



REPORT

Follow up meeting of the consultation held for discussing ‘Strengthening of Emergency Response Capabilities with Emphasis on Differently Abled People’.

DATE

30th June 2016

VENUE

Govt. Guest House, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram

PROJECT

‘Strengthening of Emergency Response Capabilities with emphasis on differently abled People’

ORGANIZED BY

Kerala State Disaster Management Authority

“Towards a Safer State for the differently abled”



KERALA STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
GOVT. OF KERALA



INTRODUCTION

Considering the emerging needs of people with disabilities towards disaster preparedness and response, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has launched a project titled ‘Strengthening of Emergency Response Capabilities with Emphasis on Differently abled people in Kerala’.

To discuss on the approach towards the project, a state level consultation meeting was held on the 11th May 2016 at Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram. Stakeholders from various government departments and NGOs participated for the consultation. However, an in-depth understanding of the issues & challenges of persons with disabilities was needed and hence a follow up meeting was planned on 30th June 2016, which was held at Govt. guest house, Thycaud from 1000 to 1600hrs. This meeting was planned mainly to engage the experts in the domain of disability to know more about their needs, challenges and to deliberate on the interventions to have a safer society for persons with disability towards disaster risk reduction.

Objectives of the Meeting.

- To engage various State government departments and NGOs to discuss on the modalities of trainings
- To prepare an action plan along with identifying available human resources in developing ToT module for dissemination trainings at the district level.

The following subject matter experts were invited to present on the four broad areas of disability viz.

- a) Speech & Hearing Impairment

Dr Samuel N Mathew, Director, NISH, Thiruvananthapuram

- b) Physical Impairment

Prof. Dr Santosh Kumar, Asst Professor, Dept. of Orthopaedics, Thiruvananthapuram Medical College

- c) Visual Impairment

Prof. K A Chandrashekhara, Consultant, Kerala State Handicapped Persons Welfare Corporation, Thiruvananthapuram

- d) Intellectual Impairment

Dr M K Jayaraj, Director, State Institute of Mentally Challenged, Thiruvananthapuram.

Dr Samuel N Mathew | Speech & Hearing Impairment

[Dr Mathew is the Executive Director of National Institute of Speech & Hearing (NISH), Thiruvananthapuram. He has long years of experience in working with the differently abled, especially with speech & hard of hearing impairments. He is also the Director of National Institute of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (NIPMR)]

He appreciated the efforts of Kerala State Disaster Management Authority for initiating such a project to address the needs of the persons with disabilities with regard to emergencies. He was of the opinion that, apart from the four broad categories of disabilities planned in the project, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) should be dealt separately, as their problems are relatively different from other disabilities. Even when rescuers try to offer help they may not cooperate, as social deficit is their major concern. Out of all the children who are autistic, 33 per cent are non-verbal; hence, for such children, it would be an additional burden to respond to disasters. Another group which needs much attention are people with multiple disabilities (Eg: deaf & blind). They need to be considered very special and the training processes should be very comprehensive to involve them too.



People with hearing impairment should be given pictorial presentations, videos etc. First responders like Fire Force & Police should be trained on these types of disabilities and how to handle them effectively. They, at times, due to lack of knowledge, force and coax the persons with disabilities to be rescued from a place during emergencies, which may create additional problems. He mentioned that an universal sign language is not yet developed, though Indian Sign Language (ISL) is being mainstreamed slowly. The sign language has gestural as well as language component. Hence, the first responders should be able to communicate through gestures to put across the information in a crisis event. He also suggested to have experts with speech & hard of hearing impairments as the module is being developed.

Prof. Dr. Santosh Kumar | Physical Impairment

[Dr Kumar is the Asst. Professor in Department of Orthopaedics, Medical College Thiruvananthapuram; Secretary & Board member of Doctors without Borders. He has worked in many disaster management & emergency situations across the globe, mainly in African Countries]

He started his presentation by quoting examples of World Trade Centre emergency response, Tsunami response etc. He also mentioned that 5 components were reflected in Hyogo framework for action 2005-2015 regarding disabilities. He further elaborated the specific issues of the persons with disabilities with reference to physical impairment. The assistive devices used by PwD and their dependence on the same was discussed in detail. The PwD have higher



risk of injuries while rescuing from a disaster site; however, they also have special abilities like additional memorizing capacity and various other abilities too which are their strengths. At the time of rescue, the issues of the PwD should be mapped by the rescuers like – whether the person is able to walk/whether the person needs assistive devices/is the person able to hold/etc. This will make the emergency operations easier for the PwD as well as the rescuers for further assistance. Dr Santosh suggested to hold a mock drill exercise to review the preparedness level of the PwD once in 6 months, he also emphasized to have a better Early Warning System, Preference for the PwD in the shelter homes, Infrastructural facilities, medical support etc. He thanked the organizers for inviting him for the programme.

Prof K A Chandrasekharan | Visual Impairment

[Prof Chandrasekharan is the honorary consultant of Kerala State Handicapped Persons Welfare Corporation, Poojapura, Thiruvananthapuram. The corporation is a public sector undertaking under the State government established in 1979, He has long years of experience working in the field of disability]

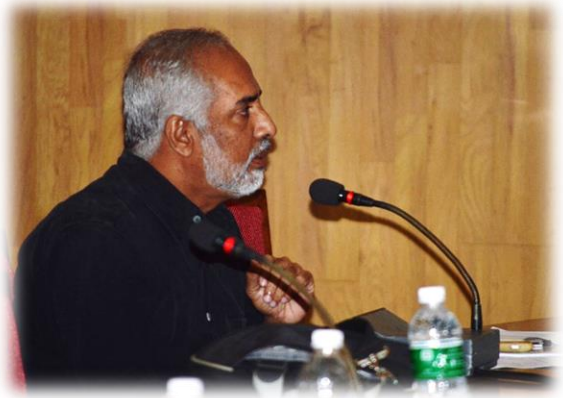
Being visually impaired himself, he shared about his experiences from the time he became blind i.e. since 1951. He also shared about the periodical transformation in the nomenclature of addressing persons with disabilities from ‘invalid’ to ‘differently abled’. He time and again mentioned that, being a disabled person itself is a disaster. The impairments could be divided into sensory & motor impairments. He also explained the difference between the terminologies – handicap, disability & impairments. He also mentioned about the renowned persons with disabilities around the world like Helen Keller, Stephen Hawking etc, and their stories of perseverance & determination in their lives. Many a times adaptation is more discussed than inclusion of PwD. Prof Chandrasekharan also mentioned about the environmental & attitudinal barriers faced by the PwD. The society need training to have a world fit for PwD. The trainings should address their needs and have to enable them to process their thinking even if they cannot see or hear. The trainings should engage the intellect and minds of PwD.



Dr M K Jayaraj | Intellectual Impairment

[Dr Jayaraj is the Director of State Institute for the Mentally Challenged, Pangappara, Thiruvananthapuram. State Government appointed him as one member commission to study the problems of the mentally challenged in the State]

He started by applauding State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) for launching this project. From his vast experience he shared about the concerns in the field of intellectual impairment. In this group, the decision making process is absent. Majority of the people with intellectual impairment are dependent on their caregivers like parents/siblings/teachers etc. He also flagged the increasing population of children with Autism, wherein the recent statistics suggest the figure at 1 in every 58 children has autism. In most of the cases, the medical sciences have no clue of the cause of it. He mentioned about the plight of people suffered in ‘endosulfan disaster’ of Kasaragod district, which was anthropogenic in nature. Children still suffer in Kasaragod due to this. He also shared about the challenges in the area of protection of the PwD from abuse, which is seen to be a growing concern in the society.



Provisions for the persons with Disabilities

Shri S Nazim, State Programme Coordinator, Kerala State Handicapped Persons Welfare Corporation Thiruvananthapuram presented on the provisions for the persons with disabilities. He shared the provisions mentioned in the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and full participation) Act 1995. There are 14 chapters in the Act, which has recognized 7 types of disabilities. He explained about



the schemes, allowances and entitlements etc for the persons with disabilities. India ratified UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities etc. Hence the provisions mentioned in the same has to be realized. The state has a policy on persons with disabilities.

Rights of persons with disabilities

The Bill (Rights of Persons with Disabilities bill, 2014) states that persons with disabilities shall have the right to equality and shall not be discriminated against on grounds of their disability. Rights of disabled persons include protection from inhuman treatment and equal protection and safety in

situations of risk, armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. All existing public buildings shall be made accessible for disabled persons within five years of the regulations being formulated by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. No establishment will be granted permission to build any structure, issued a completion certification or allowed to occupy a building, if the building does not adhere to the regulations formulated by the Commission.

1981 was observed by the United Nations as the year for persons with disabilities. Living with disability and disasters was the main theme of International Disaster Risk Reduction day of 13th October 2013.



Project Progress & Action Plan

Shri Joe John George, State Project Officer of GoI-UNDP, SEOC summarized about the deliverables of the project and further activities under the project. Broadly there are three more deliverables to be achieved

1) Preparation of Module/Tool kit.

SDMA would identify experts in the domain of disaster risk reduction, emergency management, disability etc and would form a core group to develop a module or tool kit. The module will be prepared with the background of comprehensive needs of the stakeholders – persons with disabilities.

2) ToT training for the Trainers

Once the module is prepared, the trainers would be identified through a process and will be given detailed training in the areas of both disability & disaster management. This training will equip the trainees to undertake grass-root level trainings.

3) District level training for the stakeholders

District level trainings shall be conducted in all the districts of the state which will be monitored by respective DDMA and reported to SDMA. All the four broad categories will be given training. In the case of intellectually impaired, care givers shall be given training. The training shall contain basic first aid, survival skills, introduction to disasters and rescue options, identifying hazards, vulnerability, risks & capacities. IEC materials will be developed for the trainings according to the communication method of PwDs. Braille & audio brochures are already developed in this regard which was released in the previous consultation.

Suggestions from the Participants

1. To have training on disability for the first responders of the State viz. Fire & Rescue services, Police etc.
2. To conduct mock drill for persons with disabilities once in 6 months.
3. To have a more inclusive approach & systems towards Early Warning Systems.
4. To have disability friendly temporary shelters/camps in disaster prone areas.
5. To have a smaller group of experts in developing the module.
6. The module should also have home based learning methods
7. Grass-root level engagements should be made in the project
8. Existing institutions working with PwDs shall be incorporated in the training. (i.e. BUDS schools, Government institutions, Deaf & mute schools run by social justice dept., Various private institutions/NGOs working in the field of disability etc.
9. IEC materials are to be developed which are friendly / easy to use for the differently abled.
10. Training should include basics of disaster management, first aid/survival skills, rescue, evacuation, identifying hazards, vulnerabilities etc.
11. Sign boards, Maps, Tactile marking etc in public buildings for the benefit of PwD.

Report prepared by:

Joe John George
State Project Officer
GoI-UNDP, SEOC

Approved by:

Dr Sekhar L. Kuriakose
Member Secretary, KSDMA

Annexure 1 | PARTICIPANTS

SL.NO	NAME	DESIGNATION / ORGANISATION
1	Dr Samuel N Mathew	NISH, Executive Director
2	Dr M.K Jayaraj	SIMC, Director
3	Dr Santhosh Kumar	Asst. Professor, Medical College, TVM
4	Prof. Chandrashekar	KSHPWC, Consultant
5	K N Vrinda	Treasurer, Mithra Institute of Behavioural Science.
6	S Dhanya	BUDS Special School, Venganoor, TVPM
7	S Nazim	State Programme Co-ordinator, KSHPWC
8	Col. P G Nair	IIEMS
9	S Sooraj	Station Officer, Fire & Rescue Dept.
10	E B Prasad	Director, Fire & Rescue
11	S Shaji	Former Programme Coordinator, KSSM
12	Fr Bovas Mathew	Director, MSSS
13	Ramesh Krishnan	Exe. Director, Foundation For Development Action (FDA)
14	E M Prasad	Director, Fire & Rescue
15	R Sasidharan Pillai	Exe. Director, Kerala Federation of the Blind
16	M Amalraj	Asst. Professor, ILDM
17	R Aravinth	Intern, SEOC
18	S Belaram	OA, SEOC
19	C Arun	OA, Corporation TVM
20	Siji M Thankachan	SO, SDMA
21	Dr Beela G K	Centre for Development Studies
22	C Sundari	Asst. Director, Directorate of Social Justice
23	Mujeebu rahman	KSSM
24	Joe John George	SPO, GoI-UNDP, SEOC
25	T Srinivasan	SDMA
26	S Saheerudheen	State Programme Manager, SID, KSSM
27	Mary Midhula Mary	ESS, NCRMP-KERALA
28	Shibu	SEOC
29	Biji S	SEOC

Annexure 2 | PHOTOGRAPHS



1) Dr Beela G.K, Director of Centre for Disability Studies, 2) Smt. C Sundari, Asst. Director, Directorate of Social Justice, 3) Shri Amal Raj, Asst Professor, Institute of Land & Disaster Management; 4) Fr Bovas Mathew, Director, MSSS; 5) Shri Siji Thankachan, State Disaster Management Authority; 6) Shri Shajeendran Pillai, Director, Kerala Federation of the Blind expressing their opinion during the discussions.