

Foundational Training Programme for ASOs DR of CSS of CGLE-2023

(8th April-7th June,2024)

BHARAT DARSHAN (KARNATAKA) REPORT

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Contents

Sl. No.	Particulars	Page
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Day 01: HYDERABAD – BANGALORE (FLIGHT) , Journey to Ooty	4-5
3.	Day 02: OOTY -Doddabetta Peak -Tea Factory -Ooty Lake	6-7
4.	Day 03: OOTY Continued -Botanical Garden - Pykara Falls -Neelimala View Point, Wayanad	8
5.	Day 04: VISIT TO KERELA -Visit to Eddakal Caves, WAYANAD -Kappad Beah, Kozhikode	9
6.	Day 05: VISIT TO COORG -ABBEY FALLS -CAMPING IN MADIKERI	10
7.	Day 06: NAMDROLING MONASTERY	11
8.	Day 07: Visit to Mysore -NGO Visit-ODP Foundation - Mysore Palace -Ranganath Temple	12-14
9.	CONCLUSION/LEARNING	15

INTRODUCTION

Bharat Darshan is a study tour which is an integral component of the FoundatioTraining Programme conducted for ASOs DR of CSS selected through CGLE 2023. A batch of 61 ASOs from different Ministries was formed and Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerela state were chosen for Bharat Darshan (study tour) which was scheduled from 28th April-4th May, 2024. During these days we visited Mysore, Kodagu (Coorg), Ooty, Wayanad and Kozhikode under the guidance of Vinod Goud, Senior Faculty (FTP).

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.

DAY1(28th April, 2024)



Journey commenced on 28th April, we departed for Bengaluru by flight at 8:30 AM. We reached Bengaluru at 10:00 A.M. and proceeded to Ooty (Tamil Nadu) en route Mysore in a Bus. Mysore is connected to Ooty via the national highway 181 which passes through Bandipur National Park and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. Bandipur National Park is regarded as one of the most beautiful national parks of India. Located amidst the picturesque surroundings of the Western Ghats on the Mysore-Ooty highway in Karnataka, it is an important part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve that constitutes Karnataka's Rajiv Gandhi National Park (Nagarahole) to its Northwest, Tamil Nadu's Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary to its South, and Kerala's Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary to its Southwest. The name Mudumalai means "the ancient hill range". Details about both tiger reserves are as follows:

BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARK	
AREA	872.24 sq km
LOCATION	<i>Partly in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar District and partly in H.D.Kote and Nanjangud taluks of Mysuru District.</i>
FAUNA	<i>Tigers, Asiatic wild Elephants, sloth bears, gaurs, Indian rock pythons, jackals, muggers, and four-horned antelopes and Over 200 species of birds .</i>
FLORA	<i>wide range of timber trees including teak, rosewood, sandalwood, Indian-laurel, Indian Kino tree, giant clumping bamboo, etc.</i>

MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE	
AREA	688.59 sq.km sq km
LOCATION	<i>Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu</i>
FAUNA	<i>Tiger, Elephant, Indian Gaur, Panther, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Mouse Deer, Common Langur, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Wild Dog, Mongoose, Jungle Cat, Hyena and more than 260 species of birds.</i>
FLORA	<i>The Reserve has tall grasses, commonly referred to as "Elephant Grass", Bamboo of the giant variety, valuable timber species like Teak, Rosewood, etc</i>

This indeed, is a fine example of managing inter-state Tiger Reserves for the long term Conservation of Tiger Population.

After a long journey we reached Ooty at around 11:00 P.M.

DAY 2(29th April, 2024)

The second day begins with a lovely morning amidst misty hills of Ooty . The climate was cool and soothing. Ooty officially Udhagamandalam is a mesmerising hill station located in Nilgiri Distict of Tamil Nadu.



DODABETTA PEAK

We began our day with a rewarding trek of 3 km to Doddabetta Peak, highest peak of Tamil Nadu. It is located 9km away from Ooty. Standing tall at 2,637 metres, Doddabetta lives up to its name, which translates to “big mountain.” Perfectly placed between the Eastern and the Western Ghats, the Doddabetta peak, offered a bird’s eye view of Ooty the "Queen of Hill Stations" Ooty is home to some 650 species of plants and trees. We were enchanted with never-ending ranges of tea-gardens, grasslands, fine pine, eucalyptus and Shola vegetation.

Tour to Ooty Tea Factory After having lunch, we went to the Tea factory. As we entered the factory we could smell the intense aroma of tea. We got to learn about the legendary origin of different kinds of tea leaves used across the world and the history of tea in India and its evolution in the Nilgiris hills. In the factory, we could actually see the real production of tea. The process of drying the tea leaves inside a stainless steel sheet and then these dried tea leaves are passed through the crushers and finally, the tea was produced using the cut, twist and curl method. Once we witness the tea production, we got to taste a cup of hot tea, which was very refreshing and good to taste.

Then we moved further to the Chocolate production section, we saw how they prepare chocolates from cocoa to powder and then prepare the chocolate paste and later mould it in different shapes.

OOTY LAKE

Then we went to the Ooty Lake which is an artificially constructed lake, built by John Sullivan in 1824. Surrounded by the majestically-tall eucalyptus trees and dotted with green bushes along the shores, the Ooty Lake was an impressive spot in Nilgiris district. Boating is major attraction there. Paddle boat-, motor boat- and rowing boat services were available. We took a tranquil ride through the waters and tried to soak in the entire beauty of the Lake.

ANALYSIS/LEARNING

The trip to Ooty made me appreciate the beauty of Mother Nature even more. The serene view of lush green hills was humbling and filled me with gratitude. Most remarkable thing in Ooty was that there was a ban on sale of plastic water bottles. This trip encouraged me to do my bit in preserving the environment.

Botanical Garden

On third day we went to Botanical garden. Situated about 2400 – 2500 mts above sea level, the botanical garden was established by Marquis of Tweedale in 1897 with William Graham McIvor as the architect.

The Ooty Government Botanical Garden was a haven for Nature lovers with 600 varieties of plant species cultivated and exhibited there. The lush lawns and the exotic varieties of flora were pleasing to the eye because they were very well maintained by the Tamil Nadu Horticulture Department. Some of the enticing attractions there were the Cork tree, which is probably one of the very few of its kind in India, the paperbark tree, monkey puzzle tree, the majestic 20-million-year-old fossil tree trunk and glass house with varieties of flowering plants.

Pykara Falls

Then we went to Pykara Falls. The Pykara is the largest river in the Nilgiris District. It is considered very sacred by the Todas. The Pykara river rises at Mukurthi peak. It passes through hilly tract, generally keeping to North and turns to West after reaching the Plateau's edge. It gets down majestically in a series of cascades; and the last two falls of 55 meters and 61 meters are known as Pykara falls.

On the way to Wayanad

After having lunch we proceeded for Wayanad and reached our hotel around 7:00 P.M. En route we visited the Neelimala View Point. The trail in the woods offered a serene and stimulating environment for a fun-filled time with our group. The beautiful green valley and misty peaks made me appreciate the beauty of nature.

DAY 4 (1st May, 2024)

Eddakal Caves, Wayanad

On the fourth day, we went to The Eddakal Caves.

To reach the entrance of Edakkal Caves, we needed to trek up and climb steep steps. But once we made it to the top, the view was rewarding and inside the caves, we saw ancient wall carvings, which depicted animals, humans and other figures from prehistoric times. A tour guide told us that the earliest Edakkal Caves carvings were believed to be from the neolithic era (the Stone Age), as early as 6000 BCE and the latest carvings were from around 1000 BCE.

Also he told that Edakkal means “a stone in between.” And this cave-like rock shelter was formed by a massive boulder wedged between two bigger boulders. It’s believed to exist for over 8,000 years now.

Edakkal Caves was a site with archaeological importance. It’s known for its mystic rock formation and ancient drawings and engravings. And these petroglyphs are some of the earliest examples of human writing and expression.

Kappad Beach, Kozhikode

After having lunch, we departed for Kappad beach which was approx 85 Km from Wayanad. Nestled in the North Kerala Coast at Kozhikode, Kappad beach is of historic importance. On these shores, over 500 years ago in 1498, Vasco- da-Gama landed on his first voyage to India. The spice route flourished through this Beach. The rocks and small hills add to its charm. Kappad Beach has also been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag Certification, signalling its status as one of the cleanest beaches in the world.



Then we returned to Wayanad to our hotel by 9:00 P.M.

DAY 5 (2nd May,2024)

On this day we left for Kodagu district, Karnataka. On the way, we could see towering hills, scenic views and sprawling coffee plantations. Kodagu(also known by its former name Coorg) is the largest Coffee and Pepper producing district in India. Karnataka produces nearly 70% of the total Coffee production in India, out of which 33% is contributed by Kodagu district alone. Also Kodagu produces nearly a quarter of India's Black Pepper.

Abbey falls

We visited Abbey Falls which is a popular waterfall in Kodagu district. Madikeri stream also called Muttaramuttu, falls 21.3m between huge boulders to a deep rocky valley creating a spectacular view. Abbi means waterfall in Kodavatak. We could smell the aroma of coffee and spice plantation amidst which Abbey falls is nestled. There I had an opportunity to get indulged in an adventure activity i.e.Zipline amidst Madikeri forests.

Camping

In evening we reached at ELA Glamping, Madikeri for camping in the night. The campfire, tented accommodations in the lap of nature was once in a lifetime experience.

Walk along the river, star gazing, the scene of numerous fireflies dancing in the dark has been etched in my mind forever. We had a true escape from the virtual world as there was no internet connectivity, no signal in mobile phone. We were surrounded by lush green forests and listening to the tunes in the jungle which comprised sound of various insects and birds was so relaxing.

This visit taught me that we are so minuscule in front of the forests, rivers and mountains, we humans are just a small part of the ecosystem. It's our responsibility to preserve this biodiversity around us.



NAMDROLING MONASTERY

On the day 6 we headed for Mysore and en route we visited the Namdroling Monastery, popularly referred to as 'The Golden Temple' and is one of the largest Tibetan settlements in India. Located in Bylakuppe, about 5 kms from Kushalanagara in Kodagu district, it is home to about 16000 refugees and 600 monks.

Namdroling Monastery's main entrance is an attractive four story tower with a wheel portraying symbols of Buddhism. The main attractions inside the temple are the statues of Lord Buddha in the centre with statues of Lord Amitayus and Lord Padmasambhava on either sides. There we prayed, meditated, gave our offerings and rotated the mani prayer drums. Rotating these prayer drums is believed to give the same benefit as chanting "Om Mani Padme Hum", the Buddhist prayer.

History

His Holiness the 3rd Drubwang Pema Norbu Rinpoche (1932-2009) is the founder of Namdroling Monastery (popularly known as 'the Golden Temple'). His Holiness laid a foundation stone of the monastery in the year 1963 on 31 st of July. His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited the monastery to consecrate it and bestowed the name Namdroling. Likewise His Holiness Chatrel Rinpoche named the monastery Thegchog, while Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche named it Shedrub and His Holiness himself added Dargyeling. Thus the complete name of monastery came to be known as Thegchog Namdrol Shedrub Dargyeling (Land of Increasing Practice and Teaching of the Utmost Yana that achieves spontaneous Liberation).

After a long journey we finally reached Mysore by 6:00 P.M.



DAY 7 (4th May, 2024)

NGO VISIT

Day 07 started by a visit to NGO- ORGANISATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE at Mysore.

This NGO was established on 4th January, 1984 and managed by the Mysore Diocesan Social Service Society. They cover four districts – Kodagu, Mandya, Mysore being the Headquarters and Chamarajnagar. The NGO is registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act-1960. The NGO is guided by vision of creating a society of Love ,Peace, Justice , Prosperity and ecological harmony. The aim of the NGO is to bring about change in attitude and inappropriate value systems.

We learnt about the key focus areas of the NGO some of which are:

Women Empowerment Programme

Natural Resource Management Programme

Health and Sanitation Programme

Livelihood Enhancement Programme

After this informative visit we went to Mysuru Palace which is located in Mysore, Karnataka, India.



MYSORE PALACE

History

The current Mysuru Palace – the fourth to occupy this site – was designed by the British architect Henry Irwin after its predecessor was destroyed in a fire in 1897. The imposing building that stands today was completed in 1912, but it is believed that a Mysuru Palace was established as part of a wooden fortress, by the royal family of Mysuru, the Wodeyars, as early as the fourteenth century.

In 1638 the palace was struck by lightning and rebuilt by Kantirava Narasa Raja Wodeyar (1638 - 1659 AD), who extended the existing structures, adding new pavilions.

However, the death of Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar (1673 - 1704 AD) in the eighteenth century plunged the kingdom into a period of political instability.

The Palace was demolished in 1793 by Tipu Sultan, the son of Hyder Ali, a maverick general in the king's army who rose to become the ruler of Mysuru.

In 1799, when upon the death of Tipu Sultan the five-year old Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1794-1868) AD assumed the throne, the coronation ceremony took place under a marquee. One of king's first tasks, on his accession, was to commission a new palace built in the Hindu architectural style and completed in 1803. The hastily constructed palace soon fell into disrepair and in 1897 was razed to the ground by a fire at the wedding ceremony of princess Jayalakshmmanni.

The destiny of the Mysuru Palace now passed to Queen Regent Kempananjammani Vanivilasa Sanndihana, who commissioned well-known British architect Henry Irwin to build a new palace that would be a tribute to the legacy of Mysuru and the Wodeyars.



The Architecture

The palace is a three-story, gray granite, Indo-Saracenic building capped by a five-story tower that culminates in a gilded dome. The construction cost was placed at Rs 41,47,913 (around \$30 million adjusted to inflation) and the palace was completed in 1912.

- The palace has a temple dedicated to the Hindu goddess Chamundeshwari.
- The Durbar Hall with its ornate ceiling and sculpted pillars and the Kalyanamantapa (Marriage Pavilion) with its glazed tiled flooring and stained glass, domed ceiling were worth noting

The visit to Mysore Palace taught me a lot about our rich past and culture



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 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.