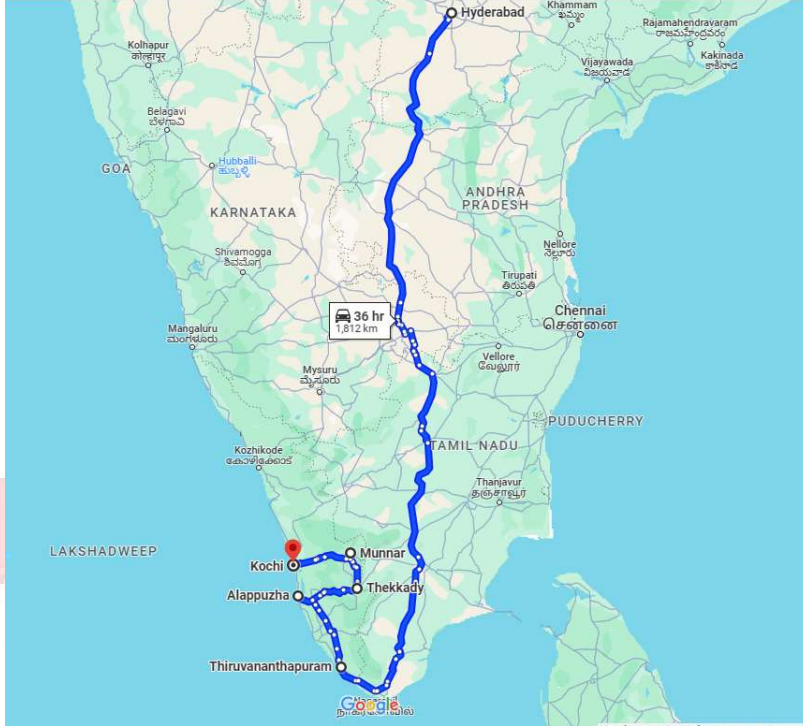


# REPORT ON STUDY TOUR

## KERALA ROUTE



**Study tour (Bharat Darshan) of FTP for ASO of 2023 Batch**

**(28.04.2024-04.05.2024)**

**FOR  
ASSISTANT SECTION OFFICERS OF CSS**

**PREPARED BY –**

**SAHIL**

**A51**

**MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS**

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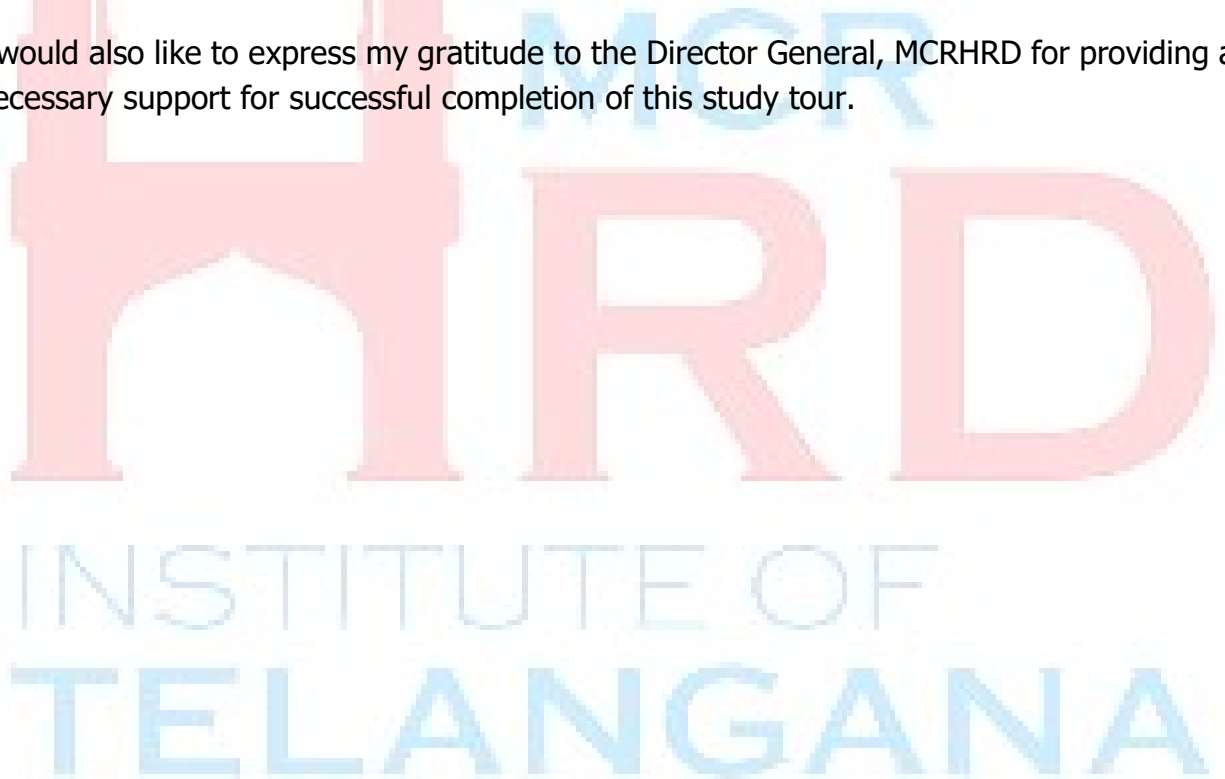
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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. Saka Venkateswara Rao, 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 Kerala tour. I enjoyed the study tour and learned many things during the NGO attachment and the whole tour.

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 in Kerala under the guidance of Mr. Saka Venkateswara 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: -

- 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.

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## Schedule of Study Tour & NGO attachment

The study tour organized by MCRHRD 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 in Kerala was as per the following details :-

➤ **DAY 01: 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024: HYDERABAD – TRIVANDRUM (BY FLIGHT) –**

03:15 AM: Depart from Hyderabad (61 OTs – BY INDIGO)

07:45 AM: Arrival at Trivandrum Airport

08:30 PM: Depart for Padmanabhaswamy temple by Bus

01:30 PM: Depart to Kovalam hotel for lunch and check in.

3:00 PM: Depart for Veli village

06:00 PM: Evening at Kovalam beach.

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

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

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Drive to Alleppey.

01:00 PM: Alleppey Houseboat Cruise with lunch.

05:00 PM: Disembark the cruise.

06:00 PM: Depart from Basilica & drive to hotel.

06:30 PM: Check in to Hotel

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

➤ **DAY 03: 30TH APRIL 2024: THEKKADY - MUNNAR**

07:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

07:30 AM: Proceed to Thekkady

12:00 PM: Lunch at hotel Sandra Palace

01:00 PM: Depart for Periyar Lake for Boating

04:30 PM: Proceed to Munnar

08:30 PM: Arrive Munnar Hotel for dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

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

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Departure to visit Mattupatty Dam.

01:00 PM: Drive around the tea estates of Munnar & Tata Tea Museum.

05:00 PM: Evening visit the Kalari Shetra in the evening for Kalaripattu Show.

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

➤ **DAY 05: 02<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024: ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK - COCHIN**

08:30 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:30 AM: Depart from hotel and proceed for Eravikulam National Park in Munnar.

12:00 PM: Arrive back in Munnar. Lunch at local Restaurant in Munnar.

02:30 PM: Depart from Munnar. Enjoy the scenic drive through the Western Ghats and the beautiful tea plantation.

06:00 PM: Arrive at the Hotel in Cochin.

07:30 PM: Dinner at the Hotel in Cochin. Overnight stay at Cochin.

➤ **DAY 06: 03<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2024: COCHIN**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Depart for Cherai Beach.

01:30 PM: Lunch at local Restaurant.

03:00 PM: Arrive at Hotel .

07:00 PM: Free for Shopping.

09:00 PM: Dinner & Overnight stay at Hotel.

➤ **DAY 07: 04<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024: COCHIN – HYDERABAD (FLIGHT)**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Checkout from Hotel.

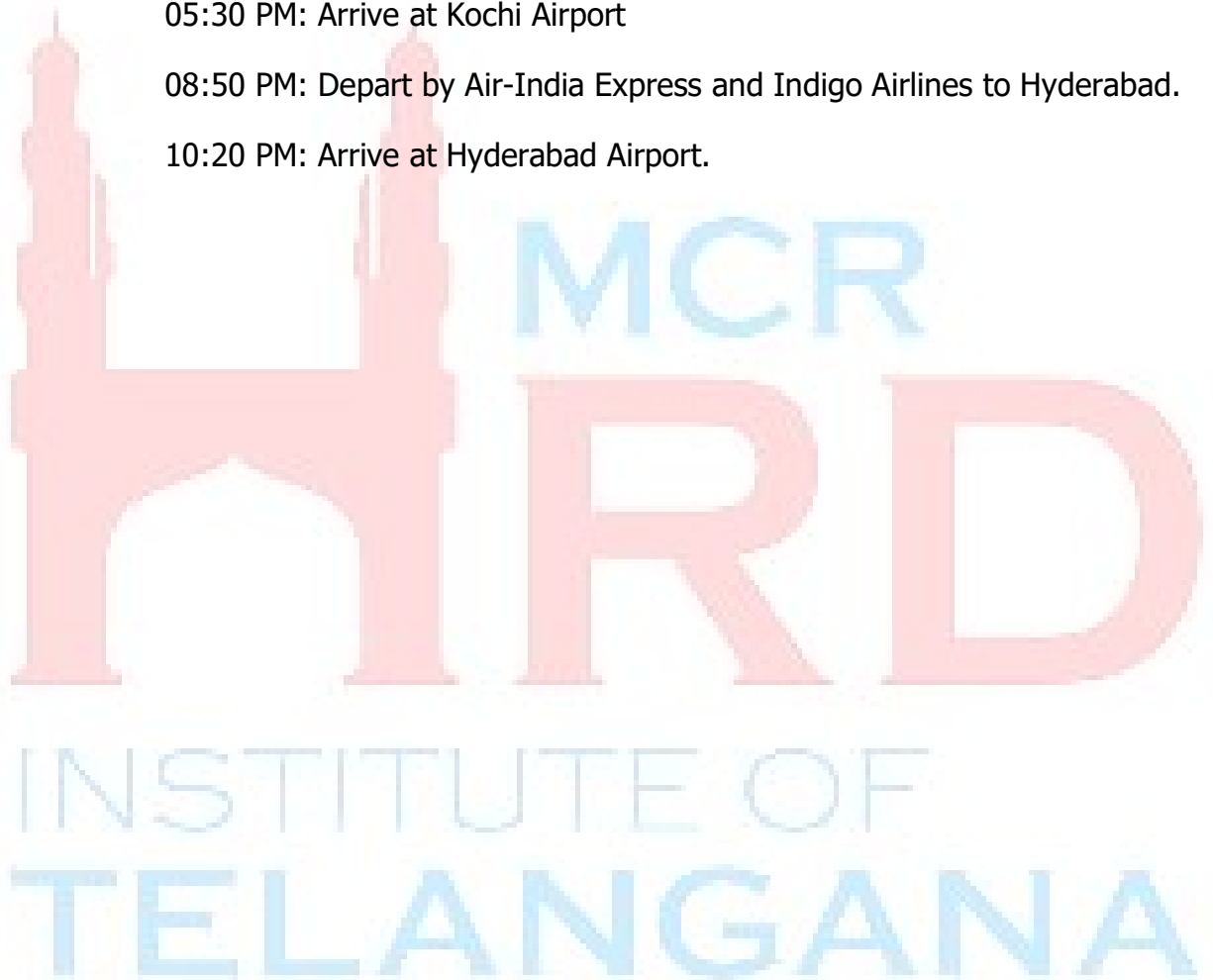
11:00 AM: Visit NGO – THERUVORAM

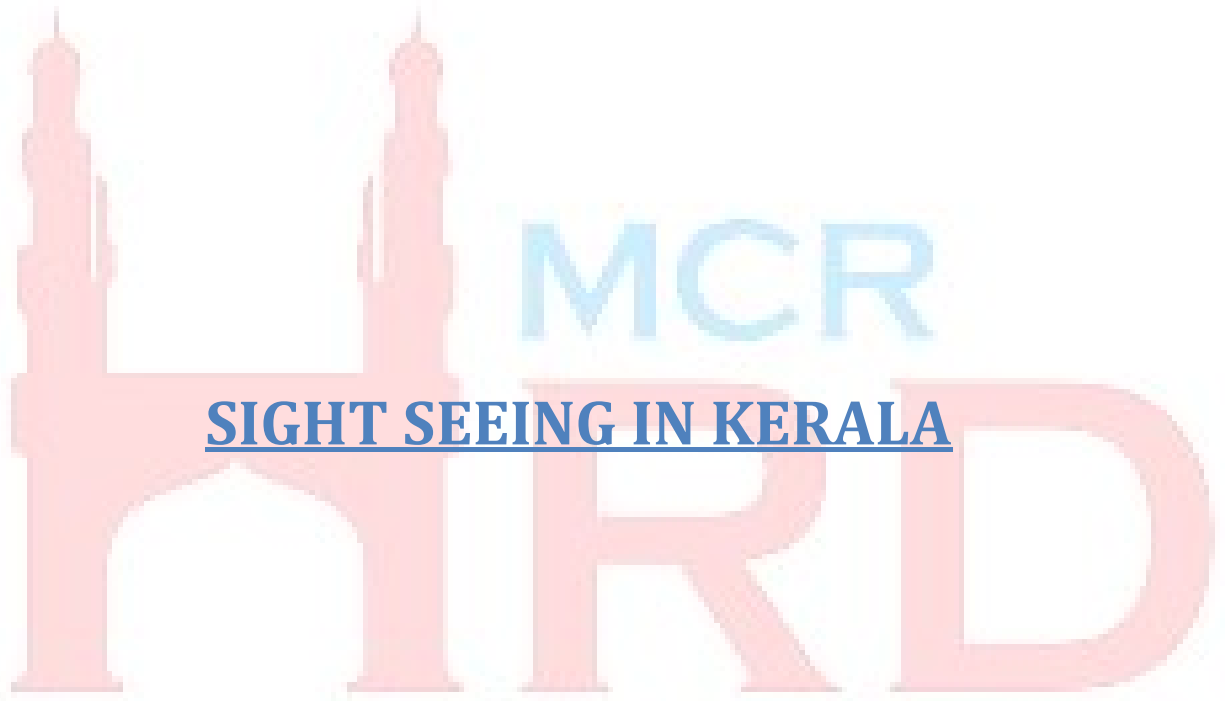
01:30 PM: Local Sightseeing

05:30 PM: Arrive at Kochi Airport

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

10:20 PM: Arrive at Hyderabad Airport.





**SIGHT SEEING IN KERALA**

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# PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

- ❖ Located in Thiruvananthapuram, is the Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. This temple is a blend of the Kerala and Dravidian styles of architecture. It is one of the 108 sacred Vishnu temples or Divya Desams in India. *Divya Desams* are the holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu that are mentioned in the works of the Tamil *Azhvars* (saints).
- ❖ The temple architecture stands out for its work in stone and bronze. The temple interiors are adorned by beautiful paintings and murals. Some of them are that of the life-size images of Lord Vishnu in the reclining posture, Narasimha Swamy, Lord Ganapati and Gaja Lakshmi. The temple has a *dhwaja stamba* (flag post) that is about 80 ft high and is covered with gold plated copper sheets. The temple also has *Bali Peeda Mandapam* and *Mukha Mandapam*. These are halls, decorated with beautiful sculptures of various Hindu deities. Another structure that captures attention here is the *Navagraha Mandapa* the ceiling of which displays the *navagrahas*.
- ❖ Extending from the eastern side into the sanctum sanctorum is a broad corridor which has 365 and one-quarter sculptured granite-stone pillars with beautiful carvings. There is a ground floor below under the main entrance in the eastern side, which is known as the *nataka sala*, where Kerala's classical art form - the Kathakali is performed during the annual ten-day festival at the temple, held during the Malayalam months of *Meenam* and *Thulam*.
- ❖ Only Hindus are permitted inside the temple. There is a strict dress code that needs to be followed while entering the temple. Men need to wear *mundu* or *dhoti*. Women need to wear *sari*, *mundum neriyathum* (set-mundu).

❖



## VELI VILLAGE & KOVALAM BEACH

- ❖ Veli Village in Trivandrum is not just about its natural beauty; it also offers various attractions like a floating bridge, children's park, and an adventure park. Visitors can enjoy pedal boating, kayaking, kite flying and try local cuisine at the Floating Cafe run by Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC). It's a great place to unwind and spend quality time with friends and family amidst nature's tranquility.



- ❖ Kovalam Beach is a famous beach destination near Trivandrum, known for its golden sands and clear waters. It's divided into three crescent-shaped beaches: Lighthouse Beach, Hawa Beach, and Samudra Beach. Kovalam offers various water sports activities like swimming, surfing, and parasailing, along with Ayurvedic massages and yoga retreats. It's a popular tourist spot in Kerala, attracting visitors from around the world for its natural beauty and relaxing atmosphere.



# ALLEPPEY

- ❖ Alleppey, also called the Venice of the East is the city of canals and lagoons. Alleppey is the hub of backwater tourism. This huge backwaters of canals, lagoons and lakes provide the lifeline of Alleppey. A notable point is that Alleppey is the only city in Kerala without forests. Boat race is the trademark of Alleppey. The snake boat race conducted in the backwaters during the harvest season is world famous. The prime attraction in Alleppey are the Houseboat Cruises.
- ❖ The Alleppey Houseboat Cruise is a once in a lifetime experience, offering a serene journey through the picturesque backwaters of Alleppey. These traditional Kettuvallams, converted into floating accommodations, provide a cozy and comfortable setting for guests to unwind and soak in the natural beauty of the surroundings. The experience is enhanced by delicious Kerala cuisine, warm hospitality from the onboard crew, and the enchanting sights of sunset and sunrise painting the sky in vibrant hues. The Alleppey Houseboat Cruise offers a perfect blend of relaxation, adventure, and cultural immersion, making it a cherished memory for travelers exploring the beauty of Kerala.
- ❖ The houseboat cruises typically navigate through the interconnected network of canals, lakes, and lagoons, providing passengers with breathtaking views of the lush greenery, paddy fields, and local life along the banks. One of the highlights of the Alleppey Houseboat Cruise is witnessing the stunning sunset and sunrise views over the backwaters, which paint the sky with vibrant hues.





## PERIYAR LAKE

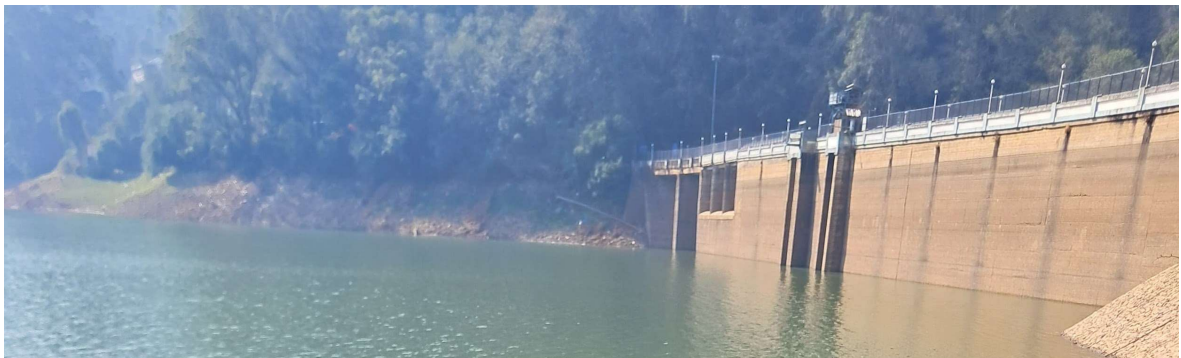
- ❖ Periyar Lake located inside Periyar National Park was created artificially when Kerala's longest river, Periyar or Mullaperiyar, was dammed in 1895. The Mullaperiyar Dam formed the present day Periyar Lake which is spread across 10 square miles or 26 square kilometres. It serves as a crucial water resource for irrigation, drinking water supply, and hydroelectric power generation for the surrounding regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It plays a vital role in maintaining the biodiversity of the region by providing water and habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, including endangered species like tigers, elephants, and Nilgiri langurs.
- ❖ The lake and its surrounding ecosystem serve as a valuable site for scientific research and environmental education. Researchers study the ecology, behavior, and conservation of various species within the Periyar Tiger Reserve, contributing to our understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem dynamics.
- ❖ It also offers a number of adventure activities including bamboo rafting, tiger trail, border hiking, tribal dance and jungle camping.
- ❖ Periyar Lake's importance extends beyond its scenic beauty, encompassing ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational aspects that make it a vital asset for both humans and wildlife in the Western Ghats of Kerala.



# MATTUPETTY DAM

The Mattupetty Dam is a popular tourist attraction located near Munnar in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. Here's more about it:

- ❖ **Location:** Situated at an altitude of about 1,700 meters above sea level, the Mattupetty Dam is nestled amidst the picturesque Western Ghats, offering stunning views of the surrounding hills, valleys, and tea plantations.
- ❖ **Purpose:** The dam was constructed to conserve water for hydroelectricity generation and irrigation purposes in the region. It is part of the Pallivasal Hydroelectric Project.
- ❖ **Reservoir:** The Mattupetty Dam forms a reservoir, which is fed by several streams originating from the nearby hills. The reservoir provides water for irrigation to the neighboring farms and also serves as a source of drinking water for local communities.
- ❖ **Scenic Beauty:** Apart from its functional aspect, the Mattupetty Dam is renowned for its scenic beauty, attracting tourists with its serene ambiance and panoramic views. Visitors can enjoy leisurely walks along the dam, soak in the tranquility of the surroundings, and capture stunning photographs of the landscape.
- ❖ **Boating:** The reservoir offers boating facilities for tourists, allowing them to explore the calm waters and enjoy the scenic beauty from a different perspective. Boating at Mattupetty Dam is a popular activity, especially during the tourist season.
- ❖ **Wildlife:** The area around the Mattupetty Dam is rich in biodiversity, with opportunities for bird watching and wildlife spotting. Visitors may encounter various species of birds, butterflies, and occasionally even elephants and other wildlife in the vicinity.
- ❖ **Tourism Hub:** Mattupetty Dam is also a hub for tourism activities in Munnar, with nearby attractions such as the Indo-Swiss Livestock Project, Echo Point, and Kundala Lake, making it a must-visit destination for travelers exploring the hill station.



## TEA MUSEUM

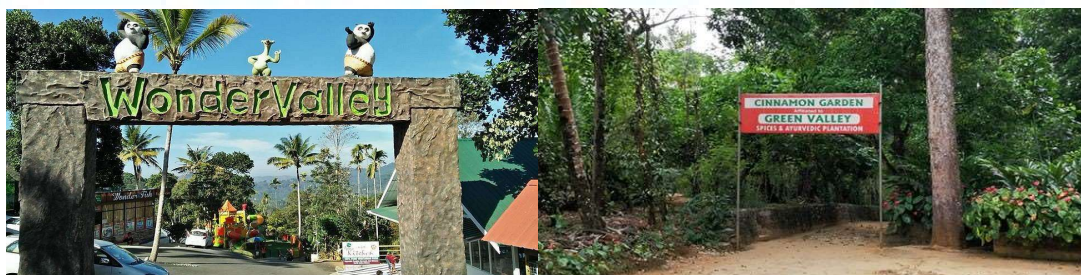
- ❖ Tea has played an integral part in the history of Munnar. Tata Tea established a Tea Museum in 2005 which has photographs and machineries, which chronicle the journey of tea in the area. The museum set up at the Nallathanni Estate of Tata Tea ensures that the legacy of those who worked hard to ensure the tea plantations survived this long is recognised publicly.
- ❖ One can observe the history and growth of tea estates in the area. We get to watch the transition from the rudimentary tea roller to the modern fully automated tea factory. Various stages of tea processing can be seen, which includes the making of black tea. One can also see a sundial, placed on a granite block, which was made in 1913 by the Art Industrial School at Nazareth, Tamil Nadu. It has other attractions like the 'Pelton Wheel' used in the power generation plant in the 1920s, tea roller and a rail engine wheel of the Kundale Valley Light Railway.
- ❖ A demonstration room for tea tasting is another attraction where one would come across different varieties of tea. One can taste some of the most exotic varieties of tea available around the world here. It has steadily turned into a must-visit spot for those who wish to delve into the soul of Munnar.





# Some other tourist places visited in and around the Munnar

1. Tea plantations
2. Spice Garden
3. Chocolate factory
4. Zip line
5. Wonder valley



# KALARI SHETRA

- ❖ Kalaripayattu is the martial art form of Kerala. In the past kalaris (combat arena or battle field) formed an integral part of the lives of the people. Boys and girls in their childhood would be sent to the Kalaris for practicing. With social life undergoing changes, the position of Kalaris and their influence changed. Today, Kalaripayattu is staged during festivals and other occasions as a showpiece.
- ❖ Kalaripayattu has different techniques like meipayattu (physical body exercise), vadipayattu (fight using sticks), valpayattu (fight using swords) and verumkaiprayoga (bare hand exercise). Kalari treatment is a part of the curriculum. In Kalaripayattu, the first exercise is body exercise. Oil massage is an integral portion of body exercise. The body is well oiled. This is done to fine tune the body for the next step that is payattu (fight). Body movements together with oral instructions are practiced. There are 8 to 16 payattu (fight) during different stages. Physical body exercise is followed by kolpayattu in which sticks are used.
- ❖ The next stage involves the use of sword, shield, urumi (flexible sword), kuntham (spear) and kattari (dagger). Multiple persons take part in this exercise. The target areas in angathari are head, chest, back, stomach and portion below the knee.
- ❖ Verumkaiprayoga (bare hand exercise) is a technique in which weapons are not used. Through this exercise the person gets the will power and physique to deal with armed opponents. Concentration and flexibility are developed through this technique.
- ❖ Vaythari (oral commands) is the most important stage in Kalaripayattu training. The kalari Asan controls the movements of the performers through Vaythari. Vaythari has a rhythm of its own. Sometimes elder students and others may give Vaythari.
- ❖ Kalaripayattu's own system of medicine based on Ayurveda and Kalarichikitsa (kalari treatment) is very unique. Ancient gurus had framed the system. It includes marmachikitsa, thirumal and vyayamachikitsa (physical exercise). There are different branches in kalarichikitsa. Marmachikitsa (treatment of vital parts) maintains a secret nature. This is done so that the chikitsa is not misused. We find a blend of Kalarividya and medicine in marmachikitsa. Kalariuzhichil helps a lot in restoring body and mental peace. Today, no wonder, kalarichikitsa is very popular among the people.





## ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

- ❖ Eravikulam National Park, located in the Idukki district of Kerala, is a renowned wildlife sanctuary and biodiversity hotspot. Here's more about it:
- ❖ Location: Eravikulam National Park is a 97 km<sup>2</sup> national park located along the Western Ghats in the Idukki and Ernakulam districts of Kerala in India.
- ❖ Biodiversity: The park is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including several endemic and endangered species. One of the park's highlights is the Nilgiri tahr, a rare mountain goat found only in the Western Ghats. Other wildlife species include gaur, leopards, nilgiri pipit, nilgiri blue robin and many more.
- ❖ Neelakurinji Bloom: Eravikulam National Park is famous for the blooming of the Neelakurinji flowers, which occurs once every twelve years. The mass flowering event attracts tourists from around the world to witness the hillsides covered in a vibrant blue carpet.
- ❖ Visitor Experience: The park offers guided nature walks and trekking trails, allowing visitors to explore its diverse landscapes and spot wildlife in their natural habitat. The Rajamalai Hills within the park are a popular trekking destination, offering panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and tea plantations.
- ❖ Conservation: Eravikulam National Park is dedicated to the conservation of its unique biodiversity. Efforts are made to protect the habitat of the Nilgiri tahr and other species, as well as to promote sustainable tourism practices in the region.
- ❖ Visitor Facilities: The park provides facilities for visitors, including interpretation centers, viewing points, and shuttle services to transport visitors to higher altitudes where the Nilgiri tahr can be spotted.
- ❖ The park is also famous for medicinal plants in the region such as the Drosera peltata and wild species of cultivated plants such Piper schmidtii and Elettaria cardamomum, which adds to the conversational significance of Eravikulam.



# WESTERN GHATS

## **Glimpse into the Past:**

- ❖ **Ancient Civilization:** The Western Ghats have been inhabited by humans for thousands of years, with evidence of ancient civilizations and cultures dating back to prehistoric times.
- ❖ **Trade Routes:** Historically, the Ghats served as crucial trade routes, connecting the inland regions of the Indian subcontinent with the coastal areas and facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures.
- ❖ **Cultural Heritage:** Indigenous communities have thrived in the Western Ghats for centuries, each contributing to the rich tapestry of cultural diversity found in the region.
- ❖ **Colonial Influence:** During the colonial era, the Western Ghats witnessed significant transformations, including the establishment of tea, coffee, and spice plantations by the British and other European powers.

## **Significance:**

- ❖ **Biodiversity hotspot :** The Western Ghats are recognized as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, harboring a staggering array of plant and animal species, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth.
- ❖ **Water Source:** The Ghats act as a crucial water catchment area, providing water to numerous rivers, streams, and watersheds that sustain millions of people downstream.
- ❖ **Climate Regulation:** The forests of the Western Ghats play a vital role in regulating regional climate patterns, influencing rainfall, temperature, and humidity levels across the Indian subcontinent.
- ❖ **Cultural Importance:** The Western Ghats are steeped in cultural significance, with sacred sites, temples, and traditions deeply intertwined with the natural landscape and biodiversity of the region.

## **Flora and Fauna:**

- ❖ **Flora:** The Western Ghats are home to an astounding diversity of plant life, including thousands of species of trees, shrubs, herbs, and orchids. Many of these plant species are endemic to the region, found nowhere else on Earth.

- ❖ **Fauna:** The Ghats support a rich variety of wildlife, including large mammals such as tigers, elephants, leopards, and gaur (Indian bison). The region is also renowned for its diverse birdlife, reptiles, amphibians, and butterflies.
- ❖ **Endemic Species:** The Western Ghats are particularly famous for their high levels of endemism, with a large proportion of plant and animal species found exclusively within the Ghats' boundaries.

In summary, the Western Ghats offer a captivating journey through time, revealing the intertwined history, ecological significance, and extraordinary biodiversity of this ancient mountain range.



# TELANGANA



## CHERAI BEACH

- ❖ The 10 kilometer long Cheraï Beach is the longest beach in Kerala. The beach is located on the northern end of Vypeen Island. Tourists who visit Cheraï beach can witness the alluring beauty of backwaters merging with the majestic Arabian Sea. This beach is also renowned for dolphin watching.
- ❖ The 15 kilometer shoreline of Cheraï beach is also known for being one of the cleanest beaches in India. The shallow depth of the water here is safe for swimming and other water sports. The beach has a 400 meter walkway and a children's park.
- ❖ There are a number of water sports which one can try like jet skiing, parasailing, lele rides, banana rides and surfing.
- ❖ Cheraï Beach is renowned for its cultural diversity, with a blend of local fishermen communities and tourists from around the world. Visitors can experience the vibrant local culture, cuisine, and hospitality of Kerala.



# THERUVORAM NGO

- ❖ Theruvoram NGO was founded by Murukan S in 2007 with the noble mission of rehabilitating street people in Kochi.
- ❖ The NGO operates independently without receiving any funding from the central or the state government.
- ❖ The NGO is dedicated to helping those who are abandoned on streets and also the ones who suffer with serious diseases like leprosy and many more.
- ❖ The NGO welcomes individuals of all ages and backgrounds, including, children, women and men facing various disabilities including both physical and mental disabilities.
- ❖ The NGO has rescued nearly 30,000 homeless people and also has organized various drives in association with the local authorities.





## FORT KOCHI

This is part of a handful of water-bound islands and islets toward the south-west of the mainland Kochi, and collectively known as Old Cochin. This group of island includes many places of historical importance like the Mattancherry Palace, St. Francis Church, Indo-Portugese Museum, Santa Cruz Cathedral, Chinese fishing nets and Marine Drive.



## 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!  
Jai Bharat!