

PERSPECTIVES

THE GANDHIGRAM INSTITUTE OF RURAL HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE TRUST
AMBATHURAI, GANDHIGRAM POST, DINDIGUL DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU 624 302 INDIA

Ph: 0451 - 2452347, 2452346.

Fax: 0451 - 2452 347.

Grams: HEFA, Madurai.

Email: girhfwtsancharnet.in



Website: www.girhfwtsancharnet.in

The Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare Trust strives for promoting health of the rural masses.

Introduction:

The Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health And Family Welfare Trust (GIRH & FWT) was established in the year 1964 by Dr. T.S. Soundram Ramachandran, with support from Government of Tamil Nadu, Government of India and Ford Foundation. The institute derived its strategies from the experiences of a Pilot Health Project implemented in Athoor block during 1959 - 64 called the Athoor Experiment.

Realizing that health living status of the community can improve economic status and improve quality of life, the institute improves the community health through its innovative strategies. All of these strategies emphasize education in health and family welfare in the rural areas through training, research and service programs.

Objectives:

The objective of the institute is to promote implementation of National Health and Family Welfare programs in rural areas by:

- Conducting research studies in the field of reproductive and child health, rural health and family welfare activities.
- Organizing training programs in reproductive and child health, health and family welfare programs for personnel from the state and those from other states.
- Developing newer methodologies for implementing reproductive and child health, and other health programs.

Strategies:

- Legitimately tailored and constantly modified programs.
- Training needs assessment: Feedback and flexibility.
- Innovative educational technology including problem based learning, task analysis, community based education.
- Amalgamating information generated through health related research.
- Village orientation to appraise and address rural health problems.
- Hands on training in the development of Clinical and Management skills.
- Program based training modules.
- Independent and objective assessment of the Reproductive and Child Health and Family Welfare programs and its impact.
- Quick feedback on the functioning of the programs to the policy makers for taking necessary corrective measures.

Contributions:

- The institute developed innovative strategies for community participation.

- The institute identified and demonstrated spacing method as the tool for the rural people in the early years of reproduction.
- It demonstrated the positive effect of community based distribution system in the acceptance of Nirodh.
- It established the impact of community health education by constructing community toilets and drainage systems in the nearby villages.
- It assessed and established the positive impact of health awareness units on population control programs.
- Institute is acclaimed as the center for conduct of all National level surveys such as NFHS and RCH survey in the Southern Region.

Training:

The institute's training programs are based on the principle of making the human resource investments of the Government meaningful. The institute conducts two professional diploma courses and a certificate course of on-year duration in Medical Laboratory Technology. Besides, in-service training programs to various categories of health personnel from the primary health center level unto the state level administrators are held.

Professional courses:

- **Post Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion & Education :**
Affiliated with Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR. Medical University.
- **Diploma in Nursing Education and Administration :**
Recognized by Nursing Council of India.
- **Certificate Course in Medical Laboratory Technology :**
Recognized by King Institute, Chennai.

In-service Training Programs:

The government sponsored training institutions listed here under cater to the training needs of various categories of in-service health personnel.

- Central Training Institute.
- Health and Family Welfare Training Center

- Regional Health Teachers Training Institute
- Collaborative Training Institute for RCH Program
- Specialized communication training center
- Middle level training center

The short-term in-service training programs organized for government health personnel and NGOs from the southern states are:

- RCH training programs to impart Integrated Skill and Specialized Skills in Family Planning, Reproductive Health, Maternal and Child Health.
- HIV / AIDS Prevention Training Programs.
- Training in National Health Programs.
- Information, Education and Communication Training.
- Training in Participatory Learning and Management.
- Induction and Refresher Training for Medical / Para Medical personnel.

Services:

Services at the doorstep of the villagers: Direct delivery of Health services to the villagers in and around Gandhigram are implemented during the field placement programs of the various courses. The service activities include: medical camp, construction of latrine and sanitary pit, information and education on personal and environmental hygiene. Health promotion through nutrition demonstration and contraceptive services is some of the services rendered.

Research Programs:

The Population Research Center at the institute has been established with the support of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The center undertakes research in health care service delivery and training, demonstration and population related health effects, evaluation of health programs such as MCH&FW, RCH, PPI, FW and so on. The focus of research is on modification of strategies for program development and policy formulation.

Intervention Research Programs:

Reproductive Health Project: The institute with the Pathfinder-support has tested out new strategies for improving reproductive health of adolescents and young married women.

A major activity under this project is to impart awareness and intensive reproductive health education to adolescent boys and girls. The intervention also addresses the contraceptive needs of young couples for Reproductive Health improvement through spacing.

Pathfinder International awarded yet another project to the institute called 'Intervention for the Improvement of Adolescent Reproductive Health for School Children'. Under this project, the institute provides information about sexuality and reproductive health for adolescents studying in the rural schools of Reddiarchatram block.

Under the Mother NGO scheme of the Government of India, the institute implements numerous intervention activities, which address the Reproductive and Child Health Programs in seven districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

Under the National NGO scheme of the Government of India, the institute evaluates small NGOs that seek support from the Government of India for implementing health projects of the Government.

The Regional Resource Center of the institute acts as a resource-building center for the 16 Mother NGOs of the four southern states and Union Territories of the country. The institute provides technical resource materials, information and training to the NGO personnel.

Health Economics Research Unit: The institute established a Health Economics Research unit in the year 2002. This unit is designed to undertake research on the economic impact of preventive health care as compared to curative care.

Support facilities:

Audio-visual Division: The Audio-visual Division provides information, Education and Communication training to various categories of communication personnel. The division also organizes and conducts community based educational programs and community outreach programs.

Publication Unit: The Publication unit serves as a liaison wing between the programmers and the policy makers by bringing out quarterly Bulletins, Newsletters, Periodicals and Research Compendium.

Library: The institute has a well-stocked library with computer facilities and identified as one of the best public health library in the country.

Computer Unit: The institute work is supported fully by a computer division with more than 20PCs with latest and program based software including DTP software.

Seminar Halls: The institute has well maintained seminar halls and 200-seated auditorium equipped with all recording facilities.

Boarding and Lodging Facilities: The institute has separate hostels and boarding facilities for men and women trainees. It has a guesthouse with 20 well-furnished rooms of which two are air-conditioned. The sister institute in Gandhigram namely Kasthurba Hospital, provides medical consultancy.

Location:

The institute is located at Ambathurai on the main National Highway No.7, twelve kilometers south of Dindigul town en-route Madurai. It lies between the Sirumalai Hills on the east and Kodai Hills on the west. The nearest railway station is Dindigul.

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