physical techniques, weaponry, and spiritual practices. Its dynamic movements, including strikes, kicks, and defensive manoeuvres, are performed with grace and precision. Kalarippayattu's rich history, cultural significance, and holistic approach make it a captivating and revered art form worldwide.

My personal observations and learnings

- On reaching main entrance of ENP, a tourist bus of Kerala Forest department took us to starting point of Kurinji trail where we started our tracking of 3 KM. We are totally mesmerized by the scenery of tea Gardens, largest stretch of undisturbed montane shola-grassland eco-system, and witnessed herd of endangered Nilgiri Tahr.
- Our first-time adventure of Zip line was also awesome. We did a team work and took discount of its owner by showing our ID card. That's again we felt the power of our Team Work.
- The performance of Kalarippayattu dance was goosebumps for us. This war dance of Kerala bounded us to look back into our Indian heritage, culture, and traditional knowledge systems, fostering a deeper appreciation for the country's rich martial arts legacy. It teaches us principles of balance, coordination, and agility, which are applicable in various aspects of life, including sports, performing arts, and daily activities. All of us are so much inspired with the artists that we requested them for took photographs with us along with their equipment.

Day 05 (02 May, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- At 8 AM after breakfast we proceed for Mattupetty dam and enjoyed in adventure Park and other boat activities.
- Arrived Tata Tea Museum/Tea Estates at 1 PM.
- Departed from there at 2:30 PM for Cochi.
- Stopped at Clay Hotel for lunch at 4:30 PM.
- Arrived JVK Hotel Cochi at 6PM and finished our day.

Places visited and their importance

Mattupetty dam: -_Mattupetty Dam, located near Munnar in Kerala, is a scenic reservoir nestled amidst rolling hills and lush tea plantations. Built for hydroelectricity and water conservation, it offers breathtaking views and boating experiences. The surrounding area is a haven for nature lovers, with opportunities for trekking and wildlife spotting.

Tata Tea Musuem:- It is, situated in Munnar, Kerala, offers insight into the region's rich tea heritage. Exhibits showcase the history, cultivation, and processing of tea. Visitors learn about tea-making techniques and the impact of the tea industry on the local economy. The museum provides a fascinating journey through tea culture.

My personal observations and learnings

- After seeing Dam, I learnt about the importance of water conservation, hydroelectricity generation, and sustainable development. Moreover, Mattupetty Dam highlights the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities that well-planned water infrastructure can provide for both locals and tourists. Here, I noticed that there are various such types of Dams in Bihar and UP, but we couldn't develop it in a way that attracts tourist. We should introduce such tourist wanted activities Kayaking, Steamer, Boating, Jet skiing etc. in all of the dams across India like. It will be beneficial for both public and government.
- Tata Tea Museum in Munnar provides a comprehensive understanding of tea cultivation, processing, and its socio-economic significance. Visitors learn about the history, technology, and cultural impact of the tea industry, fostering appreciation for

sustainable agriculture and the role of corporations in community development.



- During our visit to Cochin, we had our lunch in traditional way on one Hotel Clay which was served on a banana leaf, which is eco-friendly and imparts a unique aroma to the meal. I couldn't remember names of dishes as it was difficult for a north Indian to remember south Indian dishes names.

Day 06 (03 May, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- At 9AM after breakfast, we proceed for Cherai Beach.
- Reached Cherai beach at 10 AM and departed from 3 PM.
- Arrived hotel at 4PM took rest.
- Departed for Lulu Mall at 6 PM and returned to Hotel at 9:30 PM.

Places visited and their importance

Cherai Beach: - It is a serene coastal destination renowned for its golden sands and calm waters. Ideal for swimming and sunbathing, it offers stunning sunset views and opportunities for water sports. The beach is dotted with resorts and shacks serving fresh seafood, making it a popular tourist spot.

My personal observations and learnings

After reaching beach, we have done a lot of thrilling activities like parasailing, Lelo ride, jet skiing, and banana boat rides etc. offered by local vendors. We as a team enjoyed all the beach activities. After a lot of activities at Beach around 5 hours, everyone gets tired and planned for rest of whole days. However, 10 OTs including me and Faculty planned to go Lulu Mall by T&T Bus. We have done a lot indoor sports activities in mall first time like Bowling, Hammer, Zero Gravity, enjoyed pizzas of dominos and burger in Mall. After that with our own convenience, we returned to our hotel. Experience and concept used in Zero Gravity is memorable for me.



Day 07 (04 May, 2024) of Bharat Darshan tour

Minutes of the day

- At 10 AM after breakfast, we proceed to NGO Theruvoram and left there around 12:30PM and went to Cochin Sea sight.
- Do some shopping at Fort Cochin Sea Sight had our lunch and proceed to Cochin Airport and arrived there on 4:30 PM.

Places visited and their importance

NGO Theruvoram: - It is an NGO based in Kerala, focuses on empowering marginalized communities, especially street dwellers and homeless individuals. Through various initiatives, including shelter homes, skill development programs, and advocacy campaigns, Theruvoram aims to provide basic necessities, education, and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, fostering social inclusion and dignity for all. Its founder Mugan received many awards for his work notably from President and Prime Minister of India, Chief Minister of Kerala etc.

Under water Metro at Cochin: - It is an extension of the Kochi Metro Rail project to include an underwater tunnel section. This ambitious project aims to provide an efficient and sustainable transportation solution by connecting the mainland of Kochi with its islands, including Willingdon Island and Fort Kochi, via an underwater tunnel.

My personal observations and learning

By knowing the work of NGO, I learn about the importance of grassroots efforts in addressing social issues, the value of community-driven initiatives, and the impact of providing holistic support, including education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. Additionally, their approach underscores the significance of empathy, compassion, and dignity in serving vulnerable populations. Their work highlights the potential for local organizations to create meaningful change and inspire others to take action in their communities.



Conclusion

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. 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.
