Virtual Cadre Training Program

BY: KERALA STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

UNICEF & SEEDS TECHNICAL SERVICES

TRAINING REPORT

(TWO DAY BASIC TRAINING)

27TH & 28TH NOVEMBER 2023

Departments: NORKA Roots, Kerala Maritime Board, Public Works Department and Department of Industries and Commerce

About this Report

Virtual Cadre was conceptualised by KSDMA, and it is the first ever program to mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practices into policy and planning at state departmental level. Kerala is highly sensitive and vulnerable to disasters owing to its geographic location and population density; therefore, an effective climate related planning is crucial for a sustainable future. The State Disaster Management Plan (2016) of suggests that every department should have its own Departmental Disaster Management Plan in place. This is also a prerequisite of National DM Plan and in line with UN's Sustainable Development Goal to combat climate change. Integrating these two visions together, the virtual cadre was created in 2017 and 26 Departments were selected to design their own Department DM Plan.

This year, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority with support from SEEDS Technical Services and UNICEF organized a Two-Day Training for Virtual Cadre Program on 27th and 28th November '23. The training was organized at Classic Sarovar Portico, Thiruvananthapuram. 20 Virtual Cadre officials' representatives from 4(four) departments were part of the training, namely department of Public Works, Kerala Maritime Board, NORKA Roots, Department of Industries and Commerce. The two-day training program aimed at introducing the departments to the concepts on Disaster Management and its relevance for each department, which was introduced by subject experts in this field. This is a brief report on the execution of the training.

Introduction

The Virtual Cadre Training Program is an initiative by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) and UNICEF to mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practices into sectoral departments of the Kerala State Government. As of now, there are 26 departments that are a part of the program (according to GO (Rt) No. 902/2022/DMD dated 24-12-2022). The objective of the training is to capacitate the Virtual Cadre officers in the norms and practices of Disaster Management and train them incrementally towards preparing their DM plan. The Virtual Cadre Officers will act as the central point of contact between their department, state disaster management authority and other line departments to carry out department specific functions as per the State Disaster Management Plan (2016). Section 38(2) (g) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 mandates the preparation of departmental Disaster Management Plans and integrating disaster preparedness and mitigation measures in developmental plans per the NDMA and SDMA guidelines. These guidelines are also in line with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal to combat climate change. Looking at Kerala's highly sensitive and vulnerable geographic location, effective climate planning is crucial at all levels. Therefore, the Virtual Cadre Training Program is a highly effective program to culminate preparedness at Institutional level of the state.

The first Virtual Cadre Training Program started in 2017 and since then 15 departments have been trained. 7 officers from each department get nominated for the training and they remain the Virtual Cadre officers for the next 5 years in the department.

This year's Virtual Cadre Training Program was executed by SEEDS Technical Services and the first batch of Basic Training was successfully completed on 27th & 28th November. 11 departments are part of the basic training batch out of which 4 departments were invited in the first batch of virtual cadre training. Apart from the 11 basic training batches, 15 departments are part of the Advanced training batch and will be given training in the coming sessions.

Batch	Total Departments	Total No. Training Days
Basic Training	11 Departments	2 Day Training
Advanced Training	15 Departments	1 Day Training

The first batch of Basic training departments included the following departments: -

- **Public Works Department**
- **NORKA Roots**
- **Department of Industries and Commerce**
- **Kerala Maritime Board**

Pre-Training Activities

To initiate the Program, an inception meeting was held on 28th February 2023 in which 26 departments were invited. The meeting was held in two different Sessions for Basic and Advanced batch. In the meeting, the relevance of the virtual cadre training as well as the format for the program was explained to the participants. A Training Needs Assessment questionnaire was administered via google forms. After the Inception Meeting, responses from all departments were compiled in the form of TNA Report and an executive summary of the report was also conceptualized.

The insights from the training needs assessment report were utilized to design department specific modules with assistance from KSDMA as well as our Trainers. Department specific individual modules for Basic training batch as well as a supporting document for state specific mechanism for Kerala was developed. The Modules incorporates information about the department and their specific functions along with the roles and responsibilities according to State disaster Management 2016.

Following are the activities that were executed under the project:

1. Inception Meeting Report
2. Project Inception Report
3. Training Needs Assessment Report and Executive Summary
4. Draft Training Modules for Departments

Resource Persons Involved for Basic Training

The trainers, (in coordination with KSDMA) systematically mapped out training sessions for each batch. The objective of the training program was to introduce the participants to the

	Resource Person	Background/Designation
1	Ms. Annie George	Former UNDP Consultant- Capacity Building
2	Mr. Joe John George	UNICEF
3	Mr. Pradeep GS	Hazard and Risk Analyst, KSDMA
4	Dr. Prateesh C Mamen	Program Coordinator, UNICEF
5	Dr. Midhila M	State Project Officer (KSDMA)
6	Ms. Divya Gupta	Associate Director- SEEDS Technical Services
7	Mr. Vijeesh P	Program Co-Ordinator Sphere India

Suggested Pre-reads for Basic Training Batch

The following documents were shared with the departments as pre reads prior to the training event: -

- Virtual Cadre Inception Meeting Report
- Training Needs Assessment (Executive Summary Report)

Two-Day Training Report

Venue: Classic Sarovar Portico, Thiruvananthapuram

Date: 27th & 28th November 2023

Time: 10 am to 5 pm

Total Number of Participants

Sr No	Department	Total Participants
1	Kerala Maritime Board	7
2	Department of Industries and Commerce	4
3	Public Works Department	5
4	NORKA Roots	4
	Total	**20**

Day 1: 27th November 2023

A two-day Basic Training was held on 27th & 28th November 2023 for the Basic Training Batch 1 at Classic Sarovar Portico, Thiruvananthapuram and nominated Virtual Cadre Officers from different districts came to participate in the training.

Session plan for 27th November 2023

Sr. No.	Topic	Trainer
1	Introduction to disaster management	Ms. Annie George
2	Institutional mechanism/frameworks/ governance	Mr. Joe John
3	Hazard Vulnerability Profile + Early Warnings	Mr. Pradeep GS
4	Activity 1	Ms. Annie George
5	General Feedback session/conclusion	Ms. Annie George

Day 1 began by Dr Midhila presenting the welcome address to all participants from all 4 departments. She introduced the participants to both KSDMA and STS Resource person present- Ms. Annie George, Ms. Divya Gupta, Mr. Joe John George and Dr Pratheesh C Mammen. Dr Sekhar L Kuriakose formally inaugurated the event and spoke on the importance of the Virtual Cadre Trainings and emphasized the importance of inter departmental co-operation in disaster response. The training started with an ice breaker session headed by Dr Pratheesh C Mammen. The participants shared their personal and professional experience of disasters and the challenges they faced.

Dr Sekhar L Kuriakose inaugurating Virtual Cadre Training

Session 1: Introduction to Disaster Management

Ms. Annie George led the first session of the Virtual Cadre Training program focusing on Basic Concepts of Disaster Management. She introduced the participants to major concepts of Disaster Management such as the difference between hazards and disasters, types of hazards and categorization of disasters. More focus was given to Kerala's vulnerabilities. She elaborated on various kinds of vulnerabilities like social, economic, emotional, psychological through examples. She also explained the DM cycle to the participants and touched upon the topics of preparedness, response and recovery. She encouraged all participants to discuss departmental activities that are carried out as part of an emergency mechanism in their departments. Her session was delivered through interactive discussion amongst all departments.

Ms. Annie George conducts the session on Introduction to Disaster Management.

Session 2: Institutional mechanisms, governance, and frameworks

Mr. Joe John George gave a detailed analysis of the institutional mechanism in DRR. He started the session from Evolution of Disaster Risk Reduction - from the first World Conference on DRR to the current Sendai Framework. He briefly captured the institutional mechanism at national level and state level. He also introduced the participants to Indian Disaster Resource Network (IDRN) and ways to utilize and update the resources. Each department was sent a link so that they could fill the portal. The session focused on evolution in DRR since 1989 which was the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). India has been actively promoting disaster management with endorsement of frameworks since the IDNDR. He also threw light on the latest development in DRR since 2015, touching upon the importance of Sustainable Development Goals, Sendai Framework and Paris Agreement. The four-point agenda of the Sendai Framework was also highlighted in the session. After capturing the international frameworks, he moved on to explain the National level mechanism and the state level mechanism in DM. An in-depth analysis of the DM framework existing in the state was captured. Various existing plans, policies and frameworks were highlighted.

Mr Joe J George conducting a quick activity before commencing session on Institutional Frameworks, mechanisms, and governance.

Session 3: Hazard Vulnerability Profile of Kerala and Early Warning Systems

Kerala's Early Warning System and its Hazard Vulnerability Profile was shared by **Mr. Pradeep GS** (HRA KSDMA) His sessions focused on Kerala specific hazards and vulnerabilities and early warning associated with each hazard. He explained Kerala's multi-hazard vulnerability through examples. He emphasized the need for disseminating and receiving correct information and communication during disasters. The sessions were highly engaging as he shared his real-life experiences of responding to various hazards and disasters.

Mr. Pradeep conducting session on Hazard Vulnerability Profile of Kerala

Session 4: Activity on Impact Assessment and Resource Mapping

The activity on resource mapping and impact assessment was conducted in two parts over a stretch of two days. During the first part of the activity, the participants were asked to list one or two major hazards or disasters that have impacted their department in the recent past along with the implications the department faced, and the response carried out to mitigate it. The participants from each department was asked to share their observations with everyone. All departments listed various hazards that affect them specifically. For example, ports department gets affected during cyclones and they shared their experience during Cyclone Okhi. The department also mentioned the available resources/assets that were used during emergencies. NORKA Roots shared their experience of issues arising during conflict in other countries such as the Russia Ukraine War and 'Operation Ganga' when Indians students stranded in Ukraine were evacuated. They shared the challenges arising from inconsistent state specific data and the. For example, during the operations it was difficult to determine and identify the no. of students from Kerala since no state specific data is available. The department of Public Works shared their insights on challenges during construction activities. For example, availability of land around the river determines the type of bridge and its quality, which may result in conflict with the public. The department of Industries and Commerce pointed out various strengths and weaknesses within their department and how it can be utilized during an emergency. For example, they pointed out that the supply chain system in Kerala is not as strong as what is seen in other parts of the country and that is something to be worked upon. They also highlighted the dearth of industries and entrepreneurship working towards climate change and that is something the department can encourage

within the state. The participants also pointed out that the general view of public when it comes to development is to see construction happening all around, but no one is thinking of the long-term impacts. During the presentations, the departments discussed various aspects that collide with the interest of the other departments. For example, lack of availability of land for construction was seen as a major issue blocking development by the Public Works Department whereas other departments did not share the same perspective.

Key Questions for group discussion: -

- What were the major Hazards and disasters faced in recent years by your department?
- What were the issues that came due to these hazards/disasters?
- How has the department handled or responded to the disaster?

Response from the participants

Name of the Department	Hazards/Disasters	Impacts	Gaps and Challenges
Kerala Maritime Board	• Cyclone Okhi (2017) • 2018 floods	• Shipping operations are affected. • Berthing Facilities and other equipment's are damaged. • Shipping operations at port was affected	
NORKA Roots	1. Russia-Ukraine War and 'Operation Gang 2. Yemen Evacuation 3. Covid 19 4. Operation Ajay (evacuation of Keralites from Israel, 2023) 5. Manipur Conflict 2023	• Medical Students were evacuated from Ukraine. • War victims affected in Yemen who were Keralites were rescued. • For Covid 19- War rooms and COVID helps at New Delhi, Mumbai, and other major cities. Online health consulting and supply of emergency medicines was initiated. • Repatriation of Keralites from Israel	• Lack of State-Specific information on Keralites.
Public Works Department	1. 2018 Floods 2. 2020 Cyclone	• Collapse of retaining wall in Alappuzha district • Sinking of School building foundation • Collapse of bridge • Roads washed away in coastal belts. • Keralite Students were present in the state during the conflict	
Industries and Commerce	Flood 2018 Covid 19	• MSME sector especially from central and north Kerala was affected severely during the flood of 2018. Livelihood of thousands depending on the sector came to a standstill. Most of the units from the flood affected area lost their infrastructure facilities. • Lockdown due to Covid 19 badly affected services and production sector. During that period, the migrant labour force returned to their state which caused a severe crisis in the sector. Supply chain was also badly affected	• No proper supply and value chain exists in Kerala which itself causes a lot of issues especially when responding to crisis.

Participants from Kerala Maritime Board presenting their findings in Activity Session

Conclusion: The first day of the training concluded with the activities and presentation by each department. The participants got the opportunity to go through the handouts displayed at the venue like the Kerala SDMP Plan 2016, the Orange Book of Disaster Management and Post Disaster Need Assessment Study of 2018 Floods.

Day 2: 28 November 2023

The second day of the training started with a recap from the previous day's learnings. During the recap sessions, participants shared their experiences and opinion on various issues and challenges their department faces. The session also involved re-encapsulating the process of disaster management, recalling important terms related to Disaster Management such as hazards, vulnerability, risk and rehabilitation.

Session Plan for 28th November 2023

Sr No	Session	Trainer/Facilitator
1	Recap from the previous sessions	Ms. Annie George
2	Session 5: Mainstream DRR to departments	Mr. Annie George
3	Session 6 (Part 1): Preparedness, Response, Recovery Planning, and Introduction to DM Template	Mr. Vijeesh
4	Activity 2	Ms. Annie
5	Way Forward and Plan of Action and Q&A	All Trainers
7	Vote of Thanks + Concluding Remarks	Ms. Divya Gupta/Aishwarya

Session 4: Mainstreaming Disaster Management

The session started with Ms Annie George Introducing the participants to the Prime Ministers' 10 Point Agenda. All development sectors must imbibe the principles of disaster risk management. This will ensure that all development projects are built to appropriate standards and contribute to the resilience of communities they seek to serve. She also highlighted the fact that development can solve various issues in society and create some at times, therefore, it should always be focused on reducing challenges both in long term and short term. She further elaborated on the same theme by introducing the participants to various examples of good practices in DRR such as multi hazard resilient housing post tsunami in Kerala, construction of raised floors/ foundation in flood prone areas. She drew examples from both historic and traditional architectural practices as well as the latest development in DRR.

Ms. Annie George Conducting a Session on Mainstreaming DRR in development practices.

Session 5: Introduction to DM Template

Mr. Vijeesh introduced the participants to the DM Template developed by KSDMA. His introductory session included guidelines for making the DM Plan and the legal frameworks that support the plans. He emphasized the need for preparing a DM plan for each Department as per NDMA Act, 2005. Each department prepares their DM Plan as per the hazards and vulnerabilities it is most susceptible to. He also mentioned the need for reviewing and updating the plan each year. Each element of the DM plan was carefully discussed with expected challenges with possible solutions. The provision of funds for prevention of disaster, mitigation, capacity-building and preparedness from the respective departmental budget head and Centrally Sponsored Schemes was also discussed. Each department must make a basic introduction o their organization with its major functions, assets, and the logistical activities involved. The description should be brief, well defined with a clear description of activities. The departments were instructed not to copy any of the activities and functions simply from existing documents. Instead, a fresh draft with precise information needs to be prepared.

Session 6: Preparedness Response and Recovery

The session was led by Mr. Vijeesh who explained the various phases of Disaster Management such as preparedness, response, recovery, and planning. These phases were then explained for different departments specifically as each department will have a different function in all the four phases. All

throughout the session, he connected these aspects to the DM Plan so that the participants get an idea of how to clearly prepare the DM Plan for their Departments.

Conclusion

Way forward for preparing the DM plan and the scope of the work for each department was discussed towards the end of the two day training program. Participants expressed their willingness to prepare a Departmental Level DM plan as the training helped them understand the requirements in the current global scenario. The session was concluded by Dr Mithila Malika and Ms. Divya who thanked all the guests for participating in the training event.

Concluding remarks and Vote of Thanks by Dr Mithila and Ms. Divya Gupta

Session Feedback

A session feedback form was provided to each participant present at the training to evaluate their experience of the training event. The following is the result of the evaluation.

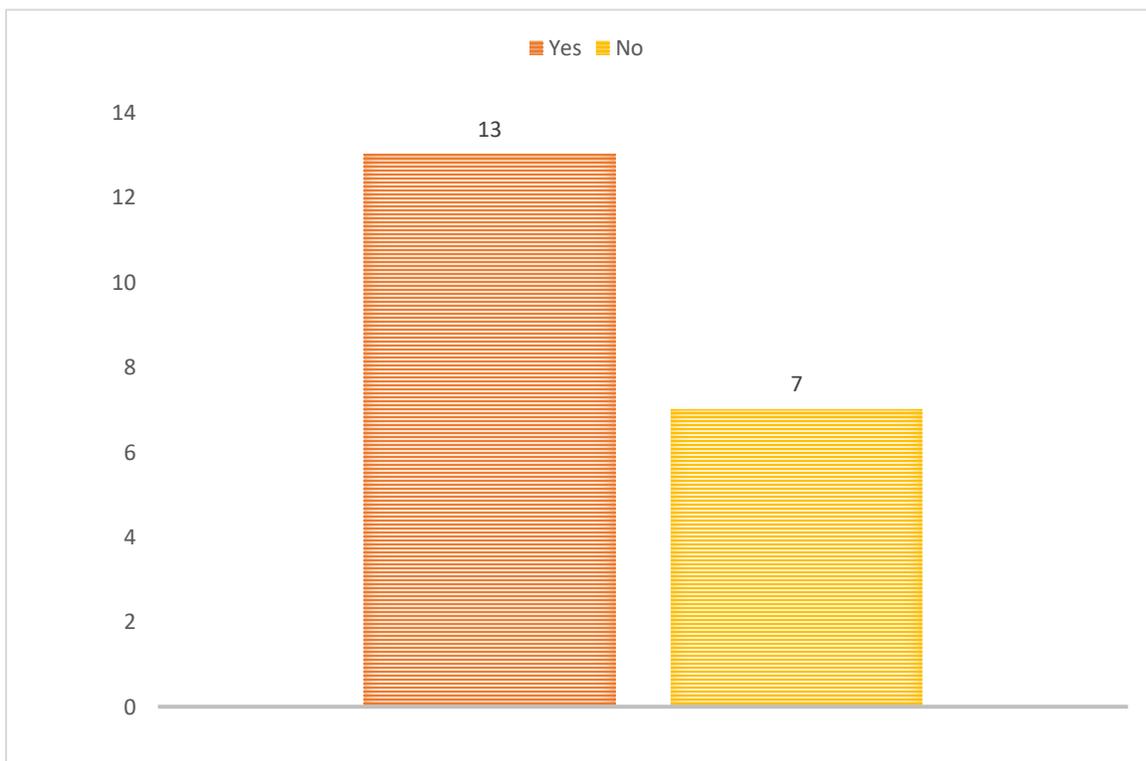1. **How was your experience of the Virtual Cadre Training Program?**
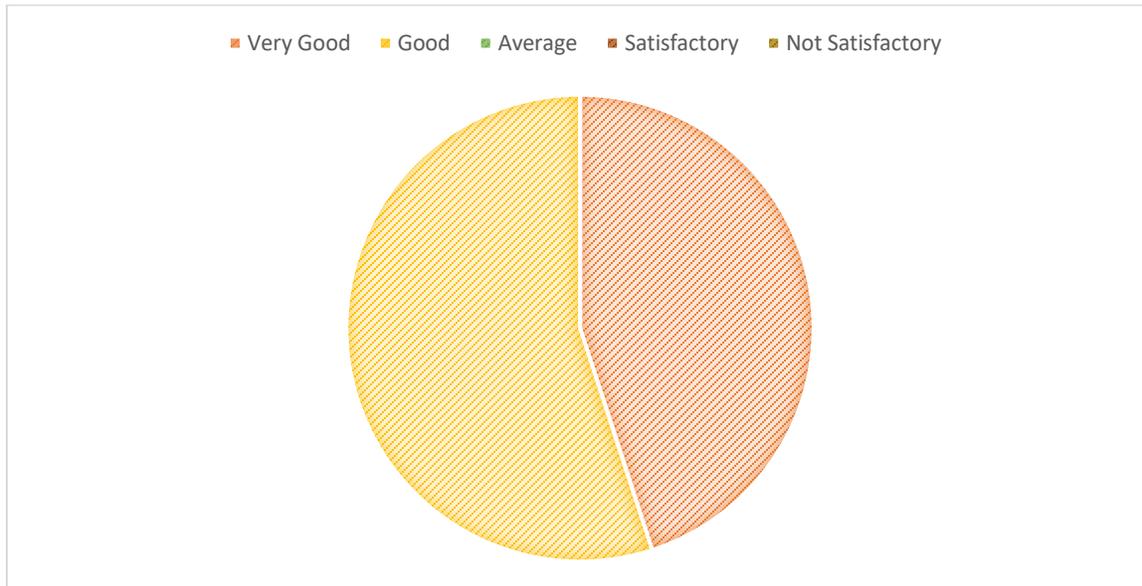
2. **How do you rate your understanding of the following Topics**:
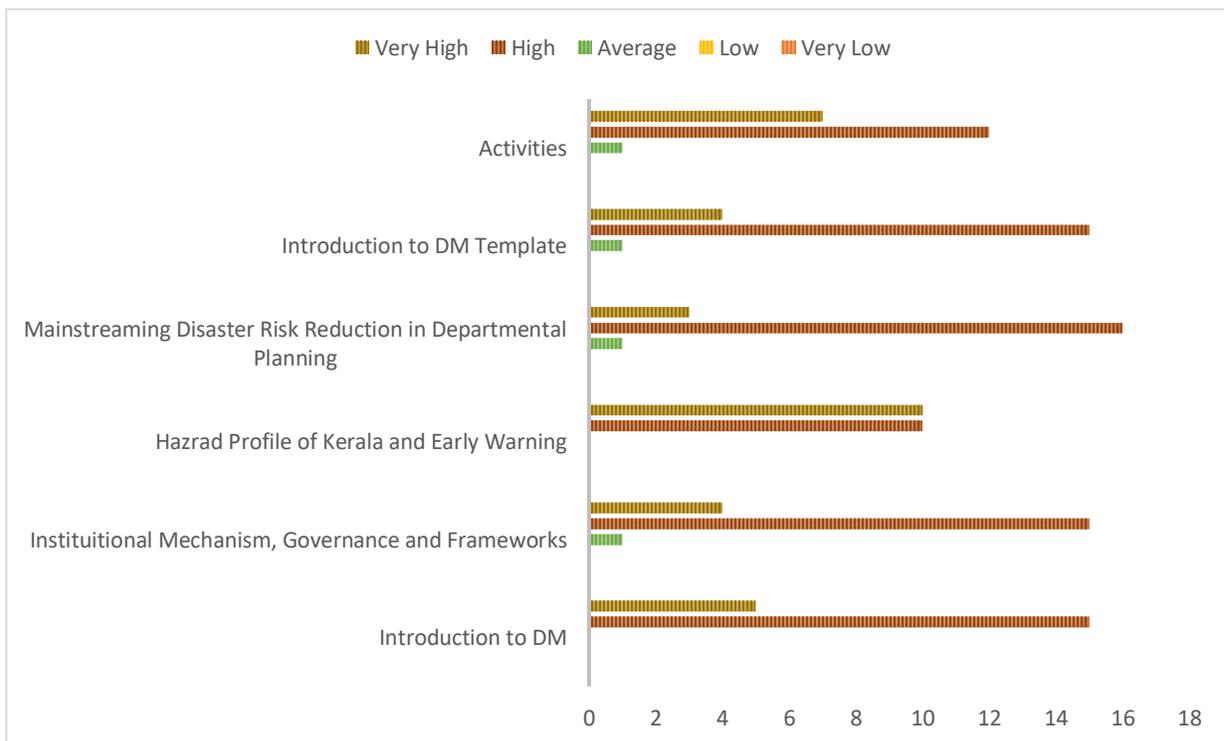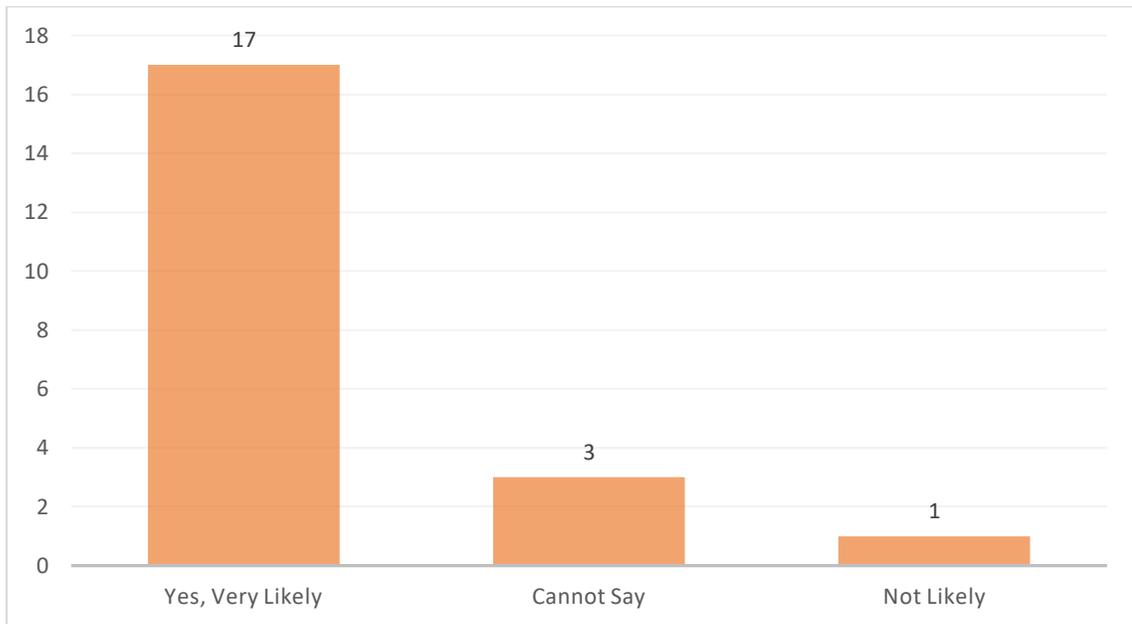
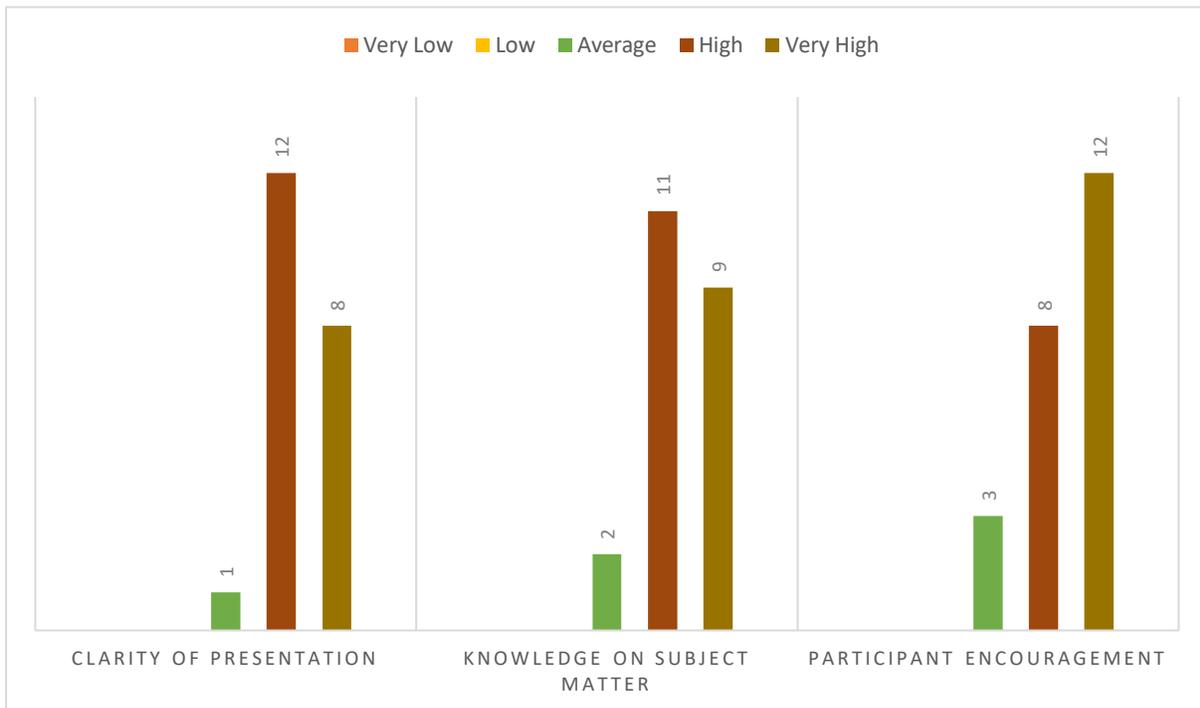**3.** **How do you see Kerala's vulnerability to disasters?**
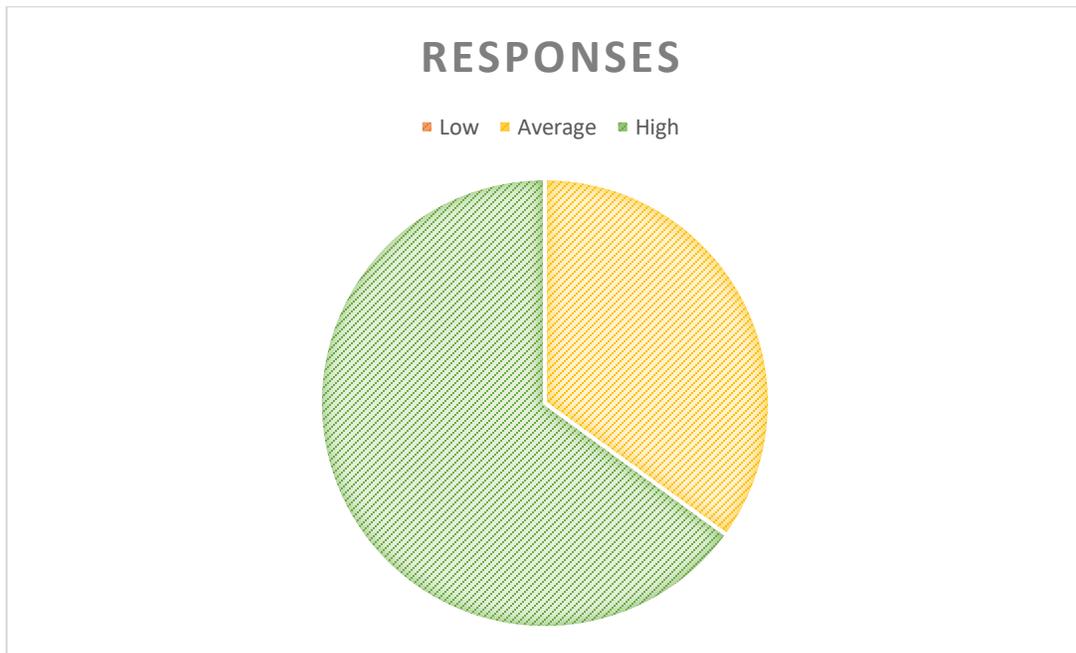
4. **Will this Training help you contribute to your department in mainstreaming Disaster Management?**
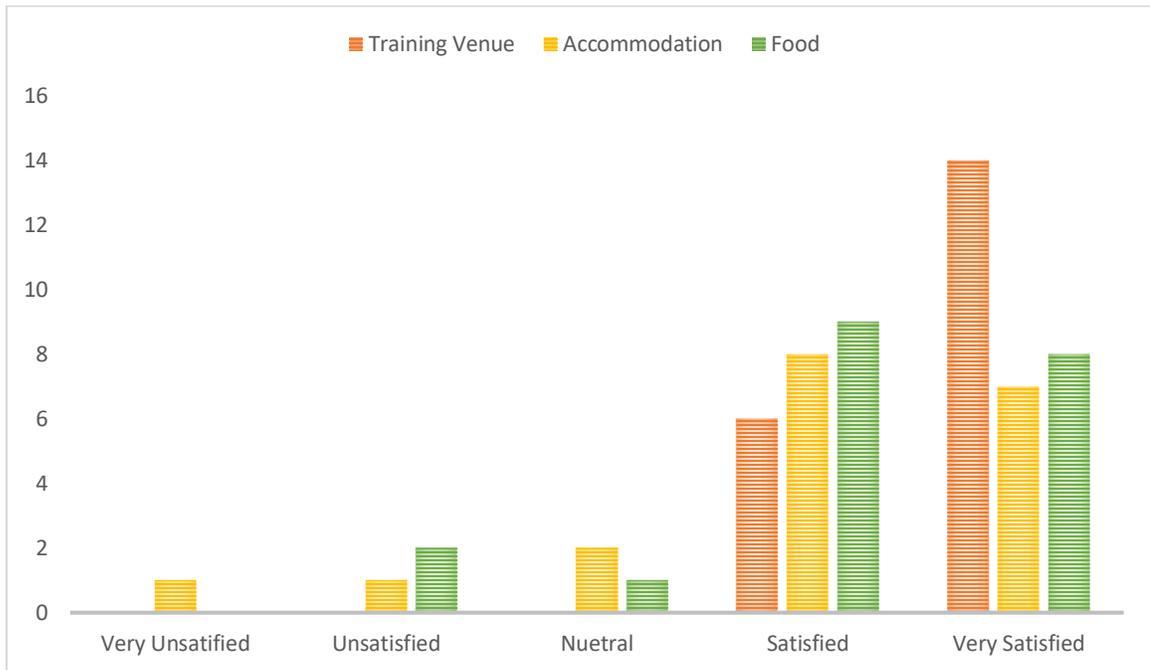
5.   Do you feel this Training will help you Develop a DM Plan for your Department?

6.   Please rate your experience with the Trainers for the following:

7. Accommodation and Stay

Photographs from the Event

Participants from NORKA roots sharing their experience of facing hazards during Ice Breaker Session

Department of Public Works presenting impacts and response of different disasters during the activities.

Annexure

List of Participants

Sr No	Participants	Designation	Department	Contact	Email
1	Justin J	Junior Superintendent	Department of Industries and Commerce	9496650331	justintvm83@gmail.com
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3	Jijith Chandran	Junior Superintendent	Department of Industries and Commerce	9497172090	ichandj@gmail.com
4	Naveen Ganesh	Junior Superintendent	Department of Industries and Commerce	8943061391	naveenmaash@gmail.com
5	Sri Susan T.R	wharf supervisor	Kerala Maritime Board	9995033983	pckozhikode.port@kerala.gov.in portconservatorkkd@gmail.com
6	Sri Anil Kumar K	Port Conservator	Kerala Maritime Board	7736167362	poalappuzha.port@kerala.gov.in
7	Sri Sudheesh	Chief Sig	Kerala Maritime Board	9895221379	kpsudhikps@gmail.com
8	Capt Abraham V Kuriakose	Port Officer	Kerala Maritime Board	8547540280	poalapuzha.port@kerala.gov.in
9	Sri Navas M	Port Conservator	Kerala Maritime Board	9447342581	navaskrishnabuvid@gmail.com
10	Sri Jeevanand M	Mechanical Engineer (In charge)	Kerala Maritime Board	9946298960	jeevan0555@gmail.com
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12	Jayakumar	Assistant	NORKA	7907581305	jkthittangala@gmail.com
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15	Syamala Kumary S	Assistant	NORKA	7025101886	syamatvm2002@gmail.com
16	Ms Sajina SJ	Asst. Executive engineer	Public Works Department	7907411710	bridgesekm@gmail.com
17	Mr Rajmohan Thampi	Asst. Executive engineer	Public Works Department	9497785159	aeermtvp@gmail.com
18	Mr Ablemon	Asst. Executive engineer	Public Works Department	7907958368	ablemon@gmail.com
19	Smt Asha M	Geotechnical Engineer	Public Works Department	8547478273	ashamreji@gmail.com
20	Sr Adarsh N	Asst Engineer	Public Works Department	9020314949	adarshn83@gmail.com

Department Categorization for Basic Training

Basic Training Batch 1	Basic Training Batch 2
Department of Industries & Commerce	Department of Dairy Development
Public Works Department	Department of Social Justice
NORKA Roots	Department of LSG (Urban)
Kerala Maritime Board	Department of Information and Public Relations
	Department of Forest and Wildlife
	Department of Collegiate Education
	Department of Higher Education