



SMART
INDIA FOUNDATION

Social work Movement for Action, Research and Training

SMART VOICE

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A New Home, A Renewed Mission: Expanding Our Impact in the Field

Dear Team, Volunteers, and Friends,

Every transformational movement begins with a simple spark, and for Smart India, that spark was ignited in 2023 when a small group of passionate social workers united around a shared dream for grassroots change. Armed with nothing more than deep empathy, sheer determination, and a hands-on commitment to social upliftment, that founding group took its very first steps into our communities. Today, that vision enters a monumental new chapter as we open the doors to our new, significantly larger rented facility. While it serves as a temporary shelter, this expanded space represents a major upgrade in our operational capacity—a vibrant command center built to accommodate our growing family, streamline our logistics, and foster deeper collaboration. It stands as a physical testament to how far we have come from those humble beginnings, proving that sustained dedication can turn even the most modest beginnings into a thriving vehicle for social impact.

However, a larger building is not our final destination; it is simply the launchpad for our true calling out in the field. As we settle into this new hub, we are channeling our collective energy directly into the communities that need us most through powerful, specialized interventions. We are stepping up our efforts in dementia care and old age support, launching dedicated community care networks and support systems to bring dignity, relief, and companionship to our senior citizens and their families. Simultaneously, our teams are advancing our school social work interventions, heading into classrooms to deliver essential psychosocial guidance, life-skills training, and emotional support to empower young minds. From localized health awareness drives to structured field campaigns, our boots-on-the-ground presence is expanding faster than ever before, ensuring that every project we undertake leaves a lasting, positive footprint on human lives.

To our incredible volunteers and dedicated team members, you remain the undisputed soul of Smart Voice and Smart India. We do not measure our success by the square footage of the space we occupy, but by the depth of the lives we touch and the hope we restore through your selfless service and daily perseverance. As we step across the threshold of this new facility, let us carry forward the unyielding grit of our 2023 roots with even greater ambition and unity. Let this space be a sanctuary where we dream bolder, plan sharper, and support one another before stepping out into the field to do the real work. The foundation is solid, the momentum is undeniably ours, and the communities we serve are waiting—let us take this new beginning and make this season our most inspiring and impactful one yet.

**With deep gratitude and shared purpose,
Team Smart India**

CONTENT

- **A New Chapter in Service: Inauguration of the New Office**
Building of SMART India Foundation 04
- **Why Knowing Is Not Enough: Understanding Behaviour**
Change in Social Work 07
- **Community Programmes** 11
- **Workshop** 27
- **Social Workers' Empowerment Programmes** 34
- **Organizational Visit** 38

A NEW CHAPTER IN SERVICE: INAUGURATION OF THE NEW OFFICE BUILDING OF SMART INDIA FOUNDATION



The inauguration of the new office building of SMART India Foundation was held on 14 September 2026 in the presence of Shri. Roji M. John, Minister for Higher Education, Government of Kerala, along with trustees, invited dignitaries, staff members, interns, volunteers, and well-wishers of the Foundation.

The programme began at 9.30 AM with the formal inauguration of the new office building. The inaugural ceremony commenced with a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Shri. Roji M. John, Minister for Higher Education, Government of Kerala. The ribbon-cutting marked the formal opening of the new office premises and an important milestone in the growth and development of SMART India Foundation.

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, a ceremonial lamp lighting was conducted by Shri. Roji M. John along with the other dignitaries. The lighting of the lamp symbolized the beginning of a new chapter in the activities of

SMART India Foundation and reflected the Foundation's continued commitment to social work, education, research, training, and community development.

Following the inaugural ceremonies, the formal meeting was conducted. Dr. Semichan Joseph, Deputy Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation, delivered the welcome speech and welcomed the chief guest and all the dignitaries and participants. Mr. Dalin Dias, Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation, delivered the presidential address and spoke about the Foundation's vision, activities, and continued commitment to social work and community development.

The inaugural address was delivered by Shri. Roji M. John, Minister for Higher Education, Government of Kerala. His presence added significance to the occasion and encouraged the Foundation in its continuing efforts towards social development and community-oriented interventions.

As part of the inauguration programme, a book release ceremony was also conducted. The book, titled *Every Drop Counts: Understanding Kerala's Water Future*, was jointly edited by Dr. Semichan Joseph, Deputy Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation, and Mr. Akhilesh Ramesh, Project Manager, WASH Institute.

The book was formally released by Shri. Roji M. John, Minister for Higher Education, Government of Kerala, during the inaugural function. The publication focuses on the importance of understanding Kerala's water resources and the need for sustainable approaches to water management and conservation.

As part of the book release, copies of the publication were presented to Chairperson and Vice- Chairperson of Angamaly Municipality and to President of Kanjoor Grama Panchayat, acknowledging the importance of local self-government institutions in promoting sustainable water management and community-level water and sanitation initiatives.

The felicitation was extended to Smt. Reetha Paul, Shri. Wilson Mundadan, Shri. Sebastian P-

aul, Mr. Akhilesh Ramesh, Mr. Shaji Malipara. The felicitation acknowledged their presence, support, and association with the activities and initiatives of SMART India Foundation.

The programme concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Xavier Vinayaraj, Joint Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation. He expressed sincere gratitude to the chief guest, Shri. Roji M. John, all the dignitaries, trustees, guests, staff, interns, volunteers, and well-wishers for their presence and valuable support in making the inauguration a memorable occasion.

The inauguration of the new office building marked an important milestone in the journey of SMART India Foundation. The new office is expected to serve as a dedicated space for coordinating the Foundation's social work interventions, community development programmes, training and internship activities, research initiatives, and collaborative projects. The occasion reflected the Foundation's continued growth and its commitment to expanding meaningful and sustainable interventions for communities.



GLIMPSES OF INAUGURATION CEREMONY



WHY KNOWING IS NOT ENOUGH: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IN SOCIAL WORK

In my previous article, I wrote about looking beyond the visible problem. That way of thinking led me to another question:

Even when we understand a problem and know what needs to change, why does behaviour not always change?

I have been thinking about this while working on WASH programmes.

In development work, we often assume that awareness is the first step towards behaviour change. Tell people why something matters, explain the risks, show them what to do, and we expect behaviour to follow.

But field experience is rarely that straightforward.

In many public programmes, the logic looks simple:

Information → Awareness → Behaviour Change

When behaviour does not change, we often assume that people need more information, so we organise another awareness programme, training or campaign. Sometimes that is exactly what is needed. But knowledge is rarely the whole challenge.

Most of us know things we do not consistently do: that exercise is good for us, that we should sleep on time, that we should save more. Knowing is

one thing; acting is another.

So what happens in the space between?

The same is true of communities. A household may know that waste should be segregated. But who separates it when it is actually generated? Where are the containers? What happens when someone is in a hurry, or another family member does not follow the same practice?

At that point, the question is no longer only about awareness. It is about behaviour and, for a social worker, about context.

Let us take the example of waste segregation. Knowing the waste categories tells us about knowledge, not necessarily about what happens in the kitchen.

In source-segregation initiatives, I have found it useful to ask how we know whether people practise what they report. A survey may tell us:

“Yes, we segregate our waste.”

But the waste itself may tell a different story: properly segregated, partly mixed, or entirely mixed?

There is a real difference between:

“I know how to segregate my waste.”

and

“I actually segregate my waste correctly every day.”

The first is knowledge; the second is behaviour. Programme design has to work in the space between them.

Diagnose the Behaviour, Not the Person

We tend to look for a problem's cause where it becomes visible.

A dirty public toilet prompts the question of why users do not keep it clean. Yet an assessment may point to who is responsible for cleaning, whether water is available and who monitors the facility.

Behaviour deserves the same scrutiny.

If people are not doing something, we should not immediately conclude that they are unaware, careless or unwilling. Professional social work asks us to see people in relation to their environment: family, community expectations, institutions, services, economic circumstances and past experience.

One change in my own thinking has been to ask fewer questions about wha



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It is “wrong” with the person and more questions about the behaviour itself.

Public programmes can sometimes treat communities as recipients of instructions:

“We know what is good for you.”

Social work starts elsewhere.

A household understands its own routines. A sanitation worker knows constraints that may be invisible from an office. A local official knows institutional realities that may not appear in a project document.

These are not obstacles to behaviour change. They are part of understanding it.

For me, sustainable change is more likely when people are able to participate in shaping the response.

Habit, Context and Systems

This is where I became interested in research on habit.

The Handbook of Behavior Change, published by Cambridge University Press, includes a chapter on “Changing Behavior Using Habit Theory” by Sheina Orbell and Bas Verplanken. It describes habits as associations between contextual cues and behaviours, built through repeated practice.

Think about an ordinary routine. Coming home, you may put your keys in the same place or wash your hands without consciously planning each step. Repetition and context make the behaviour familiar.

The lesson for programmes is simple: a behaviour that happens once is not necessarily a changed behaviour.

Can it be repeated? Is it convenient? Does the surrounding context support it?

Habit is one useful lens, but it is not the whole explanation. Motivation, opportunity, social expectations, resources and the wider environment also matter.

In practice, I find it useful to think about behaviour through four connected elements:

Person → Behaviour → Context → System

What looks like “non-compliance” from outside may reflect competing priorities, social expectations, lack of resources, distrust or a service that does not work as intended. Understanding this does not remove per-

sonal responsibility. It helps us identify where intervention may be needed: with the individual, the family, the community, or the conditions around the behaviour.

Another example is from Sanitation, Faecal sludge and septage management shows how far this chain can extend.

After a toilet is flushed, the sanitation process does not end. The containment system must be maintained, desludging needs to happen at an appropriate time, collected sludge needs to reach a treatment facility, and that facility needs to function.

Between “I used the toilet” and “the sanitation system is safely managed” lie many behaviours and institutional actions.

In my work on the Malambootham campaign in Kerala, the challenge was not just explaining a technical issue. We had to make something largely invisible understandable and relevant, and connect communication with institutional ownership and service delivery.

That was a social-work lesson too: a technical problem becomes a social problem when it shapes how people understand risk, make decisions, access services and relate to institutions.

The IEC route

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) matters. It can explain, motivate, remind and make an invisible problem visible.

But a message cannot, by itself, make a behaviour convenient or possible.

Segregation campaigns need working collection arrangements. Sanitation messages need services that function. Safe water practices need to fit daily routines.

IEC is part of behaviour change, but it cannot carry the entire burden. Communication has to work alongside the services, routines and conditions that support the desired behaviour.

We often count attendance, trainings and materials distributed. These measure activity and reach, not necessarily behaviour.

In source segregation, several different things can hide behind the word “success”:

What This Means for a Social Worker

A social worker need not deliver every awareness message.

The role can be to understand what surrounds the behaviour: who influences it, what makes it difficult and what would make it easier.

A social worker can also bring people's experiences into programme design, acting as a bridge between communities and institutions, between policy and practice, and between technical teams and everyday experience.

Engineers, administrators, communication specialists and community workers may each see the same problem differently.

One question can help:

“What does this intervention look like from the person's point of view?”

That question can reveal barriers and strengths that are not visible in a project plan.

So what happens between knowing and doing?

After working across WASH programmes, I do not think there is one simple answer.

Sometimes it is motivation, convenience or habit. Sometimes it is social expectation, lack of opportunity or lack of trust. Sometimes the surrounding conditions simply do not support change.

That is why I am cautious about saying:

“People need more awareness.”

Sometimes they do.

But sometimes they need a better service, a clearer process, a supportive environment or an opportunity to practise the behaviour repeatedly.

Our first instinct is often to change people. The more useful question may be:

What can we change around the behaviour?

Can we make the action easier? Can we make the routine workable? Can we make responsibility clear?

Can people participate in shaping the solution?

One way I have started thinking about this is:

**Knowing | Intending | Doing | Repeating |
Sustaining**

This is not a scientific sequence or a fixed model. It is a practical way of examining where a programme

may be succeeding or getting stuck.

People change, circumstances change and behaviour changes with them.

Perhaps the goal is not simply to change what people know, but to work with people and institutions to create conditions in which people can move from knowing to doing—and from doing to sustaining.

That is where policy meets behaviour—and where professional social work has an important role to play.

What Comes Next

This brings me back to Article 3: the problem may not be where we see it.

Perhaps the same is true of behaviour.

But what if we understand the problem and the behaviour, and change still does not happen?

Sometimes, the challenge lies in implementation: a good policy that does not reach the last mile, a well-designed programme delivered differently on the ground, or a training that is completed but never translated into practice.

If we understand the problem and the behaviour, how do we make programmes work in practice?

To be continued in Article 5...

Dimension	What it may look like
Knowledge	“I know the waste categories.”
Intention	“I should segregate my waste.”
Opportunity	“I have the containers and collection arrangement I need.”
Practice	“I segregate correctly.”
Sustaining	“It is part of my routine.”

These are different dimensions of behaviour, and people may move between them as circumstances change. They should not be understood as a universal or strictly linear sequence.

The important question is therefore not simply whether people attended a training or received a

message.

What do people actually do over time?

Success is not just that people followed an instruction once. It is whether they have the understanding, opportunity and support to make and sustain healthier and safer choices.

My 30-day internship at Smart India Foundation was one of the most meaningful parts of my social work journey. I got the opportunity to take part in different surveys, counselling activities, awareness sessions and community visits. I enjoyed interacting with children, older people and community members through mental health surveys, dementia screening, water surveys, casework and community profiling. These activities helped me understand people and their problems better. I learned to communicate with patience and empathy, listen to people and respect their feelings.



The guidance and support from our supervisors helped me learn from my mistakes and improve my skills. This experience helped me develop my communication, observation, teamwork and counselling skills. My time at Smart India Foundation was not just fieldwork. It was a valuable learning experience that helped me grow personally and professionally. It also gave me many meaningful and beautiful memories.

Thank you, Mariya Ma'am, Dalin Sir and Semichan Sir, for your guidance, support and encouragement throughout this journey ❤️

My experience with SMART India Foundation was one of the most meaningful parts of my social work journey. During my fieldwork, I got the opportunity to take part in different programmes, surveys, counselling activities, awareness sessions, and community visits. Each activity gave me a new experience and helped me understand people and their problems more closely.

One of the things I enjoyed most was interacting with different people from the community. Through water surveys, dementia screening, mental health activities, community profiling, and casework, I learned how to communicate with people with

patience and empathy. I also understood that social work is not only about helping others, but also about listening to them, understanding their situations, and respecting their feelings.

At the beginning, I felt a little nervous while interacting with people and handling field activities. Gradually, I became more confident and comfortable. The support and guidance received from the supervisors helped me learn from my mistakes and improve my skills.

This experience helped me develop better communication, teamwork, observation, counselling, and problem-solving skills. More importantly, it made me feel more connected to the profession of social work. My time at SMART India Foundation was not just a fieldwork requirement; it was a learning experience that helped me grow both personally and professionally. Smart India foundation is always very close to my heart.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

EVERY DROP COUNTS: HWTS WATER SURVEY IN NEDUMBASSERY PANCHAYAT



On 18 August 2026, a Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS) Water Survey was conducted across 20 wards of Nedumbassery Grama Panchayat by Social Work students from Vimala College, Thrissur, under the guidance and coordination of SMART India Foundation.

The programme was inaugurated by Smt. Jessy George, President, Nedumbassery Grama Panchayat. The inauguration highlighted the importance of ensuring safe drinking water and promoting appropriate household water treatment and storage practices within the community.

Following the inauguration, the students were oriented about the objectives and methodology of the survey. They visited households across the 20 wards and collected information regarding

drinking water sources, household water treatment practices, safe storage methods, hygiene practices, and awareness of water safety through direct interaction with community members. The field survey provided the students with valuable practical experience in community assessment, household-level data collection, water and sanitation awareness, and participatory social work practice. The activity also helped identify existing practices and areas requiring greater awareness regarding household water safety.

The HWTS survey served as an important community-level initiative to understand household water practices and promote the significance of safe treatment, proper storage, and hygienic handling of drinking water among families in Nedumbassery Panchayat.

DEMENTIA SCREENING AND AWARENESS PROGRAMME



Angamaly Municipality, in collaboration with Dementia India Alliance and the Rotary Club, organised a Dementia Screening and Awareness Programme with the objective of creating an elderly-friendly Angamaly. The programme was held on 13 August 2026 from 10:30 AM onwards at Sree Badra Auditorium, Ward 10, Vengoor North. SMART India Foundation supported the programme through volunteer collaboration and facilitated the participation of interns in the community health intervention.

The programme primarily focused on creating awareness about dementia, promoting early identification of cognitive decline, and encouraging elderly individuals and their families to seek appropriate support when memory-related or cognitive changes are noticed. The awareness session was led by resource person Sumith P. T., who introduced dementia as an umbrella term for progressive cognitive disorders that can significantly affect memory, thinking, behaviour, and daily functioning. The session also helped participants understand the difference between normal age related changes and symptoms that may require further assessment. Various forms of deme-

ntia, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia, Lewy body dementia, and dementia associated with Parkinson's disease and Huntington's disease, were discussed along with their general causes, warning signs, and symptoms.

Following the awareness session, dementia screening activities were conducted for senior citizens. SMART India Foundation volunteers and interns actively supported the screening process by establishing rapport with the elderly participants, guiding them through the procedures, and assisting the medical and professional team in administering standardised cognitive screening questionnaires. The interns used empathetic communication and a supportive approach to help participants feel comfortable throughout the process. The elderly participants showed considerable interest in understanding dementia, brain health, memory-related concerns, and the importance of early identification. Their active participation and willingness to undergo screening contributed significantly to the smooth conduct of the programme.

The programme provided SMART India Foundation interns with valuable practical exposure to community-based geriatric care, dementia awareness, cognitive screening coordination, professional teamwork, and communication with older adults. It also helped the interns understand the importance of preventive and early-intervention approaches in community mental health. Overall, the Dementia Screening and Awareness Programme contributed to strengthening awareness about dementia among the elderly community and supporting the broader objective of creating an elderly-friendly Angamaly through collaborative community health initiatives.



FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: BUILDING WASH CHAMPIONS FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



The Jalaraksha School WASH Training Programme was organised by SMART India Foundation at Holy Family High School, Angamaly, on 5 September 2026 from 1:30 PM onwards for students of Classes 8 and 9. The programme aimed to create awareness about safe water, sanitation and hygiene and to encourage students to become responsible WASH champions in their school, homes and communities.

The programme was inaugurated by Sr. Merin George FCC, who welcomed the students and highlighted the importance of developing healthy WASH practices in everyday life. She encouraged the students to actively participate and understand how proper water, sanitation and hygiene practices can protect their health and contribute to healthier families and communities. Ms. Mariya, Programme Manager, SMART India Foundation, introduced the students to the Jalaraksha Project and explained the importance of School WASH. She encouraged the students

to apply the knowledge they gained in their daily lives and share healthy WASH practices with others.

The programme, conducted by the interns of SMART India Foundation, began with an engaging skit that introduced the theme of water, sanitation and hygiene. The awareness sessions covered the three key components of WASH—safe water, sanitation and personal hygiene. Students learned about the importance of safe drinking water, clean toilets, proper waste disposal, hand hygiene and responsible water use. Interactive question sessions helped the students recall and reinforce the key messages.

The programme also introduced students to the “tiny troublemakers”—microorganisms such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and helminths—and explained their connection with water safety and disease prevention. Through the “KNOW, TREAT and PROTECT” approach, students learned the importance of k-

knowing their water source, treating water when necessary and protecting treated water through safe storage and handling. They were also made aware that water may look clean while still containing harmful microorganisms or chemicals and that visual appearance alone cannot determine whether water is safe.

An important part of the programme focused on responsible water use. Students were encouraged to identify common sources of water wastage, such as running or leaking taps and unnecessary use of water at home and school.

A practical handwashing activity further strengthened the learning, demonstrating the

proper technique and highlighting important occasions for handwashing, including before eating and after using the toilet or handling waste.

The programme concluded with a WASH pledge, encouraging students to take responsibility for practising and promoting safe water, sanitation and hygiene habits. Overall, the Jalaraksha School WASH Training Programme provided an interactive and practical learning experience and motivated students to become WASH champions who can carry the message of healthy habits from school to their homes and communities.



CHOOSE HOPE, SHARE HOPE: WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AWARENESS PROGRAMME

On 10 September 2026, in observance of World Suicide Prevention Day, SMART India Foundation conducted an awareness programme at St. Joseph High School, Angamaly. The programme was organized to promote awareness among students about emotional wellbeing, mental health, help-seeking,



ng, and the importance of supporting peers who may be experiencing emotional difficulties.

The session focused on encouraging students to recognize the importance of open communication, empathy, emotional support, and timely help-seeking. Through an interactive awareness session, students were encouraged to speak about their concerns, seek support from trusted adults, and extend care and understanding to others.

The programme emphasized the theme “Choose Hope, Share Hope”, highlighting the importance of creating a supportive school environment where students feel comfortable seeking help and talking about their emotional wellbeing. The session contributed to strengthening students’ awareness of mental health and the importance of early support and intervention.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS: COMMUNITY PROFILING AT KARAYAMPARAMBU

On 28 September 2026, a team of 11 Social Work interns conducted a community profiling programme in Karayamparambu, Ward 16 of Karukutty Grama Panchayat. The activity was undertaken to understand the demographic, social, economic, and community-level characteristics of the area and to identify key



and available resources. The interns conducted house-to-house visits and direct interactions with community members, collecting information related to household composition, children, senior citizens, employment, migration, education, and other relevant social factors. The team also gathered information about vulnerable groups and existing community resources and support systems. The activity strengthened interns’ skills in community assessment and data collection while supporting future need-based social work interventions.

CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR STUDENT GROWTH: NURTURING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



A two-day School Social Work Intervention Programme was successfully conducted on September 16th and 17th, 2026, at Sacred Heart Orphanage High School, Mookkannoor, Angamaly, under the coordination of SMART India Foundation. The programme engaged student social workers from B.Voc Medical & Psychiatry at St. Albert's College, Ernakulam, alongside Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students from Rajagiri College of Management and Applied Sciences (RCMAS), Kakkanad. Together with Mind Bliss Counseling Centre team, the student social workers facilitated comprehensive, student-centered activities running from 9:15 AM to 3:30 PM on both days. The initiative reached a total of 306 participants, with 180 Class IX students engaging on the first day and 126 Class VIII students on the second day. To ensure a comfortable and non-intimidating environment for open communication, interactive sessions and group discussions were conducted separately for male

and female students.

The core objective of the programme was to systematically explore, identify, and address the multifaceted academic, personal, emotional, social, and family-related challenges that affect students' overall mental health and developmental well-being. To achieve this, the student social workers employed a structured methodology that prioritized building genuine rapport before introducing sensitive topics. Information gathering was conducted using a dual approach: direct interpersonal dialogue paired with a digital Google Forms questionnaire designed to map out well-being indicators and key problem areas. Through these tools, the team conducted one-on-one interactions and preliminary counseling sessions with students to understand the distress or specific guidance needs.

The findings from the two-day engagement revealed a range of underlying challenges that significantly impact the students' daily lives.

The interactions and survey responses provided valuable insights into common developmental and adolescent growth challenges faced by students today. Key findings highlighted requiring supportive guidance, including academic stress, time management hurdles, exam anxiety, peer relationship dynamics, and adolescent emotional changes. Many participants also shared personal and family-related concerns, alongside feelings of self-doubt regarding their personal growth and future goals. While some students initially displayed slight hesitation during the initial interactions, the empathetic and supportive atmosphere helped them open up comfortably, leaving them feeling reassured, motivated, and emotionally unburdened by the conclusion of the sessions.

Building on the insights gathered, Smart India Foundation and the student social workers have outlined a series of structured post-programme interventions and follow-up strategies. Ongoing individual counseling and targeted programmes will be provided for students who require extended psychological or emotional support. Additionally, plans are underway to engage parents and educators to foster supportive environments both at home and in the classroom. These initiatives emphasize reducing undue academic stress, encouraging positive reinforcement, eliminating public criticism, and reinforcing the principle of viewing mistakes as valuable learning opportunities. Through these sustained efforts, the initiative aims to build long-term resilience, emotional strength, and holistic development among the school's student community.



LIFE-SAVING INITIATIVE: BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGN AND AWARENESS DRIVE HELD AT DISTRICT HOSPITAL ALUVA



A impactful blood donation campaign and awareness drive was successfully conducted on 18th September 2026 at the Regional Blood Transfusion Centre (RBTC), District Hospital, Aluva. Presided over by Dr. Prasanna Kumari, Medical Superintendent of District Hospital Aluva, the programme brought together hospital leadership, civic dignitaries, and student volunteers to emphasize the vital role of voluntary blood donation in saving lives and supporting community health infrastructure.

The event was officially inaugurated by Ms. Saiji Jolly, Chairperson of the Aluva Municipality, who commended the organizers and young donors for their selfless service. The programme witnessed the esteemed presence of Dr. N. Vijaya Kumar, Medical Officer of RBTC Aluva, District Nodal Officer of Blood Bank, senior doctors from various departments across the hospital and Mr. Dalin Dias, Managing Trustee of SMART India Foundation.

A total of 49 students from St. Alberts, Naipunya and KMM Colleges actively attended the comprehensive blood donation awareness session, which focused on the importance of regular blood donation, key health eligibility criteria, and dispelling common misconceptions surrounding the donation process. Demonstrating extraordinary civic commitment and enthusiasm, 21 students voluntarily donated blood during the drive, contributing significantly to the hospital's life-saving blood reserves and setting a powerful example of youth-led humanitarian action.



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS: A COMMUNITY-BASED AWARENESS SURVEY



The Mental Health Awareness Survey was conducted by the student social workers of SMART India Foundation on 19 September 2026 in various parts of the Ernakulam area with the objective of understanding the level of mental health awareness among members of the community. The programme was organized as a field-based learning activity to help students gain practical exposure to community interaction, data collection, mental health awareness, and social work practice. The survey focused on understanding people's awareness and perceptions regarding mental health, common mental health concerns, sources of support, and their willingness to seek professional assistance when required.

The programme commenced at 10.00 AM with the students assembling and receiving necessary instructions regarding the survey process, communication with respondents, ethical considerations, and the importance of maintaining confidentiality while collecting information. The students were divided into different groups and assigned to various locations in and around Ernakulam. The groups moved to nearby residential and public areas

including Pathadipalam, Changampuzha Nagar, Palarivattom, Kakkanad, Edappally, and surrounding localities to interact with members of the community and collect information for the survey.

During the field activity, students approached community members and introduced the purpose of the survey before proceeding with the interaction. The survey provided an opportunity for students to understand how people perceive mental health in their everyday lives and how they distinguish mental health from mental illness. Through direct interaction, the students explored people's awareness of common mental health concerns, the importance of emotional wellbeing, stress and other psychological difficulties, available sources of support, and attitudes towards seeking counselling or professional mental health services. The Mental Health Awareness Survey was therefore a meaningful field-based initiative that combined academic learning with direct community engagement and provided students with practical exposure to mental health awareness and social work practice.

MEMORY MATTERS: TAKING DEMENTIA SCREENING TO THE COMMUNITY



Medical and Psychiatric, Social Work interns conducted a community-based dementia screening programme in Ward 4 of Nedumbassery Grama Panchayat with the aim of promoting early identification of cognitive difficulties among senior citizens and creating awareness about dementia and the importance of timely support.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr. M. V. Shaju, Ward Member, in the presence of Mr. Dalin Dias, Managing Trustee SMART India Foundation, ASHA worker, Anganwadi teacher, and Kudumbashree member. Their participation supported the community-level coordination and facilitated access to households within the ward. Following the inaugural session, the interns were oriented about the purpose and process of dementia screening, ethical considerations during household visits, effective communication with older persons and family members. Emphasis was given to conducting the screening respectfully and sensitively, particularly while interacting with elderly persons and their caregivers. For effective field-level implementation, the students were divided into four groups. Each group visited households within the ward and interacted with senior citizen

-s within the ward and interacted with senior citizens and their family members. The interns used the memory screening tool to assess indicators related to memory and cognitive functioning. The house visits also provided an opportunity to observe the social and family environment of older persons and understand concerns that may affect their wellbeing and access to care.

The programme served as a valuable practical learning experience for the interns. Through direct household visits, they gained exposure to community-based screening, geriatric social work practice, cognitive assessment, family interaction, community networking, documentation, and referral-oriented intervention. The collaboration with the Ward Member, ASHA worker, Anganwadi teacher, and Kudumbashree member further demonstrated the importance of involving local community structures in addressing the needs of older adults. The dementia screening initiative strengthened community awareness on dementia and emphasized the importance of early identification, family involvement, and timely referral for senior citizens.

EVERY MEMORY MATTERS: COMMUNITY-BASED DEMENTIA SCREENING AT VINCENT DE PAUL NAGAR



A community-based dementia screening programme was conducted on 23 September 2026 (Wednesday) at Vincent De Paul Nagar, from 10:00 AM onwards, as part of the initiative to promote early identification of cognitive concerns among senior citizens.

The students gathered at the venue at 10:30 AM and received an orientation regarding the screening process and the use of the memory screening tool. The interns were divided into groups and carried out house-to-house visits, interacting with senior citizens and conducting the screening using the standardized tool.

During the visits, the interns interacted with senior citizens and their caregivers, collected relevant information, and conducted the memory screening using the designated tool. The activity enabled the students to observe the living and social environment of older adults while understanding the concerns faced by families in relation to ageing and cognitive changes.

The activity provided the students with practical exposure to community-based dementia screening, household visits, communication with older adults, cognitive assessment, and family interaction. The programme also helped strengthen awareness about dementia and highlighted the importance of early identification and timely referral for appropriate support.



MEMORY SCREENING & COGNITIVE WELLNESS SESSION FOR OLDER ADULTS



A community engagement programme titled "Mind Bloom: Memory Screening & Cognitive Wellness Session for Older Adults" was successfully conducted on September 28, 2026, at Nazareth Nagar, Pakalveedu, running from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The initiative was organized as a collaborative effort between the Smart India Foundation and the 2nd-year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students from the Department of Social Work at Rajagiri College of Management and Applied Sciences (RCMAS), Kakkanad. Designed to enhance the overall quality of life for senior citizens, the event brought together physical exercise, creative recreation, educational awareness, and health screening within a single, integrated community platform.

The session commenced with interactive ice-breaking games and warm conversations that established a welcoming, supportive, and cheerful atmosphere. To encourage social inclusion, cultural expression, and joy, the participants were invited to sing and dance alongside the student social workers. The atmosphere was further energized by traditional Thiruvathira performances and an active zumba

fitness session tailored for elderly participation. Alongside these vibrant recreational and physical wellness activities, an informative awareness session on dementia was conducted to educate participants on cognitive health and the importance of early detection. Parallely, dementia screenings were systematically administered to assess cognitive functioning among attending seniors.

The older adults participated with remarkable energy, filling the venue with enthusiasm, laughter, and active involvement across all segments. Beyond promoting physical vitality and cognitive health awareness, the event provided the elderly with a comforting sense of belonging and joy. For the student social workers from RCMAS Kakkanad, the collaboration offered valuable hands-on field experience in gerontological social work, community mobilization, and health campaign coordination. By bridging recreation with clinical awareness, the Mind Bloom programme successfully demonstrated how community-based social work interventions can meaningfully uphold the dignity, health, and happiness of senior citizens.

HONOURING AGE, CELEBRATING LIFE: CELEBRATING SENIOR CITIZENS' DAY



In observance of World Senior Citizens' Day, the SMART India Foundation organized a special programme on 30 September 2026 at Snehakoodu Pakalveedu. The programme was designed to promote awareness about the rights, wellbeing, and social participation of senior citizens while providing them with an engaging and meaningful experience.

The programme began with an orientation session on the functioning and activities of Pakalveedu, followed by an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of a geriatric social worker. Interns were also got the information on important government schemes, welfare programmes, and support services available for senior citizens.

The programme was inaugurated by Ms. Jancy Areeckal, Ward Councillor. Felicitations were offered by Ms. Mariya Benny, Programme Manager, SMART India Foundation, and Sr. Chaithanya, In-charge, Snehakoodu Pakalveedu.

Their addresses highlighted the importance of respecting, supporting, and actively engaging senior citizens in community life. The highlight of the celebration was a lively series of games, interactive activities, and cultural programmes organized and conducted by the interns. The activities encouraged active participation, social interaction, recreation, and emotional wellbeing among the senior citizens. The programme created a cheerful and inclusive atmosphere, allowing the participants to enjoy the day while strengthening their sense of belonging and community connection.

The celebration concluded on a joyful note, with the active involvement of the senior citizens, interns, and staff. The programme served as an opportunity to combine awareness, social work learning, recreation, and community engagement, reaffirming the importance of creating supportive and age-friendly communities for senior citizens.

WORKSHOPS

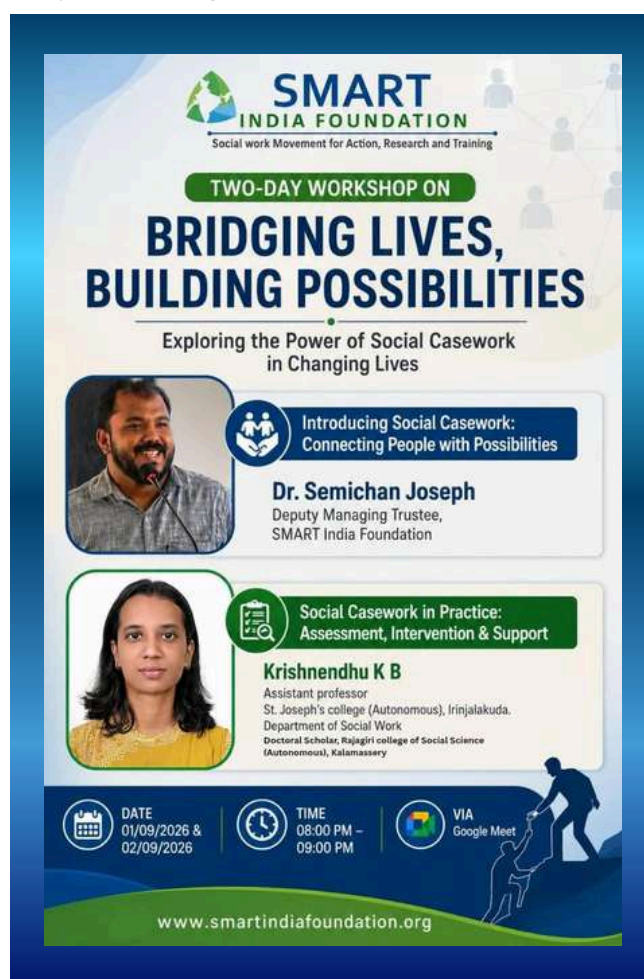
EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH ACTION: TWO-DAY MASTERCLASS ON SOCIAL CASEWORK

The SMART India Foundation successfully organized a two-day online workshop titled "Bridging Lives, Building Possibilities: Exploring the Power of Social Casework in Changing Lives". Held on September 1 and September 2, 2026, the program ran virtually via Google Meet from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM each evening. The workshop brought together an engaged audience of 40 participants, aiming to deepen their understanding of social casework methodologies and highlight its vital role in empowering individuals and communities.

The inaugural session on Day 1 was led by Dr. Semichan Joseph, Deputy Managing Trustee of the SMART India Foundation, who addressed the topic "Introducing Social Casework: Connecting People with Possibilities". Dr. Joseph provided foundational insights into how casework serves as a transformative tool in social work practice. He emphasized establishing meaningful connections with individuals to help them recognize potential growth opportunities, navigate personal challenges, and unlock new possibilities in their daily lives.

On Day 2, the workshop continued with a specialized focus on practical execution, titled "Social Casework in Practice: Assessment, Intervention & Support". This session was facilitated by Krishnendhu K B, Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda, and Doctoral Scholar at Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Kalamassery. She provided structured guidance on conducting thorough client assessments, designing tailored interventions, and delivering sustained support throughout the social casework process.

The two-day virtual workshop concluded on a highly positive note, offering participants valuable theoretical perspectives grounded in real-world application. With 40 attendees actively participating across both days, the event served as an enriching platform for learning, professional reflection, and skill-building. The SMART India Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to advancing social work training and creating meaningful, community-focused impact through such continuing education initiatives.



LISTENING, CONNECTING, EMPOWERING: 5-DAY MASTERCLASS IN COUNSELLING PRACTICE

The SMART India Foundation (Social Work Movement for Action, Research and Training), in joint organization with the Mind Bliss Centre for Holistic Development and Well-Being, conducted a five-day online learning program titled "Counselling in Practice: Building Skills to Listen, Connect & Support". Held from September 7 to September 11, 2026, the virtual initiative took place via Google Meet every evening from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM, followed by a live 10-minute Q&A session daily. The program successfully engaged an active cohort of 40 participants, providing them with structured insights into counselling essentials, empathetic communication, interventions, and student support systems.

The learning journey commenced on Monday, September 7 (Day 1), with an insightful session led by Ms. Seby Johny, Counselling Psychologist at the SMART India Foundation. Focusing on the topic "Counselling Essentials: Understanding the Helping Relationship," she laid down the foundational principles of effective therapeutic engagement, stressing the significance of trust, empathy, and active listening in creating a supportive environment for clients.

On Tuesday, September 8 (Day 2), Dr. Semichan Joseph, Assistant Professor at Nirmala College (Autonomous), Muvattupuzha, led the discussion on "Counselling Skills in Action: Listen, Connect

& Respond". His session emphasized practical active listening skills and effective communication strategies, guiding participants on how to make meaningful connections and deliver thoughtful, constructive responses during interactions.

Midway through the program on Wednesday, September 9 (Day 3), Ms. Sherin Paul, Retired Assistant Professor from the Department of Social Work, facilitated a session titled "From Conversation to Intervention: Basic Counselling Practice". She guided attendees through the process of transitioning standard supportive dialogue into structured therapeutic intervention methods tailored to client needs.

On Thursday, September 10 (Day 4), the program shifted focus to academic settings with a session by Ms. Anila Arjun, Life Skill Educator & School Counsellor, on "Supporting Students: Understanding School Counselling". She provided practical guidance on addressing unique student

DAY	DATE	SPEAKER	TITLE	TOPIC
DAY 1	07/09/2026 MONDAY	Ms. SEBY JOHNNY Counselling Psychologist, SMART India Foundation	Counselling Essentials: Understanding the Helping Relationship	Heart icon
DAY 2	08/09/2026 TUESDAY	Dr. SEMICHAN JOSEPH Asst. Professor, Nirmala College (Autonomous), Muvattupuzha	Counselling Skills in Action: Listen, Connect & Respond	Ear icon
DAY 3	09/09/2026 WEDNESDAY	Ms. SHERIN PAUL Asst. Professor (Retd.), Dept. of Social Work	From Conversation to Intervention: Basic Counselling Practice	Two people talking icon
DAY 4	10/09/2026 THURSDAY	Ms. ANILA ARJUN Life Skill Educator & School Counsellor	Supporting Students: Understanding School Counselling	Group of people icon
DAY 5	11/09/2026 FRIDAY	PANEL DISCUSSION From Skills to Impact: Rethinking Counselling Practice		Group of people icon

07/09/2026 to 11/09/2026 (5 Days) | 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM (Everyday) | 10 Minutes Q&A Session Everyday | Via Google Meet | For more details +91 88485 33312 www.smartindiafoundation.org

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challenges, managing peer stress, and fostering positive social-emotional growth within educational institutions.

The program concluded on Friday, September 11 (Day 5), with an interactive panel discussion titled "From Skills to Impact: Rethinking Counselling Practice". Bringing together key concepts from across the week, the final session allowed all 40 participants to reflect on their learning journey, explore practical applications, and reaffirm their commitment to making a positive difference through skilled counselling support.

Across the five days, expert resource persons—including Ms. Seby Johny, Dr. Semichan Joseph, Ms. Sherin Paul, and Ms. Anila Arjun—guided attendees through a progressive journey covering therapeutic relationship essentials, active listening skills, structured intervention strategies, and dedicated school counselling practices. The learning experience culminated in an impactful panel discussion on rethinking counselling for real-world impact, leaving all 40 participants equipped with practical tools to effectively support individuals and student communities.

M 16-day fieldwork experience at SMART India Foundation, Angamaly was a valuable and enriching part of my social work education. The fieldwork provided me with opportunities to connect classroom learning with practical experiences in community, school and institutional settings.

During the fieldwork, I participated in various activities including community profiling, WASH awareness, suicide prevention awareness, school social work camp, mental health survey, community engagement and dementia screening. These experiences helped me develop my communication, observation, active listening, teamwork, rapport-building and community assessment skills.

The interaction with students, community members, elderly persons and agency personnel helped me understand the importance of empathy, confidentiality, participation and non-judgmental practice in social work. I was also able to understand how social work theories and approaches can be applied in real-life situations.



My fieldwork experience at SMART India Foundation, Angamaly, was a valuable and enriching part of my social work education. It provided me with opportunities to connect classroom learning with practical experiences in community engagement, social welfare activities, and institutional settings.

During the fieldwork, I participated in various activities, including community surveys, mental health awareness programmes, school-based activities, community engagement, and social welfare initiatives. These experiences helped me develop my communication, observation, active listening, teamwork, rapport-building, and problem-solving skills.

The interaction with community members, students, and agency personnel helped me understand the importance of empathy, confidentiality, participation, and a non-judgmental approach in social work. I also gained a better understanding of how social work principles and methods can be applied in real-life situations to address community needs and promote social well-being.



FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: DEMENTIA CARE AND COMMUNITY SCREENING



A comprehensive one-day workshop titled "Dementia Care and Management and Community-Based Dementia Screening" was jointly organized by the SMART India Foundation and Dementia India Alliance on Monday, 21 September 2026, from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM at the SMART India Foundation in Angamaly, Ernakulam. Conceived as an interactive capacity-building initiative, the programme was specifically designed to equip social work practitioners and community volunteers with

essential knowledge, diagnostic screening tools, and care management strategies necessary to foster dementia-friendly communities.

The inaugural session commenced with a welcoming atmosphere, highlighting the urgent need for community-level intervention in dementia care. The workshop was officially inaugurated by Mr. Benny Behanan, Member of Parliament for the Chalakudy Constituency. In his inaugural address, he highlighted the crucial role of localized support networks, public awareness, and early intervention in improving the quality of life for individuals with dementia and their care providers.



The presidential address was delivered by Dr. Semichan Joseph, Deputy Managing Trustee of SMART India Foundation, who outlined the foundation's dedication to research, social work action, and specialized training programs. Felicitations were offered by Dr. Smijo Sebastian, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Department of Social Work at Rajagiri College of Management



and Applied Sciences (RCMAS), Kakkanad, who commended the institutional partnership and emphasized the significance of connecting academic social work education with active field-level health interventions. The core technical modules were facilitated by expert trainer Dr. Priya Rose KJ. The interactive sessions spanned four major focus areas, starting with a foundational understanding of dementia, including its neurological aspects, .

early indicators, and behavioural patterns. The discussion then moved into practical care and management strategies, emphasizing person-centred care approaches, communication methods, and environment-friendly adjustments. Participants were further trained on community-based screening mechanisms, gaining direct familiarity with practical tools and standardized assessment methods to identify early cognitive decline in field settings. The final module focused on resource mapping, practical tools, and developing local referral pathways for sustained community support.

ONE-DAY WORKSHOP IN OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

“From Dialogue to Action: Social Work Strategies for Peace building”



SMART India Foundation, in association with ISI Bangalore and LIPI Kochi, organised a one-day workshop in observance of the International Day of Peace on 26 September 2026 at the SMART India Foundation Administrative Office, Angamaly from 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM. The workshop was organised with the theme “From Dialogue to Action: Social Work Strategies for Peacebuilding” and was facilitated by Mr. Luis P. Thomas,

State Coordinator, Department of Peace & Reconciliation, ISI Bangalore & LIPI Kochi. The programme commenced with a prayer, followed by the welcome speech delivered by Ms. Mariya Benny, Programme Manager, SMART India Foundation. The presidential address was delivered by Mr. Dalin Dias, Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation. Prof. Dr. Jose Antony, HOD, Social Work Department, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, delivered the inaugural address. The programme also included a felicitation by Mr. Luis P. Thomas, State Coordinator, Department of Peace & Reconciliation, ISI Bangalore & LIPI Kochi. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Semichan Joseph, Deputy Managing Trustee, SMART India Foundation



The main workshop session focused on understanding peace from a social work perspective. The facilitator began by inviting participants to reflect on what comes to mind when they hear the word “peace”. Participants were encouraged to critically reflect on whether peace can exist in situations i-



nvolving injustice, when an individual is continuously unheard within a family, or when certain groups are excluded from a community. The discussion helped participants understand that peace is not merely the absence of violence, but also involves justice, dignity, inclusion, relationships, dialogue and human well-being. The session further explored the different levels at which social workers can contribute to peace. Participants were e-

ncouraged to examine peace and conflict within everyday settings such as colleges, families, communities and digital spaces. Through the “Peace or Conflict?” activity, participants analysed situations including disagreements between student groups, family conflicts arising from financial stress and poor communication, neighbourhood disagreements over shared resources, and the impact of misleading social media messages.



Participants were then guided to examine conflict through a series of reflective questions such as what is happening, who is affected, what the underlying causes are, what could escalate the situation and what could create peace. This helped participants move beyond the visible aspects of conflict and consider the people, relationships and circumstances involved. A Conflict Mapping activity was conducted as part of the workshop.

Participants worked in groups and analysed conflicts by identifying the problem, people affected, needs and interests, emotions, power relationships, root causes and possible interventions. The activity enabled participants to understand that visible disagreements can have deeper causes related to needs, fear, identity, power, history, inequality, insecurity and mistrust. Another experiential activity titled “Listen Without Fixing” was conducted. Participants worked in pairs, with one participant speaking for two minutes about a non-sensi-



Following the activity, participants reflected on how it felt to be genuinely listened to, what usually prevents people from listening and whether listening can prevent escalation. The discussion connected effective listening with dignity, trust, understanding, dialogue and the possibility of cooperation. The session emphasised that listening is not merely a passive communication skill but can itself become a peacebuilding intervention. The facilitator introduced seven social work strategies for peace building, namely active listening, empathy, dialogue, mediation and conflict tr-



ansformation, advocacy, community mobilisation, and inclusion and empowerment. These strategies highlighted the role of social workers in creating spaces for people to be heard, understanding experiences without immediate judgement, facilitating dialogue, addressing exclusion and discrimination, building collective capacity, and strengthening the voice and agency of less-heard groups.

The session further explored the movement from empathy to cooperation, presenting peace building as a gradual process involving empathy, listening, dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Participants were encouraged to understand that meaningful peace building requires a willingness to hear different experiences, understand perspectives, identify needs and common ground, and work together.

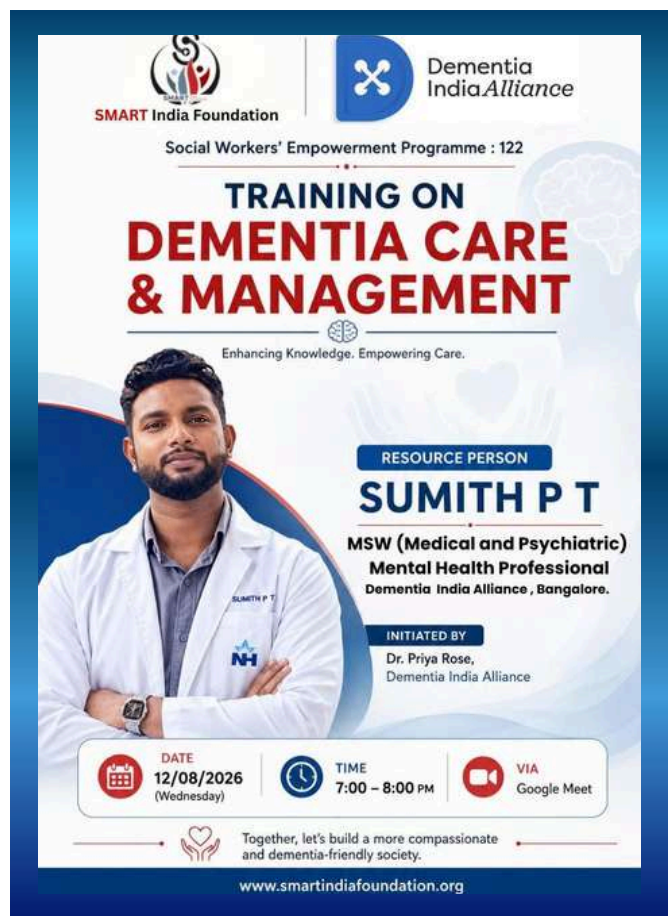
The workshop provided a meaningful learning experience by connecting social work knowledge with practical peace-building approaches. Through discussions and activities, participants explored the importance of listening, empathy, dialogue, inclusion and community empowerment, concluding with the message: **“Invest in Peace – For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day.”**

SOCIAL WORKERS' EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

TRAINING ON DEMENTIA CARE & MANAGEMENT

The 122nd session of the Social Workers' Empowerment Programme, titled "Training on Dementia Care & Management," was successfully conducted on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM IST by SMART India Foundation in collaboration with Dementia India Alliance. The event was initiated under the guidance of Dr. Priya Rose from the Dementia India Alliance. The session was led by Mr. Sumith P T, MSW (Medical and Psychiatric), Mental Health Professional at Dementia India Alliance, Bangalore. The programme was organised under the theme "Enhancing Knowledge. Empowering Care." with the objective of equipping social workers and healthcare professionals with essential skills to support individuals living with dementia and their families. The session highlighted the crucial role of frontline social work practice in addressing the complex cognitive, social, and emotional needs of individuals affected by dementia. The resource person explained that social work professionals frequently operate in community and clinical settings where they encounter aging populations and families dealing with progressive neurodegenerative conditions. In such situations, possessing specialized knowledge of dementia care and management strategies is vital for delivering effective intervention, maintaining patient dignity, and supporting family caregivers through emotional and operational challenges. The session covered several key competencies essential for specialized dementia care, including early identification, empathetic communication, behavioral management, and caregiver support frameworks. Effective communication was discussed as a cornerstone for building trust and maintaining meaningful connections with individuals experiencing memory loss and cognitive decline. Participants were also introduced to practical techniques for recognizing and managing behavioral changes in patients while responding thoughtfully to the emotional distress faced by family members and primary caregivers.

The discussion also addressed psychosocial interventions and care coordination, which are particularly relevant to clinical and psychiatric social work practice. Participants were encouraged to approach care plans holistically, consider available community resources, understand the trajectory of dementia, and make responsible care decisions grounded in professional ethics and patient well-being. The importance of interprofessional collaboration and community networking in creating a supportive ecosystem for patients and mitigating caregiver burnout was also emphasized. The session successfully concluded at 8:00 PM, leaving participants with actionable insights and practical perspectives to advance the vision of building a more compassionate and dementia-friendly society.



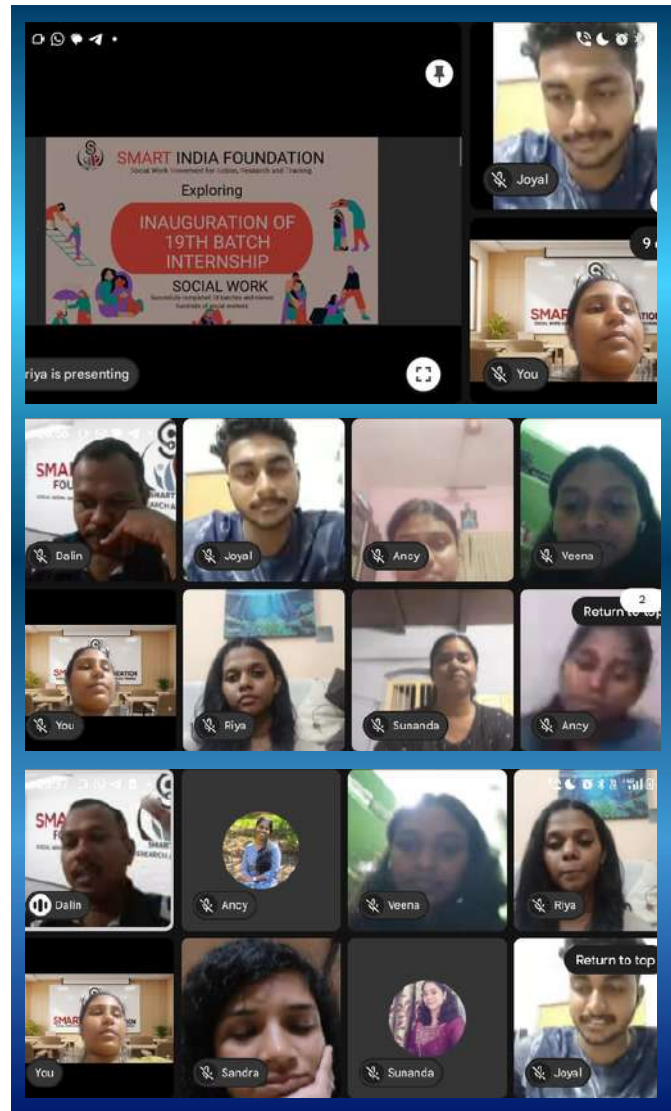
ORIENTATION AND INAUGURATION OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME -19TH BATCH

SMART India Foundation officially inaugurated the 19th batch of its Internship Programme and conducted an orientation programme for 12 newly joined interns on 17th August 2026. The programme was designed to welcome students pursuing distance-mode Social Work degree program -mes and introduce them to the organization's activities and professional practices.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr. Dalin Dias, Managing Trustee of SMART India Foundation, who highlighted the importance of social work education, practical field experience, and community engagement. The session also introduced the vision, mission, objectives, and major initiatives of the Foundation, providing the interns with an understanding of its commitment to community development and social welfare.

The orientation familiarized the interns with the organization's ongoing projects, professional ethics, fieldwork responsibilities, documentation and reporting procedures, and internship guidelines. Emphasis was placed on maintaining confidentiality, demonstrating professional conduct, and actively participating in community-based interventions.

The programme concluded with an encouraging message to the interns, motivating them to uphold the core values of social work, develop their practical skills, and contribute meaningfully to community development throughout their internship journey with SMART India Foundation.



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The 123rd session of the Social Workers' Empowerment Programme (SEP) was organised by SMART India Foundation on the topic "Introduction to Social Work Practice" on 24 August 2026 from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM via Google Meet.), the session was led by Ms. Anupama Rajan, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara. The objective of introducing foundational principles, core methodologies, and practical frameworks essential to field-level social work. The session highlighted the crucial role of structured professional intervention in addressing complex social issues and supporting individuals, groups, and communities. The resource person explained that social work practitioners operate across diverse and challenging settings, where a clear understanding of fundamental social work methods is vital for driving meaningful social change and fostering sustainable community development.

The session covered several core competencies required for effective professional practice, including primary social work methods, ethical principles, relationship-building techniques, and community engagement strategies. The core methods of social work—such as social case w-

SMART India Foundation
Social Work Movement for Action, Research and Training

Social Workers' Empowerment Programme : 123

**INTRODUCTION TO
SOCIAL WORK
PRACTICE**

RESOURCE PERSON
Ms. Anupama Rajan
Assistant Professor
Department of Social Work
Bharata Mata College
Thrikkakara

DATE
24/08/2026
(Monday)

TIME
8.00 PM - 9.00 PM

VIA
Google Meet

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ork, group work, and community organization were discussed as primary tools for assessment, intervention, and empowerment. Participants were introduced to the importance of professional ethics, empathy, and active listening in establishing strong rapport, understanding client contexts, and upholding human dignity across all levels of practice.

The discussion also addressed problem-solving approaches, reflective practice, and advocacy, which are central to field-level social work. Participants were encouraged to critically evaluate social challenges, apply evidence-based interventions, and align their field efforts with professional values and code of conduct. The importance of collaborative action and social responsibility in building resilient communities was also emphasized. The session successfully concluded at 9:00 PM, equipping participants with essential foundational insights to enhance their professional practice and drive positive community impact.

OBSERVATION VISTS

FOSTERING HOPE AND RESILIENCE: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK AND LIFESTYLE YOGA



A one day training session was conducted for 30 B.Voc Medical & Psychiatry students at Five Points International Yoga Studio, running from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The interactive session was led by Dr. Smitha Pillai, a distinguished lifestyle-based yoga trainer and mentor, who guided the trainees through the core principles of holistic wellness. Dr. Smitha emphasized the vital role of incorporating yoga into daily routine, highlighting its physical, mental, and emotional benefits. The program also underscored the strong synergy between mindfulness practices and effective school social work interventions, showing how wellness techniques can complement traditional mental health

frameworks to support adolescent well-being.

Throughout the session, special focus was given to navigating the complex developmental and psychosocial challenges faced by adolescents today. Dr. Smitha Pillai trained the student social workers on practical communication strategies, stressing the importance of active listening, genuine empathy, and non-judgmental engagement when interacting with young people. The trainees explored actionable ways to build trust, inspire hope, and promote genuine happiness in children, equipping them with essential therapeutic tools to foster supportive, safe, and nurturing environments in school settings.

BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE: A LEARNING VISIT TO ERNAKULAM GENERAL HOSPITAL



On 25 September 2026, a hospital visit was organized at Ernakulam General Hospital for 30 Medical and Psychiatry Social Work Interns from SMART INDIA Foundation. The main objective of the visit was to gain practical knowledge about the medical setting and understand the role of social workers in a hospital.

The visit began with an introduction to the hospital and its functioning. The interns received an orientation about the medical setting, different departments, and the healthcare services provided by the hospital. An introduction to the National Health Mission (NHM) was also given to understand its role in improving public healthcare services.

During the visit, the interns interacted with the hospital's social workers and learned about their roles and responsibilities. The interaction helped them understand how social workers support patients and their families, provide guidance, and connect people with relevant services and support systems.

During the visit, the interns interacted with the hospital's social workers and learned about their roles and responsibilities. The interaction helped them understand how social workers support patients and their families, provide guidance, and connect people with relevant services and support systems.

The visit also provided information about various health programmes, government schemes, and healthcare services available at the hospital. The interns gained awareness of how these services help patients, especially those who require additional support and assistance. Overall, the hospital visit was a valuable learning experience for the interns.

It helped connect theoretical knowledge with practical experience and provided a better understanding of the hospital environment, the role of medical social workers, and the importance of healthcare programmes in serving the community.



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