

# 250 students join CMFRI project to study Kerala's Vembanad Lake

## **OUR BUREAU**

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Around 250 students from 16 colleges have joined a multi-institutional research project on optical mapping of Vembanad Lake, which is part of a campaign by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) to promote citizen participation in the scientific research.

The research project is aimed at understanding the extent of pathogenic vibrio pollution in the Vembanad Lake, identifying its reservoirs in the ecosystem, mapping the distribution of vibrio carriers using remote-sensing techniques and developing forecast models that would serve to anticipate hotspots of

microbial infections. The study is jointly carried out by CMFRI, National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Nansen Environmental Research Centre-India (NERCI) and Plymouth Marine Laboratory, UK, under the India-UK Water Quality Initiative of the Department of Science and Technology.

The students started collecting data for the study using Secchi disc, a simple hand-held device to measure turbidity level of water, after undergoing a training at the CMFRI. They were also trained to upload the collected data using a mobile app which was developed as part of the project. The study focuses on mapping the hotspots of vibrio in the lake and

developing a forecast model using remote-sensing technology.

A Gopalakrishnan, Director, CMFRI, said participation of students in the project would enhance the frequency and spatial extent of data collection, which is a crucial factor in a research initiative, especially the study on Vembanad Lake. "In addition to being a part of a scientific work of high social relevance, the students get a golden chance to shape their career in science", he said.

CMFRI would ensure the participation of stakeholders such as fishermen, environmental activists, NGOs and residents along the banks of the lake during the next phase of the project, he added.