

# BHARAT DARSHAN REPORT

## KERALA GROUP-3



**Study Tour (Bharat Darshan) from 28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024 for  
Assistant Section Officer, Batch CGL 2023**

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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, 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 the visit to Kerala. I enjoyed the study tour and learned many things during the NGO attachment and Tea-cum-Chocolate Factory Visit as well.

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 Karnataka-Tamilnadu-Kerala under the guidance of Dr. Vinod Goud, Senior Faculty (FTP).

There were 1 faculty member, 61 participants and out of these 5 students were chosen as group leaders for smooth conductance of the tour. 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 develop team spirit, time management, management of crisis and adaptability to various odd situations.
- To enables the trainees to know about the ecological, historical and cultural background prevailing in the different zones of India.

## **Bharat Darshan Group-3 Schedule**

### **Day 0 (28<sup>th</sup> April,2024)**

- Padmanabhaswamy Temple
- Veli Village

### **Day 1 (29<sup>th</sup> April,2024)**

- Alleppey Houseboat Cruise
- Alleppey Beach

### **Day 2(30<sup>th</sup> April,2024)**

- Periyar National Park

### **Day 3 (01<sup>st</sup> May, 2024)**

- Eravikulam National Park

### **Day 4 (02<sup>nd</sup> May,2024)**

- Mattupetty Dam
- Tata tea museum
- Tea estates

### **Day 5 (03<sup>rd</sup> May,2024)**

- Cherai Beach
- Fort Kochi
- Mattancherry Palace

### **Day 06 (04<sup>th</sup> May, 2024)**

- THERUVORAM NGO VISIT

## 1. Padmanabhaswamy Temple

The first point in our itinerary was Padmanabhaswamy temple. The temple has a dress code for men and women. Women are required to wear sarees, Mundum Neriyathum (set-mundu), skirt and blouse, or half-saree. We wore the attire and proceeded towards temple. The temple is located in the East fort of Trivandrum. After entering east fort, there is pond, padmatheertham on the right hand side of the path and Kuthirmalika Palace on left hand side of the path. The temple is built in an intricate fusion of the Kerala style and the Dravidian style of architecture, featuring high walls and a 16th century gopuram. The gopuram of temple is 100 foot(30 m) high, it has 7-tier and it is built in pandyan style. The temple has 4 entrance- kizakke nada, padinjare nada, vadakke nada and thekke nada" ( means East,west,north & south). But the main entrance is Kizakke nada (East Entrance). The temple has a corridor with 365 and one-quarter sculptured granite-stone pillars with elaborate carvings. By the time we reached sanctum sanctorum, it was time for madhyanya Pooja or , so we had to wait for another 45 minutes for darshan. In the Grabhagriha, Padmanabha reclines on the serpent. The deity is visible through three doors – the visage of the reclining Padmanabha and Siva Linga underneath his hand is seen through the first door; Sridevi and Bhriugu Muni in Katusarkara, Brahma seated on a lotus emanating from the deity's navel, hence the name, "Padmanabha", gold abhisheka moorthies of Padmanabha, Sridevi and Bhudevi, and silver utsava moorthi of Padmanabha through the second door; the deity's feet, and Bhudevi and Markandeya Muni in Katusarkara through the third door. Inside the Temple, there are two other important shrines, Thekkedom and Thiruvambadi, for the Deities, Ugra Narasimha and Krishna Swami respectively.



## **2. Veli Village**

Everyone was feeling full of energy after having lunch and taking some rest. In the evening we proceeded towards veli village. Veli tourist village lies where the veli lake meets the Arabian sea. It provides unique boating and picnicking opportunities. We returned from veli village by around 8pm and after having our dinner we took a good sleep.



## **3. Kovalam Beach**

In the early morning we went to kovalam beach to see sunrise. There we had the opportunity to meet some local fisherman. Fishing is one of the major business in Kerala. The catch consists of King Fish, Red Snappers, Pomfrets, shrimps, etc. They sell their lot mostly to local market.



#### 4. Alleppey Beach (Venice of the Beach)

Alleppey is famous for its canals, backwaters, beaches and lagoons. We had booked a backwater cruise to see the scenic man made islands and beautiful sights of coconut fringed backwaters and paddy fields. The cruise started from pamba river and went upto vembanad lake. Total distance covered was around 15km (to and fro). The path traversed by us is part of national waterway 3. It is the first national waterway in the country with 24 hour navigation facilities along the entire stretch.

The economy of alleppey is based on paddy farming, tourism and coir industry. Alleppey is part of Kuttanad region, this region has the lowest altitude in India, and is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried on around 1.2 to 3.0 metres below sea level. The region is known as the rice bowl of Kerala and it is also the part of second largest Ramsar site in India. To stop the saltwater intrusion into the Kuttanad, a 1252m long saltwater barrier, Thanneermukkom has been built on Vembanad lake.

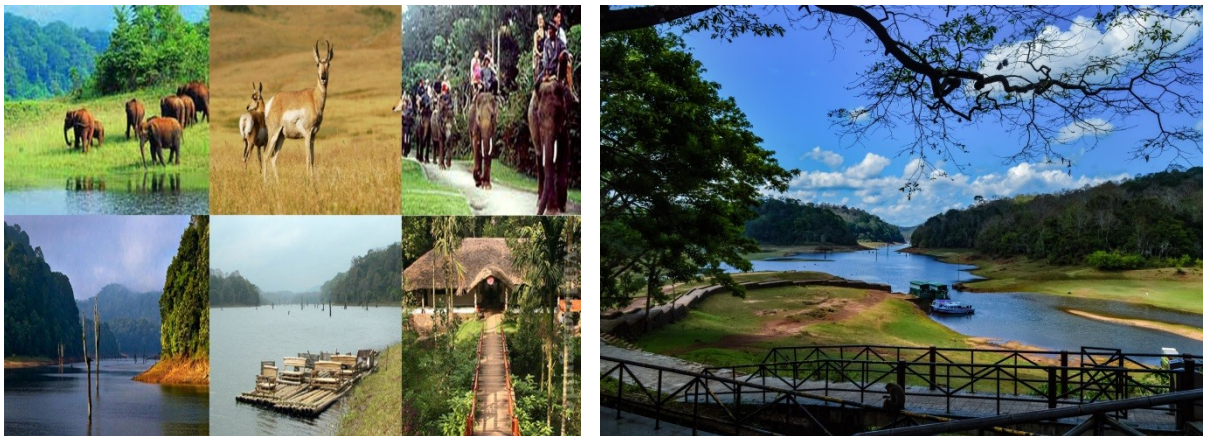
Besides its backwaters, alleppey is also famous for its coir industry. Coir is extracted from the outer husk of coconut and is used to make ropes, twine, brooms and brushes, doormats, etc.





## 5. Periyar National Park

i. People-oriented and park-centered community-based ecotourism is the hallmark of Periyar Tiger Reserve. These programmes are conducted by local people responsible for the surveillance of the vulnerable parts of the reserve. Community-based and protection-oriented ecotourism programmes (CBET) were initiated in PTR during the IEDP. These programmes were developed to ensure livelihood security and to reduce negative dependency on forests. Tickets for boating at Periyar lake were already booked by us. During this boat journey we witnessed herd of deer, elephants, wild goats and wild buffaloes. There was no sight of tiger. On inquiring forest official about this, he 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 is that 925 sq km of Periyar National Park is home to only 40 tigers. The forests of Periyar tiger reserve are pristine and unaffected from all outside disturbances, even after accommodating thousands of tourists every year. This is because of the management effectiveness of periyar tiger reserve. It also bagged first prize in the management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) of tiger reserves in India for the year 2022, released by ministry of environment, forest and climate change.



## 6. Eravikulam National Park

In the morning we departed for Eravikulam national park which was 15km from our hotel. It is situated in the Kannan Devan Hills of the southern western ghats. The wildlife park has an area of 97 sq. km. and it is the first national park in Kerala. It is divided into three regions- the core area, the buffer area and the tourism area. Visitors are allowed only to the tourism area. After reaching main entrance of tourism area, a bus of Kerala forest and wildlife department took us to the starting point of Kurinji trail. The magnificent view of beautiful tea plantations on our way was a sight to behold. The trek from to kurinji is of one hour and the on the way one can witness herds of nilgiri tahr, the endangered mountain goat, for which Eravikulam is a natural habitat. The national park has the highest density and largest population of Nilgiri Tahr. The trekking journey also provides a mesmerizing view of the largest stretch of undisturbed montane shola-grassland eco system in the western ghats. Anamudy (2695m), the highest peak south of Himalayas, is also located within the park.

At the ending of the trek is the highly admired plant species strobilanthes kunthiana, which is locally known as Neelakurinji. Neelakurinji is an endemic species of Western Ghats and it is under threat because of being plundered from the grasslands of High Ranges by ignorant/berserk people. It blooms once in 12 years. It last bloom in 2018 and hence it will bloom again in 2030. After spending some time on the top, we came back to the starting point of the trek and visited “story of the park”. it shows brief history of the park and the flora and fauna which are found in the park with special attention to niligiri tahr.



## 7. Mattupetty Dam

Mattupetty is more than just a water storage facility. The water body that forms as a result of this gravity dam is often termed as Mattupetty lake. Mattupetty lake is a perennial lake which never dries up even in the summers. the dam is an important source of electricity and the lake hosts various water based recreational activities which adds to the tourism. The water of mattupetty lake is also used for irrigation purpose in the nearby fields.



## **8. Tata Tea Museum**

Tata tea museum 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. We got 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. There was 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 we came across different varieties of tea. We tasted some of the most exotic varieties of tea available around the world here.



## **9. Tea States**

The tea museum is situated in the Nallathanni Estate, which is owned by Kanan Devan Hills Plantations Company Private Limited. Some of the plantations of KDHP are open to public. We visited some of the tea estates and saw how the tea workers plucked tea leaves. For plucking the pluckers take first two leaves and a bud. Plucking is a labour intensive business and hand plucking is economical than machine plucking.

## 10. Cherai Beach

Cherai Beach in Kerala offers pristine shores, swaying palms, and serene backwaters. Enjoy water sports, dolphin watching, and tranquil sunsets amidst its natural splendor. The adventure activities at cherai beach like lay low, banana ride, jet ski, etc attract many tourists.



## 11. Fort Kochi

Fort Kochi, a historic gem in Kerala, boasts colonial architecture, bustling markets, and serene backwaters. important places in fort kochi are

- Mattancherry palace
- St francis church
- Dutch Cemetery
- Santa Cruz Basilica
- Fort Immanuel
- Jewish Synagogue
- Maritime Museum
- Chinese Fishing Nets



## 12. Mattancherry Palace

This palace is popularly known as the Dutch Palace. It is a quadrangular structure built in Nalkettu style, the traditional Kerala style of architecture, with a courtyard in the middle. Certain elements of architecture, as for example the nature of its arches and the proportion of its chambers are indicative of European influence in basic Nalukettu style. There is large number of murals on the walls of the palace, executed in the traditions of Hindu temple art, which are religious, decorative and stylized.



### **13. THERUVORAM NGO VISIT**

**“THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS”**

**-MAHATMA GANDHI**

Our final day was reserved for a NGO visit. Our goal to visit NGO was to get an insight into the organisation’s mission, goals and activities, the issues they address, the communities they serve, and the impact of their work.

#### **ABOUT:-**

- **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.

#### **THE FOUNDER:-**

- 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

#### **VISION AND MISSION:-**

Mission empowerment and welfare of street people specially old age, mentally challenged, migrant labour communities, empowerment of rural women to build and equitable relationship of strength, sustenance and dignity between the cities and villages using the under-utilised urban material as a tool to trigger development with dignitym across the country vision make the world a berrer place for human race

#### **SERVICE:-**

- 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 disabilites, 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!