DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AD1006 - Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)

FOCUSSING AERA:
SPECIAL CARE FOR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PEOPLE
LOCATION:
Thirumalapuram, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu

REPORT

Submitted by

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UBA Focusing Area Mapping with SDG and Justification

The UBA project on *Special Care for Physically Challenged People* strongly aligns with

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, which emphasizes ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. One of the major objectives of our project was to improve access to health services for differently- abled individuals in the village of Thirumalapuram.

As part of our intervention, we conducted a door-to-door survey to identify physically challenged individuals and assess their health conditions. We then coordinated with the local Primary Health Centre (PHC) to organize a basic **medical screening camp**, where preliminary check-ups were carried out. This helped initiate the process for disability certification and connected individuals to further medical support.

Our project also raised awareness among families about the importance of regular check-ups, government health schemes, and the availability of assistive devices through programs like the ADIP scheme. These efforts aimed to ensure that the health needs of physically challenged persons are recognized and addressed, contributing directly to the goals of SDG 3 at the grassroots level.

INTRODUCTION

India's path to inclusive growth requires empowering rural communities, particularly youth and women, by equipping them with the right skills. As part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), our student team adopted **Thirumalapuram village** in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu. Through our field visits and surveys, we identified a significant gap in employment opportunities, primarily due to the lack of vocational skills and exposure to industry-relevant training. As part of this initiative, we a student team from St. Joseph's College of Engineering chose Thirumalapuram, a rural village in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, to study, engage with, and support through community-focused interventions. During our preliminary visits and interactions with villagers, we recognized that one of the most pressing issues in Thirumalapuram was the lack of skill development opportunities, especially among youth and women.

Our project was grounded in hands-on fieldwork and involved multiple phases:

- Baseline surveys to understand employment status, education levels, and interest in vocational training.
- Community awareness sessions to inform the villagers about various government schemes like PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana), DDU-GKY, and Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation .
- Skill orientation programs in partnership with local NGOs to provide a taste of training in areas such as tailoring, electrical maintenance.

By the end of the project, several individuals had successfully enrolled in welfare schemes, received medical assistance, and gained renewed hope of inclusion in the village's educational, health, and economic systems. Our goal now is to ensure that this momentum is sustained through community ownership and policy-level support.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The objective of our Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) project was to address the widespread issue of **unemployment and underemployment in Thirumalapuram village** by promoting skill development opportunities through partnerships with specialized training agencies, government schemes, and NGOs. Our goal was not only to spread awareness but to initiate real, ground-level change by guiding the villagers through the process of skill acquisition, empowerment, and potential self-employment. Based on field observations, surveys, and feedback from the villagers, the following specific objectives were set for our project:

1. To Identify Skill Gaps in the Village

The primary goal was to understand the employment situation in Thirumalapuram by surveying households. We aimed to identify the skills that youth and women were interested in and the barriers they face in accessing vocational training**.**

2. To Raise Awareness About Government Schemes

We sought to inform the villagers about various central and state government initiatives like PMKVY, DDU-GKY, and TNSDC. The objective was to help them realize the benefits of enrolling in formal skill development programs.

3. To Collaborate with Skill Training Agencies

We aimed to bring in support from NGOs and local training institutions to organize hands-on skill orientation programs. These partnerships would make training more accessible and relevant to the rural population.

4. To Empower Women Through Vocational Training Special attention was given to encouraging women to participate in tailoring, handicrafts, food processing, and other skills. The goal was to enhance their confidence and support them in achieving financial independence.

5. To Assist with Enrollment and Applications

Another key objective was to help interested individuals complete application forms, collect necessary documents, and enroll in courses. This ensured that lack of digital literacy or paperwork did not stop them from joining.

**6. To Build a Sustainable Skill Development Framework**

We planned to recommend the creation of a local skill committee and use Panchayat spaces for regular training. This would ensure that skill development becomes a continuous and self-sustained effort in the village.

Through these objectives, our team aimed to not only highlight the needs of a neglected section of society but also contribute practically toward a more inclusive and equitable rural ecosystem. These goals guided every step of our intervention in the village and were aligned with the vision and mission of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.

VILLAGE PROFILE – THIRUMALAPURAM

Thirumalapuram is a rural settlement in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. The village has a population of approximately 2,200 people across 500 households. The primary livelihood revolves around agriculture and manual labor. Literacy levels hover around 70%, but many educated youths remain unemployed due to lack of access to practical skills or job opportunities.

Most homes are connected to basic amenities, but the village lacks access to structured training centers, digital infrastructure, or regular workshops. Women, especially, are underrepresented in the workforce despite expressing interest in tailoring, beautician courses, and food processing units.
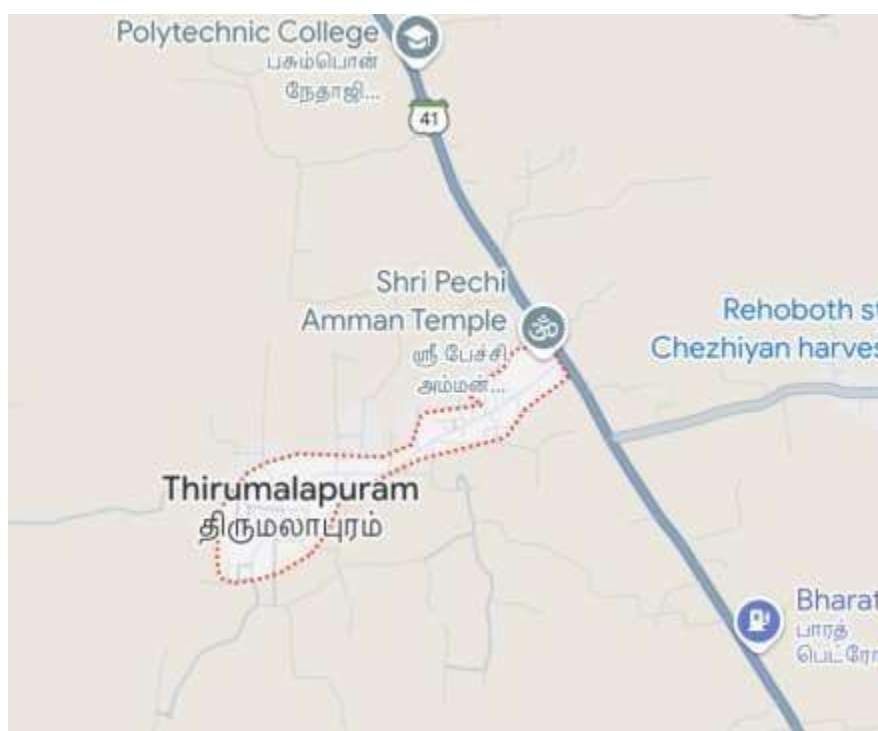
According to the baseline survey conducted by our team in association with data from the UBA household study the real needs and employment challenges faced

by the people of **Thirumalapuram**, our team conducted a **door-to-door baseline survey** covering **120 households** across different parts of the village. This extensive fieldwork aimed to gather data on education, employment, vocational skills, and awareness of existing government schemes. The findings helped us identify key skill gaps and tailor our interventions accordingly.

Unemployment Among Youth (Ages 18–30)

Our survey revealed that 47% of the village youth are either unemployed or working in low-paying, irregular jobs. Most of them have completed at least secondary education, but due to the lack of job-oriented skill training, they are unable to find sustainable livelihoods. Many shared an interest in learning new trades but were unaware of how or where to begin.

High Interest Among Women in Vocational Skills

Among the women surveyed, 65% expressed strong interest in skill-based programs such as tailoring, handicrafts, and food preparation. However, they also

cited cultural limitations, safety concerns, and household responsibilities as major hurdles preventing them from traveling to training centers in nearby towns. There was a clear demand for community-based or home-based training models.

 Poor Awareness of Government Skill Schemes

Despite the availability of central and state-level skill development programs, only 12% of respondents had ever heard of schemes such as PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) or DDU-GKY. There was also a general mistrust or confusion about the process of enrollment, the authenticity of the training centers, and whether the certifications would lead to real employment.
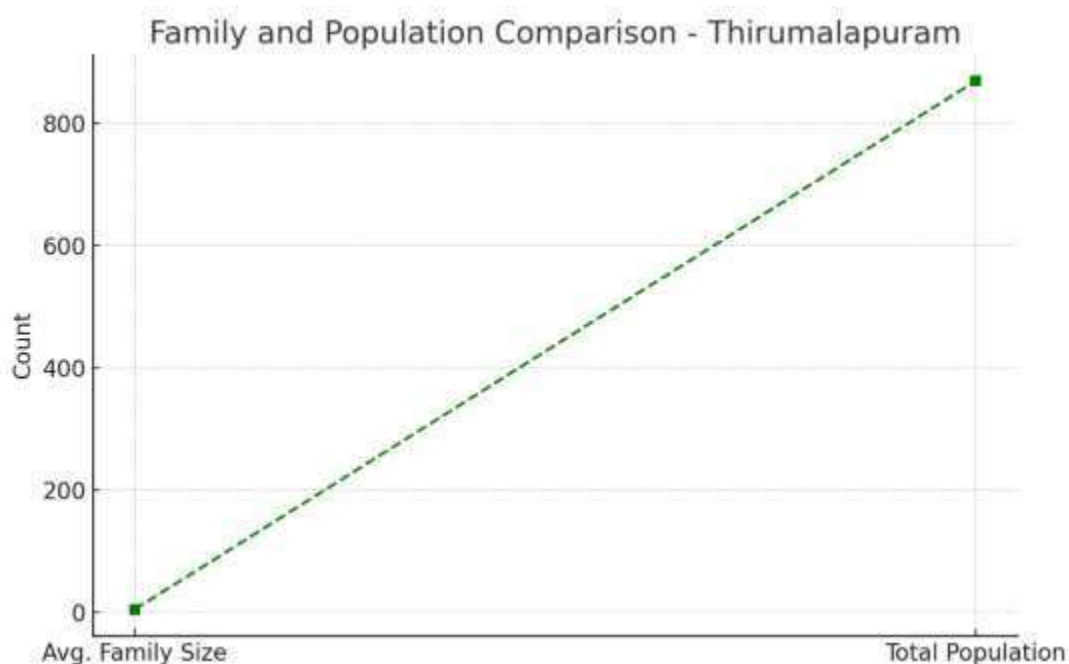

The village has essential amenities like a primary school, anganwadi center, PDS shop, and a nearby PHC, though it lacks disability-specific services. Transport to nearby towns is available but not accessible for the physically challenged. Our survey revealed key gaps: absence of ramps in public buildings, limited mobility

aids, poor awareness of government schemes, and no vocational training for differently-abled individuals.
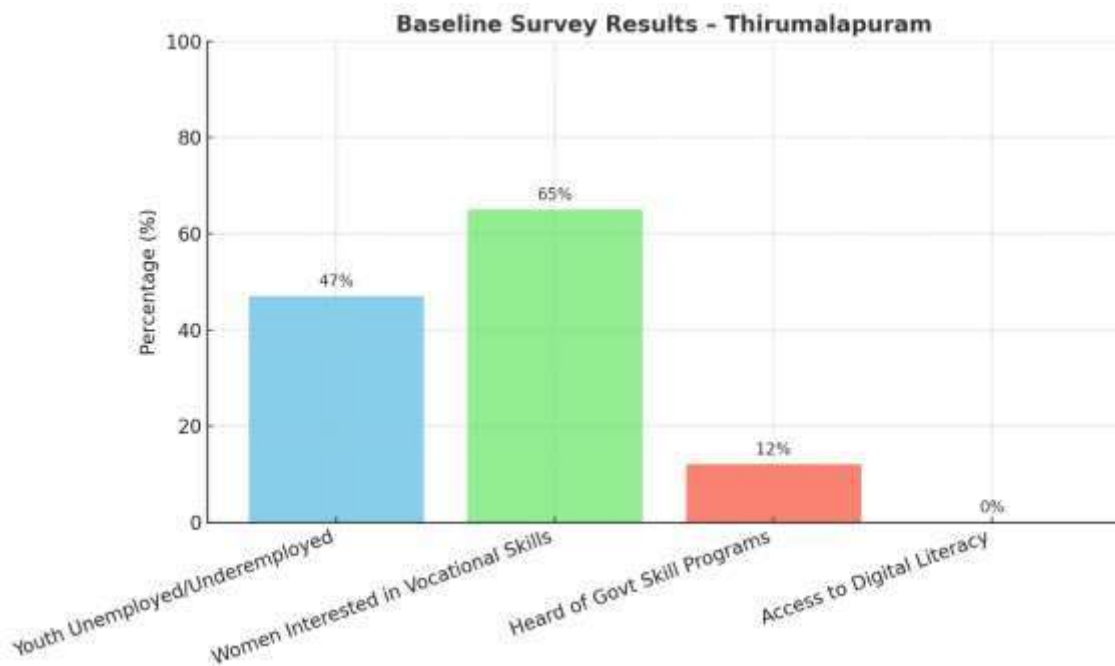
Lack of Digital Literacy and Access

The digital divide is another major concern. Our survey found that none of the households had access to digital literacy training, and very few had computers or smartphones with internet connectivity. This severely limits their ability to explore online training programs or apply for government benefits.
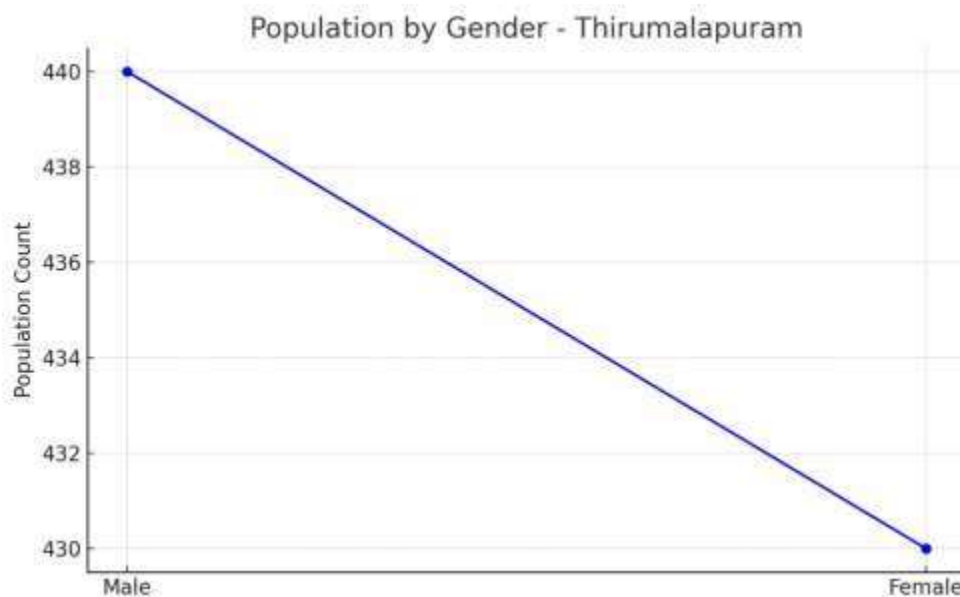
BASELINE SURVEY AND IDENTIFICATION OF PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED INDIVIDUALS:

Baseline Survey - Physically Challenged Individuals (Thirumalapuram)

Others 13.3%
Cognitive 10.0%
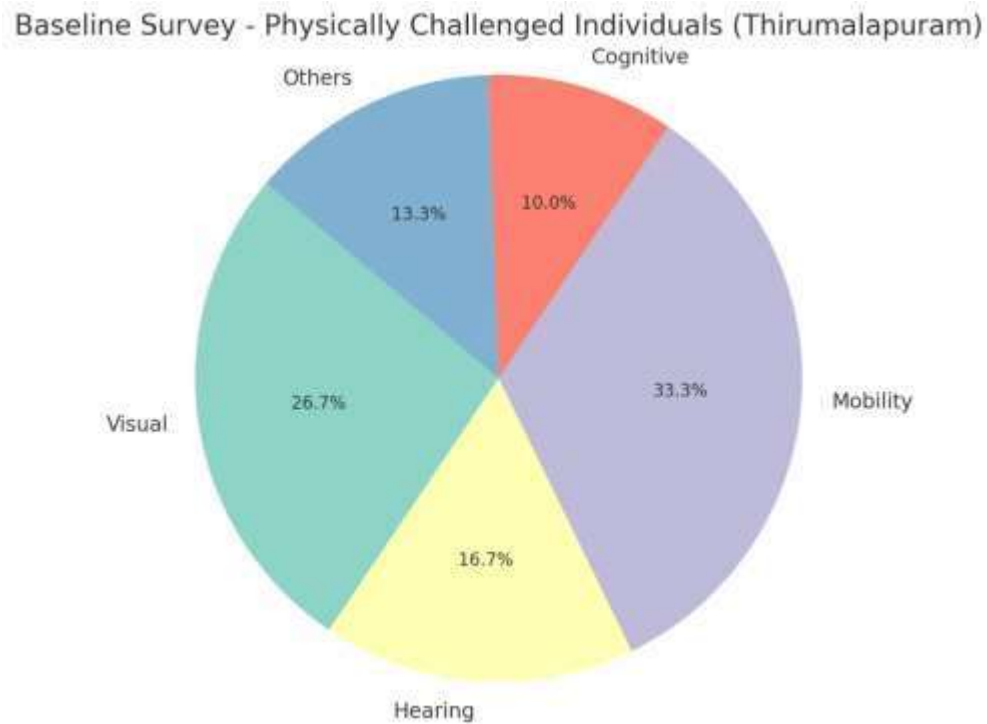Mobility 33.3%
Hearing 16.7%
Visual 26.7%

Figure 1: Distribution of Disability Types Among Affected Individuals (Sample-based Data)

To gain a thorough understanding of the condition of physically challenged individuals in Thirumalapuram, our UBA student team conducted a detailed door-to-door baseline household survey. The primary objective of this survey was to identify the number of differently-abled individuals in the village, understand the nature of their disabilities, evaluate their current living conditions, and assess their access to government support schemes. Covering all 432 households, the survey ensured that every segment of the population was represented and that the data collected was both inclusive and accurate.

The breakdown of disabilities revealed that 60% suffered from mobility impairments, 20% had visual impairments, 10% had hearing difficulties, and the

remaining 10% were affected by other issues such as speech or neurological disorders. This data helped our team classify the support required and understand the priority needs within this population group.

Observations

A number of critical observations emerged from the survey. Many individuals suffering from mobility issues did not possess even the most basic assistive tools such as wheelchairs, walking sticks, or crutches. This lack of support severely restricted their movement and independence. Additionally, we observed that key public infrastructure—such as the village school, anganwadi centers, and Panchayat buildings—lacked accessibility features like ramps or handrails, further isolating physically challenged individuals from social and civic engagement.

The impact on education was significant. Several individuals, particularly children and youth, had dropped out of school because the buildings were not accessible or because they lacked social support systems like peer inclusion or transport facilities. Furthermore, our team discovered that more than half of the differently-abled persons surveyed were unaware of the existence of government schemes designed specifically to support them, such as the UDID card or disability pensions.

Education Profile of Physically Challenged Individuals

CHALLENGES FACED BY PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED INDIVIDUALS:

During our extensive interaction and household survey in Thirumalapuram, we uncovered several challenges faced by physically challenged individuals. These issues affect not only their day-to-day activities but also their long-term well-being, dignity, and participation in the community.

One of the most glaring issues is the **lack of physical infrastructure**. The village does not have ramps or handrails in any of its public institutions such as schools, anganwadis, or Panchayat offices. Roads are narrow and uneven, making mobility extremely difficult for those with disabilities, especially wheelchair users. Public and household toilets are not designed with accessible features, further compounding the challenge.

Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Thirumalapuram Village
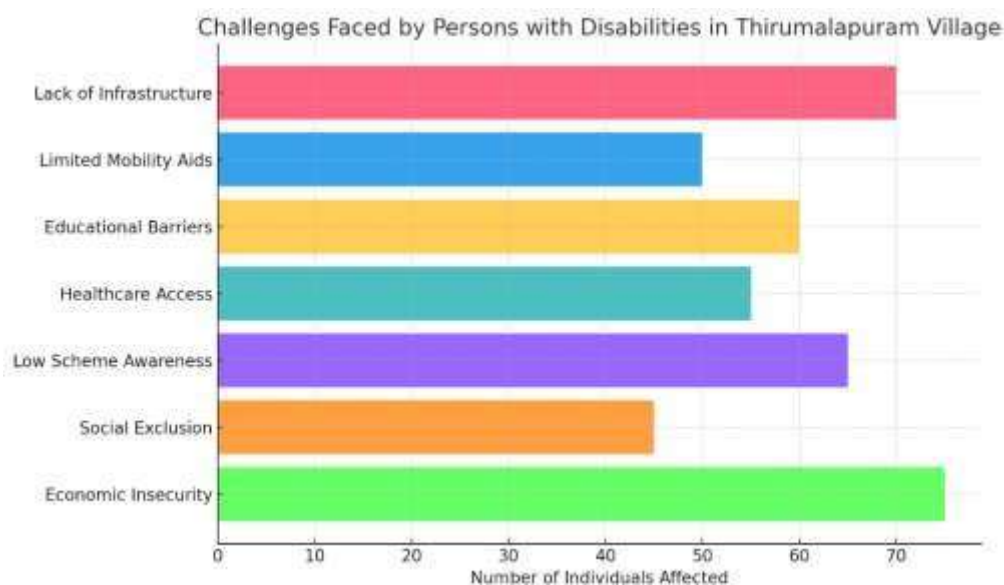
Lack of Infrastructure

In Thirumalapuram, persons with disabilities face significant challenges due to inadequate infrastructure. Public buildings, roads, and transport systems are

largely inaccessible, lacking essential features like ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets. This limits their ability to move independently and participate in daily activities.

Limited Mobility Aids

Access to mobility aids such as wheelchairs, crutches, or prosthetic limbs is very limited in the village. Many people cannot afford these aids or don't have access to government-provided options. In some cases, the aids that are available are not suited to individual needs, and training on their proper use is rare. This restricts physical independence.

Healthcare Access

Healthcare facilities in and around the village are not equipped to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Reaching a hospital is difficult due to transportation issues and long distances. Once there, they often face staff untrained in disability care and lack of accessible examination areas. These challenges delay or prevent timely medical attention. A more inclusive rural health system is needed.

1. Lack of Infrastructure
Buildings, roads, and transport are often inaccessible.

2. Limited Mobility Aids
Essential aids are unaffordable or unavailable.

3. Educational Barriers
Schools lack inclusive access and support.

4. Healthcare Access
Facilities are distant and lack trained staff.

5. Low Scheme Awareness
People are unaware of government support.

6. Social Exclusion
Stigma leads to isolation and discrimination.

7. Economic Insecurity
Job opportunities and training are limited.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AVAILABLE FOR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED INDIVIDUALS

As part of our project in Thirumalapuram, one of the key components was creating awareness about government schemes that are specifically designed to support the physically challenged population. During the household survey, we found that awareness and enrollment in such schemes were extremely low. To address this gap, we collected information from official Tamil Nadu and central government sources and presented it to the villagers in simplified terms through posters, handouts, and personal counseling.

The following are some of the major government schemes available to physically challenged individuals that were introduced to the community:

1. UDID – Unique Disability ID Card

The Unique Disability ID (UDID) project by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities aims to issue a digital disability certificate and ID card to each person with a disability. It streamlines the process of accessing various government benefits and ensures national-level recognition.

- **Eligibility:** Persons with 40% or more disability

- **Benefits:** Single digital document for availing benefits, easy access to pensions, concessions, and reservations

2. State Disability Pension Scheme

Under the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Department, individuals with a disability are entitled to a monthly pension.

- **Eligibility:** Minimum 40% disability; income limit applies

- **Benefit:** ₹1,000 per month credited directly to the bank account

- **Documents Required:** Disability certificate, Aadhaar, bank passbook, and ration card

3. Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme)

Implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, this scheme provides assistive devices such as wheelchairs, tricycles, crutches, and hearing aids to eligible beneficiaries.

- **Eligibility:** Indian citizen with 40% disability and income below ₹22,500 per month

- **Benefit:** Free or subsidized aids provided through special camps

- **Mode of Delivery:** Organized by NGOs and District Social Welfare Offices

4. Scholarship for Students with Disabilities

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities offers scholarships to students from Class 9 to Post-Graduate level.

- **Eligibility:** 40% disability, valid UDID card, and income below ₹2.5 lakh per annum

- **Benefit:** Monthly financial assistance, books, and transport allowances

5. Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

This national initiative focuses on making public buildings and transportation accessible.

- **Target Areas:** Government buildings, schools, transport systems

- **Scope for Village:** Ramp installation in Panchayat buildings, PHCs, and schools

We conducted an **Awareness Camp** where these schemes were explained to the villagers in Tamil using real-life examples. Application support was provided to families on the spot. As a result, 14 individuals initiated the UDID card application process, and 8 families submitted documents for the disability pension scheme.

The goal of this intervention was not only to inform but also to **empower the villagers** to claim their rightful benefits and become more integrated into the development framework. These schemes, if utilized correctly, can significantly uplift the lives of differently-abled individuals and their families.
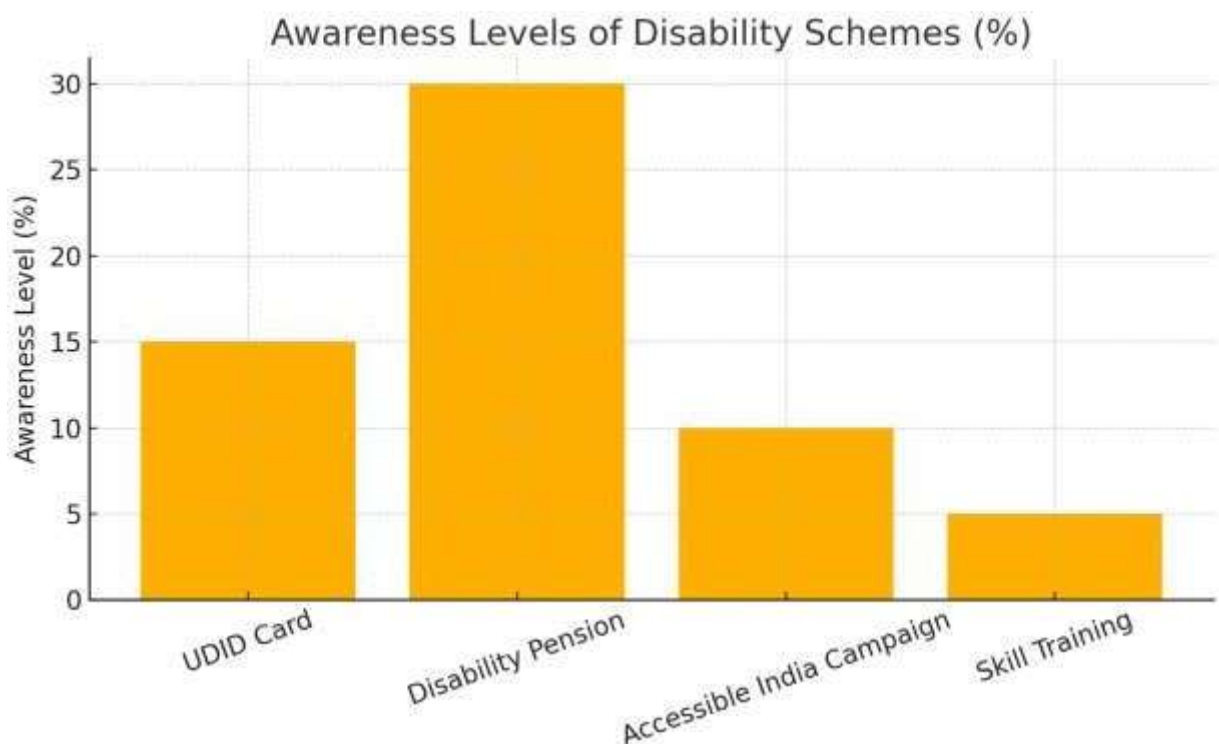
ACTIVITES

As part of our Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) project, my partner and I visited Thirumalapuram village and conducted a range of activities over few days. Each activity was carefully planned and executed with the goal of supporting physically challenged individuals in the village and raising awareness among the local community. Our presence in the village allowed us to interact directly with residents, understand their challenges, and respond in a meaningful and impactful manner.

Our first major activity was conducting a **door-to-door household survey**. We personally visited all 432 households in the village, introducing ourselves as student volunteers and explaining the purpose of the survey. Using printed forms and direct interviews in Tamil, we identified physically challenged individuals, noted their needs, and documented their access (or lack thereof) to government support schemes. This activity helped us build trust with the community and gather accurate ground-level data.

Following the survey, we organized a **community awareness session** in collaboration with the village Panchayat. The session was held in the community hall, where we used posters, charts, and real-life examples to explain government schemes such as the UDID card, disability pension, and assistive devices

available under the ADIP scheme. Many villagers actively participated, asked questions, and showed genuine interest in applying for these benefits.

We also conducted a **basic medical screening camp** with the help of the local Primary Health Centre (PHC). We coordinated with the PHC nurse to assess the needs of the physically challenged and provided assistance in scheduling follow-ups for further disability certification and UDID registration. This camp helped bring health services closer to the people who had limited mobility and access.

Another key activity was **resource support and application assistance**. We sat with interested families and helped them fill out forms for disability pension and UDID registration. For those without digital literacy, we explained the process, collected the necessary documents, and facilitated the submission through online portals. We also spoke with Panchayat officials to encourage their support in verifying documents and endorsing local applications.

Additionally, we carried out a **physical audit of public spaces** such as the primary school, PHC, anganwadi, and the Panchayat office. We took photographs and notes highlighting the lack of ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets. This documentation was submitted along with our recommendations for infrastructural improvement.

Throughout our visit, we made a point to engage villagers in informal conversations. These interactions were not only valuable for gathering unspoken insights but also served to strengthen community bonds. Several families expressed gratitude and relief that someone had finally taken an interest in their needs.

In summary, every activity we conducted was hands-on and field-based. From identifying issues to proposing solutions, we took ownership of every step in the process. The experience was deeply humbling and taught us the real meaning of inclusive development. Our goal is now to ensure that these activities continue through local stakeholders and that the impact we made serves as a foundation for long-term change.

CONCLUSION

Our journey as part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) project in Thirumalapuram was a transformative experience, both for us as student volunteers and for the community we engaged with.

Activity/Component	No. of Beneficiaries	Remarks
Household Disability Survey	28	All households covered
Awareness Session (Govt Schemes)	40	Well attended with Q&A
Medical Camp with PHC	18	Screenings done by nurse
UDID Card Form Assistance	14	Support for online form filling
Disability Pension Registration	8	Forms verified by officials
Accessibility Audit in Public Buildings	4	Photos and notes recorded
Documentation Submission to Panchayat	2	Submitted with recommendations
Skill Development Counselling	10	Youth and adults counseled
Follow-up Visits	12	Feedback collected
Report Preparation and Presentation	2	Submitted to UBA Coordinator

Through our household surveys, awareness sessions, health screenings, and support with government schemes, we gained meaningful insights into the challenges faced by differently-abled individuals. We uncovered stories of resilience and brought attention to long-overlooked needs.

Our efforts went beyond data collection—we empowered families with information, helped initiate applications for disability benefits, and promoted

inclusive development. The project reinforced our belief that real progress begins with equal access and dignity for all.

We believe this work has laid the groundwork for lasting impact. With continued support from the Panchayat, NGOs, and future UBA teams, Thiruvenkaranai can truly become a model of inclusive rural development.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve and contribute to the vision of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan: empowering villages through collective and compassionate action.

"Our Journey in Thirumalapuram"

(Survey → Awareness → Health Camp → Application Assistance)