

# **A Study Tour Report on**

## **TamilNadu-Pondicherry Group Visit of ASOs**

**By Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana,  
Hyderabad**

**From 28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024**

**UNDER FOUNDATION TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ASSISTANT  
SECTION OFFICERS (DR) SSC CGL-2023**



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### Objective of the Study Tour

- To study implementation of a policy/programme/scheme
- To get familiarized with developmental and citizen centric activities in villages including remote/tribal areas
- To develop team spirit, time management, management of crisis and adaptability to various odd situations.
- Inculcating skills for effective writing
- Integrity in writing by giving due credit and other ideas

- Researching, inculcating timelines in task completion
- Developing word processing skills

### Itinerary

Description:	
Day 1	<b>Mahabalipuram</b> Arrive at Chennai Airport and proceed to Mahabalipuram, visit seashore Temple, Five Rathas & Arjuna Penance, Proceed to Pondicherry and check in to the hotel
Day 2	<b>Pondicherry</b> Visit Auroville and French Colonies, visit Aurobindo Ashram, visit Pondicherry beach and Boating in the mangrove forest then proceed to Coimbatore
Day 3	<b>Adiyogi-Coimbatore</b> Proceed to Coimbatore and visit Adiyogi, overnight stay in Coimbatore
Day 4	<b>Coonoor-Ooty</b> proceed to Ooty Visit Sim's park enroute
Day 5	Ooty visit Dodabetta peak, visit tea museum and chocolate factory, boating in Ooty lake
Day 6	<b>Ooty-Mysore</b> Visit Pykara lake and proceed to Mysore
Day 7	<b>Mysore</b> Visit Mysore palace and visit St. Phelomena Cathedral church, shopping in Mysore and proceed to Bengaluru Airport, back to Hyderabad

- As Aso(css) we have opportunity to go for Bharat darshan tour during FTP. I am very excited for tour. It gives me to experience cultural and economical aspect of place.

## Day 1

## Mahabalipuram unesco sites

**Mahabalipuram**, also known as Mamallapuram, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Kancheepuram district of Tamil Nadu, India. It's renowned for its ancient rock-cut temples, monolithic sculptures, and cave sanctuaries. Here are some notable sites in Mahabalipuram:



1. **Shore Temple:** This iconic temple, built in the 7th century during the reign of the Pallava dynasty, is dedicated to Lord Shiva and Vishnu. It's situated right by the Bay of Bengal and is known for its architectural grandeur and intricate carvings.
2. **Arjuna's Penance:** Also called "Descent of the Ganges," this massive rock relief is one of the largest bas-reliefs in the world. It depicts scenes from Hindu mythology, including the story of Arjuna performing severe penance to obtain Lord Shiva's weapon.
3. **Pancha Rathas:** These are five monolithic temples, each carved out of a single rock formation. They are named after the Pandavas and their wife Draupadi from the Hindu epic Mahabharata. The intricate carvings and unique architecture make them a significant attraction.
4. **Krishna's Butter Ball:** This is a giant natural rock formation that seems to defy gravity by balancing precariously on a slope. Legend has it that various rulers attempted to move it but failed.

5. **Mahishasura Mardini Cave:** This cave temple is dedicated to Goddess Durga and features intricate sculptures depicting her victory over the demon Mahishasura. The temple is adorned with beautiful carvings and reliefs.
6. **Tiger Cave:** Located a bit away from the main sites, this cave temple is dedicated to Goddess Durga. It features a unique facade adorned with tiger heads, giving it its name.

## Places visited in Pondicherry

### Day 2

#### Auroville

**Auroville** is a unique international township located in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, near the town of Pondicherry (now Puducherry). It was founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa, often referred to as "The Mother," who was a spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo.

The concept of Auroville is based on the vision of human unity, where people from all over the world can live together in harmony, transcending the barriers of nationality, religion, and culture. The township is designed

to be a place of ongoing experimentations in sustainable living, environmental conservation, and spiritual growth.

Key features of Auroville include:

1. **Matrimandir:** The Matrimandir, or "Temple of the Mother," is the spiritual center of Auroville. It is an iconic spherical structure surrounded by twelve petals and is meant to symbolize the birth of a new consciousness. Inside the Matrimandir, there is a quiet chamber for individual silent concentration and meditation.
2. **International Community:** Auroville is home to people from over 50 different countries, making it a truly international community. Residents, known as "Aurovilians," come from diverse backgrounds and contribute their skills and expertise to various projects and activities within the township.
3. **Sustainable Living:** Auroville places a strong emphasis on sustainable living practices, including organic farming, renewable energy, waste management, and eco-friendly construction techniques. Many initiatives within the community focus on minimizing environmental impact and promoting holistic well-being.
4. **Education and Research:** Auroville hosts several educational institutions and research centers dedicated to areas such as alternative education, environmental studies, and sustainable development. These institutions play a crucial role in fostering learning and innovation within the community and beyond.
5. **Cultural Activities:** Auroville offers a vibrant cultural scene with events, workshops, and festivals celebrating music, dance, art, and



spirituality. Cultural exchange and collaboration are integral to the community's ethos, fostering creativity and cross-cultural understanding.

Auroville operates under the auspices of the Auroville Foundation, which is supported by the Government of India and the UNESCO. It is governed by its own charter, emphasizing principles of unity, sustainability, and spiritual growth. Auroville continues to evolve and inspire people around the world with its vision of a harmonious and sustainable human habitat.

### French colonies

**Pondicherry**, now known as Puducherry, was a significant French colonial settlement in India. The French established their presence in Pondicherry in the 17th century, and it remained a French colony until it was integrated into the Indian Union in 1954.



During the colonial period, Pondicherry was one of the five French settlements in India, collectively known as French India. The other settlements included Karikal, Yanam, Mahé, and Chandernagore (in present-day West Bengal). Each of these settlements had its own administrative structure, but Pondicherry was the capital and the largest of the French territories in India.

French colonial rule in Pondicherry left a lasting impact on the region's architecture, culture, and administration. The town still retains many traces of its French heritage, including colonial-era buildings, churches, and street names. The French Quarter, also known as the "White Town," is particularly famous for its well-preserved colonial architecture and charming streets.



## Rock Beach

The rocky beach in Pondicherry is a captivating sight, contrasting with the more common sandy beaches found elsewhere. It offers a unique experience with its rugged beauty and the soothing sound of waves crashing against the rocks. Visitors often find themselves



drawn to these shores for a leisurely stroll, to witness stunning sunsets, or simply to sit and contemplate amidst the tranquil atmosphere. The rocky formations also provide opportunities for exploration and photography, making it a favorite spot for both locals and tourists alike.

## Places visited in Coimbatore

Day 3

### Adiyogi

**The Adiyogi** Shiva Statue in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, is an iconic monument dedicated to Lord Shiva as the Adiyogi, the first yogi and the originator of yoga. This colossal statue stands 112 feet tall and is situated at the Isha Yoga Center, which was founded by Sadhguru





Jaggi Vasudev, a renowned spiritual leader and yogi.

The unveiling of the Adiyogi statue on Mahashivaratri in 2017 marked a significant moment, as it symbolizes the essence of yoga and its transformative power. The statue's unique design and massive scale have garnered international recognition, making it a prominent landmark in Coimbatore and a destination for spiritual seekers and tourists alike.

The Adiyogi Shiva Statue serves as a reminder of the timeless wisdom of yoga and the profound potential for inner growth and self-realization. It stands as a tribute to the ancient science of yoga and its relevance in today's world, inspiring countless individuals to embark on a journey of self-discovery and well-being.

**The Isha Foundation** is a non-profit organization founded by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev in 1992. It is dedicated to fostering global harmony and individual well-being through various yoga programs, environmental initiatives, and social outreach projects. Here's a brief overview of the key aspects of the Isha Foundation:

1. **Yoga Programs:** The foundation offers a wide range of yoga programs aimed at promoting physical health, mental clarity, and emotional balance. These programs include classical hatha yoga practices, meditation techniques, and advanced spiritual programs such as Inner Engineering.
2. **Inner Engineering:** Inner Engineering is a flagship program of the Isha Foundation designed to help individuals achieve inner transformation and holistic well-being. It combines ancient yogic practices with modern scientific approaches to address various aspects of human life.
3. **Environmental Initiatives:** Isha Foundation is actively involved in environmental conservation efforts, particularly in the preservation of rivers and forests. The Rally for Rivers campaign, initiated by Sadhguru, aims to revitalize India's rivers through afforestation and sustainable water management practices.
4. **Social Outreach:** The foundation runs numerous social outreach projects focused on education, healthcare, and rural development. These

initiatives aim to uplift rural communities and improve their quality of life through various interventions such as education programs, healthcare clinics, and economic empowerment projects.

5. **Dhyanalinga Temple:** The Dhyanalinga is a unique meditative space created by Sadhguru at the Isha Yoga Center. It is a powerful energy form that is open to people of all faiths and backgrounds for meditation and inner exploration.

Overall, the Isha Foundation is committed to promoting individual well-being and global harmony through the integration of yoga, social outreach, and environmental conservation efforts. Its holistic approach to human development has garnered widespread recognition and has touched the lives of millions of people around the world.

## Day 4

### COONOOR

**Sims Park**, nestled in Coonoor amidst the Nilgiri Hills, is a captivating botanical garden spanning 12 hectares. It boasts over 1,000 plant species from around the world, including rare and endangered varieties. Visitors wander along winding pathways, surrounded by lush greenery, vibrant flower beds, and towering trees. The park's Japanese Park section showcases traditional landscaping with bonsai trees and serene water features. Families enjoy recreational facilities like play areas and boating on the lake, while horticultural exhibitions and flower shows add to the park's allure. Sims Park offers a tranquil escape into nature's embrace, captivating all who wander its verdant paths.



## Places visited in Ooty

Day 5

Ooty

**(i) Dodabetta Peak:** At an elevation of 2,637 meters (8,650 feet) above sea level, Dodabetta Peak stands tall as the highest point in the Nilgiris. A visit to this majestic peak promises awe-inspiring vistas of rolling hills, lush valleys, and dense forests blanketed in mist. Travelers can reach the summit by a scenic drive or opt for an invigorating trek through verdant trails, immersing themselves in the tranquility of nature along the way.



The panoramic views from Dodabetta Peak offer a serene retreat for nature enthusiasts and photographers alike, providing the perfect vantage point to marvel at the beauty of Ooty's landscape.

**(ii) Tea Museum:** For those intrigued by the art of tea-making, a visit to the Tea Museum in Ooty offers a delightful journey into the region's rich tea culture. Housed within a colonial-era building, the museum showcases vintage tea-processing equipment,



photographs, and exhibits that chronicle the history and evolution of tea cultivation in the Nilgiris. Visitors can delve into the nuances of tea



production, from plucking to processing, and savor aromatic blends during guided tasting sessions. The Tea Museum provides an immersive experience that educates and indulges tea aficionados while highlighting the significance of tea in Ooty's heritage.

**(iii) Chocolate Factory:** Indulgence takes center stage at the Chocolate Factory, where visitors can witness the artistry behind crafting delectable chocolates from bean to bar. Set amidst lush surroundings, the factory offers guided tours that unveil the chocolate-



making process, from roasting and grinding cocoa beans to molding and packaging exquisite confections. Guests can sample an array of handcrafted chocolates, truffles, and pralines, tantalizing their taste buds with the rich flavors and textures of artisanal chocolate creations.

**(iv) Ooty Lake:** For a leisurely escape amidst serene environs, Ooty Lake beckons with its tranquil waters and scenic vistas. Originally constructed for fishing purposes during the British colonial era, the lake now serves as a popular recreational hub for boating enthusiasts and nature lovers. Visitors can embark on leisurely boat rides across the shimmering waters, soaking



in the breathtaking views of verdant hillsides and lush greenery that adorn the lake's periphery. Whether paddling in colorful pedal boats or rowing in traditional rowboats, the boating experience at Ooty Lake offers a serene retreat that captivates the senses and rejuvenates the soul.

In essence, Dodabetta Peak, Tea Museum, Chocolate Factory, and the boating experience at Ooty Lake encapsulate the essence of Ooty's charm, blending natural beauty, cultural heritage, and culinary delights into unforgettable experiences that linger in the hearts of visitors long after their journey comes to an end. These iconic attractions epitomize the allure of Ooty as a timeless destination where every moment unfolds with beauty, serenity, and wonder.

1. **Employment Opportunities:** The tea industry is a major employer in Ooty and surrounding areas. The Tea Museum serves as a focal point for tourists interested in learning about tea cultivation and processing, creating jobs for tour guides, museum staff, and related hospitality services.

## Visited pykara lake enroute to Mysore

### Day 6

**Pykara Lake**, nestled amidst the lush greenery of the Nilgiri Hills in Tamil Nadu, is a serene reservoir famed for its scenic beauty. Offering boat rides amidst pristine surroundings, it's a popular tourist destination. Its tranquil ambiance and picturesque landscapes make it a refreshing retreat for nature lovers and photographers alike



## Places visited in Mysore

### Mysore

**Mysore Palace**, a breathtaking symbol of opulence, stands as a testament to India's rich cultural heritage. Nestled in Karnataka, its majestic architecture blends Hindu, Muslim, Rajput, and Gothic



styles. Intricate carvings, vibrant paintings, and intricate craftsmanship adorn its halls, narrating tales of royalty and history. Originally built in the 14th century and rebuilt in 1912, it continues to mesmerize millions with its grandeur, making it a must-visit destination for tourists and history enthusiasts alike. Beyond its cultural significance, the palace is a vital economic asset, drawing tourists from around the globe, stimulating local businesses, and contributing to the region's economy.

**The St. Philomena's Cathedral** in Mysore, India, is an architectural marvel, blending Neo-Gothic and Oriental styles. Constructed in the late 19th century, its towering spires and intricate detailing captivate visitors. As a revered place of worship and a cultural icon, it stands as a testament to the city's rich religious and architectural heritage.



**Mysore silk sarees** are not just garments; they're repositories of cultural and economic significance.

Culturally, Mysore silk sarees are deeply intertwined with the heritage of Karnataka, particularly the city of Mysore. They represent centuries of tradition, craftsmanship, and artistic excellence. The intricate weaving techniques, often passed down through generations, showcase the skill and dedication of local artisans. Each saree tells a story, reflecting the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

Economically, the production of Mysore silk sarees sustains livelihoods for many individuals and families. The silk industry in Mysore provides employment opportunities for weavers, dyers, designers, and various other craftsmen involved in the production process. Additionally, the popularity of Mysore silk sarees both domestically and internationally contributes significantly to the local economy through tourism and exports.

### Learnings Carried Over From The Visits

Our study tour through the cultural and natural marvels of Mahabalipuram, Auroville, Adiyogi, Ooty, Mysore Palace, and Chamundeshwari Devi has been an enlightening odyssey, weaving together history, spirituality, and natural beauty.

**Mahabalipuram**, with its ancient rock-cut temples and intricate sculptures, taught us the significance of preserving our cultural heritage and the artistry of ancient civilizations.

**At Auroville**, we discovered the ethos of sustainable living and the power of collective harmony, witnessing firsthand the potential for communities to thrive in harmony with nature.

**Adiyogi**, the majestic manifestation of Lord Shiva, instilled in us the values of inner exploration and self-realization, inspiring us to delve deeper into our spiritual journey.

**In Ooty**, amidst the serene hills and verdant valleys, we learned the importance of environmental conservation and the delicate balance between human development and preserving natural ecosystems.

**Mysore Palace**, a testament to opulence and grandeur, offered insights into the rich cultural heritage of Karnataka, showcasing the architectural marvels of bygone eras.

Finally, at Chamundeshwari Devi, atop the Chamundi Hills, we experienced the reverence and devotion of pilgrims, understanding the significance of faith and spirituality in people's lives.



Through this enriching journey, we have not only expanded our knowledge but also gained a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of history, culture, and nature. Each destination has left an indelible mark on our minds, inspiring us to continue our quest for learning and exploration.

**Thank You**

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