

# IISER Thiruvananthapuram

CARE – Collective Action for Rural Empowerment

## Unnat Bharat Abhiyan



**IISER Thiruvananthapuram**



# IISER TVM at a glance

IISER Thiruvananthapuram is located in Vithura village, the foothills of Western Ghats. The village is surrounded by the Western Ghats. The prominent tourist locations include Ponmudi, Peppara Dam, Meenmutty Falls, Vazhvanthol waterfalls and Thavakkal waterfalls are located in this region. It is recognized as a World Heritage site by the UNESCO; also it has marked as one of the eight “hottest hot-spots” of biological diversity in the world. The Western Ghats contains the highest proportion of country’s flora and fauna. The western Ghats influences the Indian monsoon weather patterns by intercepting the monsoon winds that sweep in from the south-west during the summer season.



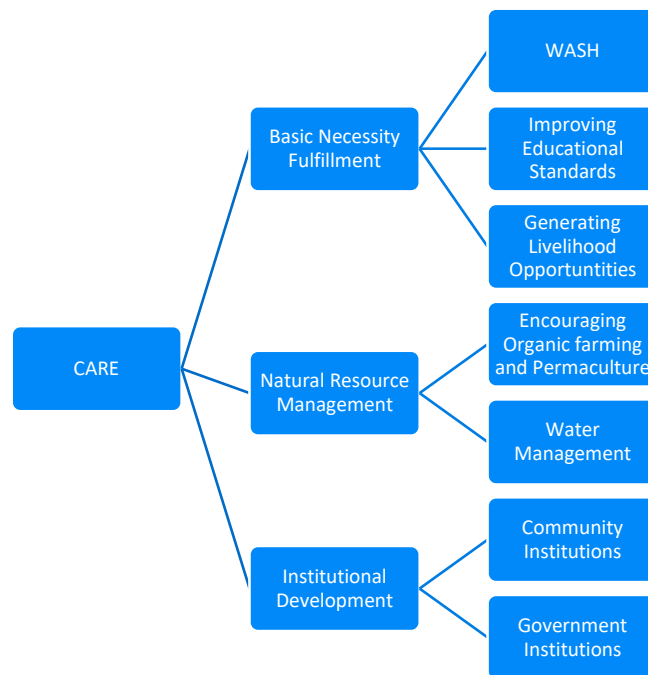
Source: Photographed by the UBA Team.

IISER Thiruvananthapuram has joined in UBA as a Participating Institution in the year 2015, in the year 2019 IISER Thiruvananthapuram has become one of the Regional Coordination Institution under UBA Program. At present the RCI is leading 23 Participating Institutions functioning in four (Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram) districts of Kerala.

Since the inception of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), the UBA cell at IISER Thiruvananthapuram campus has been actively conducting and participating in the development process of the villages adopted by the Institute. The assistance and support from the UBA 2.0 program and National Coordinating Institute has motivated the team to work diligently to bring a perennial positive social change in the villages and to achieve the prospects of the program.

The flexibility in UBA 2.0 helped us to stride in to different social domains to initiate and achieve the goals of UBA 2.0 program. The Gram panchayat, government institutions and civil society organizations supported us to reach the pinnacle of social development through active community participation. The UBA cell of IISER TVM stimulating the socio-economic development of adopted villages by implementing and supporting various community/ government led development activities along with initiatives designed and operated by the UBA cell itself. As planned, we could expand our programs in to various socio-economic, environmental domains with the support of our internal team, student volunteers and stakeholders.

## **UBA - CARE – Focus areas**



### **Basic Necessity Fulfilment and Natural Resource Management**

Under basic necessity fulfilment, CARE is working on improving WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) and improving the educational standards of the schools and other educational institutions in the adopted villages. The UBA cell is also supporting the adopted villages in managing the natural resources with the help of Gram Panchayat.



## Basic Necessity Fulfillment

- CARE - Vanajyothi SHG
- CARE - Haritha Karma Sena cloth bag production Unit
- CARE - Marg Darshan
- CARE - Green Vithura



## Natural Resource Management

- CARE - For Nature
- CARE - Clean Village Campaign
- CARE - Plastic Free Vithura Campaign



## Institutional Development

- Community Meetings
- Active Field visits
- Collaboration with civil society organizations
- People's participation in governance through Gram Sabha



## **CARE- Vanajyothi (SHG)**

IISER Thiruvananthapuram is located in the southern tribal belt of Kerala. The Kani tribe has identified as one of the unique indigenous tribal community in Kerala. The tribal community is blessed with endless knowledge in traditional healing, health practices, art and craft so forth. The Kani tribe won the first UN Equator award for their use of the forest plant Arogyapacha (*Trichopus Zeylanicus*). We the UBA cell of IISER Thiruvananthapuram has continuously putting efforts to disseminate the idea of integrating their traditional skills and practices with livelihood to improve their living standards. The initial step we took was to build a rapport with the tribal people to mobilize them and identify the group who makes bamboo products in the community; as well as, to give them awareness about how they are being exploited by the middleman. The major goal of the team is to break the current value chain where the middleman enjoys the maximum benefit by exploiting the tribal people and to break the gap between Manufacturers/ Gatherers and Market/ Consumers. As part of the initiative, the UBA cell has created a small Self Help Group consisting of 8 women from the tribal area and started an initiative called ‘Vanajyothi’ which is primarily focusing on replacing plastic products (waste baskets and other daily use products) with eco-friendly bamboo products as an alternative to reduce use of plastic made items. Later the group will expand and would produce eco-friendly products according to the market demands. The SHG has started in Valiyakala tribal settlement located in Maruthamala region.



Source: Photographed by the UBA team



## **First official meeting of the SHG**

The UBA cell, Vithura Gram panchayat along with The Gulmohar foundation has decided to team up for attaining the goal of making Vithura a green eco-friendly plastic free village. As part of the program the team has conducted the primary level community meeting at Vliyakala tribal settlement with the support of Vithura gram panchayat and the Kudumbashree ADS (Area Development Society), CDS (Community Development Society).



Source: Photographed by UBA team.      The Chairperson of ADS delivering the concept of the project.

The meeting held at a the Valiyakala tribal community. The Panchayat President Shri. Krishnakumari, ward member Shri. P. Subha, ADS chairperson Shri. Jayavalsala, CDS chairperson Shri S. Sreekala and from the UBA side, Officer in charge Shri. Manoj Kumar and Manager Shri. Vishnu T U has attended the program. People from the tribal settlement came to attend the program along with the bamboo products they have made for their daily use.



The people have the potential to establish a bamboo products making unit, the high risk of starting an enterprise in the production sector is backing them off from starting the project. The UBA team is conducting active field visit to understand the incomprehensible mindset of people and to support them in starting a bamboo products making unit inside their tribal community. For the active participation of the community people the ownership of the unit has given to the SHG itself. The fundamental of the project is to obliterate the interference of middleman in the tribal community as well as to make them self-sustainable. The goal of the team is; by organizing the tribal people into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and putting all the endeavors to support and nurture them to involve in economic activities till they achieve an appreciable increase in the income over a period of time to improve their living standards.



Source: Photographed by the UBA team.

The people from Valiyakala tribal settlement attending the community meeting on establishing the SHG





Source: Photographed by UBA team.

Displaying the products made by the tribal people.



## **Panchayat level meeting on starting a Cloth bag production unit**

The Vithura panchayat conducted a meeting with the HKS team regarding establishing a cloth bag production unit to reduce the use of single use plastic in Vithura village. As part of the project IISER Thiruvananthapuram has signed an agreement with the HKS and Vithura gram panchayat to manage the solid wastes that generate by the institute.

The HKS team will be collecting and managing the plastic wastes from the campus. Since the HKS team is collecting solid wastes from all over the village it is easier for the team to identify the source of plastic and take the immediate and appropriate action to reduce it. The UBA team has come up with the idea of starting a cloth bag production unit with the help of HKS, so that the HKS team will get a livelihood opportunity as well as it will help to reduce the use of single use plastics in the village.



Source: Photographed by UBA team.



The Haritha Karma Sena (HKS) is a project of Kerala state supported by Kerala Suchitwa Mission, Haritha Keralam Mission and Kudumbashree. The HKS collects non-biodegradable waste from houses and establishments and then forward to shredding units for recycling. The waste is segregated into different sections based on its features, H.M White, P.P, H.M, LDPrint, Bajar, Ganny, Bulb, PVC, steel, tubes, bottle, E- waste, LD(Glucose), Bottle caps, Spray bottle etc. According to the mission, the shredded plastic is being given to the local bodies for road laying by Clean Kerala Company.

**Source: Kudumbashree**

The primary level meeting for starting the cloth bag production unit was held at the Vithura gram panchayat community hall. The panchayat President Shri. Krishnakumari has inaugurated the meeting, Secretary Shri. Anusachethanan addressed the audience, later UBA Manager Shri. Vishnu T U introduced the concept of Green Vithura project as well as the significance of starting a cloth bag production unit in Vithura village.



Source: Photographed by the UBA team.

The snap from the meeting – Panchayat President Shri. Krishnakumari introducing the project to Haritha Karma Sena team.



## **CARE – For Nature - Tree Plantation drive**



Source: Photographed by the UBA team

The CARE (UBA Cell) of IISER Thiruvananthapuram has conducted an extensive plantation drive in collaboration with the Kerala State Forest and Wildlife Department and Christ Nagar English School at IISER Thiruvananthapuram campus and nearby villages. The program has inaugurated by Adv. K Raju, Honorable Forest Minister for Forest, Govt. of Kerala. Faculties, staffs and students from Christ Nagar school, Govt. College for Women Thiruvananthapuram (PI under IISER TVM) and IISER TVM participated in the plantation drive. The honorable Minister gave the inaugural address and he also emphasized on the importance of planting trees and the protection of our ecology in this century; where and about the ill effects of global warming. After the inaugural address the minister along with other team members planted trees in the empty places identified inside the campus and nearby villages in a well-organized way. Total 10000 tree saplings were planted by the folk. The program could create a great stir among the student community and the general public. The students are ensuring that the planted saplings are maintained well.







## **Clean Campus Campaign / Cleaning of Water bodies - Cleanliness drive**



Source: Photographed by the UBA team

The UBA Cell along with student community of the institute has conducted a cleanliness drive inside the campus and nearby villages, the team has also cleaned up a stream which originates from the mountains of Western Ghats and flows to Karamana River. The team has collected more than 1000 kg of plastics on the same day. The campaign has a larger goal to make Vithura village as a complete plastic free eco-friendly spot.

The UBA team has collaborated with Vithura Grama Panchayat helping in establishing the GPDP efficiently in the village. The UBA has put forwarded the idea of making Vithura an eco-friendly model village by implementing a proper waste management system in the village and provide the necessary project work for the same. Based on the intense lobbying by the UBA team, the Govt. of Kerala has allotted Rs. 21,51,473 (Rupees Twenty One lakh fifty one thousand four hundred seventy three only) to Vithura Grama Panchayath for implementation of Aerobic waste management system in the village. The UBA team has conducted the pilot/ feasibility study of the project and submitted the report to panchayath and as per the report the facility is being established.



The UBA cell has identified few NGOs working on waste management and conducting campaign on reducing single use plastics from our daily life. The team will be signing an MoU with the Gulmohar foundation which is a youth led organization working in Kerala with a goal of giving awareness on reducing the use of plastic from our daily life.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

A picture of the students of IISER Thiruvananthapuram cleaning a stream.





Source: Photographed by the UBA Team





## **CARE – Green Vithura Plastic free Vithura**

The 'Plastic free Vithura' is a flagship project of CARE - Green Vithura initiative supported by the Vithura Gram Panchayat and NSS unit of schools located in the village. The program has a wider goal of making Vithura a complete plastic free ecofriendly village within this calendar year. Vithura gram panchayat collaborated with the UBA cell with a goal of reducing the use of plastic in the entire village by restricting single use plastics and replacing it with other alternatives. The initial phase of the program was for 10 days which has covered the entire shops and institutions located in the village and make an awareness about ill effects of usage of plastic and how hazardous it is for the environment.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

The program has also decided to start an enterprise with the Haritha Karma Sena (HKS) team to make paper/ cloth carry bags in order to reduce the use of single use plastics. There was a rally conducted by the UBA team with the support of Vithura Higher secondary school to give awareness on reducing the use of plastic to protect the environment.





Source: Photographed by the UBA Team



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

## CARE – Marg Darshan

### Science Awareness Workshop

Marg Darshan is an initiative focuses to improve the quality of education in the adopted villages. CARE has conducted science awareness workshop wherein students from the schools of adopted villages has participated, more than 100 students along with teachers from higher-secondary schools were participated in the program. The major objective of the program was to develop and nurture scientific thinking and research skills among children at the school level. The program was consisting of lectures by the faculties of IISER Thiruvananthapuram. The science labs of the Institute were open for the children to observe and engage in different scientific experiments. The students and teachers were awarded with certificate of participation and a periodic table with some amazing factors in it, designed by the Anvesha, the science club of the Insitute.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team





Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

Volunteers showing experiments to the students



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

### **English Coaching at Maruthamala LP School**

The CARE has started an English coaching class for the Maruthamala LP school under the Marg Darshan program. The major focus of the program is to improve the language skill of the students and support them in participating in different competitive programs. The classes held at the school on every Saturday, the program also supports the children to participate in different science-social science and extracurricular activities to nurture their knowledge and improve their public speaking skills.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team



## **Coaching/ Skill Development program**

The program basically focused on the rural / tribal students of the community. Through Marg Darshan we are providing coaching classes for competitive exams, entrances and skill development training. The program is completely run by the UBA student volunteers, at present the team is supporting 87 students from the community of class 5 to 10. The program will also cover students belonging to higher secondary grade by giving them training for cracking competitive exams and entrances. The program will run for the entire academic year; IISER Thiruvananthapuram supported initiative by providing the premises and basic facilities to conduct the program inside the institute, so that the students will get motivated to achieve more in their future and be part of such great institutions.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team

## **Campaign on Rain water harvesting and Importance of Water conservation**

The UBA cell has made publicity material on the importance of rain water harvesting and the preservation of water along through cost efficient, simple and advanced methods and technologies which can be adopted by each and every single household for the conservation of ground/ rain water. The team has conducted awareness classes in the schools and institutions of adopted villages during the first week of October.

The UBA cell of the Institute has identified two technologies, drinking water quality monitoring device and a low cost low carbon water purification machine and has submitted the same to UBA for funding under technology development. Once approved and finalised, the team will research on the practicality of installing both technologies in the village and will provide the technology for the beneficiaries (rural/ tribal population of the adopted villages) and to other stake holders under UBA.



Source: Photographed by the UBA Team



The initial campaign conducted at Maruthamala LP school. Students from all classes along with their parents attended the program, the campaign also showed few videos on the importance of the conservation of water. The resource person



Source: Designed by UBA Team

The model of the poster designed by the UBA team.

### **Workshop - An introduction to active community engagement of young minds**

The UBA cell along with The Gulmohar foundation (The Gulmohar foundation is a Youth Led organization working with an objective of creating social leaders and social entrepreneurs through capacity development, Volunteering and Global Citizenship Education. Youth empowerment and Capacity Development focusing on young bloods is the major area of working of the organization and it takes into consideration the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) has conducted a one-day orientation workshop for the students of Vithura Government Higher Secondary school. The objective of the workshop was to give an introduction to the students about the project 'Green Vithura' and how the students can be part of the movement through active community engagement and campaign. Shri. Muhammed Jaseel, Co-founder of Gulmohar foundation along with the Manager- UBA Shri. Vishnu T U took the sessions.



Source: Photographed by NSS volunteers – GHSS Vithura

Shri. Muhammed Jaseel interacting with the students of GHSS Vithura





Source: Photographed by NSS volunteers – GHSS Vithura

The students are presenting the group activity to the audience.



Source: Photographed by NSS volunteers – GHSS Vithura

A glimpse from the workshop.