

## **Best Practices 2 :**

**1. Title of the Practice:** Social intervention through academic outreach to safeguard the environment and support marginalised communities, including Indigenous people.

### **2. Objectives of the practice**

This is an opportunity to use the academic proficiency of the faculties, students, and various research and outreach units to work with various government and non-government bodies to safeguard the environment and empower marginalised people. Where students and faculties establish linkages with the government and NGOs providing technical support with a scientific basis for long-term engagement to safeguard the environment and marginalised communities to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the UN focusing on environment, gender, equity, sustainable livelihood, and climate action.

### **3. The context**

The various departments and research units of the MES Asmabi College use this as a platform to learn and experience academic proficiency while engaging in real-time activities for the benefit of the environment and marginalised communities. The Centre for Ecology Taxonomy Conservation and Climate Change (CETC), research extension wing, in collaboration with the Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation, has taken the lead in this best practice since 2011 by providing assistance, consultancy, and expert support to various state agencies in nature conservation, environmental management, sustainable livelihood, climate action, and indigenous community rights. In which researchers, students, faculties, and national and international interns work together. The linkages with government departments such as Forest, Tribal, Revenue, Landuse Board, Biodiversity Board, and Local Self Governments (LSGs) and international NGOs, including Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) etc., were used.

### **4. The practice**

The focus of the programme augmented to ecological restoration and climate change mitigation, in tune with the UN Declaration on the Decade of Ecological Restoration and the SDGs. The regular environmental awareness workshops and training for the Indigenous people, women, and fishermen continued. The CETC link with IUCN, BGCI, and SER selected the SN Puram Grama

Panchayath as the model local self-government to implement the multistakeholder, niche-specific ecological restoration of the ecosystems.

The programme was implemented with the collaboration of the BMC of SNP Grama Panchayath and ensured women's participation through MGNREGA. The strategic plan was released by Hon. MLA Mr. E,T.Tyson Master on August 26, 2021, at Sangukulangara Kavu.

## **A. Safeguarding the Environment and Climate change resilience through community action**

### **i. Strategic Plan for the Conservation of Sacred Grove - Project Completion Program: 26th August 2021**

The completion of the project to prepare a detailed Perspective Strategic Plan for the Conservation, Monitoring, and Ecorestoration of Coastal Ecosystems and its Biodiversity within the SN Puram Grama Panchayath was inaugurated by Mr. E. T. Tyson Master, Hon. MLA, Kaipamangalam constituency on 26th August 2021 at Sangukulangara Kavu in the auspicious presence of M. Mohanan, President SN Puram Grama Panchayat. Members of the trust Mr. Raghunath and other members of the trust. Ward member and Mr. Febin, District coordinator, Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Mr. Ratheesh Convenor, Biodiversity Management Committee of Sree Narayanapuram Grama Panchayat. Dr. K.H. Amitha Bachan presented a brief study of the report during the meeting. Three teachers and 15 students were participated.

**ശ്രീനാരായണപുരം പഞ്ചായത്ത്**

**ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പരിപാലന പദ്ധതി ഒന്നാംഘട്ടം പൂർത്തിയായി**

കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂർ > കാലാവസ്ഥാ വ്യതിയാനം കൊണ്ട് ഭൂരന്തബാധിതമായ തീരദേശത്തെ ആവാസ വ്യവസ്ഥ പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ ഒന്നാംഘട്ടം പൂർത്തിയായി. ശ്രീനാരായണപുരം ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണസ്വാമിക്ഷേത്രത്തിന് വടക്കുഭാഗത്ത് സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്ന മൂന്നര ഏക്കരോളം വിസ്തീർണ്മമുള്ള ശംഖ്കുളങ്ങര കാവിന്റെ പരിപാലനം നിർവഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് ആദ്യഘട്ട പദ്ധതി നടപ്പാക്കിയത്.



ശ്രീനാരായണപുരം പഞ്ചായത്തും ബയോഡൈവേഴ്സിറ്റി മാനേജ്മെന്റ് കമ്മിറ്റിയും പശ്ചിമഘട്ട വേഴാമ്പൽ ഫൗണ്ടേഷനും എം.ഇ.എസ്. അസ്സാബി കോളേജ് ബോട്ടണി ഗവേഷണ വിഭാഗവും ചേർന്ന് കിഴക്കുട്ട് കുടുംബ ഭസ്തിന്റെ സഹകരണത്തോടെയാണിത്.

172 തരത്തിലുള്ള പുഷ്പിത സസ്യങ്ങളുടെ ആവാസ കേന്ദ്രമായ ശംഖ്കുളങ്ങര കാവിൽ 20 തരം സസ്യങ്ങൾ വംശനാശ

ശംഖ്കുളങ്ങര കാവിലെ മരങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്ന പഠന ബോർഡുകൾ ഇ.ടി. ടൈസൺ എം.എൽ.എ. അനാച്ഛാദനം ചെയ്യുന്നു

ഭീഷണി നേരിടുന്നുണ്ട്. 107 ഇനം പക്ഷികളും 32 ഇനം കൃണുക്കളും കണ്ടെത്തിയ കാവിന്റെ പഠനവും പുനഃസ്ഥാപനവുമാണ് ആദ്യഘട്ടത്തിൽ നടപ്പാക്കുന്നത്.

പദ്ധതിയുടെ ഭാഗമായി കാവിലെ മരങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്ന പഠന ബോർഡുകൾ ഇ.ടി. ടൈസൺ എം.എൽ.എ. അനാച്ഛാദനം ചെയ്തു. ചടങ്ങിൽ പഞ്ചായത്ത് പ്രസിഡന്റ് എം.എ

സ്. മോഹനൻ അധ്യക്ഷനായി. ഡോ. അമിതാബച്ചൻ പദ്ധതി വിശദീകരണം നടത്തി. വൈസ് പ്രസിഡന്റ് സി.സി. ജയ, സ്ഥിരം സമിതി ചെയർമാൻ കെ.എ. അയ്യപ്പ്, വാർഡ് മെമ്പർ ജിബി മോൾ, ആസൂത്രണ സമിതി അധ്യക്ഷൻ കെ. രഘുനാഥ്, ജൈവ വൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡ് ജില്ലാ കോ-ഓർഡിനേറ്റർ ഫൈബിൻ ഫ്രാൻസിസ് തുടങ്ങിയവർ പങ്കെടുത്തു.

**ii. Principle and Practices for Ecorestoration of Coastal Ecosystems in Kerala- workshop**

An online webinar was conducted as part of the training for coastal ecorestoration and biodiversity conservation in Sree Narayanapuram Grama Panchayath. The webinar was organized jointly by the Research and PG Department of Botany, CEtC of Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation in the MES Asmabi College campus with support from SN Puram Grama Panchayath. Mr. M.S. Mohanan inaugurated the program, and President, SN Puram Grama Panchayath, and Dr. Amitha Bachan K.H., Member of IUCN; CEM and SER provided a thematic talk. Members form all the coastal Grama Panchayaths of Kaipamangalm Constituency and BMC members across Kerala participated int he event. A total of 33 students and 10 teachers were participated in the programme.

  
 ശ്രീനാരായണപുരം ഗ്രാമപഞ്ചായത്ത്  
**16th Sep 2021**  
 തിരദേശ ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥ പുനസ്ഥാപനവും ജൈവസംരക്ഷണവും

  
**Inauguration**  
 of  
 Completion of the First Phase  
 10.30 am

  
 Shri. E.T. Tyson Master  
 MLA, Kaipamangalam  
 Shri. M.S. Mohanan  
 President, SN Puram Grama Panchayath

  
**Shri. Saji Cheriyan**  
 Hon. Minister for Fisheries & Culture, Kerala.

  
**Webinar 7.30 pm**  
**Principle and Practices for Ecorestoration of Coastal Ecosystems in Kerala**  
 Thematic talk  
**Dr. Amitha Bachan KH**  
 Member IUCN CEM


[directorwghf@gmail.com](mailto:directorwghf@gmail.com)  
**For Registration Click here..**  
<https://forms.gle/tLHj2hDi6vw4oPdK7>  
**SN Puram Grama Panchayath**  
**Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation**  
**MES Asmabi College, Kodungallur**

### iii. Coastal Ecorestoration Phase I Inauguration

The success of the first phase of restoration and launch of the coastal vegetation belt in the climate change disaster-hit zones was done by Mr. Saji Cheriyan, Hon. Minister of Fisheries, and declared a model for the state. A model seed germination centre and nursery for threatened tree species and coastal ecorestoration were started at the end of the year jointly with the Hornbill Foundation. The major agenda of the programme was 1. Inauguration of the First Phase of the Coastal Ecorestoration programme by Mr. Saji Cheriyan, Hon Minister of Fisheries and Cultural Affairs, Kerala. 2. Declaration of the Successful implementation of Phase 3. Ecorestoration of the Arappthodu, streams draining to sea involving MGNREGA. The Program was inaugurated by Mr. Saji Cheriyan, Hon. Minister of Fisheries and Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Kerala in the venue arranged at the Coastal Ward- 1 of the SN Puram Grama Panchayath near Vekkod beach.

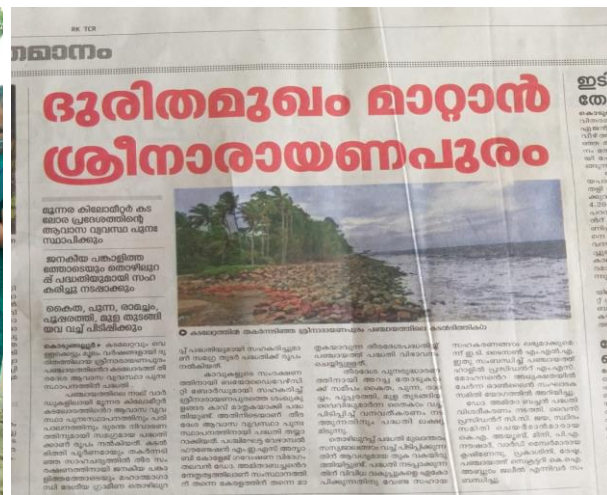
Mr. Tyson Master, MLA chaired the function in the auspicious presence of Mr. Devis Master, President of District Panchayath, Mrs. Girija, President, of District Panchayath, Mr. M S. Mohanan, President Grama Panchayath. Dr. Amitha Bachan K H, Assistant Professor and Director of the Research Extension Centre (CEtC) of WGHF, MES Asmabi College presented the project details. All the representatives of the Panchayath and local community members gathered. The minister declared the project as a unique one for the scientific and people involved ecorestoration program to save the coastal belt. A total of 24 students and two teachers were participated in the programme.



**Mr. Saji Cheriyan, Hon Minister of Fisheries Inaugurates the Coastal Ecorestoration Phase 1**



Tree planting and inauguration



Newspaper report



Mr. MS Mohanan, President SN Puram GP plant tree sapling in the disaster hit areas

Mr. M.S Mohanan, president of SN Puram Gram Panchayth expressed willingness to have more MoUs for the expansion of the program. The project team lead by Dr. Amitha Bachan K.H, supported the BMC of the SN Puram Grama Panchayath to develop a comprehensive plan for the ecological restoration of other ecosystems within, and later it was submitted to the Kerala State Biodiversity Board as the next cognitive step.

#### **iv. Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Preparation of Athirappilly Grama Panchayath: Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation had an opportunity to collaborate in the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Preparation of Athirappilly Grama Panchayath organized by Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB). The program was conducted at Athirappilly Grama Panchayath Hall. Sri. Rajesh P. President, Athirappilly Grama Panchayath, Sri R. Lakshmi Divisional Forest Officer, Vazhachal, Sri. Govidhan, Member KSBB took part in the programme. Dr. Amitha Bachan KH delivered a talk on the biodiversity assessment of the Athirappilly Grama Panchayath. The local people, indigenous people and various stakeholders participated in the meeting as well as the discussion for the final preparation of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Preparation of Athirappilly Grama Panchayath.



**Mr. Govindan, member Kerala State Biodiversity Board Inaugrating the meeting**



**MS. R. Lakshmi, DFO Vazhachal facilitate the function and Dr. Amitha Bachan K.H., Convenor of the BSAP preparation presenting the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.**

**v. The Riparian Forest for Fish, Rivers and People” on May 21st “The world fish migration day: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022**

As part of the Celebration of "The world fish migration day" an International Conference on "The Riparian Forest for Fish, Rivers and People" was organized. The programme envisages to bring out a status document on riparian zones of various rivers of Kerala in November 2022 towards the concept of "ecological management of rivers" in an international workshop. A comprehensive status on Chalakkudy River and riparian ecorestoration protocol will be used as a baseline. The Centre for Ecology, Taxonomy, Conservation and Climate change (CEtC) of Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation (WGHF) at Research Department of Botany MES Asmabi College campus organised an online event "The Riparian Forest for Fish, Rivers and People" on May 21<sup>st</sup> "The world fish migration day". This event is joining hands with other events happened across the world linked with 'World Fish Migration Day "on the 21st May 2022. This is to propagate the requisite of "Ecological Restoration and management of the Riparian forests across the Western Ghats". Various scientists, researchers, local people and community organisations presented their views on various rivers across Kerala part of Western Ghats. The event was in collaboration with the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation, CEtC & Research Department of Botany MES Asmabi College, Fish Migration Foundation, Society for Ecorestoration (SER). A total of 62 students participated in the programme.





## B. Supporting the indigenous Community Grama Sabhas

The expertise of Dr. Amitha Bachan as a member of the special committee on Community Forest Resource Rights (CFR) of the Indigenous People constituted by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India, has been useful in selecting one of the expert collaborators for preparing a policy advocacy document for the Govt. of Kerala in association with the Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai. An online session was organised on 29 September 2021 and more than 72 members from Tribal Grama Sabhas across the state and academicians participated in the process.

### i. Forest Right Act and Community Forest Resource in Kerala Towards Policy Advocacy: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The major agendas of the programme were (i) To develop a Policy advocacy note on the performance of the implementation of CFR in Kerala and its Challenges to Govt of Kerala. (ii) Present

and discuss the National and Kerala scenario with the community in Kerala (iii) Empowerment of the Tribal Grama Sabha members in Kerala. The program was organized by the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Mumbai, in collaboration with the Centre for Tribal and Natural History Studies (TNHS) of Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation at the Research Department of Botany, MES Asmabi College. The program was to get opinions and develop a Policy and Advocacy Note to the Government of Kerala as per their request to TISS, Mumbai. Dr. Geethanjoy Sahu, Assistant Professor, Centre for Science, Technology and Society, TISS made the Keynote, and Dr. Amitha Bachan KH, Assistant Professor, CEtC WGHF; Research Department of Botany MES Asmabi College made the plenary talk. Nearly 21 students and three teachers were part of the programme.

**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST RIGHTS ACT & COMMUNITY FOREST RESOURCES IN KERALA TOWARDS POLICY ADVOCACY**

**LIVE Webinar** On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 2.00 – 5.00 pm

As part of developing an advocacy note

**Keynote :**  
**FRA and CFR the national level Perspectives**  
**DR. GEETANJOY SAHU**  
 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
 CENTRE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY  
 TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (TISS), MUMBAI

**Potential and performance of FRA and CFR implementation in Kerala**  
 Dr. Amitha Bachan K.H., member Committee on PVTG Habitat Right, MoTA

**Discussion**  
 Grama Sabha members from various districts across the state on Key issues

ORGANISED BY  
 TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (TISS) MUMBAI  
 WESTERN GHATS HORNBILL FOUNDATION (WGHF), KERALA  
 RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY, MES ASMABI COLLEGE, KODUNGALLUR

Interested can register :

TISS | WESTERN GHATS HORNBILL FOUNDATION | M.E.S ASMABI COLLEGE

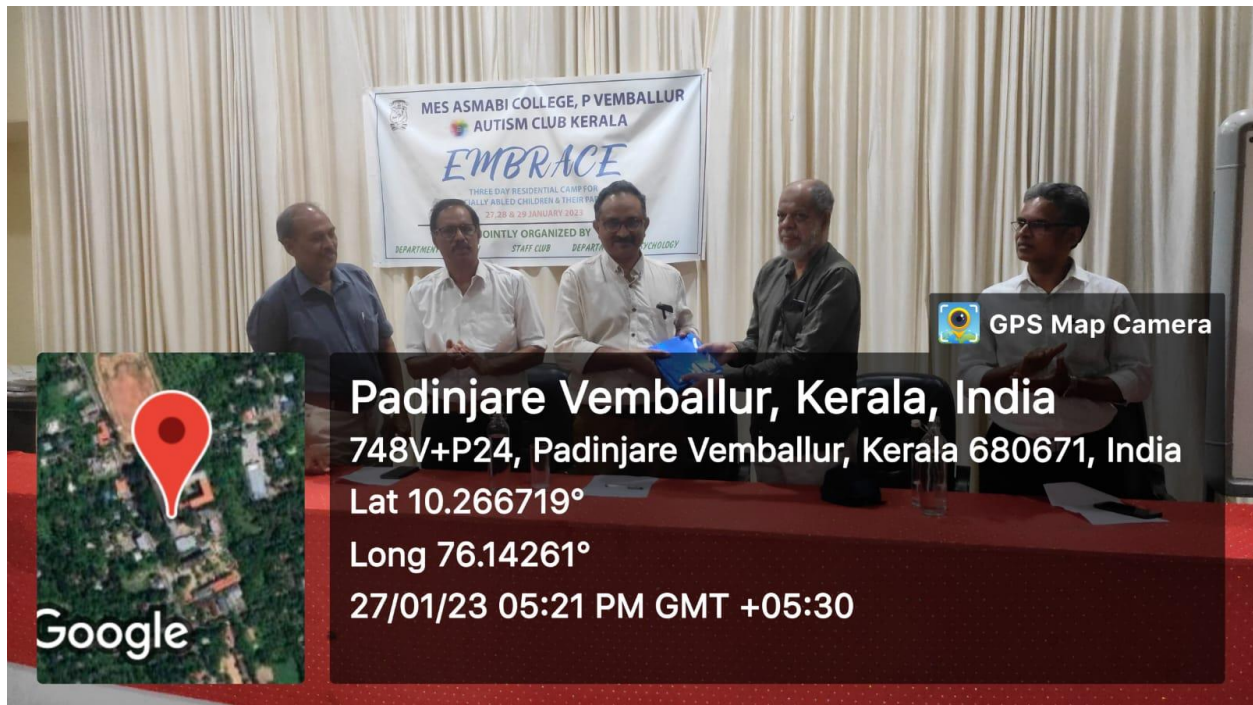
Various programmes organised on mental health addressing equity and justice by Mr. Lathif, Faculty of Psychology, contribute to other aspects of the SDGs.

## **ii. Embrace - Three day residential camp and workshop for Specially Abled Children and their Parents**

2023-01-27 To 2023-01-29

To spread awareness among parents of specially abled children, in order to understand and enhance the skills of children and also to enhance students' attitude, knowledge and skill in dealing a collective social / community need through experiential learning

Embrace, the three day residential camp for children with special needs and their parents was jointly organized by Department of English, Department of Psychology and Staff Club, MES Asmabi College, P. Vemballur, in association with an NGO named Autism Club Kerala. The camp was officially inaugurated by Adv. Navas Kattakath, Secretary and Correspondent, MES Asmabi College. Sri. Lathif Penath, HoD Department of Psychology has delivered the welcome speech. Felicitation for the camp was delivered by Dr. A Biju, Principal, Dr. K. P Sumedhan, Director, Self-Financing Departments, MES Asmabi College, Dr. Aboobacker, Autism Club Kerala.



### **Inauguration of the workshop**

The three Days residential camp was conducted for 50 children with special needs and their parents on 27, 28 and 29 January 2023. The training sessions for the children with special needs and their parents were provided by a specialist in Autism and Development Disorders. The students from Department of English and Department of Psychology department has volunteered throughout the camp days. The student volunteers were under the professional supervision of Sri Lathif Penath, Dr. Reena Mohammed and Ms. Minsila Hilal. Each student volunteer was assigned a child with special needs to be taken care of. these students were partial caregiver for the children. The student volunteers were able to learn and approach their subjects in a professional manner with empathetic perspective. It incorporated activities and entertainments to the specially abled children and their parents for a better experience apart from their stressful life situations.

## **5. Evidence of success**

The project received support from WGHF, IUCN, and BGCI for the assessment of the threatened status of plants and the ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems. Dr. Amitha Bachan K.H., faculty and PI of the program, and Ms. Devika M. Anilkumar, research scholar and coordinator of the ecorestoration program were selected as Global Assessors of the IUCN RedList of Threatened Status of Plants and also as members of SER's Asia network. Coastal vegetation belt restoration started for a four-kilometre stretch of SN Puram Grama Panchayth, which ensured the livelihood of 25 women through MGNREGA throughout the year. The ecorestoration of the Arappathodu (stream draining to sea), started last year, was implemented through the empowerment of 10 women. The Hon. Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Saji Cheriyan, announced it as the model project for coastal zone restoration in Kerala. More than 340 students intensively participated in the activities, which brought out research projects for UG and Masters levels. More than 1000 students from various neighbouring institutions and various clubs visited and participated in this event. Dr. Bachan was a collaborator for developing a policy advocacy document for Govt of Kerala on Forest Rights in Collaboration with Dr. Sahu, TISS Mumbai.

## **6. Problems encountered and resources required**

The resources, such as basic travel support for students, research, and fundamental necessities for such outreach, including building nurseries of plants, meetings with community members, etc., needed to be arranged from various voluntary sources. The support of the Hornbill Foundation and plan fund support from SNP Puram Grama Panchayath were useful. Continuous field visits, regular and step-by-step empowerment of the women and local communities, and challenges faced by them due to harsh weather, sea erosion, and other social factors were crucial. Decided to involve interns and students to monitor these challenges as part of their UG and PG projects in the future. A suitable proposal was developed and submitted to various agencies.

## **7. Notes**

We are happy that this best practice envisaged five years ago is stepping up as a pioneering ecological restoration and multiple partnership-involved climate change resilience programme in the region, where students and our institution have a serious role to play. Such practices are essential in providing commitments to safeguard our environment and beat climate change, ensuring the right and sustainable livelihood of the local community. The use and practices of expertise, research output, and the student's capacities in collaboration with various agencies and communities are the key factors.