



FTP for ASO of 2023 Batch

Report on Study tour (Bharat Darshan) -Tamil Nadu

(28.04.2024-04.05.2024)

**FOR
ASSISTANT SECTION OFFICERS OF CSS**

Prepared by –

HIMANI (B48)

Assistant Section Officer

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Contents

Sl. No.	Particulars	Page
1.	Acknowledgement	02
2.	Objective of the Tour	03
3.	Schedule of Study Tour & NGO attachment	04
4.	Puducherry Sight-Seeing	07
●	4.1 Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram	07
●	4.2 Arjuna's Penance	08
●	4.3 Pancha Rathas	09
●	4.4 Auroville Visit - NGO Attachment	10
●	4.5 Paradise beach	12
●	4.6 French Colony	12
●	4.7 Art and Crafts Village Pondicherry	13
●	4.8 Arakimedu	14
●	4.9.Pondicherry Mangroves	15
5.	Coimbatore- Visit to Adiyogi	17
6.	Ooty Sight-Seeing	18
●	6.1 Doddabetta Peak	18
●	6.2 Tea Factory	19
●	6.3 Ooty Lake	20
●	6.4 Pykara waterfalls	21
7.	Karnataka- Visit to Mysore Palace	22
8.	Conclusions and Learnings	24

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 Dr. K. Sukumar, 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 Tamil Nadu and Karnataka tour. I enjoyed the study tour and learned many things during the NGO attachment and Tea 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 in Kerala under the guidance of Dr. K. Sukumar, 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;

Schedule of Bharat Darshan Study Tour & NGO attachment

The study tour organized by MCRHRD for 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 at Tamil Nadu-Puducherry-Karnataka as per the following details:-

□ **DAY 01: 28th APRIL 2024: HYDERABAD – CHENNAI (BY FLIGHT) –**

10:55 AM: Depart from Hyderabad (BY INDIGO)

12:15 PM: Arrival in Chennai Airport

12:30 PM: Depart For Mahabalipuram Shore temple by Bus

01:30 PM: Lunch at local restaurant on the way

3:00 PM: Visited Mahabalipuram Shore Temple, Arjuna Penance and Five Rathas

07:00 PM: Check-In to the Hotel at Puducherry

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

□ **DAY 02: 29TH APRIL 2024: PUDUCHERRY**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel

09:00 AM: Visit to Auroville NGO

12:00 Noon: Visit to French Colonies

01:30 PM: Lunch at a local restaurant

06:00 PM: Visit to Puducherry Rock Beach

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

□ **DAY 03: 30TH APRIL 2024: PUDUCHERRY - COIMBATORE**

07:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

08:00 AM: Check-out from the Hotel and proceed to Puducherry Mangroves

09:00 AM: Visit to Arts and Crafts Village

10:00 AM: Visit to Arakimedu and Pondicherry Mangrove Forest

01:30 PM: Lunch at a local restaurant

03:00 PM: Depart for Coimbatore

08:00 PM: Dinner at a local restaurant

12:00 PM: Check-in Hotel at Coimbatore and overnight stay at hotel.

□ **DAY 04: 01ST MAY 2024: COIMBATORE - OOTY**

05:30 AM: Visit to Adiyogi

10:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel and Check-out from hotel

11:00 AM: Departure for Ooty

01:30 PM: Lunch at a local restaurant

07:00 PM: Check-in at Hotel in Ooty

08:00 PM: Dinner & Overnight stay at Ooty

□ **DAY 05: 02ND MAY 2024: OOTY**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel

09:00 AM: Visit to Doddabetta Peak

01:00 PM: Lunch at local Restaurant

02:30 PM: Visit to Tea Factory & Chocolate Factory

05:00 PM: Boating at the Ooty Lake

07:30 PM: Dinner and Overnight stay at Ooty

□ **DAY 06: 03RD MAY 2024: OOTY-MYSORE**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel and Check-out from the Hotel.

09:00 AM: Departure from Ooty

11:00 AM: Visit Pykara Lake & Dam.

01:30 PM: Lunch at Restaurant

06:00 PM: Arrive Mysore & Check in at Hotel.

07:00 PM: Free for Shopping in Mysore

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

□ **DAY 07: 04TH MAY 2024: MYSORE – BANGALORE (BY ROAD) / BANGALORE – HYDERABAD (FLIGHT)**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Visit Chamundi Hills and Mysore Maharaja Palace

11:00 AM: Visit St. Philomena's Cathedral at Mysuru

01:00 PM: Lunch at Local Restaurant & Departure from Mysore.

06:30 PM: Arrive Bangalore & Drop in Airport (Full Group Departure in the Same Flight)

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

10:05 PM: Arrive at Hyderabad Airport.

4. Puducherry Sight-Seeing

4.1 Mahabalipuram Shore Temple

Dating from the 8th century AD, it is a structural temple built with blocks of granite. It is a complex of temples and shrines overlooking the Bay of Bengal.

Marco Polo and the European merchants who came to Asia after him called the site Seven Pagodas, one of which is believed to be the Shore Temple. The Temple probably acted as a landmark for seafarers.



Fig.1: Mahabalipuram Shore Temple Main Entrance

The temple is a combination of three shrines which are built on the same platform. The main shrine and the smaller second shrine are dedicated to Shiva. The third shrine is dedicated to reclining Vishnu. The Shore Temple is one of the most popular temples in Mahabalipuram.

The main five-storied structural Hindu shore Temple faces east so that the sun rays shine in the main deity of Shiva Linga in the shrine. Built with sculpted granite stones, it is the earliest important structural temple in South India.

The temple structures affected by rough sea tides and winds with salt content are being conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.

4.2 Arjuna's Penance

Descent of the Ganges, known as Arjuna's Penance, is a giant open-air rock relief carved on two monolithic rock boulders.

The relief depicts the story of the descent of the sacred river Ganges to Earth from the heavens led by Bhagiratha. The relief was created to celebrate the victory of Narasimhavarman I over the Chalukya Emperor Pulakesin II. The name 'Mamallapuram' was named in the honor of Pallava Monarch Narasimhavarman I who was conferred the title Mamallan, the "great wrestler".

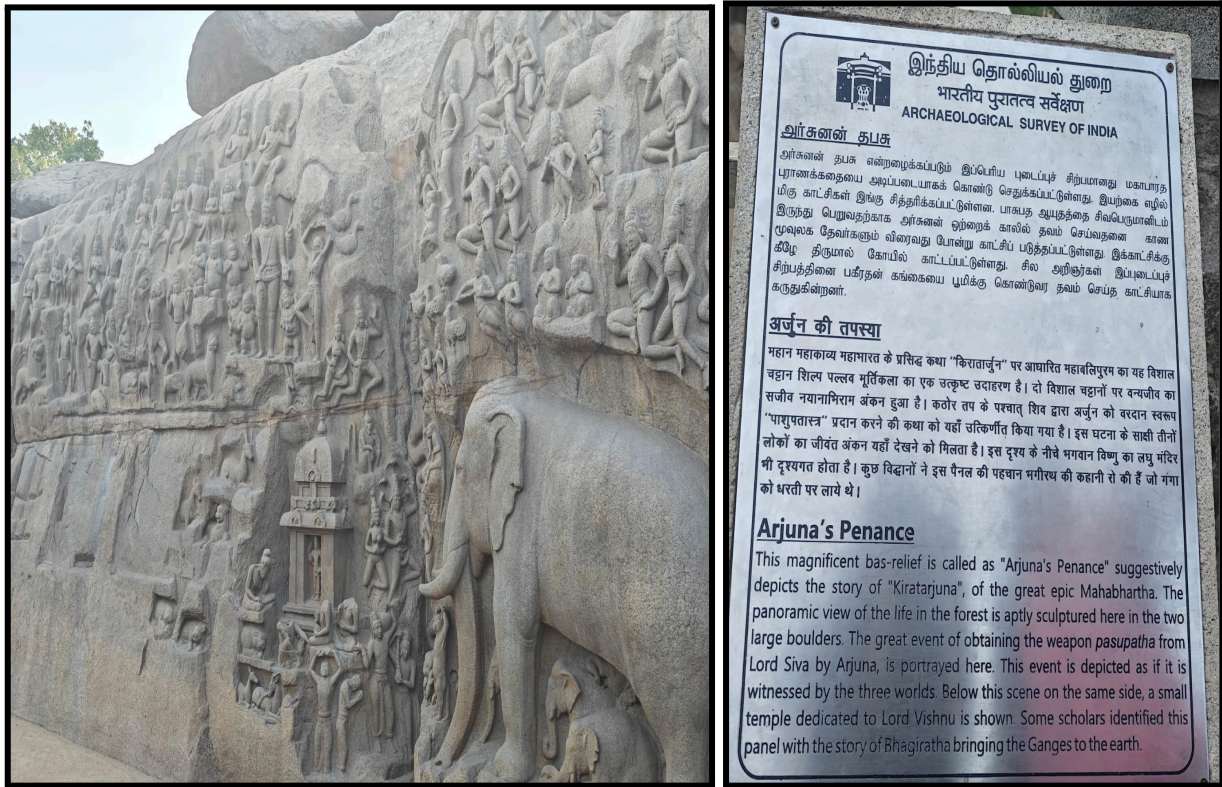


Fig. 2 : Arjuna's Penance

The sculptures carved in the natural fissure that divides the cliff not only depict the cosmic event of Ganges descending to Earth but also show the event being watched by many gods, goddesses, puranic figurines and also wild and domestic animals. It is also said that the relief in one unity is the early Indic artist's concept of "sublime continuity in all living things".

It is part of 25 UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Sites in India. It is one of the Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram that were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.

4.3 Pancha Rathas

Pancha Rathas, also known as Five Rathas or Pandava Rathas is a monument complex at Mahabalipuram. Pancha Rathas is an example of monolithic Indian rock-cut architecture. The complex was initially thought to have been carved during the reign of King Narasimhavarman I.



Fig. 3.1 : Pancha Rathas of Mamallapuram

Each of the five monuments in the Pancha Rathas complex resembles a chariot (ratha), and each is carved over a single, long stone or monolith, of granite which slopes in north–south direction with a slight incline. The structures are named after the Pancha Pandavas and their common wife Draupadi, of epic Mahabharata fame. In order of their size, they include the Dharmaraja Ratha, Bhima Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Nakula Sahadeva Ratha, and Draupadi Ratha.



Fig 3.2 Dharmaraja Ratha and Bhima Ratha

The complex is under the auspices of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed by UNESCO in 1984 as Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram.

4.4 Auroville- NGO Attachment

Founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa (known as "the Mother") and designed by architect Roger Anger, Auroville is an experimental township in Viluppuram district, mostly in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, with some parts in the Union Territory of Pondicherry in India.

Auroville has its origins in the French language, "Aurore" meaning dawn and "Ville" meaning village/city. Additionally, it is named after Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950).

Handwritten in French by Mirra Alfassa (the Mother), its four-point charter set forth her vision of integral living:

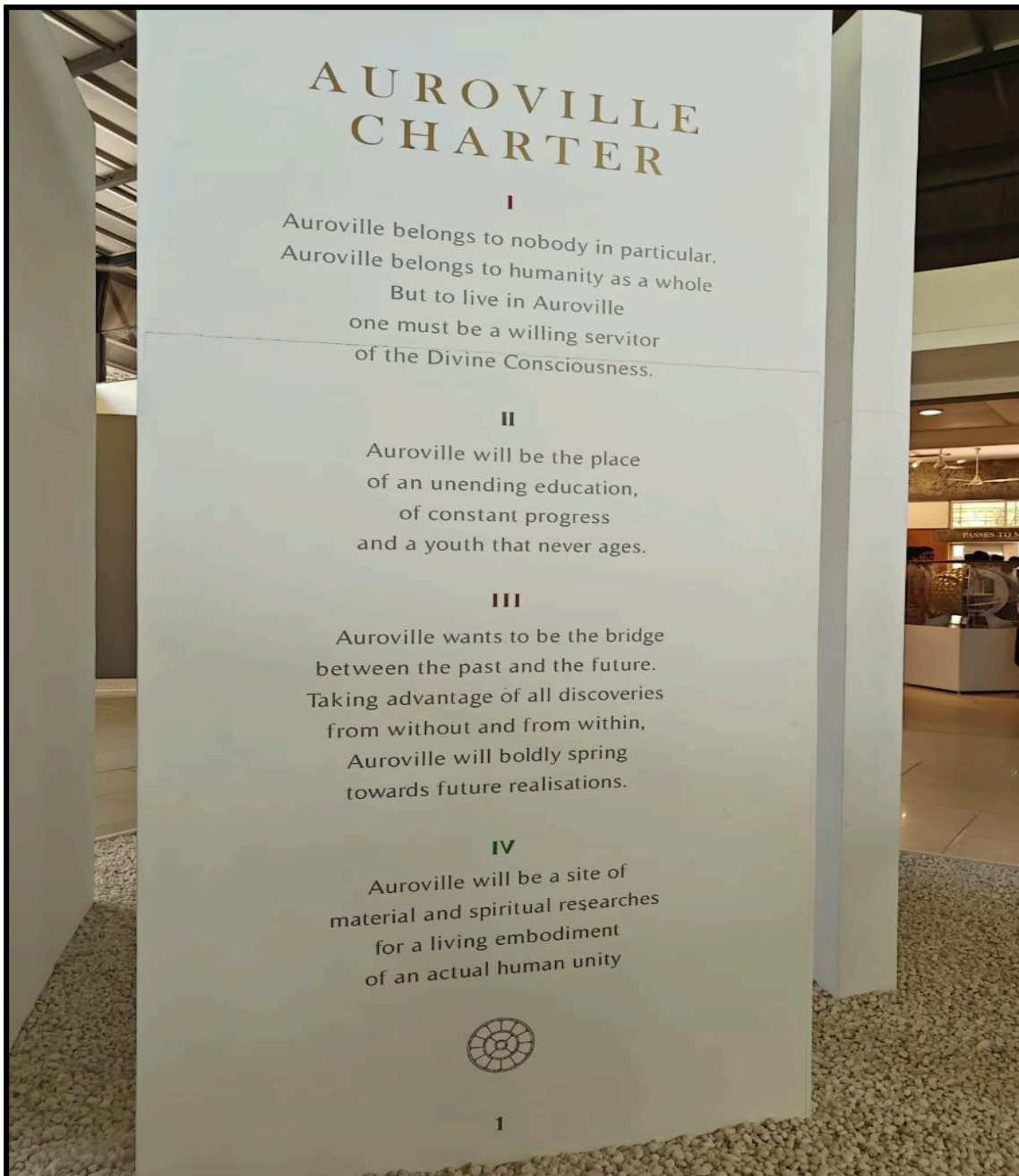


Fig 4.1 The Auroville Charter

In the middle of the town is the Matrimandir, which was conceived by Alfassa as "a symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection". Silence is maintained inside the Matrimandir to ensure the tranquility of the space, and the entire area surrounding the Matrimandir is called the Peace area. Inside the Matrimandir, a spiraling ramp leads upwards to an air-conditioned chamber of polished white marble referred to as "a place to find one's consciousness".



Fig 4.2: The Matrimandir

The community had many residential housing clusters with Tamil, English, French and Sanskrit names like Aspiration, Arati, La Ferme, Auromodel and Isaiambalam.

Auroville works closely together with the surrounding villages, where mainly Tamil people reside, via the Auroville Village Action Trust under which many different projects including the villages fall. The Auroville Foundation is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Many filmmakers visit Auroville, and a wide range of films are available. These include “Ever Slow Green - Re-afforestation in Auroville, South India”

4.5 Paradise Beach

Also known as Plage Paradiso, Paradise Beach, widely famous for its unparalleled charm, mesmerizing beauty, and jaw-dropping scenery, offers a peaceful yet delightful experience to all those who are looking to relax and rejuvenate in serenity.

The best time to enjoy the peaceful and serene ambiance of the beach is at the Sunrise at 05:30 in the morning.



Fig.5: Paradise Beach at Morning

Since Paradise Beach is situated at a distance of only 8 Km from the heart of the city, it can be easily accessed by locals as well as tourists by all means of transport.

Unlike other beaches, Paradise Beach is an all-season beach and it can be visited by tourists at any time of the year.

4.6 French Colony

Two hundred years of French influence has had a tremendous impact on Pondicherry. This quaint, charming town of French Colony Pondicherry in Tamil Nadu is renowned for its delectable food and mesmerizing beaches.

The French colony of Pondicherry has a typical French colonial style of buildings with compounds and high walls. These buildings are mostly painted in yellow and blue with highlights of white.



Fig.6: French Colonies

Puducherry was the last French colony in India. It became a part of India in 1954 as a union territory. The French colony in Pondicherry makes you feel as if you are not in India. The White town of Pondicherry still has strong French influence with French names of streets and many of the Tamilians speak fluent French.

4.7 Arts and Crafts Village

Located on the outskirts of Puducherry near the Murugapakkam village, the prominent Arts and Crafts Village of Puducherry exhibits the lifestyle, culture and heritage of the local residents of Puducherry. It displays the indigenous works of the artisans, who have been the local residents of Puducherry for many years.

The Artefacts are made of wood, mud, terracotta, clay, stone marble etc. portrays the traditional and contemporary skill sets of the artisans in the village in an excellent manner.

The wide variety of arts and crafts includes kalamkari-styled bags, handbags, decorative lamps made up of coconut shells, paper lamps, stone works, wooden toys, etc.



Fig.7: Arts and Crafts Village Stalls

The main objective of this Art and Craft Village is the re-emergence of various art forms and craftsmanship which is a legacy since thousands of years and should not fade away with the time. It aims to rejuvenate the almost forgotten art and crafts forms of India.

4.8 Arikamedu- an archaeological site

It is an historic trading port which stands as a testament to Puducherry's maritime links with ancient Greece and Rome. Arakimedu had trade links with Rome and other European empires between the 2nd century BCE and 8th century CE.

Excavations carried out by Sir Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler in 1945 and Jean-Marie Casal in 1947-1950, revealed walls, remains of a harbour, pillars and many other architectural structures giving substantial evidence of a Roman trading settlement.



Fig.8.1: The Remains of a warehouse at Arakimedu

Originally a French colonial town, it is now a coastal fishing village. The site has been a subject to extensive archaeological excavations and is under the control of Archaeological Survey of India since 1982.



Fig.8.2: The Remains of pillars and wall structures at Arakimedu

It is a bridge between Roman and Indian architecture indicating the extent of trade and cultural connections.

4.9 Pondicherry Mangroves Ecosystem

The backwaters of the Ariyankuppam river flow alongside the Arts and Crafts Village and in Pondy Marina where the Ariyankuppam river meets the Bay of Bengal. The mangroves forest can be explored via boating activities in Ariyankuppam river .

Covering around 100 acres, Pondicherry Mangrove Ecosystem is both ecologically and economically important as it is bridging the land and the sea.

Mangroves are high-salinity tolerant forest ecosystems. They are situated at the confluence of the land and sea, protecting the coastline against strong wave action, sand erosion and strong winds.

Mangroves depend on the terrestrial and tidal waters typically along coastline and tidal rivers. These mangroves are enriched in biological diversity as they provide shelter and breeding grounds for fish, shellfish, crabs, etc.



Fig.9.1: Pondicherry Mangrove Ecosystem

It is important to protect these mangroves from degrading as healthy mangroves forest are hotspots of biodiversity.



Fig.9.2: Mangroves along the coastline of Ariyankuppam River

5. Coimbatore - Visit to Adiyogi

Adiyogi is located at the Isha Yoga Centre, Coimbatore, TamilNadu. Its height, 112 ft, symbolizes the 112 possibilities to attain to moksha (liberation) that are mentioned in yogic culture, and also the 112 chakras in the human system. A linga named Yogeshwar Linga was consecrated and placed in front of the statue. The Indian Ministry of Tourism has included the statue in its official Incredible India tourism campaign.



Fig.10.1: Adiyogi 112 ft tall statue

Adiyogi refers to Shiva (Shankara) as the first yogi. It was established to inspire people towards inner well-being through yoga. It is recognized by the Guinness World Records as the "Largest Bust Sculpture" in the world.

Adiyogi Divya Darshanam is a 3D laser show, narrating the story of the Adiyogi and how the science of yoga was given to human beings. It is a 14 minute light and sound show, projected upon the Adiyogi Statue.

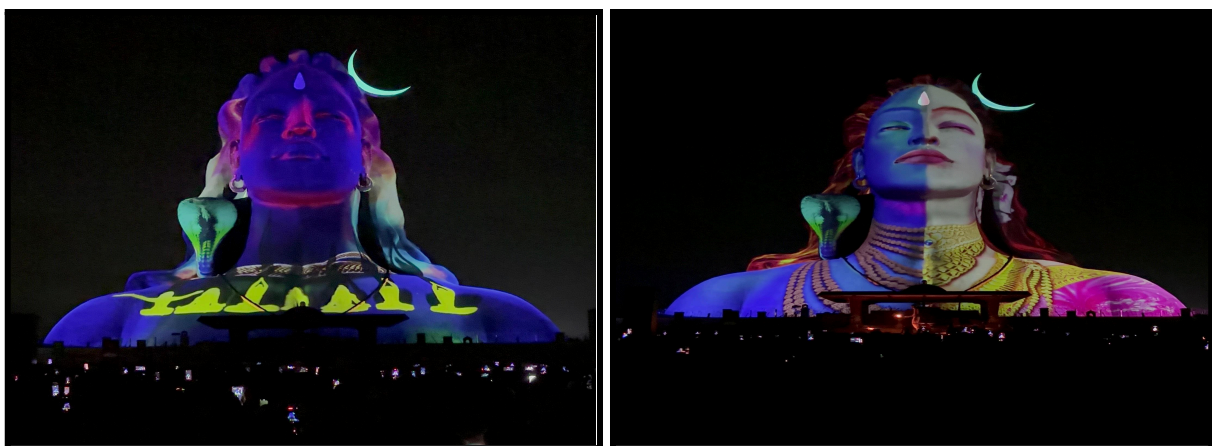


Fig.10.2: Light and Sound show at Adiyogi

6. Ooty Sight-Seeing

6.1 Doddabetta Peak

Doddabetta is the highest mountain in the Nilgiri Mountains at 2,637 metres (8,652 ft). There is a reserved forest area around the peak. It is 9 km from Ooty, on the Ooty-Kotagiri Road in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu, India.



Fig.11.1: View point of Doddabetta Peak

It is a popular tourist attraction with road access to the summit. It is the fourth highest peak in South India next to Anamudi, Mannamalai and Meesapulimala. The word Doddabetta is derived from Kannada, meaning 'big hill'. There is an observatory at the top of Doddabetta with two telescopes available for the public.



Fig.11.2: Observatory of Doddabetta Peak

Flora: The area surrounding Doddabetta is mostly forested. Sholas cover the hollows of its slopes. Slightly stunted, rhododendron trees, in the midst of thick coarse grass, flowering sub-alpine shrubs and herbs are common, even very near the peak.

6.2 The Tea Factory and The Tea Museum

Situated at an altitude of 1839 metres and spread over an acre on Doddabetta Road, the tea factory takes you through the process of making tea right from plucking tea leaves to the packaging of tea powder. By visiting the factory, you will get to learn on the history of tea in India and its evolution in the Nilgiris hills. It will also tell you about the origin of different kinds of tea leaves used across the world. There is a tea museum inside the factory which educates you on the cutting, twisting, and curling (CTC) methods of tea leaves using machines.

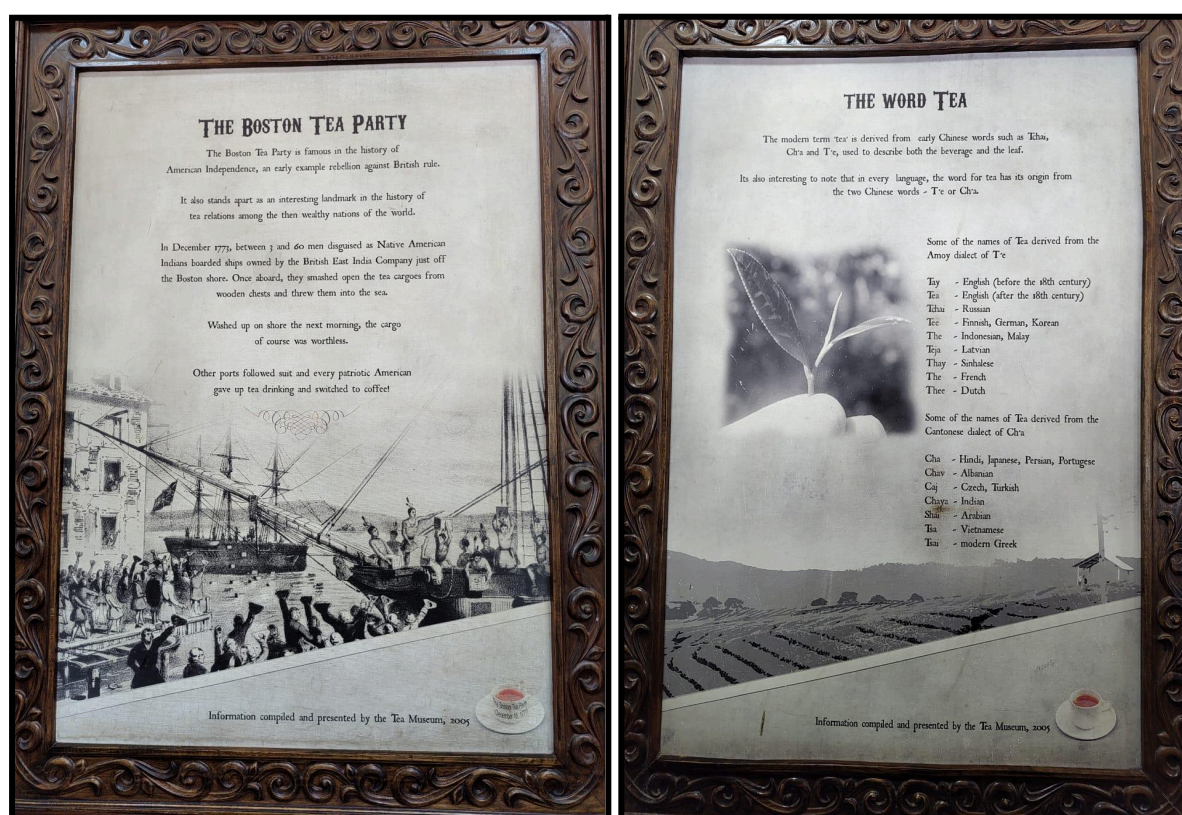


Fig. 12.1: Some excerpts from The Tea Museum

Each stage of tea production like withering, rolling, drying, and finally, the shifting stages are shown to the visitors with the help of a video. The tea leaves are dried in a stainless-steel container and are passed through crushers before passing through CTC.



Fig.12.2: The process of CTC at The Tea Factory

Surrounded by emerald green tea plantations, the museum takes you on a tour of tea evolution from the origin to the present. It has a variety of preserved tea leaves on display. It also has an adjacent souvenir shop where you can try and buy various kinds of tea leaves.

6.3 The Ooty Lake

Ooty Lake is an artificial lake constructed by John Sullivan in 1824. The water flowing down mountain streams in the Ooty valley was dammed to form the lake.

Originally, the lake was intended to be used for fishing, with ferries being used to travel across the lake. It gradually shrunk from its original size, giving place to the current bus stand, race course and the lake park. The lake is surrounded by groves of Eucalyptus trees with a railway line running along one shore.

Boating is the prime attraction at the lake. The boat house offers boating facilities with paddle boats, row boats, and motorboats. It also features a garden, a mini-train, and an amusement park. Other notable features include a canteen run by the TTDC and pony rides in front of the boat house.



Fig.13: Ooty Lake at Evening

Fun activities inside Ooty Lake include a mini-train (especially for kids), a 7D cinema, horror and mirror house, dashing car, break-dance, and Columbus ride. Other things to do nearby Ooty Lake include horse rides and cycling.

6.4 The Pykara waterfalls and Dam

Pykara is a river 19 kilometres (12 mi) from Ooty in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu with a village by the same name nearby. The Pykara River is considered very sacred by the Todas. It rises at Mukurthi peak, flows northwards, and then turns to the west after reaching the edge of the plateau. The river flows through Mukurthi, Pykara and Glenmorgan dams, and forms part of an important hydro-electric power project.



Fig.14: The Pykara waterfalls

The river flows over a series of waterfalls, the last two of 55 metres (180 ft) and 61 metres (200 ft) being known as Pykara Falls. The falls are approximately 6 kilometres (4 mi) from the bridge on the main road. There is a forest rest house at Pykara.

A boat house on the Pykara reservoir is an added attraction for tourists. Pykara boasts well-protected, fenced sholas, Toda settlements, large grassy meadows and good wildlife habitat. The Pykara Dam, falls and reservoir attract many tourists.

7. Karnataka-Visit to Mysore Palace

Location: Mysore, Karnataka, India. The palace is in the centre of Mysore, and faces the Chamundi Hills eastward.

History: The first palace inside the Old Fort was built in the 14th century, which was set ablaze and reconstructed multiple times. The Old Fort was built of wood and thus easily caught fire, while the current fort was built of stone, bricks and wood. The current structure was constructed between 1897 and 1912, after the Old Palace burnt down, the current structure is also known as the New Fort. The palace was further expanded in around 1930 (including the addition of the present Public Durbar Hall wing) during the reign of Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar.

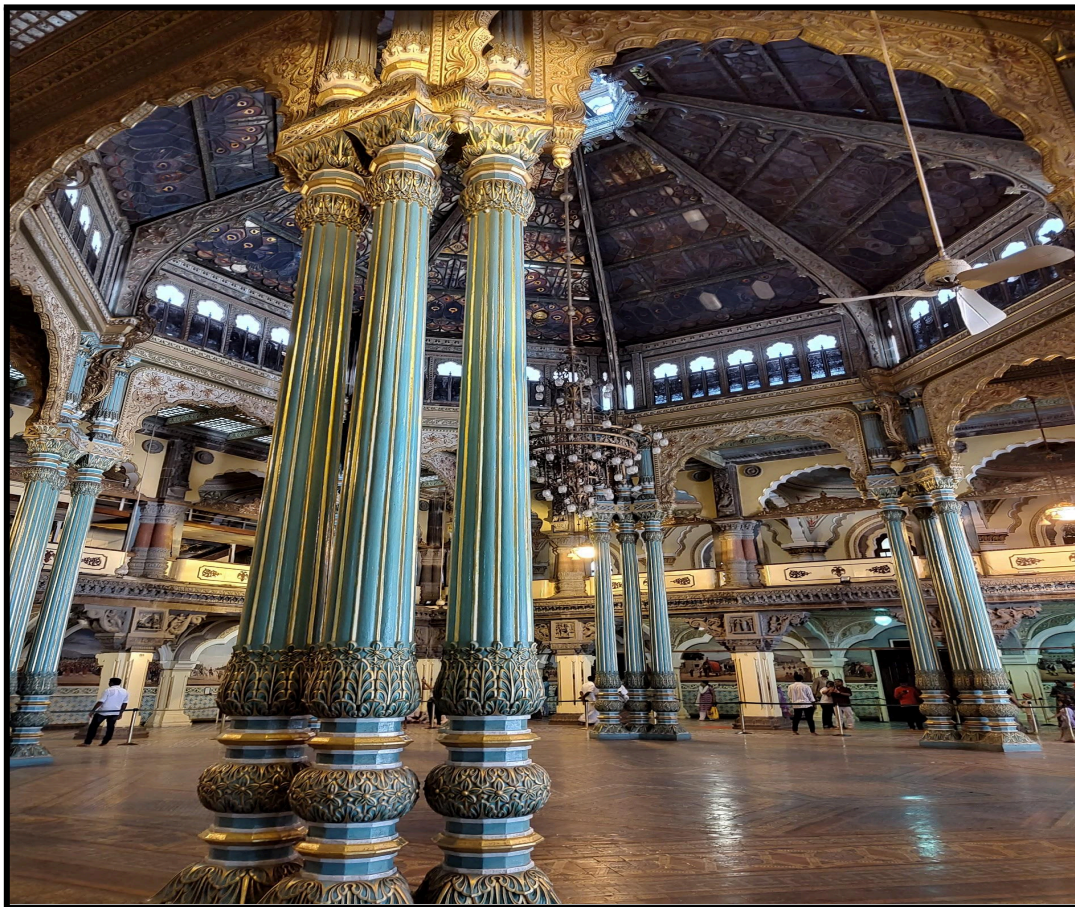


Fig.15.1 Mysore Palace Hall

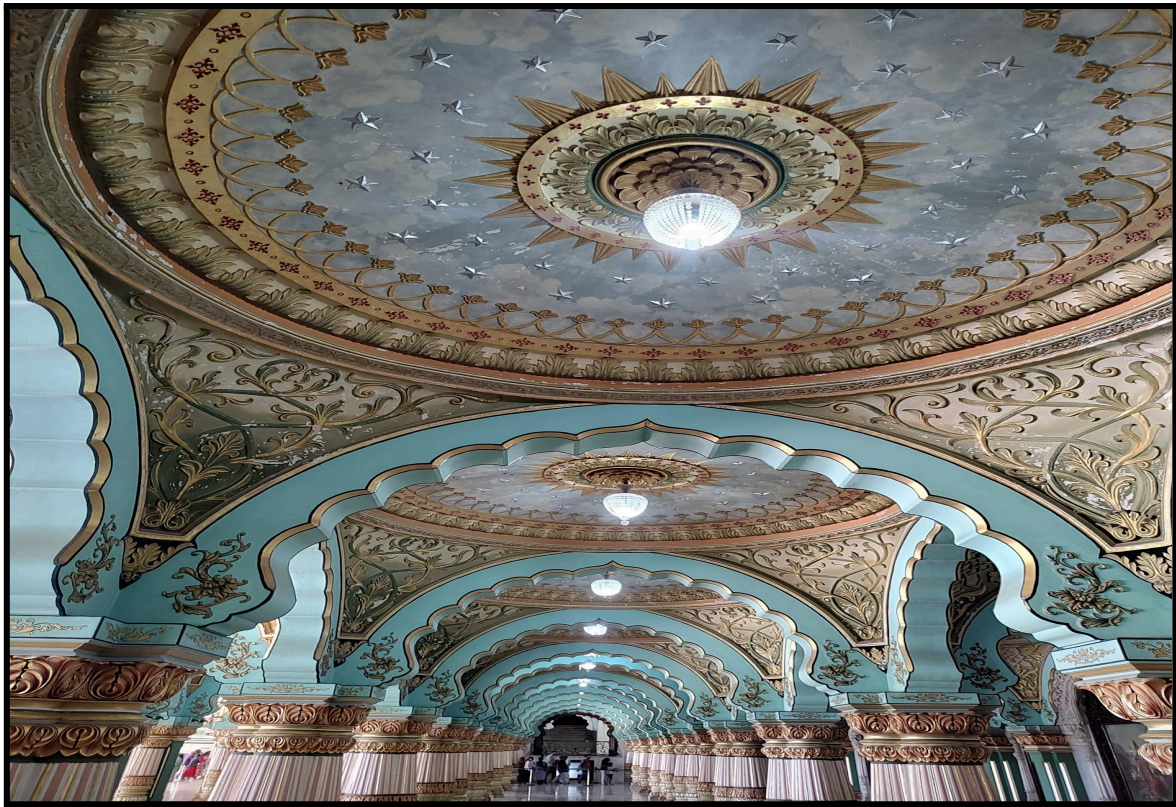


Fig.15.2: Gallery of Mysore Palace

The land on which the palace now stands was originally known as mysuru (literally, "citadel"). Mysore Palace, also known as Amba Vilas Palace, is a historical palace and a royal residence (house). Mysore is commonly described as the 'City of the Palaces', and there are seven palaces including this one. However, the Mysore Palace refers specifically to the one within the new fort.



Fig.15.3: Pictures of Rooms of Mysore Palace

Mysore Palace is one of the most famous tourist attractions in India, after the Taj Mahal, with more than six million annual visitors.

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!