

JOINING | FORCES

■ CMFRI's 'Nirmaladhara' project a success at Mulavakadu panchayat

## Blue green brigade to cleanse water bodies

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A blue green brigade of students has been formed by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) for its 'Nirmaladhara' project, a participatory initiative to keep villages plastic free.

The brigade of 50 students from the St. Albert's College, Ernakulam was formed during an awareness workshop on waste management held at the CMFRI on Wednesday.



CMFRI started the 'Nirmaladhara' project

earlier this year in Mulavakad panchayat in Ernakulam district as part of rejuvenating the ecosystem of water bodies in the panchayat.

The blue green brigade was formed to extend the project into wider areas after the successful completion of the 'Nirmaladhara' initiative in the first phase in Mulavakadu panchayat.

During the workshop, Dr V. Kripa, Head of Fishery Environment Division of CMFRI, who is leading the

initiative, presented the details of the project. According to her, the project was launched after the CMFRI researchers found that the public water bodies in the panchayat were on a deteriorating stage owing to accumulation of excess amount of plastics which made the waters unfit to aquaculture practices.

In addition, presence of many harmful microbes was found out in the water bodies in the region by the CMFRI team before

launching the project with public participation to keep the water bodies plastic-free and clean, she said.

In the second phase of the project, the blue green brigade would join the CMFRI team for creating awareness in village level for effective waste management to make the water bodies plastic-free and clean, Dr Kripa said.

Speaking on the occasion, CMFRI director Dr A. Gopalakrishnan said the institute would take

steps to extend the 'Nirmaladhara' initiative to more panchayats.

Referring to the frightening situation due to plastics, he said CMFRI studies revealed that during fishing in the backwaters in Ernakulam district up to four kilogram of plastics were being caught in the stake nets out of the total of five kilogram.

"The situation is actually a threat to the livelihood of the fishermen in the region", Dr Gopalakrishnan said.