

UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN



REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS - 2019

CARE
COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR RURAL EMPOWERMENT

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SUMMARY REPORT

REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS - 2019

As part of the UBA activities titled CARE (Collective Action for Rural Empowerment) a full-day workshop for the Nodal Officers of 65 Participating Institutions of UBA under the Regional Coordinating Institute of UBA at IISER Thiruvananthapuram was conducted on 6th July 2019 at its campus in Vithura, Thiruvananthapuram. The purpose of the workshop was to acquaint the Nodal Officers about the rural social factors and specific development requirement to the rural sector of Kerala, which is quite different from the national scenario in many aspects, and to have collective discussion and policy formulation towards bringing a positive social change in the rural villages adopted by the participating institutions.

57 participants (list attached at Appendix 1) representing 48 Participating Institutions out of 65 PIs registered under UBA RCI – IISER TVM has attended the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Srinivasa Murthy, Professor-in-Charge (Administration) of IISER Thiruvananthapuram. Professor M P Rajan, Nodal Officer of UBA Regional Coordinating Institute (RCI) at IISER TVM has welcomed all the participants and gave an introduction about the vision, mission and objectives of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0. He also emphasized on the role of the Regional Coordinating Institutes and Participating Institutions under UBA Program.



KEY OBJECTIVES: -

The key objectives of the workshop were as follows: -

- (a) To create an understanding among Nodal Officers of Participating Institutions about the Kerala Rural community and the specific development needs.
- (b) To acquaint them about the various implementation agencies at State, District and local self-government level which are involved in rural development activities.
- (c) To understand about the programs and policies of Central and State governments in Rural Health Sector.
- (d) To have a common discussion platform wherein the Nodal Officers can discuss their initiatives, problem being faced and chalk out common strategies by which such problems can be addressed and how well the UBA programmes can be successfully implemented.
- (e) To discuss about the previous year's activities undertaken by the Participating Institutions.

SUMMARY

The workshop was designed with a focus of providing the participating institutions an idea of the rural background of Kerala and how it is different from other Indian States in Socio-economic cultural and developmental aspects. The first session was conducted by Prof. M P Rajan, Nodal Officer, UBA RCI, IISER TVM. He gave a lecture on broader areas of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, the importance of establishing UBA and why Unnat Bharat Abhiyan programs have selected higher education institutions for playing the role of a facilitator to community development, its vision, mission and objectives. Since most of the Higher Educational Institutions are located in rural areas, it is easy for the institutions to build a rapport between the key stakeholders and community people. Being a Participating institution under UBA, the institutes have to study about the community and to find out the major drawbacks faced by the region and device sustainable developmental plans towards bringing all round development to the rural community. The Participating Institutions has to play the role of a facilitator with their inborne expertise and technological inventions which cater the region specific requirements.

The major role of the Participating Institution is to work along with government stakeholders for the effective implementation of various government programs in the community and help them to harness the necessary expertise and fund. Charity is not what the community people are expecting from PIs, but they have to assist them in realizing their potential, reviving of livelihood and provide new arenas towards increasing their income, level of education, skill development and health parameters. The villagers should be made self-sustainable through efforts of the higher educational institutions which is a prerequisite for developed and self-sustained villages. For the holistic development of the community it is important to have a focus on both Human and material development. Prof. Rajan has also stated about the role towards improvement in the educational and health sector of the villages.

The second session was handled by Mr. Jamal Neeravil , Member of State Resource Group , Planning Board, Kerala on the topic how higher educational institutions can contribute towards developing the rural areas with their technical knowhow.

The session was consisting of topics on different central-state government policies and programs for the upliftment of rural community as well as channelizing the government and CSR funds for different developmental activities. Mr. Jamal has also mentioned about the various livelihood programs and how participating institutions can play the role of a development incubator among the government and people to thrive the social life of community people. The session was followed a convergence model of communication to make ensure that each and every Participating Institution got a chance to state their problem and got assistance from the resource person. Most of the organization had a doubt about integrating their works with the local panchayat's projects, the resource person has provided how PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) and doing FGD (Focus Group Discussions) will help the PIs to have a complete engagement with work of local governing bodies. During the session we have countered waste management as the major challenge being faced by the rural people. Most of the PIs has pointed out the same issue while doing their activities in the field. The resource person gave an in-depth information about the state government's program to manage the wastes in both rural and urban area, the Kerala government's sanitation program called 'Suchitwa Mission' have collaborated with the state livelihood mission called 'Kudumbashree' has deployed a team 'Haritha Karma Sena' (HKS) to collect waste and recycle or destroy it using ecofriendly methods. The HKS is led by different SHGs (Self Help Groups) and they are using plastics to pave the roads. Mr. Jamal has also stated that for giving your wastes to the HKS you have to segregate the waste in to plastic and non-plastics and also have to clean the plastic wastes before remitting it to the team. The PIs are urged to educate the rural people through programmes under UBA about the necessity of segregation of waste as per their type, waste disposal at the origin itself, wherever possible and turning to ecofriendly manners and subsequent reduction in creation of waste, especially plastic waste which is very harmful to the environment and manking.

Introduction of Aerobic Bin system was a suggestion from the resource person to eradicate household wastes. Aerobic composting not only reduces the amount of wastes but the waste can be converted to manure to improve the soil's quality. Instead of following a central waste management system the state government has a decentralized model, each panchayat has a HKS team to collect wastes and recycle it. Some PIs stated that the program is not running effectively in their region, Mr. Jamal has suggested the Nodal officers to have a Focus Group Discussion or Grama Sabha with the Panchayat to discuss about the issue, he has also provided few methods to manage the accumulation of waste in their region.



The session has also focused to provide information about CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) fund and how PIs can approach corporate institutions for getting CSR funds. Even though few PIs had doubt on getting the CSR fund for government of non-government educational Institutions which was clarified by those PIs who are already getting CSR fund for their UBA and philanthropic activities.

Mr. Jamal Neeravil also encourages the Nodal Officers of PIs to mingle with the rural people for which gaining their confidence is very much essential. If they are approached with some tailor made programme they may not be willing to accept the same. The area specific problem has to be identified by conducting field surveys with clearly defined data collection methods. The data has to be analyzed and based on the data fool proof solutions specific to the region has to be formulated. The solution thus arrived has to be discussed with the various stake holders in the local self-government and necessary modifications are to be made based on their inputs. Such local specific solutions will be more accepted by the rural community and will in turn help the PIs to establish rapport with them and will be able to work more effectively thereafter.

The Nodal Officers also raised the issue of non-awareness among the local self-government officials about the UBA programme when they are approached. After discussion, it was suggested to take up the matter with KILA (Kerala Institute of Local Administration), the agency which provides training to local self-government representatives and other officials, to include details about UBA programme in their curriculum so as to make an awareness about the programme. The Nodal Officer of RCI has assured that every possible measures will be taken to implement the same.



The third session was handled by Dr. John D Cruz, Additional DMO, Thiruvananthapuram on the topic **how health can be measured as an influencer to community development.** Dr. John has expertise in dealing with several health related issues in tribal settlements of Thiruvananthapuram district. He has also provided information regarding different programs to improve the health status of rural-tribal community. During the discussion session he spoke about common waterborne diseases and how participating institutions can work with PHCs (Primary Health Care) by using their workforce and knowledge to provide awareness classes along with taking adequate steps to reduce the chances of spreading those diseases. 'Aardram' is a state initiative which ensure the wellbeing of the people, under this program the Primary Health Centers has transformed in to Family Health Centers (FHC) the main agenda of this transformation is to treat every patient with dignity. At this point the PIs can use their skills or expertise to develop new technologies or can conduct awareness, medical camps in the community with the help of medical practitioners from the nearby FHC. The session has also discussed about the increasing number of diarrhea in the villages. Dr. John has suggested the audience to propagate the need to have a proper hygiene practice to avoid issues caused by E Coli bacteria among the target group in their respective areas.

The recent flood in Kerala has also created a large number of people affected by hepatitis A, the doctor has given an in-depth information about how to control or cure the disease. The most common issue countered during the session was majorly about water borne diseases, it could completely avoid by giving awareness class and by ensuring the quality of drinking water. The Participating Institutions are urged to take up water conservation, rain water harvesting, revival of natural sources of water, necessity to have clean habits, the requirement of proper disposal of fecal waste, demerits of open defecation etc as their agenda for educating the rural people. The necessity of nurturing these habits from the school level itself through conducting awareness camps was also emphasized.

The PIs are also urged to spearhead the campaign against drug abuse and alcoholism rampant among the rural population. He specified that the higher educational institutions can act as ambassadors for the anti-drug campaign in their respective areas by conducting awareness camps, poster campaigns, door to door campaign etc through student volunteers.



A discussion on previous years' activities conducted by Participating Institutions was held at the last. The Nodal Officers from different PIs presented their major activities and the common risks that they had to face while doing community interventions. Most of the institutions came up with an issue of clean drinking water problem in the adopted villages. As an initial step to solve the issue the cohort came up with an idea of implementing 'Sawyer' (An instrument widely used to filter water) in those places where contaminated ground water occurs. At the same time there are few technical institutions among the PIs working on water treatment and they have sufficient technologies to continue the work in nearby villages all they need is the support from the local governing body. By sharing information about their resource and contribution area it helped us to share the existing technologies and methods with other participating institutions and villages who needed the services. The contribution of PIs during Kerala floods was immense. The institutions have conducted rehabilitation camps, medicines and support for the survivors. Some of them have built houses for the one who lost their habitat during floods.

The Participating Institutions having social science departments has also shared about the efforts made by them as part of UBA towards protecting the ethnic communities in their region and their folk arts. Few institutions has also ventured towards providing assistance in organic farming also.

The workshop has followed an interactive model of communication throughout the session, for ensuring the active involvement of each and every single representative from participating institutions. The model has also helped to exchange the ideas or messages of resource person to audience and vice-versa.

The workshop has designed to have a session on the challenges faced by the Participating Institution, it was very informative for the PIs to identify the key stakeholders, major risk factors and work diligently to initiate their new activities under UBA 2.0. All the Nodal Officers participated in the workshop got a chance to address their issues and got proper assistance from the resource person. The workshop has also motivated the Nodal Officers to integrate their work with the Panchayat Raj institutions for the effective implementation of the government programs and to get channelize the fund for implementing new development initiatives by the PIs.

Mr. Jamal has also mentioned about various government institutions working for the development of different sectors like education, livelihood, skill development, agriculture and water management.

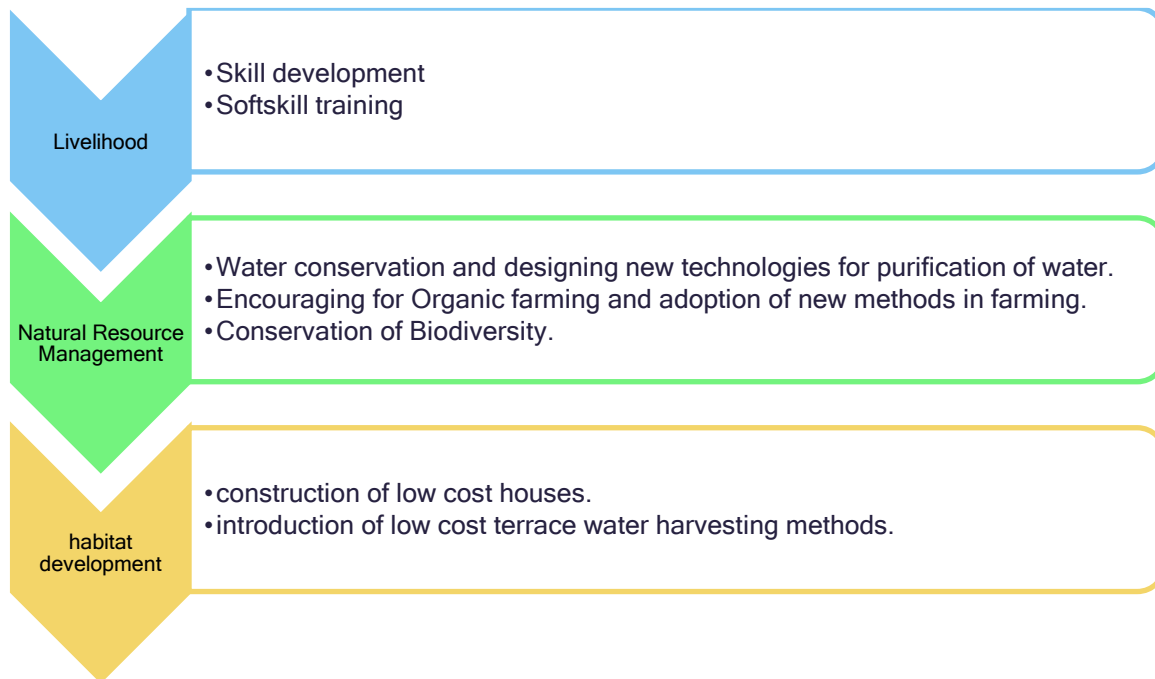
The session also helped to identify some potential institutions who can develop sustainable low carbon technologies. Most sought after technology was the one for conservation and purifying the water, which is a very huge problem now a days. Also when it comes to livelihood the workshop opened wide opportunities to collaborate with the state livelihood mission 'Kudumbashree'. Already some of the PIs have been working with few SHGs and giving them training on skill development like Mushroom cultivation, making of ecofriendly single use utensils etc. , which motivated the PIs to find and develop employment opportunities in their own region depends on the availability of local resources. The technical institutions engaging in UBA activities decided to motivate their students for integrating their research projects based on the community needs, which will help the rural community and the students will also get proper recognition for his/her project work.

The necessity of low cost housing to achieve the objective of shelter for all was also discussed. The efforts made in this regard by few PIs in helping the nearby schools towards planning of their school buildings and other public places were discussed. The PIs were urged to come up with new ideas towards implementing low cost building methods where in the cost of building house can be reduced to a considerable extent.

The PIs are also discussed about the water conservation awareness programmes conducted by them. It was decided to take up water conservation as one of the most important activity under UBA programme where in rural people will be sensitized about the need to protect the natural water sources, rain water harvesting, roof water harvesting, well recharge etc.

The Workshop was a key influencer to understand the rural reality in Kerala context. At the same time, it also helped them to identify the state-central programs which could help them to initiate development in their respective field. It also helped the PIs to find out the most innovative and advanced development strategies to initiate change in the field.

ACTIVITIES FOR UBA 2.0



MAJOR RISK FACTORS

The Workshop has also focused to identify the common risk factors identify the Participating Institutions while implementing UBA programs. The most common issue that have raised by the institutions are conducting the household survey in the adopted villages. Kerala has a high number of population density when it compares with other Indian states. A single village may consist of a minimum of 10000 households and reaching out to them will be difficult view limited resources and other academic schedules. For conducting the survey in the adopted villages the PIs does not have the adequate workforce to deploy in the field, most of the institution find it difficult to convince the students to do the survey, even though they are going to filed it is difficult to cover the whole households in a single day or week and sending the students by skipping their classes was not a practical way to do it they have added.

Overlapping of adopted villages was also a problem projected by PIs to initiate development activities in the field. Some institutions have adopted the same village, this situation made it difficult for institutions to implement the activities in the adopted villages. At the same time few institutions got compelled to adopt villages which is located far from their institute. In such cases the accessibility to the village has become an obstacle for them. Conducting Household survey has become quite difficult since the students are not able to find any benefits for them, in this situation most of the institutions have suggested of providing grace marks for the students whoever is volunteering the UBA activities. If there is any official declaration regarding providing grace marks, it is easy for the PIs to send the students in the field. Also the survey format provided for conducting survey was found irrelevant when it compares to Kerala's situation, a huge number of PIs has pointed out the same issue. As a suggestion to this issue the cohort has found if we can change the format or questions in relate to Kerala context it would be helpful for the PIs to initiate development activities in the community. It was decided to take up the matter with National Coordinating Institution.

The following problems projected by the PIs needs immediate attention: -

- The size of the village, population density and number of households in the adopted villages is very high made and hence it makes difficult to conduct household surveys of entire village.
- Adopting 5 villages was quite difficult since a lot of other nearby Participating Institutions has already selected villages close to their region. A few PIs are forced to adopt villages far from their campus because of which activities are not be able to undertake in a proper manner as envisaged due to high expenditure in transportation and other support to volunteers.
- The format provided for survey is irrelevant in the particular scenario of Kerala on various parameters prescribed.
- Many PIs haven't received the basic funding citing the reason that the bank account is in the name of Principal.
- During the previous regional meeting conducted by Kerala Veterinary and Agricultural Science University, the representative from IIT Delhi has assured that there is no need to upload the Village Survey.

SUGGESTIONS

- Instead of adopting five villages, the activities can be restricted to one or two villages adjacent to the campus. The number of beneficiaries will almost be same as five villages adopted by PIs of other states. This would also help the PIs to work effectively.
- The RCIs should be allowed to design its own format to conduct the household survey which cater the local requirements rather than the tailor made one.
- As per the orders of Govt. of Kerala, the bank accounts pertaining to educational institutions can be opened only in the name of Principal. Opening of Institutional accounts in other names are not permitted. Hence the basic funding be provided to the bank account operated by the Principal.
- Clarification may be provide by IIT Delhi about the assurance given in the said meeting about uploading of survey.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Workshop Participant List.
- Appendix 2. Program Schedule.
- Appendix 3. Photographs