



**ONE DAY CONSULTATION CUM WORKSHOP ON
ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY AND PEOPLE UNDER
PALLIATIVE CARE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

15th June 2019



Organized by

Kerala State Disaster Management Authority

In association with

Pallium India &

Indian Association of Palliative Care



Dr Sekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary, KSDMA addressing the gathering



Dr M R Rajagopal, Founder, Pallium India delivers the Keynote address

Introduction

Following the worst flood in a century that ravaged Kerala in August 2018, killing 451 people and displacing more than a million, two thoughts remain paramount. One was the intensity of suffering and the other, intense pride on how the common man responded, tens of thousands working shoulder to shoulder with the government machinery and armed forces. The people of Kerala demonstrated true heroism.

The predominant thought was the magnitude of suffering of those under palliative care. When people were evacuated, many lost medicines and physical aid which were essential for their very existence. For the persons with disabilities and elderly, rescue was often delayed and even after rescue, their suffering was intense. Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), Pallium India and Indian Association of Palliative Care (Kerala) joined hands to conduct a one-day consultation on “Addressing the needs of the Elderly and People under Palliative Care in Disaster related Emergencies,” involving as many palliative care organizations and NGOs that work in the field of elderly care in Kerala as possible. The expected participation was 50; but due to this unique subject, 85 people registered.

Inaugural Session

The inaugural function started at 10am at Mascot hotel Trivandrum on 15th of June 2019. Dr. Sekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary, KSDMA; Dr. M R Rajagopal, Founder Pallium India; Mr. Joe John George, State Project Officer KSDMA; Mr. Narayan Puthukudy, IAPC and Ms. Anupama N, Hazard Analyst KSDMA were the member’s part of the inaugural function.

The workshop comprised with two technical sessions and one group discussion. Experts in various fields took the technical sessions. Overview of palliative care in the Country & State and Importance of Inclusion of elderly & people under palliative care in emergencies was dealt by Dr. M R Rajagopal (Chairman, Pallium India). Ms Annie George State Coordinator, UNDP discussed on the excerpts of the study among the elderly in Kerala. Dr. Bipin Gopal, Nodal Officer of Palliative Care, Directorate of Health Services talked about Geriatric care initiatives in the State. Social Security Schemes for the Elderly were discussed by Dr. Diana C.G. Mr. Sathyakumar C J, Hazard Analyst communicated on Overview of Disaster Management in the State & Hazard Profile of the State.

Post lunch sessions were based on two different aspects, one is Experience on working with the elderly during floods 2018 & Recommendations by Mr. K.K Basheer (General Secretary, Thanal Palliative and Paraplegic Care Society) and the second part was on Experience on Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction & Recommendations by Mr. Joe John George (State Project Officer, KSDMA).

In the post lunch session, the participants were divided into groups to discuss three topics viz.

- 1) Challenges faced by the elderly & people under palliative care during emergencies
- 2) Training needs of the elderly & people under palliative care and their care givers
- 3) Suggestive list of interventions of bring inclusion among elderly & people under palliative care with regard to disasters & emergencies

The groups discussed in detail and came up with suggestions & recommendations as follows:-

Group 1

1) Challenges faced by the elderly & people under palliative care during emergencies.

- Physical Worries
- Loneliness
- Identified the depth of defect
- Mental Stress
- Communication Problems
- Unknown Rescue operators
- Reluctance to move from house for several reasons
- Delay to identified
- Regular using medicines
- Mental conflicts of volunteers
- Cannot make appropriate decision due to communication gap with family
- The hand held wealth
- Difficult to switch

Group 2

2) Training needs of the elderly & people under palliative care and their care givers.

Training- To whom

- Palliative care patients – paraplegic/ wheelchair bound
- Volunteer (youth)
- Kudumbasree workers / Community workers/Asha workers
- Caregivers
- Elderly
- School, college Squad candidates

Subjects-Topics/Area for training

- Field Assisted Target-Transportation
- Locally available raw materials
- Communication/Early warning systems
- Know how Disaster relief Patient care
- Specialised Training – skill based
- Locality Awareness/ community awareness.

Implementation of Training

- NGO'S
- LSGDS
- Linking DDMA to NGO'S

Module

- Elderly / Palliative
- Specials- Alzheimer's
- Pain & Palliative care
- Materials
- BLS
- Meditations

Group 3

3) - Suggestive list of interventions to bring inclusion among elderly & people under palliative care with regard to disasters & emergencies

- Geo Tagging – to locate the exact mapping.
- Clear Data base
- Compulsory toilets in public place
- Made wheel chair friendly areas
- Turn disaster temporary shelter to safe permanent shelters
- Made strong early warning system to overcome disasters
- Do not give permits for building in places where the fracture is genuine

Annexure 1 | Participants

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Introduction

Kerala is aging faster than the rest of India. Its 60 plus population, 5.1 per cent of the total in 1961, was just below the national 5.6 per cent. Since 1980, Kerala has overtaken the rest and almost 13 per cent of the population is already past 60 years. According to a study (Centre for Development Studies, 2013 “A survey on ageing scenario in Kerala”), the State's elderly population is growing at a perpetual rate of 2.3 per cent. The growth rate is high among the elderly aged 70 or 80 and above. Currently 42 lakh people of Kerala are 60 and above; 13 per cent of them are 80 years and over, the fastest growing group among the old. Women outnumber men among the 60 plus and among them, majority are widows. Kerala has got the highest life expectancy at birth. The life expectancy at birth in Kerala is 71.8 years and 77.8 years for male and female respectively. Majority of old age people in Kerala are widows is also a matter of concern.

By 2025, about 20 per cent of the population would be elderly and the demand on the social security system would be really enormous. Hence, it is very important to remember that social security to the senior citizens is not charity instead it is their basic human right.

Background

Kerala is a multi-hazard prone state and highly vulnerable to natural disasters. The State's location along the sea coast and with a steep gradient along the slopes of the Western Ghats and its population (860 persons per square kilometers) makes it more vulnerable to disasters. The SDMP, 2016 has identified 39 hazards categorized as naturally triggered hazards and anthropogenically triggered hazards.

Last year, 2018, the torrential rain in the month of August ravaged the State causing floods and landslides in all the 14 districts. An estimated 5.4 million people were affected and 453 persons lost their lives. Thousands of people with pre-existing illnesses, those with disabilities, the elderly, people under palliative care have been particularly vulnerable.

Government of Kerala with the technical support from UN organizations had conducted a detailed Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) after the floods of 2018, which was first of its kind in the country has found the following with regard to the elderly:-

- Highlighted that floods and landslides have affected women and girls, persons with disabilities (PwDs), the elderly, transgender persons, migrant workers, fisher folk, scheduled tribe and scheduled caste population disproportionately
- Over 8600 PwDs were affected by the disaster
- Elderly who were living alone, and particularly elderly women were hard hit by the disaster
- Many elderly people resisted evacuation, fearing loss of their life and property. A few of them stayed in relief camps and some did not have a home to go back to, as their homes were completely destroyed.

Effects of 2018 floods on the Elderly

The vulnerabilities of the elderly living alone, mostly elderly women, were aggravated in the aftermath of the disaster. Field visits to six districts showed that during the evacuations, the elderly resisted moving out of their homes or comfort zones, fearing loss of life and security. Several elderly persons remained in the camps in Pathanamthitta despite discomfort, as younger family members preferred that they receive the distributed benefits in the camps.

Medication and palliative care were disrupted immediately following the floods. Trauma associated with the disaster and the lack of support in re-setting their homes prevented elderly persons, especially women living alone, from accessing medical care. Visits to the homes of elderly women living alone in Perunad village of Vadasserikkara Panchayat revealed that they were suffering from depression and anxiety. Elderly women relying on a pension are also likely to use their meagre resources to make their homes habitable again, foregoing food and nutrition and risking anaemia.

This consultation on the inclusion of elderly & people under palliative care in humanitarian crisis will provide a platform where practitioners and experts who have worked at the national and state level can share their experiences and best practices in working with the vulnerable groups. The deliberations will help with government departments, NGOs to understand the challenges faced by such communities and plan ways to mitigate the risk.

Objectives of the conference

- To discuss the importance of inclusive disaster risk reduction with specific reference to the elderly and people under palliative care.
- To develop a plan of action for including elderly and people under palliative care in disaster risk reduction.
- To provide a platform for the government departments and NGOs to exchange ideas on inclusion and facilitate the actualization of 'leave no one behind' in their existing programmes & schemes.

Expected Departments/Participants

1. Kerala State Disaster Management Authority
2. DDMA Thiruvananthapuram
3. Health Department (Geriatric & Palliative Care)
4. Kerala State Institute of Health & Family Welfare
5. Social Justice Department
6. Kerala Social Security Mission
7. Kerala Fire & Rescue Services
8. Police Department
9. NGOs working with the elderly (Like Helpage India)
10. Institutions working in palliative care
11. Experts in DRR & Geriatric Care
12. UNDP
13. UNICEF
14. Sphere India

Annexure 3 | Agenda

Inaugural Session 10.00 am – 10.55 am		
Time	Session	Speaker
10.00 AM -10.05AM	Welcome & Introductory Remarks	KSDMA
10.05 AM -10.15 AM	Presidential Address	Dr Sekhar L. Kuriakose Member secretary, KSDMA
10.35AM -10.45 AM	Special Address	Dr. M R Rajagopal Chairman, Pallium India
10.45 AM– 10.50 AM	Felicitation	Shri Narayanan Puthukudy General Secretary, IAPC - Kerala
10.50 AM -10.55 AM	Vote of Thanks	KSDMA
10.55 AM- 11.00 AM	Tea Break	
Technical session -1		
11.00 AM – 11.30PM	- Overview of Disaster Management in the Country & State - Hazard Profile of the State	Dr Sekhar L. Kuriakose Member Secretary, KSDMA
11.30 AM – 12.00 PM	- Overview of palliative care in the Country & State - Importance of Inclusion of elderly & people under palliative care in emergencies	Dr. M R Rajagopal Chairman, Pallium India
12.00 PM – 12.20 PM	Geriatric care initiatives in the State	Dr. Bipin Gopal, State Nodal Officer, Elderly & Palliative Care, Health Dept., GoK
12.20 PM – 12.40 PM	Social Security Schemes for the Elderly	Dr Diana C G Kerala Social Security Mission
12.40 PM – 01:00 PM	Excerpts on the study among the elderly of Kerala	Ms Annie George State Coordinator, UNDP
01.00 PM – 01.15 PM	Discussions, Q & A	Chair
01.15 PM – 02.15 PM	Lunch	
Technical Session 2 Chair : Dr. M R Rajagopal, Chairman, Pallium India		
02.15 PM – 02.35 PM	Experience on working with the elderly during floods 2018 & Recommendations	Mr KK Basheer Thanal
02.35 PM – 02.55 PM	Experience on Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction & Recommendations	Mr. Joe John George State Project Officer, KSDMA
Group Discussion		
02.55 PM - 3.45 PM	Group Discussion (3 Groups)	4) Challenges faced by the elderly & people under

		<p>palliative care during emergencies</p> <p>5) Training needs of the elderly & people under palliative care and their care givers</p> <p>6) Suggestive list of interventions of bring inclusion among elderly & people under palliative care with regard to disasters & emergencies</p>
03.45 PM - 04.15 PM	Sharing of each group (30 minutes)	Feedback/Sharing by each group leader
04.15 PM – 04.30 PM	Tea	
04.30 PM - 05.00 PM	Way forward & Valedictory	KSDMA – Pallium India

Report Prepared by

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&

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