



Study tour (Bharat Darshan)  
of FTP for ASO of 2023 Batch  
(28.04.2024-04.05.2024)

FOR  
ASSISTANT SECTION OFFICERS OF CSS

REPORT ON STUDY TOUR  
KERALA

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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 Mr. 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 Kerala tour. I enjoyed the study tour and learned many things during the NGO attachment and Tea museum visit as well.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director General, MCR HRD 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 Mr. Saka Venkateswara Rao, 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 STUDY TOUR**

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 Kerala as per the following details:-

□ **DAY 01: 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024: HYDERABAD - TRIVANDRUM (BY FLIGHT)**

03:15 AM: Depart from Hyderabad (61 OTs – BY INDIGO)

07:45 AM: Arrival in Trivandrum Airport.

08:30 AM: Depart for Padmanabhaswamy temple by Bus.

01:30 PM: Depart to Kovalam hotel for lunch and check in.

03:00 PM: Depart for veli village.

06:00 PM: Evening at Kovalam beach.

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

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

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Drive to Alleppey.

01:00 PM: Alleppey Houseboat Cruise with lunch.

05:00 PM: Disembark the cruise.

06:00 PM: Depart from Basilica & drive to hotel.

06:30 PM: Check in to Hotel

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

□ **DAY 03: 30TH APRIL 2024: THEKKADY - MUNNAR**

07:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

07:30 AM: Proceed to Thekkady.

12:00 PM: Lunch at hotel Sandra Palace.

01:00 PM: Depart for Periyar Lake for Boating.

04:30 PM: Proceed to Munnar.

08:30 PM: Arrive Munnar Hotel for dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

□ **DAY 04: 01<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2024: MUNNAR**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Departure to visit Mattupetty Dam.

01:00 PM: Drive around the tea estates of Munnar & Tata Tea Museum.

05:00 PM: Evening visit the Kalari Shetra in the evening for Kalaripayattu Show.

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

□ **DAY 05: 02<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024: ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK - COCHIN**

08:30 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:30 AM: Depart from hotel and proceed for Eravikulam National Park in Munnar.

12:00 PM: Arrive back in Munnar. Lunch at local Restaurant in Munnar.

02:30 PM: Depart from Munnar. Enjoy the scenic drive through the Western Ghats and the beautiful tea plantation.

06:00 PM: Arrive at the Hotel in Cochin. Check in.

07:30 PM: Dinner at the Hotel in Cochin. Overnight stay at Cochin.

□ **DAY 06: 03<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2024: COCHIN**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00AM: Depart for Fort Kochin

01:30 PM: Lunch at local Restaurant.

03:30 PM: Depart for Cherai beach.

06:00 PM: Arrive at Hotel.

07:00 PM: Free for Shopping in Cochin.

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

□ **DAY 07: 04<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024: COCHIN -HYDERABAD (FLIGHT)**

08:00 AM: Breakfast at Hotel.

09:00 AM: Check out from hotel.

11:00 AM: Visit NGO – THERUVORAM.

05:30 PM: Arrive at Cochin Airport.

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

10:20 PM: Arrive at Hyderabad Airport.

## PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

- The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is a renowned Hindu temple located in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, India. It is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, specifically in his reclining form known as Anantha Shayana. The temple is considered one of the 108 Divya Desams, sacred sites revered by the Alvars, Tamil poet-saints.
- Constructed in the Dravidian style of architecture, the temple features intricate carvings, towering gopurams (gatehouse towers), and sprawling corridors. Its inner sanctum houses the principal deity, Lord Padmanabhaswamy, reclining on the serpent Anantha, symbolizing cosmic balance.
- The temple holds great religious and cultural significance and is a focal point of Hindu worship in Kerala. It hosts various festivals and rituals throughout the year, attracting devotees from all over India.
- In recent years, the temple gained global attention due to the discovery of hidden vaults within its premises containing immense wealth, including gold, jewels, and ancient artifacts. This discovery made the temple one of the wealthiest religious institutions in the world, sparking debates and discussions about its management and preservation.





## VELI VILLAGE

- Veli Village in Trivandrum is not just about its natural beauty; it also offers various attractions like a floating bridge, children's park, and an



adventure park. Visitors can enjoy pedal boating, kayaking, and even indulge in some delicious local cuisine at the eateries nearby. It's a great place to unwind and spend quality time with friends and family amidst nature's tranquility.



## KOVALAM BEACH

- Kovalam Beach is a famous beach destination near Trivandrum, known for its golden sands and clear waters. It's divided into three crescent-shaped beaches: Lighthouse Beach, Hawa Beach, and Samudra Beach. Kovalam offers various water sports activities like swimming, surfing, and parasailing, along with Ayurvedic massages and yoga retreats. It's a popular tourist spot in Kerala, attracting visitors from around the world for its natural beauty and relaxing atmosphere.



## ALLEPPEY

- The Alleppey Houseboat Cruise is a quintessential Kerala experience, offering a unique and tranquil journey through the picturesque backwaters of Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha. These traditional Kettuvallams, converted into floating accommodations, provide a cozy and comfortable setting for guests to unwind and soak in the natural beauty of the surroundings. Whether it's a leisurely day cruise or an overnight stay under the starlit sky, the experience is enhanced by delicious Kerala cuisine, warm hospitality from the onboard crew, and the enchanting sights of sunset and sunrise painting the sky in vibrant hues. The Alleppey Houseboat Cruise offers a perfect blend of relaxation, adventure, and cultural immersion, making it a cherished memory for travelers exploring the beauty of Kerala.
- The houseboat cruises typically navigate through the interconnected network of canals, lakes, and lagoons, providing passengers with breathtaking views of the lush greenery, paddy fields, and local life along the banks. One of the highlights of the Alleppey Houseboat Cruise is witnessing the stunning sunset and sunrise views over the backwaters, which paint the sky with vibrant hues.



## PERIYAR LAKE & PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE

Periyar Lake holds significant importance for several reasons:

1. **Water Resource Management:** As an artificial lake formed by the Mullaperiyar Dam across the Periyar River, it serves as a crucial water resource for irrigation, drinking water supply, and hydroelectric power generation for the surrounding regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
2. **Biodiversity Conservation:** The lake is located within the Periyar Tiger Reserve, one of the largest and oldest wildlife sanctuaries in India. It plays a vital role in maintaining the biodiversity of the region by providing water and habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, including endangered species like tigers, elephants, and Nilgiri langurs.
3. **Tourism and Recreation:** Periyar Lake attracts tourists from around the world, offering boat cruises and guided tours that provide



opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature appreciation. Tourism revenue generated from activities around the lake contributes to local economies and supports conservation efforts in

the region.

4. **Research and Education:** The lake and its surrounding ecosystem serve as a valuable site for scientific research and environmental education. Researchers study the ecology, behavior, and conservation of various species within the Periyar Tiger Reserve, contributing to our understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem dynamics.



Overall, Periyar Lake's importance extends beyond its scenic beauty, encompassing ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational aspects that make it a vital asset for both humans and wildlife in the Western Ghats of Kerala.

The Periyar Tiger Reserve, located in the state of Kerala, India, spans over 900 square kilometers and is one of the oldest and most well-managed tiger reserves in the country. It's known for its dense forests, picturesque landscapes, and diverse wildlife, including the Bengal tiger, Indian elephant, Indian bison, and several species of deer. The reserve is also famous for Periyar Lake, where visitors can enjoy boat safaris to observe wildlife in their natural habitat. Additionally, the reserve offers various eco-tourism activities, trekking opportunities, and cultural experiences, making it a popular destination for both nature lovers and adventure seekers.



## ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

Eravikulam National Park, located in the Idukki district of Kerala, is a renowned wildlife sanctuary and biodiversity hotspot. Here's more about it:

- **Location:** Situated in the Western Ghats, Eravikulam National Park spans over an area of about 97 square kilometers. It is situated near Munnar, a popular hill station in Kerala.
- **Biodiversity:** The park is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including several endemic and endangered species. One of the park's highlights is the Nilgiri tahr, a rare mountain goat found only in the Western Ghats. Other wildlife species include elephants, gaur, leopards, sambar deer, and various bird species.
- **Neelakurinji Bloom:** Eravikulam National Park is famous for the blooming of the Neelakurinji flowers, which occurs once every twelve years. The mass flowering event attracts tourists from around the world to witness the hillsides covered in a vibrant blue carpet.
- **Visitor Experience:** The park offers guided nature walks and trekking trails, allowing visitors to explore its diverse landscapes and spot wildlife in their natural habitat. The Rajamalai Hills within the park are a popular trekking destination, offering panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and tea plantations.
- **Conservation:** Eravikulam National Park is dedicated to the conservation of its unique biodiversity. Efforts are made to protect the habitat of the Nilgiri tahr and other species, as well as to promote sustainable tourism practices in the region.

Overall, Eravikulam National Park offers a unique opportunity to experience the natural beauty and wildlife of the Western Ghats, making it a must-visit destination for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts in Kerala.





## KALARIPAYATTU

Kalaripayattu, often referred to as Kalarippayattu in Kerala, is an ancient Indian martial art form that originated in the southern state of Kerala. Here's more about Kalaripayattu in Kerala:

- **Historical Significance:** Kalaripayattu is considered one of the oldest martial arts in the world, with its roots dating back over 3,000 years. It is believed to have been practiced by warriors and monks in ancient Kerala as a means of self-defense, physical fitness, and spiritual development.
- **Techniques and Training:** Kalaripayattu training encompasses a wide range of techniques, including strikes, kicks, grappling, weapon training, and defensive maneuvers. Students undergo rigorous physical conditioning, flexibility training, and mental discipline to master the art form.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Kalaripayattu is deeply intertwined with the cultural heritage of Kerala. It is not just a martial art but also a cultural practice that reflects the history, traditions, and values of the region. The art form is often showcased in cultural events, festivals, and performances across Kerala.
- **Tourism and Promotion:** With the rise of cultural tourism, Kalaripayattu has gained popularity as a tourist attraction in Kerala. Many Kalari Gurukuls offer demonstrations, performances, and introductory sessions for tourists interested in experiencing this ancient martial art firsthand.
- **Revival and Recognition:** In recent years, there has been a renewed

interest in Kalaripayattu, both within Kerala and internationally. Efforts are being made to preserve, promote, and revitalize the art form, leading to increased recognition and appreciation for Kerala's martial heritage.

Overall, Kalaripayattu holds a special place in the cultural fabric of Kerala, serving as a symbol of the state's rich heritage and tradition of physical and mental discipline.



## MATTUPETTY DAM

The Mattupetty Dam is a popular tourist attraction located near Munnar in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. Here's more about it:

- **Location:** Situated at an altitude of about 1,700 meters above sea level, the Mattupetty Dam is nestled amidst the picturesque Western Ghats, offering stunning views of the surrounding hills, valleys, and tea plantations.
- **Purpose:** The dam was constructed to conserve water for hydroelectricity generation and irrigation purposes in the region. It is part of the Pallivasal Hydroelectric Project.

- **Reservoir:** The Mattupetty Dam forms a reservoir, which is fed by



several streams originating from the nearby hills. The reservoir provides water for irrigation to the neighboring farms and also serves as a source of drinking water for local communities.

- **Scenic Beauty:** Apart from its functional aspect, the Mattupetty Dam is renowned for its scenic beauty, attracting tourists with its serene ambiance and panoramic views. Visitors can enjoy leisurely walks along the dam, soak in the tranquility of the surroundings, and capture stunning photographs of the landscape.

- **Boating:** The reservoir offers boating facilities for tourists, allowing them to explore the calm waters and enjoy the scenic beauty from a different perspective. Boating at Mattupetty Dam is a popular activity, especially during the tourist season.
- **Wildlife:** The area around the Mattupetty Dam is rich in biodiversity, with opportunities for bird watching and wildlife spotting. Visitors may encounter various species of birds, butterflies, and occasionally even elephants and other wildlife in the vicinity.
- **Tourism Hub:** Mattupetty Dam is also a hub for tourism activities in Munnar, with nearby attractions such as the Indo-Swiss Livestock Project, Echo Point, and Kundala Lake, making it a must-visit destination for travelers exploring the hill station.

Overall, the Mattupetty Dam offers a perfect blend of natural beauty, recreational activities, and functional significance, making it a popular stopover for tourists visiting the scenic hill station of Munnar in Kerala.



## THE TEA MUSEUM

The Tea Museum in Kerala is located in Munnar, a picturesque hill station known for its sprawling tea plantations. Here's more about it:

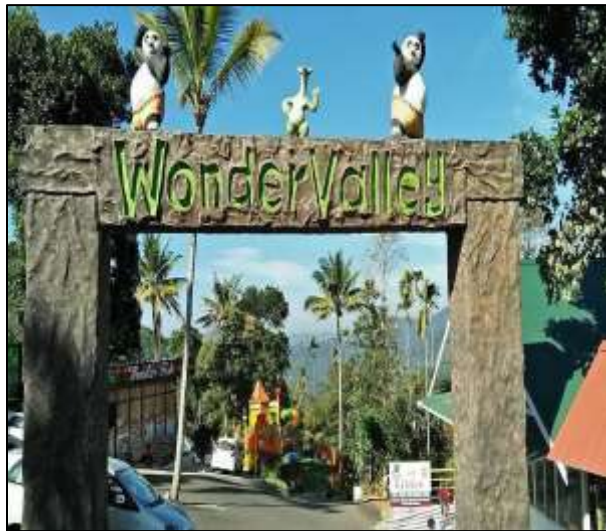
- **Location:** The Tea Museum is situated in Munnar town, which is located in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. Munnar is renowned for its scenic beauty and vast tea estates.
- **Purpose:** The museum is dedicated to showcasing the history, evolution, and significance of tea cultivation in Munnar and Kerala. It offers insights into the tea-making process, from cultivation and harvesting to processing and packaging.
- **Exhibits:** The museum features exhibits on the tea industry, including antique tea-processing equipment, photographs, documents, and memorabilia related to the tea plantations in the region. Visitors can learn about the different varieties of tea grown in Munnar and their unique characteristics.
- **Guided Tours:** Guided tours are available for visitors, during which knowledgeable guides provide detailed information about the exhibits and the history of tea cultivation in Munnar. Visitors can also witness live demonstrations of tea processing techniques.
- **Tasting Sessions:** The museum often conducts tea-tasting sessions, allowing visitors to sample various types of tea produced in Munnar. This provides a sensory experience and an opportunity to appreciate the flavors and aromas of different teas.

Overall, the Tea Museum in Munnar offers visitors a fascinating glimpse into the world of tea cultivation and production, making it a popular attraction for tourists interested in learning about Kerala's tea heritage.



## Some other tourist places visited in and around the Munnar.

1. Tea plantations
2. Spice Garden
3. Chocolate factory
4. Zip line
5. Wonder valley



## FORT KOCHI

Visiting Fort Kochi was like going back in time. The old walls told stories about the Portuguese, Dutch, and British who lived there long ago. Walking around, I saw big nets from China used for fishing and old buildings from when different countries ruled the area. It felt like I was part of history, with interesting things to see everywhere, like cozy cafes and colourful art shops. It was a special place where I could feel the past all around me, like each rock had a story to share.

**Mattancherry Palace:** The Mattancherry Palace, also known as the Dutch Palace, is a historic landmark located in Kochi, Kerala. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and later renovated by the Dutch, it showcases a unique blend of Portuguese, Dutch, and traditional Kerala architecture. The palace is famous for its exquisite murals depicting scenes from the Hindu epic, Ramayana, along with other mythological tales.





**St. Francis CSI Church:** St. Francis CSI Church in Kochi is a historic church built by the Portuguese. It's one of the oldest European churches in India. Famous explorer Vasco da Gama's tomb is here. People visit to see its ancient beauty and learn about its important role in India's history.



**The Indo-Portuguese Museum:** The Indo-Portuguese Museum displays artworks and artifacts reflecting the cultural blend of India and Portugal. It exhibits Portuguese influences on local traditions through sculptures, furniture, and religious items. Visitors learn about the historical connection between the two nations and appreciate the unique heritage preserved within the museum.



**Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica:** The Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica in Kochi is a historic church with stunning architecture. Built by the Portuguese, it features beautiful Gothic-style interiors and intricate artwork. Visitors admire its grandeur and learn about its significance in the region's religious history. It's a must-visit for those interested in cultural heritage.



**Water Metro:** The Kochi Water Metro is a transportation project in Kerala, India, aiming to alleviate traffic congestion by utilizing waterways. It includes 78 stations along 16 routes covering 76 km of waterways.

The Kochi Water Metro project values sustainability, aiming to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. It prioritizes eco-friendly transportation, utilizing electric boats to minimize environmental impact. It also emphasizes accessibility, connecting various islands and mainland areas, enhancing connectivity and mobility for residents while preserving the region's unique waterways and ecosystem.



**Marine Drive:** Marine Drive in Kochi is a picturesque promenade along the Arabian Sea coast. It offers stunning views of the sea and city skyline. Visitors enjoy leisurely walks, bustling street food stalls, and boat rides in the nearby backwaters, making it a popular destination for locals and tourists alike.

## CHERAI BEACH

Cherai Beach is a picturesque beach located in the state of Kerala, India, along the Arabian Sea coast. Here's an overview:

- **Location:** Cherai Beach is situated on the northern end of Vypeen Island, which is part of the Ernakulam district in Kerala. It's approximately 25 kilometers from the city of Kochi (Cochin).
- **Scenic Beauty:** Known for its pristine sandy shores, tranquil waters, and coconut groves, Cherai Beach offers breathtaking views of the Arabian Sea. The beach is adorned with seashells and is ideal for relaxing walks along the shoreline.
- **Activities:** Visitors to Cherai Beach can indulge in various activities such as swimming, sunbathing, beach volleyball, and water sports like parasailing and jet skiing. The calm and shallow waters make it safe for swimming, especially for families with children.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Cherai Beach is renowned for its cultural diversity, with a blend of local fishermen communities and tourists from around the world. Visitors can experience the vibrant local culture, cuisine, and hospitality of Kerala.
- **Attractions:** Nearby attractions include the Cherai Gowreeshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, and the Pallipuram Fort, a historical fort built by the Portuguese in the 16th century.
- **Sunset Views:** One of the highlights of Cherai Beach is the mesmerizing sunset views over the Arabian Sea. Watching the sun dip below the

horizon while lounging on the beach is a memorable experience for visitors.

Overall, Cherai Beach is a tranquil and scenic destination that offers a perfect blend of natural beauty, recreational activities, and cultural experiences for tourists visiting Kerala.



## **NGO- THERUVORAM**

- Theruvoram, founded by Murukan S in 2007 with the noble mission of rehabilitating street people in Kochi.
- Operated independently foregoing government funding or public grants, while steadfastly serving the community over the years.
- Extends a compassionate hand to those abandoned on the streets and individuals afflicted with diseases such as leprosy, regardless of age.
- This NGO welcomes individuals of all ages and backgrounds, including children women and men facing various disabilities, both physical and mental.

### **About 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.

### **MISSION**

- Empowerment and welfare of street people specially old age, mentally challenged, migrant labour communities
- Empowerment of rural women

## VISION

- Make the world a better place for the entire human race

## Service



- 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 storey building which 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!