



Advancing SDGs through Academic Synergy: Best Practices Exchange & Future Collaboration Dialogue Between GRI & Sairam Institutions

Minutes of the meeting

Venue: Board Room, GRI

Date : 17 December 2025

Organized by

Regional Coordinating Institute, UBA

The Gandhigram Rural Institute (DTBU)

Gandhigram – 624 302, Tamil Nadu

Programme Schedule

Time	Programme / Title	Name of the Resource Person
10:30 – 10:45 am	Welcome Address	Prof.K.Ravichandran Senior Professor & Coordinator, UBA-SEG – Rural Livelihood GRI (DTBU), Gandhigram
	Inauguration of the Programme	Prof.N.Panchanatham, Vice Chancellor GRI (DTBU), Gandhigram
10:45 – 11:00 am	Presentation by GRI Theme: “GRI’s Best Practices in Teaching–Learning, Community Engagement & SDG Localization through UBA”	Prof.A.Balakrishnan Senior Professor / Dean, School of Health Sciences and Rural Development, Dr. R. Venkataravi Professor & Head, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, Dr.S.Kavitha Maithily, UBA Coordinator, GRI (DTBU), Gandhigram
11:00 – 11:15 am	Presentation by Sri Sairam Institutions Theme: “SDG Mainstreaming through Governance, Teaching, Research & Community Engagement – The Sairam Model” • Institutional SDG integration framework • Societal outreach and service village models • Student leadership & innovation ecosystem	Dr. K. Maran, Director, Dr. C. R. Rene Robin, Dean – Innovation, Dr. S. K. Uma Maheswaran, Patron – NSS/UBA, Mr. R. Chithrakkannan, Coordinator – UBA – Campus-1 Mr. D. Muralidharan, Coordinator – UBA – Campus-2 Dr. K. Bharananidharan, Coordinator – NSS, Mr. Balaji, ELP Manager, Sairam Institutions
11:15 – 01.00 pm	Collaborative Discussion – Areas of Mutual Engagement • Exchange of best practices in teaching, research & governance • Joint UBA, SDG, and rural development initiatives • Faculty, staff & student academic visits • Joint training programmes, workshops, FDPs, TOTs • Collaborative proposals for MoE, UGC, CSR partners	Faculty members of GRI and Sairam Institutions
02.00 – 03.30 pm	Campus Visit – Learning Tour • Community Engagement & Outreach Units • Rural Energy Centre • Seaweed Start up • Rural Technology Centre	Faculty members of GRI and Sairam Institutions
03.30 – 04.00 pm	Way Forward and finalisation of Joint Action Plan	

1. Introduction

The collaboration meeting between the Gandhigram Rural Institute (DTBU), Gandhigram and Sairam Institutions, Chennai was held at 10.30 a.m. on 17 December 2025 at the Board Room, GRI. Faculty members and representatives from both institutions actively participated. The programme began with a Welcome Address by Prof. K. Ravichandran, Senior Professor and Regional Coordinator, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), GRI, who outlined the objectives and methodology of the dialogue, emphasizing academic synergy, SDG integration, and community engagement through a Whole Institution Approach. The meeting was formally inaugurated by Prof. N. Panchanatham, Vice Chancellor, GRI, who highlighted the institutional strengths and best practices of both institutions and stressed the importance of structured academic collaboration.

The dialogue aimed to promote academic synergy through the exchange of best practices in teaching-learning, curriculum innovation, governance, research, and community engagement aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Expert presentations and discussions showcased SDG-based teaching, research innovations, governance practices, and community engagement models such as UBA village adoption and experiential learning. Interactive sessions enabled the identification of opportunities for joint research, student projects, community initiatives, and faculty development. Stakeholder mapping further helped assess institutional strengths and community needs, leading to the formulation of a preliminary roadmap for future collaboration.

2. Technical and Experience-Sharing Sessions

A thematic presentation on GRI's best practices in teaching-learning, community engagement, and SDG localization through UBA was delivered by Prof. A. Balakrishnan, highlighting Nai Talim-based education, rural development, participatory research, and GRI's role as a Regional Coordinating Institute. This was followed by presentations from Dr. R. Venkataravi on community extension methodologies and Dr. S. Kavitha Maithily on the regional impact of UBA initiatives. Dr. K. Maran and his team from Sairam Institutions then presented the Sairam Model for SDG mainstreaming through governance, teaching, research, and community engagement. An interactive discussion ensued, focusing on the exchange of best practices, joint UBA and SDG initiatives, academic exchanges, capacity-building programmes, and future collaboration opportunities.

3. Collaborative Discussions

An extensive and interactive discussion was held among faculty members and representatives of both institutions. The deliberations focused on the following key areas: (1) Exchange of best practices in teaching-learning, research, governance, and community engagement (2) Joint initiatives under UBA, SDGs, and rural development programmes (3) Faculty, staff, and student academic exchanges (4) Joint training programmes, workshops, FDPs, and capacity-building initiatives and (5) Identification of future collaboration areas and operational modalities.

4. Key Observations and Field Visits

Following the discussions, the delegation from Sairam Institutions, led by Dr. K. Maran, Director, undertook a learning visit to GRI's community engagement and outreach facilities, including: (1) Gandhi Museum (2) Orchid Centre for Tribal Development (3) Rural Energy Centre (4) Seaweed Start-up Unit (5) Food Processing Centre and (6) Rural Technology Centre

The delegation appreciated GRI's integrated model of education, research, and rural development, particularly its alignment with Gandhian philosophy and SDG localization.

5. Decisions and Resolutions

After detailed deliberations, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed upon:

5.1 Role of The Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI)

GRI shall explore the possibilities for the following academic and professional support to Sairam Institutions: viz., (1) Capacity-building training programmes for faculty and students in the areas of (i) Renewable Energy, (ii) Rural Technology, (iii) Food Processing (2) Consultancy support for the establishment of a Centre for Community Engagement at Sairam Institutions (3) Organization of a Proposal Development Workshop to support fund mobilization and fundraising for community engagement and SDG-linked initiatives (4) Third-party evaluation support, wherein GRI faculty members will act as evaluators for student projects of Sairam Institutions related to community engagement, innovation, and SDGs (5) Consultancy and advisory support for NIRF-related processes and (6) Support for integration and delivery of Gandhian value-based education programmes for students of Sairam Institutions.

5.2 Role of Sairam Institutions

Sairam Institutions shall explore the possibilities for the following support to GRI: viz., (1) Funding support for village-based projects implemented by GRI under UBA, SDGs, and rural livelihood initiatives (2) Innovation and incubation support for innovative projects and start-ups emerging from GRI faculty and students (3) Facilitation of industrial visits for GRI students to Sairam Institutions and associated innovation and incubation facilities (4) Exploration of faculty and student exchange programmes between the two institutions.

6. Conclusion and Way Forward

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to formalize the collaboration through structured action plans, and nomination of nodal coordinators from both institutions. It was agreed that follow-up meetings would be organized to operationalize the agreed initiatives and to explore the possibility of entering into a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Dr.K.Ravichandran, Regional Coordinator, UBA, GRI and Dr.K.Maran, Director, Sairam Institutions will discuss and take the programme ahead.

At the evening, the Vice Chancellor, GRI, appreciated the active participation and constructive contributions of all delegates. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks and mutual appreciation for the collaborative spirit demonstrated by both institutions in advancing SDG-aligned academic partnerships.