

EMPOWERMENT OF TELLICKACHAL VILLAGE

An initiative by the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC

Government College Kariavattom

The best practice of learning in Higher Education will only be fruitful when we collaborate to extend the benefits of Higher education to marginalized communities of our society. Our surroundings consist of such members who need a helping hand to support them in their venture to create awareness and instill knowledge and self-reliance, which will consequently result in the empowerment of not just a part of the society but the overall development of a nation in the long run.

Having a comprehensive understanding of this fact, the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC in our college made one of its missions to offer wholehearted and sincere support to bring substantial positive change in the lives of the peripheralized communities of our society by channeling the expertise of the academic fraternity of the college in general and the clubs in particular.

In this direction, the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC in our college convened a meeting on 03/01/2023, Tuesday where serious deliberations and discussions happened in this regard. The chief motive of the meeting was to come up with concrete and practically applicable initiatives that can be effectively implemented at the grassroots level to bring forth a positive impact on downtrodden communities.

In the meeting, a major thrust area was identified:

- To identify a village in close proximity with moderate accessibility in order to actualise above mentioned initiatives

To bring greater clarity and wider scope for the effectuation of the welfare initiatives, two important conditions were also decided:

1. The selected village should have a population of moderately educated members (Higher)
2. The population should have completed initial forms of social/educational programs

Based on the decided thrust area and conditions, the team identified a village named Tellickachal in Pullampara Panchayat included in Vamanapuram Block of Thiruvananthapuram District. This place is located 22 km away from the college. The committee members made a pilot visit to the place on 29/05/2023 and interacted with the local people.

As the first stage of the mission, members of the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC made an action plan to initiate important measures to empower the village. As per the

plan, the initial phase of the mission focused on establishing infrastructure which would result in the enhancement of villagers' accessibility to knowledge systems beneficial for the overall development of the populace. Thus, it was decided to build an exclusive space for the villagers to gather together and share, discuss, and deliberate on issues of contemporary relevance in general and collective development in particular. It was also ensured that this public space could be utilized as a platform for organizing and delivering sessions by eminent personalities and experts from various fields of knowledge to enlighten the villagers on diverse topics. Hence, an appropriate site was located near the village pond and the public assembling space was established without harming the natural scenic beauty and vegetation of the location (see Fig. 1 and 2.).



Fig. 1. The public gathering space established for the villagers near the village pond



Fig. 2. Ensuring that the space is suitable for organizing and delivering knowledge dissemination sessions beneficial to the villagers

No source is better than books to gain valuable knowledge and enlighten oneself. The cultivation of the habit of reading will undoubtedly increase the social, cultural, political, scientific, and literary awareness of people which will eventually lead to the development, self-reliance, and empowerment of the village and its inhabitants. In light of this insight, it was also decided to make necessary contributions from our side to the enhancement of the functionality and efficiency of the village library (Grandhasala) in disseminating information, knowledge, and wisdom to the local people. Thus, Phoenix Grandhasala which was functioning in the village received a good collection of book resources from diverse disciplines and genres from the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC (see Fig. 3. and 4.).

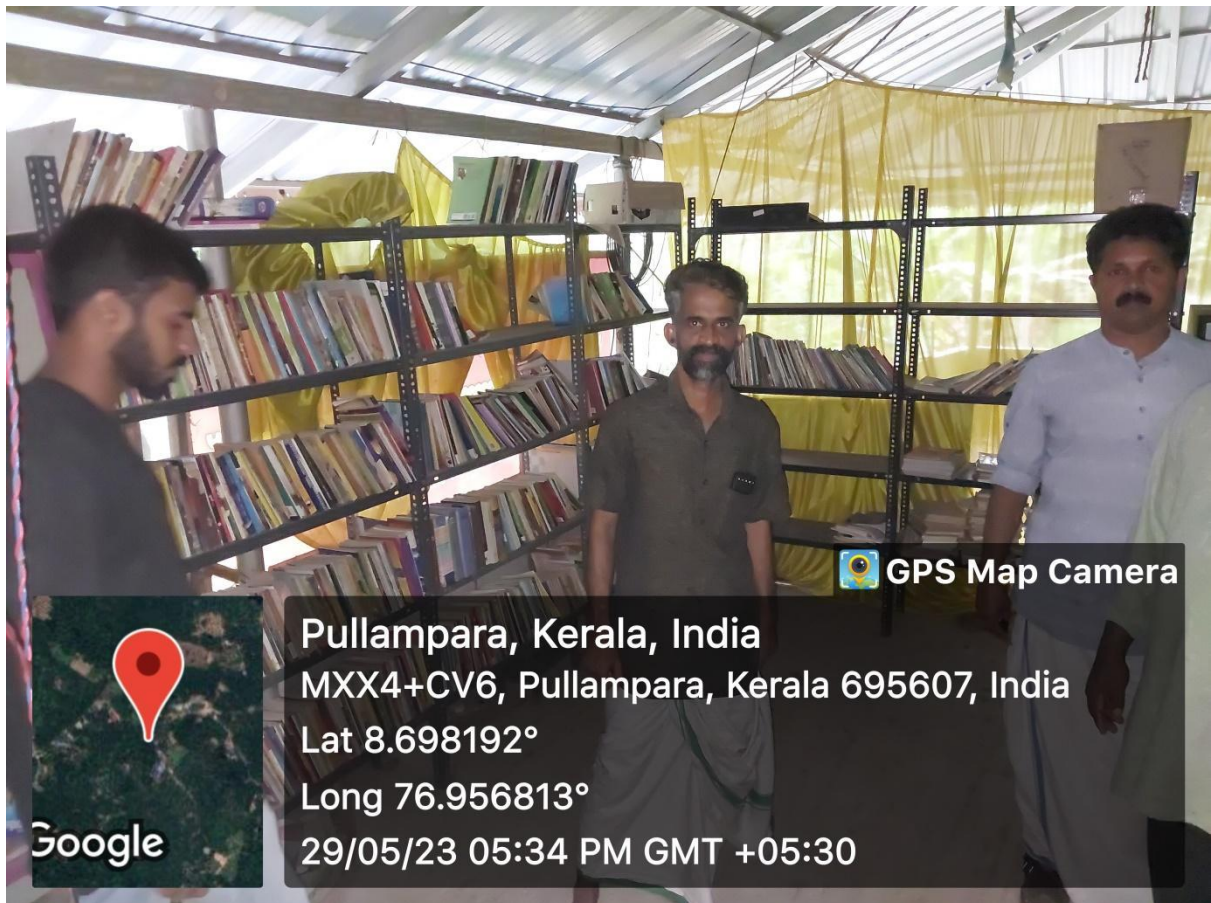


Fig. 3. Inside view of Phoenix Grandhasala functioning for the local populace. The members of the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre and IQAC interacting with the villager who has been assigned the responsibility of the smooth functioning of the library

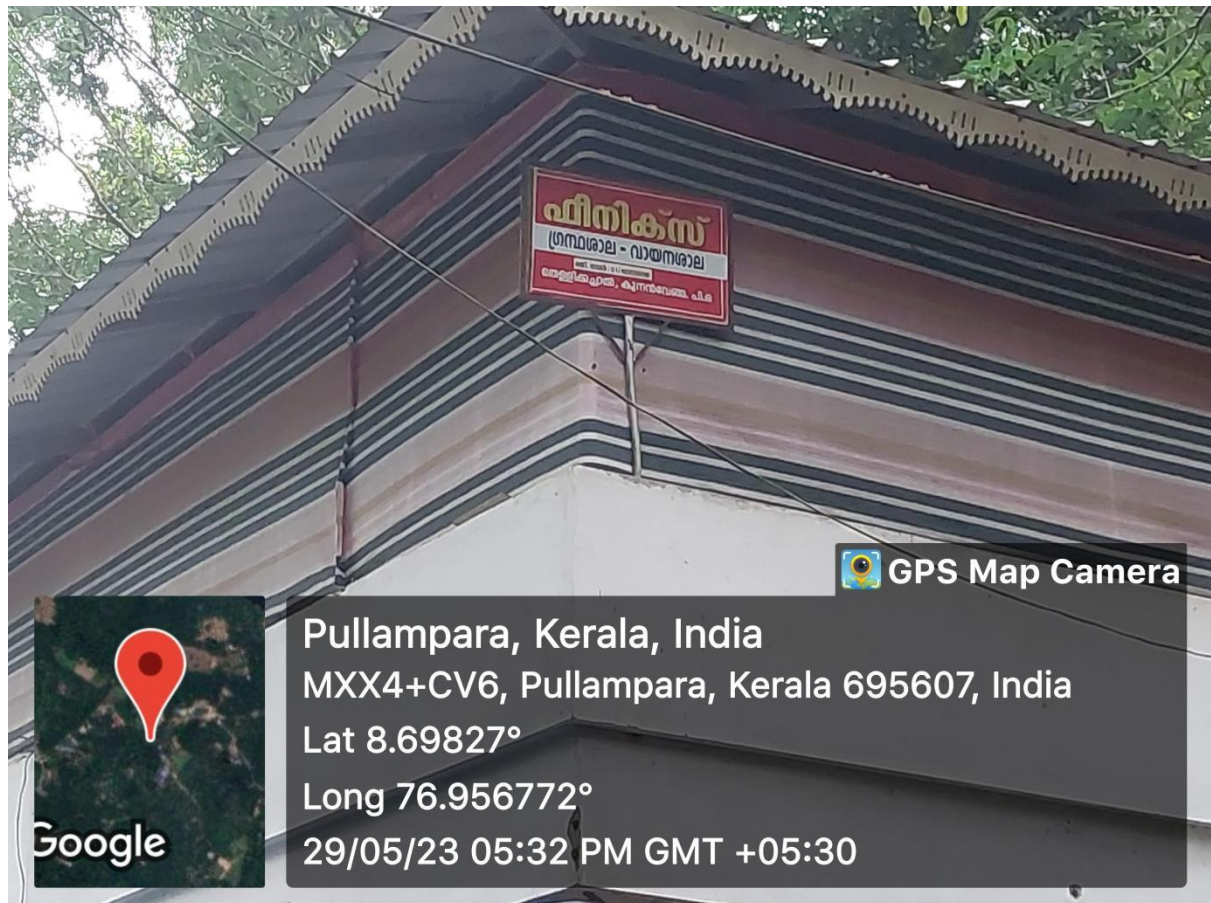


Fig. 4. Outside view of Phoenix Grandhasala functioning under the guidance of the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC for the dissemination of knowledge to the local populace

The members of the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre, and IQAC constantly visit and interact with the villagers to both ensure the functioning and management of the infrastructure established under the guidance of the club, the centre, and IQAC with the aim of formulating a comprehensive understanding of the villagers' perception on future empowerment programmes.



Fig. 5. The members of the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre and IQAC visiting and interacting with the local people

The Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre and IQAC found the initiatives to be extremely beneficial to the villagers and the mission received a positive approach from the villagers. The active participation of the villagers in collaboration with the Nature Club, Gandhian Studies Centre and IQAC resulted in the effective functioning of the established facilities. Hence, it was decided by the members to continue the efforts through the implementation of the following measures by the month of October 2023.

1. Conducting free training sessions for school going students (Higher School and High Secondary) to create greater awareness regarding the possibilities of higher education in actualising students' aspirations.
2. Organising orientation classes for local students to provide them a better clarity on the scope of various disciplines and courses offered by Government College Kariavattom.
3. To make a MoU with the village library for transfer of more book resources.

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