

Rural Visit to Palghar District 2023

Social work students' rural field visit had been organized to AROHAN, a field action project of college of Nirmala Niketan, Mokhada and BAIF Organization in Jawhar and Mokhada talukas in Palghar district. The students team visited their respective field area/ villages from 18th April 2023 to 20th April 2023 as a part of rural visit. **The objective of this visit is to understand issues of rural/ tribal communities and get an exposure in this field.** AROHAN and BAIF Organizations work on the issues of rural development, livelihood, employment generation, soil and water conservation and various tribal issues.

the details for the same are as follows:

Day & Date	Time	Name of the Organizations	Location	Details	No. of Person
Tuesday, 18th April 2023	2 pm to 7 pm	AROHAN	Mokhada, Palghar District	1. Students will reach at AROHAN Office at 1.30pm 2. A detail orientation about AROHAN's work.	17 students & 4 Faculties
Halt @ BAIF, Jawhar on Tuesday, 18h April 2023					17 students & 4 Faculties
Wednesday, 19th April 2023	7am to 6 pm	AROHAN's field area (also visit Action Against Hunger and Pragati Pratisthan)	Mokhada-Jawhar Palghar District	Field visits and discussion with village communities and groups	17 students & 4 Faculties
Halt @ BAIF, Jawhar on 19th April 2023 and leaving in the morning on 20th April 2023					17 students & 4 Faculties
Thursday, 20th April 2023	7am to 6 pm	BAIF's field area	Mokhada-Jawhar Palghar District	Field visits and discussion with village communities and groups	17 students & 4 Faculties

DAY 1

18th April, 2023



The trip started from Amity campus from there we were required to reach the BAIF centre (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation)

The BAIF centre is situated in JAWHAR, Palghar district, Maharashtra. BAIF centre was the place where we were about to stay for 3days of our trip.

When we reached the BAIF centre in afternoon after taking rest for few minutes we moved to AROEHAN Ngo which was our second organization which was scheduled and we were there to see their work.

AROEHAN'S project manager, Nithesh Mukada and Fieldwork officer Ganesh sir explained how their Ngo works what are their field of work.

AROEHAN'S origin story is that due 169 deaths of tribal children due to malnutrition in the MOKHADA block of the then Thane district initiated the formation of a field action project of the college of social work, Nirmala Niketan in 2006 thus AROEHAN was born.

From a field action project in 2006, AROEHAN transformed into a registered non-profit organization in the year 2015.

AROEHAN has increased its footprint across MOKHADA, JAWHAR, Palghar, and Dahanu blocks of Palghar district and established credibility in the area especially for its work in water conservation, health and nutrition, solar based irrigation and for introducing farmers to second cropping during the rabi season for growing vegetables and engaging in floriculture.

AROEHAN works on 5 aspect of the society which are stated below:-

GOVERNANCE



AROEHAN collaborates with villages through women's groups and statutory committees of the Gramme Sabha and Gramme Panchayat to bring about long-term change in the lives of tribal and rural people. We want to empower villagers and improve their participation in village development decision-making. Pada Samiti is a committee of selected people that works closely with AROEHAN in 62 hamlets. We regularly teach them on better governance, and through these committees, we learn about issues that need to be addressed, the whereabouts of ongoing projects, and the impact of specific initiatives. We also ensure that the inhabitants of the village are involved in the choices made by the government departments and bridge the

communication gap between them. We ensure that they fully benefit from government programmes and are not exploited in the process. Because of AROEHAN's trustworthiness, more people have become involved in numerous development activities.

WATER CONSERVATION:



There is water everywhere, yet there isn't a drop to drink! This is the reality in most tribal settlements in Maharashtra's steep terrains. The CTARA group of IIT did a study that showed the water stress zones in the Mokhada block of Palghar with the assistance of Siemens India Ltd.

With the support of the study, we produced a water conservation strategy, and AROEHAN has implemented many water conservation and rainwater collecting infrastructures over the years. So far, 200+ small and medium-sized check dams, sub-surface bunds, cordons and 610 agricultural ponds with storage capacities of 35000 litres each have been erected. AROEHAN also took attention to loose boulder structures, restored defunct wells, and built new wells. These efforts recharged the groundwater and elevated the water table in at least 13 Gramme Panchayats in Mokhada. Over 100 billion litres of water were saved, and the additional soil moisture regenerated tonnes of biomass. The number of 'thirst days' progressively decreased in these settlements, which had previously been a major issue for the tribes. Because of the availability of water, many people were motivated to produce their own bricks, and they also began to use more land for agriculture.

HEALTH:



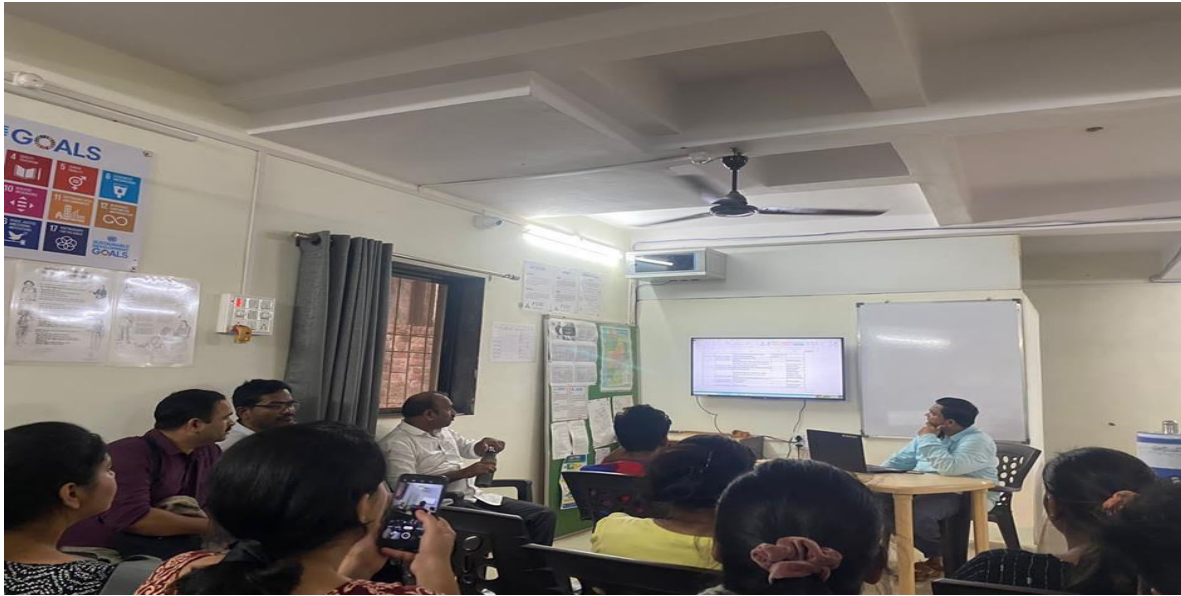
AROEHAN arose in response to the horrifying health disaster of 169 malnourished children dying in Mokhada in 2006. Since then, we've completed a slew of projects in the Health sector. To combat hunger, we improved reproductive health knowledge among pregnant and nursing mothers and encouraged early childhood care practises. AROEHAN improved villagers' participation in the Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee (VHNSC) and assisted with community health monitoring. AROEHAN also pushed Gram Sabhas in the communities to enact anti-child marriage resolutions. AROEHAN has benefited over 800 undernourished children and over 15000 pregnant and lactating women in the Palghar block. AROEHAN have held over 3000 sessions with over 5000 adolescent females to teach them about life skills and reproductive health. AROEHAN have activated and educated 225 VHNSCs and over 620 Mata Samitis to monitor health and nutrition services, and a similar project is currently underway in 45 villages in Mokhada. AROEHAN were able to install three USG equipment in rural hospitals in Palghar, Jawahar, and Mokhada with the assistance of Siemens Ltd. and DHFL. This was a big stride because it allowed us to track the health of the pregnant women and the infant and, in the event of any abnormalities, AROEHAN could take corrective actions ahead of time. Anthropometric and early screening equipment kits have been supplied to approximately 150 ASHAs in Mokhada Block who have assisted in the care of high-risk patients.

LIVELIHOOD



Through our Livelihood initiatives, we introduced farmers to linked agricultural activities. These initiatives improved their agricultural practises and helped them earn more money. AROEHAN started such projects in 2012 with only 7 farmers and 11 acres of land. AROEHAN has reached over 1000 farmers in the project regions over the last decade, introducing them to innovative ways for increasing output. They have increased their revenues by implementing modern agricultural practises such as drip irrigation, mulching, and solar-powered lift irrigation, which ensures the most efficient use of water for their crops throughout the Rabi season. Through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), AROEHAN have also offered various equipment for associated livelihoods like as papad manufacturing machines, oil crushers, rice and masala mills, cattle, and so on for marginal and landless agricultural labourers.

EDUCATION



AROEHAN's inaugural educational effort, launched in 2009, aimed to teach life skills to teenagers in tribal settlements. Our goal was to make them aware of their potential, encourage them to continue their education, and show them that there are numerous ways to make a living. This would steer children away from the tradition of early marriages, as childbearing at a young age can lead to malnutrition. This venture lasted till 2012, after which AROEHAN launched several new programmes in our Education Vertical. AROEHAN proposed a School Committee with subjects such as culture, athletics, and hygiene. This would improve their social skills, teach them to be leaders, and give them confidence in their future. In recent years, AROEHAN have collaborated closely with the School Management Committees of over 100 schools. AROEHAN have also encouraged parents to take an active role in their children's academics and to develop an interest in school activities. AROEHAN began the 'Jigyasa Project' in 10 Ashram Schools in Mokahada with the help of Siemens India Ltd. This project has launched several programs to develop scientific temperament among students for STEM (Science Technology Engineering Maths), benefitting over 8000 students from 3rd to 10 Grade.

DAY 2

19th April, 2023

On the second day of our rural camp we visited the farms where AROEHAN helps them to build their sustainable income for themselves and also guides them about the farming techniques. The farms which we visited were totally organic no fertilizers were used.

We also witnessed the river from which water is distributed among the farms for irrigation. The solar power helps the pump to run and gravity based water distribution helps the system to be sustainable. For no electric use of water distribution at first the pump pulls the water to a hill and from there the water is distributed equally to all the farm which is why no pump is used for water distribution it happens through gravity. Trip irrigation is used for water the crops.

In the farms we saw crops like

1. Spring onion
2. Jasmine
3. Cashew
4. Mango tree

We got to know how a pond is dug 2 by 2 size for storage of water in monsoon so that it can be helped to irrigate the land in other season when water is not ample.

Farm visit was over we were taken to a village to show how they utilized the same river for drinking water as well as for providing water for domestic use. That village didn't have any water to drink before the intervention. The tank which was available for the storage of water had 4 taps each side which sums up to 8 taps, 4 taps for drinking water and 4 taps for domestic water. Drinking water was purified by the purifier which was run on solar power. We also visited a school which taught adolescents girls about nutrition as well as women and how to keep their diet nutritious and protein rich from local food itself.

we moved further in the village where a meeting was held under the tree with the member of pada samiti. Pada samiti also know as hamlet its an small group of a small settlement, generally one smaller than a village. People from the pada samiti shared their experiences on how they developed the school for their village children till 5 std. They held meeting in regular interval after the inversion to discuss about the progress of the school. School also opted for visual teaching in which the school is begin painted in such a way which will give lesson to kids through the paints on the walls, after the meeting we moved forward to see the check dam. After these visit was done we were taken to see the flour grinding machines which operated on solar and also the oil extraction and oil purification machine. When this is visit was over we taken to the community canteen where it served and displayed local food it was the canteen of a Self help group.



DAY 3

20th April, 2023



On our last day of our trip which was the 3rd day of the trip only half day visit was planned and after the visit we moved back to our hostel.

For more than 55 years, the BAIF Development Research Foundation has impacted rural communities through its livelihood and climate-resilient activities. The operations are dispersed across 93,738 villages in 325 districts in 13 states, including 59 aspirational districts. It has combined the Gandhian approach to rural prosperity with climate change mitigation and adaptation techniques.

The organisation has a solid human resource base comprised of a multidisciplinary team of professionals, researchers, subject specialists, and field practitioners. We were with BAIF team members which showed the farm using pond for irrigation and educated them how to use the polyhouse and to get a regular flow of income they suggested to plant mogras.

In that farm they are also trying to grow apple. In the farm we saw :-

1. Sweet corn
2. Bell pepper
3. Cashew

4. Mogra
5. Jasmine
6. Mango
7. Chili

During the visit we came to know they also used solar power and got the information that Tata motors and Baif has an tie up through which they get funds. This particular farm visit was done we moved to the another farm where we saw and learnt about the bee keeping.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the rural camp has been a truly transformative experience for all involved. Participants were able to step outside of their comfort zones, immerse themselves in nature, and learn valuable skills that they can take with them for the rest of their lives and also the professional knowledge from ground zero helped us to widen our perspective even more.

From learning about sustainable farming practices to building, participants gained a deep understanding of the importance of self-sufficiency and teamwork of the community and the NGO. The camp also provided an opportunity to disconnect from technology and connect with each other, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, Apart from the professional learnings and the rural camp served as a reminder that life can be simple and fulfilling, without the constant distractions of modern-day society. Participants were able to appreciate the beauty of the natural world and recognize the importance of preserving it for future generations.

Overall, the rural camp was a tremendous success, providing participants with valuable skills & knowledge , unforgettable memories, and a new perspective on life. It is clear that the learnings and experiences gained at the camp will have a lasting impact on all who were fortunate enough to attend.

GALLERY

