

FOUNDATION TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR
ASSISTANT SECTION OFFICERS OF CSS
REPORT ON
**BHARAT DARSHAN STUDY
TOUR TO KERALA**

(28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024)

CONDUCTED BY: -



Dr. Marri Channa Reddy
Human Resource Development
Institute of Telangana

PRESCRIBED BY: -



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INSTITUTE OF SECRETARIAT TRAINING & MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & TRAINING
(AN ISO 9001:2015 INSTITUTION)



Submitted by: -

HITESH UPRETI
(OT code – B44)
Ministry of Home Affairs

CONTENTS

S.No	Particulars	Page No.
1	Acknowledgment	2
2	Objectives of the Study Tour	3
3	Schedule of the Tour	4-5
4	Sight Seeing in Kerala	6-18
	Day 1: Padmanabhaswamy Temple and Veli Tourist Village	6-7
	Day 2: Kovalam Beach and Alleppey	7-9
	Day 3: Periyar National Park and Spice Plantation	9-11
	Day 4 &5: Munnar	11-16
	Day 6: Kochi City Tour	16-18
5	NGO Attachment	19-21
6	Conclusion	22

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to ISTM and Dr. MCR HRD IT for orchestrating an exceptional educational excursion, the Bharat Darshan tour to Kerala. This incredibly enriching experience stands as a testament to the meticulous planning and dedicated commitment exhibited by both institutions.

A special acknowledgment goes to Dr. Kandukuri Usha Rani, Course Director, and our faculty coordinator Sri Saka Venkateshwara Rao whose steadfast support ensured a seamless and enlightening journey.

I'm immensely grateful to the organizing committee and tour coordinators whose unwavering dedication, meticulous planning, and flawless execution contributed to the tremendous success of this tour.

Beyond its intellectual pursuits, the Bharat Darshan/study tour fostered enduring memories and fostered camaraderie among us. It wasn't just an educational journey; it was a platform that created lasting bonds and cherished moments.

The thoughtfully curated tour and immersive experiences have significantly broadened our horizons. From exploring the coastal areas of Trivandrum to the hills and natural beauty of Munnar, experiencing the beauty of Kochi "The Queen of Arabian Sea" and NGO attachment has enriched our understanding of the subjects we've been studying and the diversity of India.

Once again, my deepest gratitude to ISTM and Dr. MCR HRD IT for granting me this invaluable opportunity to learn, explore, and forge indelible connections."

- **HITESH UPRETI (OT Code – B44)**

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY TOUR

As part of the Foundation Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers (Probationers)-Batch-2023, a study tour (Bharat Darshan) to Kerala was organized from 28.04.2024 to 04.05.2024 under the guidance of Dr. Kandukuri Usha Rani, Course Director and faculty coordinator Sri Saka Venkateshwara Rao.

The following was the objective of the tour:

- To familiarize the trainees with India's cultural heritage and Arts.
- To expose the trainees to research and development work being done by Government and NGOs.
- Providing exposure to our environment and wildlife conservation.
- To develop team spirit, time management, management of crisis, and adaptability to various odd situations.

SCHEDULE OF THE TOUR

(Hyderabad – Trivandrum- Alleppey- Thekkady- Munnar - Cochin-Hyderabad)

(28th April 2024 to 4th May 2024)

Date	Journey	Mode of Journey	Daily Activities
28.04.2024	Hyderabad to Trivandrum	By Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrival at Trivandrum Airport.• Visit to Padmanabha Swamy Temple.• Departure to Veli Village• Dinner and overnight stay at the Hotel in Kovalam.
29.04.2024	Kovalam to Alleppey	By Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast and departure to Alleppey• Alleppey Houseboat cruise with lunch• Disembark the cruise and drive to the hotel in Alleppey.
30.04.2024	Alleppey- Thekkady- Munnar	By Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After breakfast departure to Thekkady and lunch at a local restaurant.• Departure to Periyar Lake for boating• Proceed to Munnar and Visit to spice plantation en route to Munnar.

01.05.2024	Munnar to Eravikulam National Park and back to Munnar	By Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Breakfast proceed to Eravikulam National Park. • Evening Visit to Kalari-Shetra and Zipline Adventure Activity.
02.05.2024	Munnar to Cochin	By Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After breakfast visited Mattupetty Dam • Enroute visited tea plantation • Visit to Tata Tea Museum and tea estates • Proceed to Cochin.
03.05.2024	Cochin City visit	By Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City tour of Cochin • Visit to Chinese Fishing Nets, Fort Cochin, Jewish Synagogue. • Spice Shopping.
04.05.2024	Cochin to Hyderabad	By Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the morning NGO attachment and interaction with the founder and members • In the evening proceed to Cochin International Airport to catch the flight.

*******A MEMORY TO CHERISH FOREVER*******

SIGHTSEEING IN KERALA

DAY 1:

PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

Our itinerary started with landing at the Trivandrum International Airport and visiting Lord Padmanabhaswamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, offers a fascinating journey into the heart of Dravidian architecture, rich Hindu culture, and centuries of history. This temple is renowned for its breathtaking architecture, intricate carvings, and, notably, the mysterious vaults that have captured the imagination of people all around the world. The temple is associated with the ruling royal family of Travancore who patronages its arts and culture. Given the temple's historical importance and the discoveries of immense wealth within its vaults, the temple's role in the local economy, its impact on tourism, and the legal and ethical debates surrounding the management of its assets make a valuable learning point. Additionally, interacting with priests and devotees provided us with valuable insights into the religious and cultural traditions associated with the temple. Also, we were lucky to witness the daily afternoon ritual of the temple of taking out the sacred Jyoti around the premises of the temple.



Main Entrance of Padmanabhaswamy Temple

VELI TOURIST VILLAGE

In the afternoon after taking lunch and reenergizing us with a quick power nap we proceeded to Veli tourist village. The Veli Tourist Village which lies where the Veli Lake meets the Arabian Sea provides unique boating and picnicking opportunities. It provided a breathtaking view of the sunset and recreational activities. The village is an example of how economic activities can be blended with nature in a sustainable manner generating local employment. At 8 pm we returned from Veli to our hotel and after having dinner we rushed to bed.



Group Photo at Veli village with Faculty

DAY 2:

KOVALAM BEACH

Our morning starts with a visit to Kovalam Beach, just behind our hotel. It is one of Kerala's most famous beaches, renowned for its pristine sands, clear blue waters, and stunning sunsets. There we had the opportunity to meet some local fishermen whom we also helped in pulling their boats back from the sea. In the

interaction, they said that their major catch is King Fish, Red Snappers, Pomfrets, shrimps, etc. which they sell mostly to the local market.

ALLEPPEY

At around 9:30 am, we proceeded to our next destination that was Alleppey popularly referred to as the Venice of the East. During our journey to Alleppey we also had a glimpse of Jatayu Earth's Centre. We reached Alleppey at around 2 pm and embarked on our houseboat cruise.

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. All the staff of the cruise boat was local and they acted as our guide for the backwaters journey. The cruise started from Pamba River and went up to Vembanad Lake. The 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 waterways 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.

During our journey, we also encountered some speed boats that were providing adventure activities which we all experienced. Even though the route forms part of national waterways there are very less ferry services operating on the route. The route holds great significance to the local population as all are dependent on houseboat tourism which is a hallmark of Alleppey. While interacting with the crew of the boat we came to know that Alleppey's economy depends mainly on houseboat cruise tourism, agriculture (including paddy cultivation), fishing, and the coir industry. After finishing our ride at about 5:30 pm we proceeded to our hotel enjoying the breathtaking sunset at the lake.



Alleppey House Boat Cruise

DAY 3 :

PERIYAR NATIONAL PARK

After having breakfast, we proceeded towards Thekkady to visit Periyar National Park. The park is centered around the Periyar Lake, an artificial lake formed

by the Mullaperiyar Dam across the Periyar River. The park is famous for its rich biodiversity, especially its population of elephants. It's estimated that there are around 900 elephants in the park, making it one of the largest wild elephant populations in India. Apart from elephants, Periyar is also home to other animals like tigers, leopards, sambar deer, barking deer, gaur (Indian bison), wild boar, and various species of birds. One of the unique features of Periyar National Park is the opportunity for boat safaris on the Periyar Lake, which allows visitors to observe wildlife from the water.

We have already booked the tickets for boating. On reaching Thekkady, a bus from the 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 about one hour and during the journey, we witnessed a herd of deer, elephants, wild goats, and wild buffaloes. There was no sight of a tiger. It was a wonderful experience encompassing breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape, with dense forests, rolling hills, and wildlife-rich shores creating a picturesque setting, and witnessing it from the tranquillity of the lake gives a feeling of getting lost in nature.



Elephant Sightseeing

SPICE PLANTATION

While going to Munnar we got a chance to visit a spice and ayurvedic herb plantation facility called “The Spice Route”, the ayurvedic and spice garden. The guide there made us familiar with the different spices and herbs that we use in our daily life along with the process of extracting them and turning them into useful products.



Spice Plantation

DAY 4 & 5:

MUNNAR

On reaching Munnar we got a refreshing escape from the heat and humidity of the plains that we were experiencing from the start of our trip. Known for its lush

green tea plantations, misty hills, and cool climate, Munnar is a popular tourist destination and a haven for nature lovers. In the morning, we took a walk to nearby tea plantations and had a cup of tea which the vendor told us was from nearby plantations only. After breakfast, we proceeded to Eravikulam National Park. Traveling through scenic tea plantations, lush green hills, and serene lakes provided us with a memorable experience.



Munnar Tea Plantation

ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

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 tourist area. Visitors are allowed only to the tourist area. After reaching the main entrance of the tourism area, a bus from the Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department took us to the starting point of the Kurinji trail. The magnificent view of beautiful tea plantations on our way was a sight to behold. The trek to Kurinji is one hour and 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 ecosystem in the western ghats.

At the end of the trek is the highly admired plant species *strobilianthes 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 bloomed 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 the “story of the park”. It shows a brief history of the park and the flora and fauna which are found in the park with special attention to Nilgiri Tahr.



Nilgiri Tahr grazing

KALARI SHETRA

After returning from Eravikulam National Park we had lunch at a hotel and in the afternoon we proceeded to KalariShetra to witness the Kalaripayattu show going on there. Kalaripayattu is a traditional Indian martial art form that originated in Kerala, a state in South India. It is one of the oldest fighting systems in existence, dating back over 3,000 years. The word "Kalari" means battlefield or combat arena, and "Payattu" means to practice or to fight. In addition to its martial aspects, Kalaripayattu is also considered a holistic system for physical, mental, and spiritual development. It incorporates elements of yoga, Ayurveda (traditional Indian medicine), and meditation, making it a comprehensive system for overall well-being.



Kalaripayattu Show

MATTUPETTY DAM

On day 5 in the morning we visited 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 Mattupetty Lake. Mattupetty Lake is a perennial lake that 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 purposes in the nearby fields.



Mattupetty Dam and Lake

KANAN DEVAN HILLS PLANTATIONS AND TATA TEA MUSEUM

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 the public. The museum showcases a variety of machinery used in tea production from the early to the late 20th century. A few of the exhibits on display in the museum are the original tea roller from 1905, a rotor vane, A Pelton wheel from the Kanniamally Estate power plant in the 1920s, and artifacts from the

Kundale Valley Light Railway that operated between Munnar and Top Station in the early 1900s. We also visited tea plantations and during the interaction with plantation workers, we learnt the precautions taken during harvesting of tea leaves and the specific way of plucking the tea leaves. Due to sloppy terrains still, manual plucking is preferred over machine plucking. After some shopping at a local factory outlet, we proceeded to Kochi as the last leg of our itinerary. En route to Kochi we had traditional Kerala cuisine called “Sadhya”.

DAY 6:

KOCHI CITY TOUR

FORT KOCHI

Fort Kochi has been shaped by the influence of various colonial powers, including the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. This is evident in its architecture, with colonial-era buildings, churches, and forts dotting the landscape.

MATTANCHERRY PALACE

Mattancherry Palace, also known as the Dutch Palace, is a historical landmark located in the Mattancherry neighborhood of Kochi (Cochin), Kerala, India. The palace was built by the Portuguese in the mid-16th century as a gift to the Raja of Kochi. Later, it was renovated and expanded by the Dutch in the 17th century, which is why it is often referred to as the Dutch Palace. The palace served as the residence of the Kochi royal family. Mattancherry Palace is a fine example of traditional Kerala architecture with a mix of colonial influences. The structure features a typical Nālukettu style, characterized by a central courtyard surrounded by halls and rooms. The palace is adorned with intricately carved wooden ceilings, ornate arches, and vibrant murals depicting scenes from the Ramayana and other Hindu mythological tales.



Mattancherry Palace

CHINESE FISHING NETS

The Chinese fishing nets are believed to have been introduced to Kochi by Chinese traders in the 14th century. The Chinese fishing nets are not only functional fishing tools but also a major tourist attraction in Kochi. Visitors flock to the waterfront to witness the spectacle of the nets being operated by skilled fishermen. Many tourists also take the opportunity to try their hand at operating the nets or enjoy freshly caught seafood dishes served by nearby stalls and restaurants. The Chinese fishing nets are an integral part of Kochi's cultural identity and history. They represent the centuries-old maritime trade connections between Kerala and China and the multicultural heritage of the region.



Chinese Fishing Nets

CHERAI BEACH

Cherai Beach is renowned for its natural beauty, with pristine golden sands, clear blue waters, and coconut groves lining the shore. The beach offers panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and is an ideal spot to relax, unwind, and enjoy the serene surroundings. Cherai Beach offers a range of activities for visitors to enjoy. Sunbathing, swimming, and beachcombing are popular pastimes here. Adventurous visitors can also indulge in water sports such as parasailing, jet skiing, and banana boat rides.

Kochi's visit gave us a rewarding experience filled with history, culture, natural beauty, culinary delights, and warm hospitality. Whether exploring its historical landmarks, relaxing on its beaches, or immersing oneself in its vibrant cultural scene, Kochi offers something for every traveller to cherish. Truly, it is the Queen of Arabian Sea.

NGO ATTACHMENT

On last day of our study tour, we have attachment with Theruvoram, an NGO founded by Murukan S Theruvoram, a social worker, for the rehabilitation of street people in Kochi.

History and Background: It was established in the year 2007. Theruvoram had been in service in the past years without accepting fund or grants from Government and public Theruvoram aims to reach out to the most marginalized children and old age people to provide interventions of shelter, medical, repatriation, rescue, death related, sponsorship, emotional support and guidance.

Founder: Murugan S, the founder of Theruvoram NGO, was born and brought up in Peerumedu, Idukki district in Kerala. Later in 1990's, the family migrated to Kochi in search of job, but the family could only earn Rs 300 a month. Murugan was brought up in the slums of Kochi; living among them as one of them. Bro.Mavooris, a well-known social worker gave a new life path to Murugan from the slum boy image. Murugan got a new life with many friends in Don Bosco Snehabhavan, from where he learned to write Malayalam. More over the harden experience of life taught him to love and see other people with compassion. In the year 2000, Murugan volunteered to serve as child line worker. In those days, during the morning, he worked for the society by rescuing kids and old age people from the street and provided shelter, food, medicine according to their needs and met the expenses from the late-night drive being an auto rickshaw driver. In 2007, Murugan founded an NGO called THERUVORA PRAVARTHAKA ASSOCIATION ALSO KNOWN AS THERUVORAM NGO, for the rehabilitation of people from street. The objective of the institution is to provide full time (24 hrs*7days) help to street people. Theruvoram NGO is the first NGO to be emerged from the street for the street.

Services: The NGO has rescued nearly 30,000 homeless beggars and destitute. 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 disabilities, bedridden, and elderly individuals. The organization has a two-story building that accommodates 30

homeless individuals. Apart from this, their project THERUVU VELLICHAM has rehabilitated around 1,356 people since inception, which would amount to a year and a half in period.



THERUVORAM NGO



THERUVORAM NGO



Social Service of NGO

Awards: The selfless social service of Murugan S is recognized by the central and state government as well as various private organizations. He has been conferred with various awards some of them are:

- 1) National award for social welfare, in the year 2012 from Honourable President of India Shree Pranab Mukharjee for his honorary service.
- 2) Government of Kerala Department of Social Justice Award 2013 May 16 for Special Appreciation of Social Work.
- 3) Best National Social Worker Award 2017 was presented by Hon'ble Union Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh from Jindal Foundation and many more

Murugan S, through his efforts has shown to the world that you don't need money or education to serve mankind. Being empathetic and kind to fellow human beings is enough to help them. Despite limited resources, he has shown if you have the will anything can be accomplished. Meeting Murugan S has given a new direction to our thinking and has brought a greater sense of responsibility toward the downtrodden and neglected section of society.



Interaction with Murugan S

CONCLUSION

The Bharat Darshan/Study Tour to Kerala has proven to be a comprehensive and enriching encounter, seamlessly integrating educational aspects with the exploration of culturally vibrant and naturally captivating destinations. The detailed exploration of each destination provided participants with profound insights into India's diverse heritage. The program's alignment with economic, social, and cultural developments, coupled with an emphasis on sustainability, made it a holistic and enriching experience for all participants.

We also developed our skills and competencies in teamwork, time management, crisis management, and adaptability. The NGO attachment has shown us how a common man from the streets with limited resources has become a saviour for the abandoned people on the street. His dedication and commitment to serving humanity have changed the lives of many.

In all, this trip was a great learning experience. With a lot of new friends made during the trip, it can surely be said that we all will work together in all the circumstances towards the development of our nation.

Thank You.

Jai Hind.