

**Loyola College of Social Sciences Thiruvananthapuram**

**Department of Disaster Management**

**Online Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction: Developing a New Curriculum for Higher Education in Kerala (Curriculum Development for the MSW programme in Disaster Management)**

**MSWDM- CDW-29-05-2020**



**Screen shots of the DRR curriculum development workshop**

**Background**

In 2020, the Loyola College of Social Sciences launched a new PG programme, the MSW in Disaster Management. Like all the other PG programmes initiated by the college, the MSW in Disaster Management was also first of its kind in the state. This programme was a response to the need of the times. The recurring disasters in the state of Kerala has necessitated the creation of a trained pool of young professionals, equipped to engage with different dimensions of disaster management.

As a part of curriculum development and syllabus finalization of the new proposed course of MSWDM, an online workshop was conducted on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, involving renowned academics and activists, with significant experience in this sector.

The resource persons included academicians, government administrators, prospective employers in the field of disaster management and alumni. They provided feedback regarding mandatory components of an inter disciplinary programme of this nature that merges the disciplines of social work and disaster management. The list of resource persons and participants is attached herewith.

### **Workshop Proceedings**

The online workshop on **Disaster Risk Reduction: Developing a New Curriculum for Higher Education in Kerala** was inaugurated by Dr. K.T Jaleel, Hon. Minister for Higher Education, Welfare of Minorities, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, followed by a message from Shri. Kadakampally Surendran, Hon. Minister for Co-operation, Tourism and Devaswom.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Rajan Gurukkal, Vice-Chairman of Kerala State Higher Education Council followed by a special address by Dr. Muralee Thummarkudy, Operations Manager, Crisis Management Branch, United Nations Environment Programme.

Other subject experts who addressed the webinar were Dr. Shekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary Kerala State Disaster Management Authority & Head, State Emergency Operations Centre, Dr. Sunil Damodaran Santha, Associate Professor, Tata Institute of Social science, Dr. M. K. George, S. J., Former Principal, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, Dr. Abey George, Associate Professor, Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Dr. Jyothi Krishnan, Independent Researcher, Dr. Siji Varghese, S. J., Director, Assistancy, Development Officer (ADO), Dr. Jasmine Sarah Alexander, Asst. Professor, IQAC Director, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Dr. Sonny Jose Associate Professor, HOD, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, Fr. Joye James, Coordinator, Jesuit Higher Education Association, South Asia. Concluding remarks were delivered by Dr. Saji P Jacob Principal, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum

Feedback from academicians-

**Prof. (Dr.) Rajan Gurukkal:** Prof Gurukkal spoke of the timeliness and significance of a social work programme in disaster management. Prof Gurukkal opined that the draft document of the curriculum was impressive. Given the insistence of UGC and other counsel on outcome based education, Prof Gurukkal proposed that MSWDM programme needs to indicate the course and programme outcomes. The students must have the basic knowledge language to understanding the disaster situation.

**Dr. Shekhar L. Kuriakose:** Dr Shekhar spoke about the **governance dimensions of** disaster management. Dr Kuriakose spoke about the need to develop out- of- the- range solutions for out- of- the- box scenarios. He also suggested that the name of the course can be renamed in master of social work in disaster management and humanitarian action, with a focus on the role of grass root level administration in disaster management. Dr Kuriakose also spoke of the need to incorporate dimensions related to India's three tire administration and its engagement with disaster management, which can be presented as a unique model to the rest of the world. He also mentioned that microeconomic management is an area that needs to be incorporated into the syllabus. Students also can pick up and develop disaster management case studies from across the world.

**Dr. Sunil Damodaran Santha:** Dr Sunil spoke of the need of a curriculum for a people centred disaster risk reduction. His discussion was based on the guiding values, knowledge systems framework, working with diverse stakeholders, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and grass root innovations in DRR. In a disaster risk reduction scenario people involved with diverse values, interests, knowledge and power are coming on a single platform so a trans and multi-disciplinary approach is required. Disaster risk reduction has to be a platform where integrated knowledge system can work, so a student in the MSW DM has an understanding of what are the root causes and dynamic pressures that contribute to the vulnerabilities of communities and how these disasters have emerged. Specifically in this context the student can have the capacity to recognize and appreciate and also communicate local knowledge systems and at the same time try to also understand the scientific knowledge provided by the state and other officials. Blending risk communication with local knowledge and with scientific aspects is crucial. Dr Sunil also spoke of the need of integrating the core methods of social work into the syllabus.

**Dr. M. K. George, S. J:** Dr George began with two questions that need to be answered in the context of the new course. The first concerns the viability of the new course and the second on

meeting the challenge of providing quality education. Dr George mentioned the vision for higher education as per NEP-1986 as “higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through the dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. Being the apex of the education pyramid, it has also a key role in producing teachers for the education system” The proposed course can become a viable programme provided it is rooted in the history of the institution and the vision of higher education. The new course can also integrate academic and activist dimensions, and maintaining the Jesuit identity -Magis excellent.

**Dr. Abey George: Dr George spoke of** development induced disasters in the context of climate change. By initiating a course in disaster management, we are creating a set of professionals, who will need to address the full range of disasters, at different phases right from mitigation to recovery. He also spoke of equipping young professionals to engage with the full range of disaster preparedness activities. Engaging with vulnerability and preparedness implies acquiring the capacity to engage with satellite image analysis, to social vulnerability to the economic fall outs of disasters. The MSWDM professionals should act like a bridge between the community and the decision makers. Dr George also emphasised the need for incorporating an accountability framework for humanitarian action into the syllabus.

**Dr. Jyothi Krishnan: Dr Krishnan spoke of the equipping students with a field** understanding from disaster vulnerability and recovery through such a programme. She emphasised that students of social work and DM field must be familiar with social inequalities. The Kerala flood of 2018 affected the rich and poor alike, but the process of recovery was unequal, as it was more harshly felt by the poorer sections. The understanding of pre disaster vulnerabilities is equally important in the process of disaster recovery. The students may not be able to give solutions but they should understand various dimensions of vulnerability. The syllabus needs to cover the connections between ecological and ecosystem vulnerability and societal vulnerability, in order to provide students with a comprehensive framework of vulnerability. Students also need to develop skills to deal with multiple agencies ranging from the LSGDs to the KSDMA and NDMA. They should also be equipped to read project plans, maps and technical reports.

**Dr. Siji Varghese, S. J: Dr Siji spoke of the role of** international agencies in disaster responses in the Indian context. The syllabus can include global efforts / practices/ learnings to

manage disasters with the aid of international agencies such as the UN, IFRC etc. The various roles of international agencies (financial aid, relief materials, logistics support, personal and volunteers, expertise) can be explored in detail in the curriculum of MSWDM. Students need to be exposed to the dynamics of international agencies in the disaster management context. Detailed knowledge of international agencies in the field of disaster management with special focus on UN agencies is essential. The curriculum should include a detailed course on international agencies and not just a chapter. Internship with international agencies working in the field of disaster management will be effective especially in the event of a disaster context.

**Dr. Jasmine Sarah Alexander:** Dr Jasmine spoke about the multi disciplinary nature of disaster risk reduction activities, as a result of which no single discipline can contribute to DRR completely. The social worker is a very active practitioner in the all spheres of disaster management. The MSWDM curriculum should have four basic components 1) basics of social work, 2) disaster management basics, 3) disaster management skills, 4) disaster management advanced topics. Sometimes disasters responders itself can have a high level of trauma hence, self-care skills should also be a part of the MSWDM syllabus.

#### List of Resource Persons

Sl No	Name of Resource Person	Stakeholder Group	Details of the Lecture
1	<b>Fr. Sunny Thomas, S.J.</b>	<b>Academician</b>	<b>Welcome Address</b>
2	<b>DR. K. T. JALEEL, Hon. Minister for Higher Education</b>	<b>Policy maker</b>	<b>Inaugural Address</b>
3	<b>Prof. (Dr.) Rajan Gurukkal, Vice-Chairman of Kerala State Higher Education Council.</b>	<b>Academician</b>	<b>Keynote Address</b>
4	<b>Dr. Muralee Thummarakudy, Operations Manager, Crisis Management Branch, United Nations Environment Programme.</b>	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Special Address</b>
5	<b>Dr Shekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary, KSDMA</b>	<b>Academician and Employer</b>	<b>Special Address</b>
6	<b>Dr. Sunil Damodaran Santha, Associate Professor, TISS, Mumbai</b>	<b>Academician</b>	<b>Special Address</b>
7	<b>Dr. M.K. George, S. J, Former Principal, Loyola College of Social Sciences.</b>	<b>Academician</b>	<b>Prospects and Challenges of MSW in Disaster Management</b>

8	<b>Dr Siji Varghese, S.J.</b> Director, Assistancy Development Officer (ADO)	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Collaboration and Networking with International Agencies for Disaster Management</b>
9	<b>Dr Jyothi Krishnan,</b> Independent Researcher	<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Experiences of Disaster Management Interventions: Insights for a New Curriculum</b>
10	<b>Dr Abey George,</b> Associate Professor, KILA	<b>Academician and Employer</b>	<b>Possible Activism and Mass Movement Models in Disaster Management Curriculum</b>
11	<b>Dr Jasmine Sarah Alexander,</b> Assistant Professor, Loyola College of Social Sciences	<b>Academician and Alumni</b>	<b>Prospects and Challenges of Social Work in Disaster Management Curriculum</b>

### List of Participants

1.	Dr. Sunil Kumar	Faculty
2.	Mr. Aby Tellas	Faculty
3.	Mr. Saji J	Faculty
4.	Mr. Ranjit George	Faculty
5.	Dr. Sabu p Thomas	Faculty
6.	Dr. Francina P.X.	Faculty
7.	Dr. Nisha Jolly Nelson	Faculty
8.	Dr. Pramod.S. K	Faculty
9.	Dr. Anitha S Nair	Faculty
10.	Dr. Prakash Pillai	Faculty
11.	Dr. Sonny Jose	Faculty
12.	Dr. Leena.S. T	Faculty
13.	Dr. Angelo Mathew	Faculty
14.	Ms. Vandana Suresh	Faculty
15.	Mr. Kannan G. S	Alumni
16.	Dr. Mourlin. K	Expert
17.	Dominic Joseph	Alumni

18.	Dr. Lekshmi Chandran	Faculty
19.	Dr. Jisha.P.R	Faculty
20.	Fr. Joye James	Alumni
21.	Dr. Jasmine Sarah Alexander	Faculty
22.	Dr. M.K. George, S. J	Alumni
23.	Fr. Sunny Thomas, S. J.	Manager
24.	Mr. Cyriac K.J.	Alumni and Expert
25.	Fr. Abhilash k Sebastian	Alumni
26.	Mr. Prasad.R	Alumni
27.	Mr. Ramesh.S	Alumni
28.	Dr. Saji P. Jacob	Principal