



**Report on Bharat Darshan – cum- Study Tour**

**( 28-04-2024 to 04-05-2024)**

**of**

**FTP for ASO DRs 2023 Batch**

**Presented By-**

**SUSHANT TRIVEDI**

**OT CODE – B19**

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Firstly, I express my sincere gratitude to ISTM, our esteemed guides, for their invaluable insights and assistance throughout this enriching journey. Special thanks to Dr. Marri Channa Reddy Human Resource Development Institute of Telangana whose support made this educational excursion possible.

Secondly, we express our appreciation to the organizers for meticulously planning and executing every aspect of the tour. Special thanks to the local guides, experts, and community members who generously shared their knowledge and insights with us. We are also grateful to the authorities and institutions that facilitated our visits to various sites of cultural and socio-economic importance.

Lastly, we thank the people of Kerala for their warm hospitality and for welcoming us into their communities with open arms.

# INDEX

## 1. Overview of Kerala as a tourist destination

## 2. Day 1 -Trivandrum: Capital City Exploration

- Padmanabhaswamy Temple
- Kovalam Beach
- Veli Village

## 3. Day 2 -Alleppey: Venice of the East

- Houseboat experience
- Economic Significance
- International Significance

## 4. Day 3 Thekkady: Wildlife and Spice Aromas

- Periyar Tiger Reserve: Importance and conservational efforts
- Spice Gardens: Unveiling Kerala's Aromas
- Cultural Significance: Embracing Tradition and Diversity

## 5. Day 4 and 5 Visit to Munnar: Kashmir of South

- Eravikulam National Park: Protecting Nature's Diversity
- Native Species: Guardians of the Forest
- Kalaripayattu: Discovering Ancient Traditions
- Mattupetty Dam
- Munnar Tea plantations
- Tata Tea Museum
- Insights into lives of plantation workers
- Traditional Kerala Lunch – Sadya
- Visiting Kochi by Night

## 6. Day 6 Exploring Kochi: Unveiling Its Rich History

- Fort Cochin: A Window to Colonial Times
- Mattancherry Palace: A Glimpse into Royalty
- Chinese Fishing Practice: Sustaining Coastal Livelihood

## 7. Day7 Theruvoram NGO

- Discovering Theruvoram's Heart
- A Variety of Programs
- Changing Lives, Changing Communities

## 8. Conclusion

- My study tour experience
- Key learnings and insights gained

## **OBJECTIVE**

The primary objective of our study tour was to delve into the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Kerala, with a focus on understanding the socio-economic significance of its landmarks.

Through visits to diverse destinations such as Trivandrum, Alleppey, Thekkady, Munnar, and Kochi, we aimed to examine the interplay between history, culture, economy, and society in shaping Kerala's identity. By engaging with local communities, institutions, and experts, our goal was to unravel the complexities of Kerala's socio-cultural fabric and discern the factors contributing to its resilience and vibrancy.

# **Overview of Kerala as a tourist destination**

Our study tour commenced with great anticipation as we embarked on a journey to unravel the mysteries and wonders of Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," is a captivating destination known for its lush greenery, tranquil backwaters, picturesque hill stations, and rich cultural heritage. Situated on the southwestern coast of India, Kerala boasts a diverse range of attractions that appeal to travelers from around the globe. Kerala, nestled in the southern part of India, is renowned for its lush landscapes, vibrant culture, and intricate tapestry of tradition and modernity.

Overall, Kerala's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, wellness offerings, adventure activities, and culinary delights make it a captivating destination that offers something for every traveler. Whether seeking relaxation, adventure, cultural immersion, or spiritual rejuvenation, Kerala invites visitors to embark on a transformative journey that leaves a lasting impression.

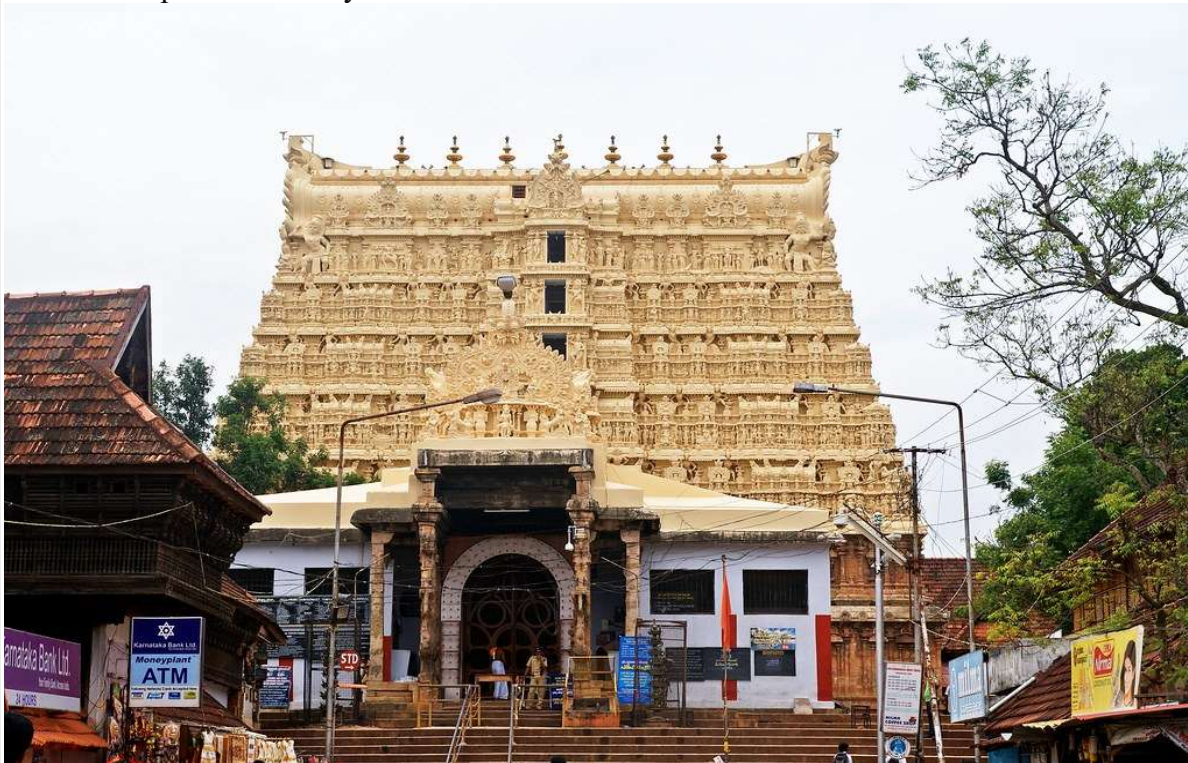
## Day 1 Trivandrum: Capital city exploration

We landed in Thiruvananthapuram as a part of our Bharat Darshan trip and commenced our journey from here. Day 1 of our trip delved into three destinations: Padmanabhaswamy temple, Kovalam beach, and Veli Tourist village.

**Padmanabhaswamy Temple:** Our journey commenced with a visit to the iconic Padmanabhaswamy Temple, a renowned Hindu pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Vishnu. As we entered the temple complex, the towering gopuram adorned with intricate sculptures greeted us, setting the tone for our spiritual journey ahead.

Inside the temple, I was mesmerized by the grandeur of the architecture, characterized by intricate carvings depicting scenes from Hindu mythology. The sanctum sanctorum houses the principal deity, Lord Padmanabhaswamy, in a reclining posture on the serpent Ananta. The idol, embellished with gold ornaments, exuded a divine aura, evoking a sense of reverence among the devotees.

The spiritual ambiance, filled with the chanting of hymns and the fragrance of incense, left an indelible impression on my mind



**Kovalam Beach:** After immersing ourselves in the spiritual realm of the temple, we proceeded to Kovalam Beach, a picturesque coastal destination renowned for its pristine shores. I engaged myself in various recreational activities, including beach volleyball, sunbathing, and leisurely strolls along the shoreline. The soothing sound of the waves and the gentle sea breeze provided a refreshing respite from our academic pursuits, allowing us to unwind and rejuvenate amidst nature's splendour.

Kovalam beach provides livelihood to people in the area in the form of economic activities like water sports, local artisans, hotels, souvenir shops making it a integral part of Kerela's tourism industry



**Veli Village:** Our final destination was Veli Village where we explored the unique blend of natural beauty and cultural heritage that defines Kerala's rural landscape.

A highlight of our visit was the Veli Tourist Village, where we embarked on a boat cruise through the serene backwaters, marvelling at the lush greenery and traditional fishing villages that dotted the landscape. I was amazed by the mesmerizing spectacle of the floating bridge, a marvel of engineering that connects the village to the beach.

Exploring these mesmerizing destinations on first day of the trip offered a multifaceted journey through the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Kerela. From the spiritual sancity of ancient temples to the shores of pristine beaches and the charm of lakeside villages, each destination leaves an mesmerizing impression on travellers, showcasing the timeless allure of “God’s Own Country”.



## Day 2 -Alleppey: Venice of the East

At around 9am we departed from Trivandrum to alleppey. We reached our destination at 2pm. 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 vembanand lake. Total distance covered was around 15km (to and fro). The path traversed by us is part of national waterway 3. The scope of road and railways development in alleppey is limited and that's why the development of waterway in this area has proved to be a boon for traditional industries such as coir, cashew and fishing. It is the first national waterway in the country with 24 hour navigation facilities along the entire stretch.

**Houseboat experience:** As the houseboat glides silently through narrow canals and expansive lagoons, I witnessed life along the waterways - fishermen casting their nets, villagers washing clothes by the banks, and children playing in the water.

**Economic significance:** 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. 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.

**International significance:** 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.

After disembarking from the boat, we went to our hotel and later in the evening we went to some coir shops to see the coir products.

As the journey on the cruise came to an end, I got myself a lifelong memory of the hospitality of the cruise, interaction with the people and understanding the intricate economy of the backwaters closely. The day ended on a good note.





## **Day 3 Thekkady: Wildlife and Spice Aromas**

### **Periyar Tiger Reserve: Importance and conservational efforts**

At around 8am we proceeded towards Thekkady to visit Periyar National Park. On reaching Thekkady, a bus of national park took us from our stop to Periyar National Park. There were 4 double decker boats waiting for the tourists at the lake. The boat journey was of 1 hour and during this boat journey we witnessed herd of deer, elephants, wild goats and wild buffaloes. There was no sight of tiger. I was amazed by the forests of Periyar tiger reserve that are pristine and unaffected from all outside disturbances, even after accommodating thousands of tourists every year.

Periyar tiger reserve 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.



### **Spice Gardens: Unveiling Kerala's Aromas**

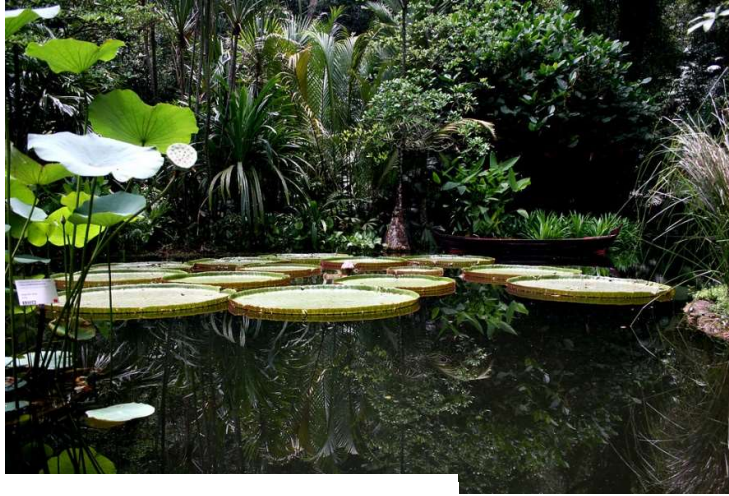
Our journey in Thekkady led us to the fragrant spice gardens, where we embarked on a sensory adventure through Kerala's culinary heritage. As we wandered through the verdant plantations, inhaling the delightful scents of cardamom, pepper, cinnamon, and cloves, I gained a deeper understanding of the significance of spices in shaping Kerala's cultural identity.

The spice trade has been integral to Kerala's history and economy, attracting traders from distant lands and fostering cultural exchange. The cultivation and trade of spices provide livelihoods for farmers and plantation workers while encouraging Kerala's export industry.

### **Cultural Significance: Embracing Tradition and Diversity**

Our exploration of Thekkasly offered insights into Kerala's vibrant cultural mosaic, characterized by a rich tapestry of traditions, art forms, and rituals. Whether witnessing a traditional Kathakali performance, experiencing the martial prowess of Kalarigavattu or partaking in a community

festival, I was struck by the resilience and dynamism of Kerala's cultural heritage.



## **Day 4 and 5 Visit to Munnar: Kashmir of South**

### **Eravikulam National Park: Protecting Nature's Diversity**

Our adventure began with a visit to the majestic Eravikulam National Park, a sanctuary for plants and animals nestled in Munnar's hills. As we ventured into the wilderness, I was immediately struck by the beauty and peace of the landscape. The lush grasslands, dotted with forests and streams, provided a safe haven for many species.

Eravikulam National Park is home to a variety of flora and fauna, including the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, a type of mountain goat. The park's diverse habitats support a rich array of life, from rare orchids and butterflies to elusive predators like leopards. Our talks with park rangers and experts shed light on conservation efforts to protect these habitats from human impact and climate change.

### **Native species: guardian of the forest**

Exploring Munnar's native plants and animals was an eye-opening experience. Walking through the forests and streams, we encountered many unique species crucial to the ecosystem's health. From towering trees to birds and monkeys, each species plays a vital role in maintaining Munnar's biodiversity. Learning from local experts deepened our understanding of these relationships



### **Kalaripayattu: Discovering Ancient Traditions**

Our trip also introduced us to Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art originating in Kerala taught by skilled practitioners, we learned about its history and significance as more than just physical combat, but also as a spiritual practice. Kalaripayattu is an ancient Indian martial art form that originated in Kerala. It is considered one of the oldest martial arts in the world, dating back over 3,000 years. Kalaripayattu encompasses a wide range of techniques, including strikes, kicks, grappling, and weaponry, all designed for self-defence and combat.

Training in Kalaripayattu is rigorous and comprehensive, focusing not only on physical conditioning but also on mental discipline and spiritual development. Practitioners undergo extensive exercises to enhance flexibility, agility, and strength, as well as meditation and breath control techniques to cultivate focus and inner balance.

Beyond its martial aspect, Kalaripayattu holds cultural significance, serving as a repository of traditional knowledge and a symbol of Kerala's rich heritage. It has also influenced other martial arts forms around the world.

Today, Kalaripayattu continues to thrive as a revered art form, attracting practitioners and enthusiasts from across the globe who seek to master its techniques and philosophy.



**Mattupetty Dam:** We saw a big dam made of concrete that holds water from the Mattupetty Lake. It helps make electricity and provides water for farming. The dam sits in a beautiful place surrounded by green hills and forests. We learned how it was built and why it's important for the area. It was really cool to see how people use nature to help them with their needs. We had a great time exploring and learning new things about dams and nature

**Munnar Tea plantations:** Journeying through the undulating hills of Munnar, we were greeted by vast expanses of emerald-green tea plantations, meticulously manicured rows of tea bushes stretching as far as the eye could see. Munnar's tea plantations sprawl across the picturesque hills of Kerala, creating a stunning landscape of verdant beauty. These lush green fields, adorned with rows of tea bushes, stretch as far as the eye can see, painting a serene tableau against the backdrop of mist-clad mountains. The cool, misty climate and fertile soil of Munnar provide the perfect conditions for tea cultivation, resulting in the production of high-quality tea renowned for its aroma and flavour. Visiting Munnar's tea plantations offers a sensory journey, where visitors can witness the meticulous process of tea plucking and processing while immersing themselves in the tranquil ambiance of nature's bounty.

**Tata Tea Museum:** Stepping into the Tata Tea Museum, we embarked on a journey through time, tracing the evolution of tea cultivation from its humble beginnings to its status as a global industry powerhouse.

Inside the museum, vintage machinery and exhibits illustrated the arduous process of tea production, from plucking the tender tea leaves to their transformation into the aromatic brew cherished by millions worldwide. We gained insights into the ingenuity and perseverance of those who pioneered the tea industry in Munnar, laying the foundations for its economic prosperity.

**Insights into lives of plantation workers:** Interactions with plantation workers offered poignant glimpses into their daily struggles and aspirations. We learned of their toil under the scorching sun, plucking tea leaves with dexterity and precision, their livelihoods intricately woven into the fabric of Munnar's tea estates. Their stories served as a reminder of the human cost





## **Day 6 Exploring Kochi: Unveiling Its Rich History**

Our study tour of Kochi was like traveling back in time to Kerala's fascinating past. Situated on India's southwest coast, Kochi has been a melting pot of cultures due to centuries of trade, colonization, and maritime exploration.

Our journey began amidst the bustling streets and vibrant markets of Kochi City, where echoes of history resonate in its ancient buildings and landmarks. Strolling through Fort Cochin and Mattancherry, I felt immersed in the city's deep-rooted heritage.

Kochi's strategic location on trade routes attracted traders, explorers, and colonial powers throughout history. Its architectural landscape is a mosaic of Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences, interwoven with local traditions. The city's buildings serve as storytellers of its diverse past, reflecting its vibrant multicultural present.

### **Fort Cochin: A Window to Colonial Times**

Exploring Fort Cochin offered insights into Kochi's colonial legacy and maritime adventures. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century to monopolize the spice trade, the fort exudes a sense of bygone eras.

Walking through its narrow streets, I was transported back in time, witnessing remnants of Portuguese, Dutch, and British rule in churches, cemeteries, and architecture. These historic sites narrate Kochi's colonial history, juxtaposed with its modern-day bustling markets and thriving art scene.

### **Mattancherry Palace: A Glimpse into Royalty**

Our exploration continued at Mattancherry Palace, a testament to Kochi's royal heritage and architectural brilliance. Initially gifted by the Portuguese to the Kochi Raja, the palace underwent Dutch renovations, featuring exquisite Kerala-style designs and intricate paintings.

Stepping into its opulent chambers, I was captivated by the palace's timeless elegance and rich craftsmanship. Vibrant paintings depicting Hindu myths and royal life offered a glimpse into Kochi's cultural and artistic legacy, highlighting the region's rich tapestry of history and heritage.

### **Chinese Fishing Practice: Sustaining Coastal Livelihood**

During our exploration of Kochi's culture, we got to see the famous Chinese fishing technique that has been helping coastal communities along the Malabar Coast for a long time. Watching the Fishermen working together to use those big nets, called "Cheena Vala," I was amazed by how smart and united they were in keeping up this old tradition.

The Chinese fishing nets show us not just Kochi's history with the sea but also how important they are for the fishermen and their families. But keeping this tradition going isn't easy. There are problems like not enough fish, damage to the environment, and new ways of fishing taking over. Talking to the fishermen and people who care about nature showed us that we need to find ways to fish that don't harm the sea and make sure everyone works together to keep this special tradition alive.

## Day7 Theruvoram NGO:



We visited Theruvoram NGO in Kochi, which is like a shining light of hope for the community. I wanted to learn more about how they help people and make a difference in society.

**Discovering Theruvoram's Heart:** When I stepped into Theruvoram's office, I felt welcomed and could sense their passion for helping others. They aim to make the world fairer and more inclusive for everyone.

**A Variety of Programs:** I was amazed by all the things Theruvoram does. They run programs for education, healthcare, jobs, and protecting the environment. One of their best programs helps kids from poor families get a good education, breaking the cycle of poverty.

**Changing Lives, Changing Communities:** Meeting people who have benefited from Theruvoram's help was touching. Women are starting their own businesses, and young people are finding their voices through art. Theruvoram gives people the tools they need to succeed and be proud of who they are.

Leaving Theruvoram, I felt inspired by their stories and their commitment to making the world a better place. In a world where things aren't always fair, organizations like Theruvoram show us that change is possible. I'm going to carry their values with me and do my part to help others, just like they do.



# **Conclusion**

## **My Study tour experience**

In wrapping up, my trip to Kerala has been amazing and eye-opening. I got to explore the state's beautiful nature, learn about its culture, and see how people live and work. From the calm backwaters of Alleppey to the green tea fields of Munnar, each place showed me a different side of Kerala's history and traditions.

Our trip to Kerala changed us in big ways, helping us understand more about the people and culture there. From the peaceful backwaters in Alleppey to the green tea fields in Munnar, each place showed us a different side of Kerala's history and how people live.

By talking to locals and experts, we got a real feel for what life is like in Kerala and the problems it faces. We also learned about cool ideas people are using to make things better. This trip wasn't just educational, it was also really meaningful, leaving us wanting to learn more about Kerala and do our part to help it grow in a fair and sustainable way.

## **Key Learnings and Insights Gained**

1. Time Management: Learn to prioritize tasks, plan activities in advance, and adapt to changes on the go.
2. Team Building: Enhance communication, foster cooperation, and resolve conflicts peacefully within your team.
3. Leadership: Develop quick decision-making skills, delegate tasks effectively, and maintain team motivation and positivity.

Reflecting on these aspects during our trip we can improve our time management, teamwork, and leadership skills, benefiting both our professional and personal life.