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Human Values: Medical Camp for Tribal Children

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Best Practice

Medical Camp for Under- 15 Children in Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

Overview

A comprehensive medical camp is being organized in the tribal settlements of Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala, for the past many years. The camp aims to assess the health and nutritional status of children under 15 years of age. This is organised as a joint venture by the collaboration of the Kerala Forest Department, St. John's College, Anchal and St Joseph's Mission Hospital, Anchal. The camp provides crucial insights into the well-being of these vulnerable communities. This is an initiative from the college to reach out to the public as an undertaking of the IQAC of St John's College. This programme has been widely accoladed and accepted by the tribal community of the region. (More Details in "Institutional Best Practices."





Medical Supplies to the camp













Tribes of Chinnar revive millet farming, beat back malnutrition

Punarjeevanam, launched eight years ago, helps them return to their traditional diet. Under the scheme, 36 millet species are grown in 15 acres

Sandeep Vellaram
IDUKKI

The tribal settlements in the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) near Marayur in Idukki are reaping the benefits of Punarjeevanam, an initiative launched eight years ago to revive millet cultivation.

Launched in collaboration with the Forest department, the project aimed at addressing malnutrition and health issues among the tribal community. The project has so far revived cultivation of 36 millet



Back to roots: Millet farming at the Puthukkudiy tribal settlement under the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, near Marayur, in Idukki.

species on nearly 15 acres and tribal families have returned to their traditional dietary habits. Former CWS assistant

wildlife warden P.M. Prabhu, who launched the initiative, said he interacted with the heads of each settlement to find

the reason for malnutrition among the community members after receiving a medical camp report. "Over the years, they had lost their traditional diet. They said the present diet mainly included ration rice and black tea, while it was millets, pumpkin, amaranthus, and vegetables earlier. The diet was the main cause of most of their diseases," said Mr. Prabhu.

Lola Paulose, paediatrician at St. Joseph Mission Hospital at Anchal in Kollam, who led the medical camps at the sanctuary from 2016, said

at the first medical camp many children had malnutrition, and were underweight and diabetic.

High on minerals

"With Punarjeevanam, many settlements began to cultivate millets, which are high on minerals such as iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. In the previous medical camp, we found that the health issues have subsided," said Dr. Paulose.

CWS assistant wildlife warden Nidhin Lal said millet farming was being undertaken in five tribal settlements. "In the initial

stage, farming was only in the Thayyannankudy tribal settlement on 15 cents. Now, it is spread over 15 acres at the Thayyannankudy, Puthukkudy, Eruttalaky, Vellakkalkudi, and Managppara. We are receiving requests for millet seeds from schools and colleges all over the State," said Mr. Lal.

Munnar wildlife warden S.V. Vinod said now the tribal community and the Forest department were marketing of finger millet products. "Finger millet varieties are receiving good response in Forest department stalls" he said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/tribespeople-of-chinnar-reaping-the-dual-benefits-of-reviving-millet-farming/article67493692.ece>



Students of BSc Zoology assisting the Medical Camp