

Dr. Beela G.K

Professor & Head, Department of Community Science

College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Kerala Agricultural University

Former Director, Centre for Disability Studies, Govt. of Kerala

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CAREER OBJECTIVE

To champion the integration of horticultural therapy as a transformative approach for improving the lives of people with disabilities, while continuing to contribute my expertise in child development and inclusive education. I aim to lead with compassion, vision, and integrity in the spheres of policy-making, academic innovation, and community-driven therapeutic outreach – rooted in a lifelong commitment to service, equity, and evidence-based practice.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- PhD in Child Development, Mahatma Gandhi University
 - MPhil in Human Development & Family Studies, University of Madras
 - MSc in Child Development, Mahatma Gandhi University
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CORE EXPERTISE

- Horticultural Therapy and Rehabilitation
 - Rice fortification
 - Cognitive Nutrition
 - Garden based Nutrition Education
 - ADHD and Autism Management through Diet & Therapy
 - Community Nutrition & Child Development Policies
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LEADERSHIP ROLES & EXPERIENCE

- Joined Kerala Agricultural University in 1997, marking the beginning of an impactful academic and service-oriented career.
- Director, Centre for Disability Studies, Govt. of Kerala (2011-2016)
- Promoted to Professor in 2017, in recognition of academic excellence, research leadership, and community outreach.
- Professor and Head, Dept. of Community Science, Kerala Agricultural University from 2022
- Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of major International (UNWFP) , national and state-funded projects

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- Director, Centre for Disability Studies, Govt. of Kerala (2011–2016): Spearheaded multi-sectoral programs for disability inclusion, therapeutic research, assistive technology, and capacity building; collaborated with national and international agencies for inclusive policy and practice development.

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

- Organised a series of **International Seminars on Disability and Inclusion** in observance of World Disability Day on December 3rd during the years 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2018. These high-impact events featured global experts, policymakers, rehabilitation professionals, and community stakeholders, promoting dialogue on inclusive practices and innovative interventions.
- Organised and coordinated multiple national and international seminars, conferences, and symposia on Rice Fortification, disability inclusion, horticultural therapy, and child development.
- Facilitated inter-institutional collaboration between Kerala Agricultural University and social service organisations for outreach-based therapeutic programs.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS INITIATED

- **PG Diploma in Horticultural Therapy** (Kerala Agricultural University)

Initiated and designed India's first Postgraduate Diploma in Horticultural Therapy under Kerala Agricultural University. The course is a pioneering academic initiative aimed at training professionals to use structured gardening activities as therapeutic tools for individuals with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges. This one-year diploma blends principles of horticulture, psychology, rehabilitation, and therapy design, equipping students with both theoretical grounding and hands-on field experience. The program aligns with global standards and serves the increasing demand for evidence-based holistic therapeutic approaches in special education, geriatric care, and community health.

ACADEMIC MENTORSHIP

Successfully guided multiple PhD, PG, PGDHT students in areas including community nutrition, stroke nutrition, cognitive nutrition, horticultural therapy, autism intervention, ADHD nutrition management, and inclusive education.

COURSES INITIATED AT CEDS

As Director of the Centre for Disability Studies (2011–2016), initiated and designed a **Diploma in Horticultural Therapy**, paving the way for academic integration of therapeutic horticulture at the state level.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

As Principal Investigator:

1. Rice Fortification for Nutritional Security in Kerala
Funded by: United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP)
Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of rice fortification strategies for improving micronutrient intake and health outcomes in vulnerable populations.
2. Horticultural Therapy for Adolescents with Disabilities
Funded by: Kerala Social Security Mission (KSSM)
Objective: To introduce horticultural therapy interventions for adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enhance self-esteem, emotional regulation, and life skills.
3. Community-Based Rehabilitation through Horticultural Therapy
Funded by: Kerala Social Security Mission (KSSM)
Objective: To implement horticulture-based community rehabilitation models in selected panchayats, involving caregivers, educators, and local stakeholders in inclusive development practices.
4. Imparting Training for Horticultural Production through Horticulture Therapy for Physically and Mentally Challenged Children
Funded by: State Horticulture Mission (SHM)
Objective: To train children with disabilities in therapeutic gardening techniques and enhance their social, motor, and cognitive skills.
5. Developing Green Environment and Adaptive Techniques of Horticultural Therapy for Challenged Children
Funded by: Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE)
Objective: To create adaptive models of horticultural therapy suitable for children with autism and multiple disabilities.
6. Developing Gardening Tools for Physically Challenged Children
Funded by: Kerala State Plan Scheme
Objective: To design and prototype inclusive gardening tools tailored for children with locomotor impairments.
7. Horticulture Therapy – A Tool to Develop Social Intelligence and Psychomotor Skills
Funded by: Kerala State Plan Scheme
Objective: To integrate horticultural therapy modules within schools and special education centers to build emotional and motor capabilities.
8. Developing Toolkit for Children with ADHD
Funded by: Kerala State Plan Scheme
Objective: To create structured, garden-based intervention kits focused on managing ADHD symptoms in school-going children.

9. ICT Tool Development Project for Autism
Funded by: Kerala State Plan Scheme
Objective: To develop and validate an ICT-enabled curriculum and activity module for enhancing social and academic functioning in children with autism.
10. A Study into the Impact of Garden-Based Diet Intervention on ADHD
Funded by: Kerala State Commissionerate for Persons with Disabilities
Objective: To assess the effectiveness of therapeutic gardening and dietary modulation in reducing ADHD symptoms.

As Co-Investigator:

1. Capacity Building Project on Street Food Services
Funded by: World Bank
Objective: To enhance hygiene practices, food safety knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills among street food vendors.
2. Re-Domestication and Popularisation of True Kasthuri Turmeric as an Endangered Cosmetic-cum-Medicinal Plant Among School Children
Funded by: National Horticulture Board, Govt. of India
Objective: To promote awareness and school-based cultivation of traditional turmeric varieties.
3. Micronutrient Security through Nutrition Garden in Anganwadis
Funded by: Department of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Kerala
Objective: To establish sustainable nutrition gardens and train Anganwadi workers in nutrition-sensitive gardening.

CONSULTANCY PROJECTS /TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ON HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

1. Adarsh Group, Ernakulam
Scope: Designed customized horticultural therapy models for children with intellectual and physical disabilities. Implemented therapeutic gardens and conducted capacity-building workshops for staff and caregivers.
2. Different Art Centre, Kazhakuttam
Scope: Developed and supervised structured horticultural therapy activities to enhance creativity, motor skills, and emotional well-being in differently abled children engaged in performing arts.
3. Sakshama, Kannur
Scope: Assisted in setting up inclusive therapeutic garden environments and provided training modules for caregivers to implement therapy-based education and life skills programs.
4. Oceano Group, Varkala
Scope: Developed nature-integrated mental health interventions through horticultural therapy. Designed garden spaces supporting mental wellness and provided consultancy for therapy-based lifestyle programs.

NOTABLE INITIATIVES & CONTRIBUTIONS

- Set up model horticultural therapy gardens across all 14 districts of Kerala, with one flagship garden established at the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, serving as a demonstration and training hub for inclusive therapeutic practices.
 - Conceptualised and implemented Kerala's first horticultural therapy module for differently abled children
 - Designed adaptive gardening tools and inclusive garden spaces
 - Developed garden-based nutrition education tools for preschoolers
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AWARDS & HONOURS

- INSO Women Researcher Award, 2023
 - Harithapeedam Mahila Ratnam Award, 2012, Kavungal
 - John Walker Community Service Award, 2020, American Horticultural Therapy Association
 - Prashasthi Pathra, Jan Abhiyan, Madhya Pradesh, 2012
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INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Horticultural Therapy Association
 - International Society for Horticultural Sciences
 - International Association of Human Values
 - Indian Horticultural Therapy Association
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MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

- Delivered expert sessions on AIR, Club FM, several times
 - Featured on Kairali TV, Asianet, Janam TV, Doordarshan, NDTV
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EXTENSION & TRAINING

- Resource person at IIT Delhi, IMG, RATTC, HRDC, CRPF, SAMETI
 - Conducted capacity building workshops for school teachers, and special educators
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ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of Home Science, St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam, affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam

PUBLICATIONS

1. Neuro-Feedback Training for Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Kerala. Beagum N, Beela G.K. *Research Reach Journal of Home Science*, 2016.
2. School-Based Kitchen Gardening: A Strategy to Improve Nutrition Literacy and Healthy Food Habits Among Preschoolers. Beela G.K., Abhina B. *The Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2022, 59(2), pp. 85–92.
3. Garden-Based Interventions for Dietary Behavior Change in Rural Preschool Settings. Beela G.K., Nair AVN. *The Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2021, 58(4), pp. 210–218.
4. Story Book and Role Plays: Promising Garden-Based Nutrition Education Tools for Preschoolers. Abhina B, Beela G.K. *The Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2024, pp. 141–151.
5. The Role of Garden-Based Nutrition Education in Enhancing Healthy Eating Habits and Cognition among Preschoolers. Shiji N, Beela G.K. *Journal of Applied Life Sciences International*, 2024.
6. Promoting fruit and vegetable consumption among school children through nutrition intervention programme. KC Seethal, Department of Home Science, College of Agriculture, Vellayani. *Research Reach Journal of Home Science*, 2011.
7. Detection and analysis of physical damages in fruits using laser biospeckle technique. B Samuel, R Rethesh, A Correya, J Peter, VR Anand, VPN Nampoori, GK Beela. *Proceedings of the 28th Kerala Science Congress*, 2016.
8. Assistive Technology in Gardening for Children with Disability Undergoing Horticultural Therapy. VG, Beela G.K. *Research Reach Journal of Home Science*, 2018.
9. Garden based nutrition intervention improves fruit and vegetable consumption among school children. Dbgk, Seethal K.C. *Research Reach Journal of Home Science*, 2017.
10. Neuro-Feedback Training for Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Kerala. BGKM, Beagum N., GK Beela. *Research Reach Journal of Home Science*, 2016.
11. Diet Intervention & ADHD Symptoms with Reference to Gender, Socio-economic Status and Area of Residence. G.K. Beela & V.R. Raji. *Asian Journal of Home Science*, Vol 11 (1), June 2016, pp. 111–116
12. A Study on responses of neonates of Kerala and Gulf countries with reference to maternal stress, expectation, acceptance, gestation period, mode of delivery and gender. GK Beela. MG University Kottayam.
13. Developing a sensory area for visually impaired persons to impart horticultural therapy. Jasmin A.B., Archana R. Sathyan, Beela G.K. *International Journal of Speech and Audiology*, 2023.

14. Accessible garden structure to impart horticultural therapy for differently abled population. Nikhil N., Rafeekhar M., Beela G.K. *International Journal of Intellectual Disability*, 2023.
15. The Role of Garden-Based Nutrition Education in Enhancing Healthy Eating Habits and Cognition among Preschoolers. Shiji N, Beela G.K. *Journal of Applied Life Sciences International*, 2024.
16. Role of Audio Visual Aids to Impart Garden-Based Nutrition Education for Preschoolers. Abhina B, Beela G.K. *Advances in Research on Teaching*, 2024.
17. Impact of Nutrition Education through Innovative Story Telling in Pre-School Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Amritha V.N, Beela G.K. *Journal of Applied Life Sciences International*, 2024.
18. Plant Meditation as Part of Horticultural Therapy Reduces Stress Levels in Adults. Sathishkumar S, Beela G.K. *ResearchGate*, 2023.
19. Garden-based diet therapy reduces ADHD symptomatology in school going students. Malavika G, Beela G.K., Anitha Chandran. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*, 2019.
20. Elimination of sugar-rich confectioneries in children with ADHD symptomatology. Beela G.K., V.R. Raji. *Food Science*, 2018.
21. Diet intervention and ADHD symptoms with reference to gender, socio-economic status and area of residence. Beela G.K., V.R. Raji. *Asian Journal of Home Science*, 2016.
22. Horticulture Therapy for the Improvement of Self-Concept in Adolescents with Locomotor and Hearing Impairment. Beela G.K., Reghunath B.R., Johnson Jament. *Indian Journal of Physiotherapy*, 2015.
23. Impact study of ICT-enabled curriculum for children with autism spectrum disorder on social maturity. Beela G.K., Anjaly Lohidakshan. *International Journal of Psychology*, 2015.
24. Horticultural therapy program in Kerala improves the emotional intelligence of school-going children with autism spectrum disorder. GK Beela, H Thankappan. *Acta Horticulturae*, 2021.
25. Impact of diet intervention on the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptomatology in school-going children. GK Beela, VR Raji. *Journal of Psychology*, 2017.
26. Effect of roasting on functional and sensory parameters of jackfruit seed flour. U Sreejaya, U Krishnaja, GK Beela. *The Pharma Innovation Journal*, 2023.
27. Impact of horticultural therapy in social intelligence of people with autism spectrum disorder. WS Nevil, GK Beela. *International Journal of Autism*, 2023.
28. Horticultural therapy on self-esteem and motor skills of physically challenged children. B GK, BR Reghunath. *Journal of Horticultural Therapy*, 2021.

29. Consumer awareness and acceptance survey with regard to biospeckle laser screened foods. U Geethanjali, GK Beela. *Journal of Food Science and Technology*, 2022.
 30. Evaluating the impact of Noni products for its anticancer activity on DLA-induced Swiss albino mice. T Subramanian, A Chandran, GK Beela. *Current Developments in Nutrition*, 2024.
 31. Does Noni possess cytotoxic properties? An in vitro study. T Subramanian, A Chandran, GK Beela. *Current Developments in Nutrition*, 2024.
 32. Food frequency preference questionnaire (FFPQ) for ischemic stroke patients. S Siji, GK Beela. *Journal of Nutritional Science*, 2023.
 33. Premorbid food consumption pattern and associated noncommunicable diseases among ischemic stroke patients. S Siji, GK Beela. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 2023.
 34. Assistive garden structures for children with locomotor disabilities to implement horticultural therapy. G.K. Beela & V. Ganeshan. *Acta Horticulturae* 1330 (Procs. XV International People Plant Symposium), 2021. DOI: 10.17660/ActaHortic.2021.1330.3
- 22 popular science articles
 - 4 authored books including “Horticultural Therapy” and “Toolkit for ADHD”
 - 16 conference proceedings at national and international levels
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REVIVING INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS THROUGH PRACTICE & SEVA

- Actively engaged in community-based service initiatives integrating Indian knowledge systems and wellness practices.
 - Practitioner and promoter of daily meditation and spiritual living, inspired by the teachings of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the Art of Living Foundation.
 - Regularly incorporate yoga, mindfulness, and seva (selfless service) as part of academic, research, and outreach efforts.
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

With nearly three decades of experience in teaching, research, and outreach, I bring blend of academic depth, social empathy, and leadership capacity. My journey has been one of silent resilience, choosing service over ambition, and growth without compromising integrity. I seek a higher role not for position, but to bring inclusive, evidence-based, and value-driven change in society.
