

Department of Social Work

B.C.M College, Kottayam-686001, Kerala, India

SAMANWAYA 2016

The International Conference and Social Work Practitioners' Congress

REPORT

I present this brief report of Samanwaya 16, by giving thanks to the Almighty who showered blessing for the success of Samanwaya and giving social workers to gather here for a meaningful interaction.

“Samanwaya” literally means, the “blend of all”. The department of social work at BCM College, Kottayam has started “Samanwaya” in 2003 as an avenue for annual gathering of social work students, educators, scholars and practitioners across the country. Samanwaya series has been serving as an avenue for interacting and exchanging knowledge among social workers, academicians and practitioners.

This year “Samanwaya 2016” *ie.* 14th Samanwaya, has been organized in association with Kerala Association of Professional Social Workers (KAPS), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Asia Pacific, India Network of Professional Social Work Associations (INPSW) with different programmes.

Theme of Samanwaya '16

The theme of **Samanwaya'16** is ‘**Social work intervention against drug abuse among children**’.

India is home to the largest number of children than any other country in the world, significantly larger than the number in China. Nearly 40 % of our population are children. A recent survey conducted by National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre and All India Institute of Medical Sciences reveals that around 74% of children in the state of Kerala are tobacco users. The study commissioned by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reached out to over 4000 children across 27 states and two union territories. It is also revealed that since 2014, there has been a sudden spurt in the cases of

drug haul and usage in the state. Substances in different forms are easily accessible for the children, especially because the racket concentrates their business near schools and other educational institutions. Some cases show that children are also used as a vital link in the marketing chain of substance.

Children are susceptible to the lure of drug use also because physiologically they are incapable of making reliable judgments. Research reveals that pre-frontal cortex in the brain- the area of judgment is not fully developed till a person reaches around mid 20s. Hence it is no use blaming the child totally for falling into the trap of dependency.

Samanwya 16, the international conference included the schools of social work to intervene against drug abuse among children. Samanwya assimilated the ideas and different strategies for combating the issue and disseminate the knowledge to the public and other authorities for a better future generation.

Samanwya 2016 comprised the following:-

i. Programmes for schools by Dept. of Social Work, BCM College

The department has initiated programs against drug abuse in different schools of Kottayam District.

ii. Theme based competitive events of social work students on themes related to the main theme. The competition items were Debate, Theme Show, Street Play, Community Intervention (in schools), scientific poster presentation and two extempore items. Samanwya gave an opportunity for students from different colleges to work together. Street play team was constituted a week before with all the participants from each team belong to different colleges. It was a great opportunity for social work students from different colleges to work in a team.

iii. 'Samanwya Sandhya', the cultural infotainment programme titled 'God Father', an exclusive talent show by BCM students and children from different centred institutions was conducted on 7th Nov at 6 p.m.

iv. A meeting of higher secondary social work students from Kottayam district was conducted along with preconference of Samanwya.

Inaugural function: Inaugural function was held on 7 Nov at 10 a.m. Prof. Mariko Kimura, Vice President IFSW (International Federation of Social Workers) & President IFSW Asia Pacific has inaugurated the whole programme. In her inaugural address Prof. Mariko covered the need to be vigilant against drug abuse among children and role to be played by social workers in this. She also emphasised the need for all social workers to come together for the growth of profession. H.G Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Arch Bishop, Arch Diocese of Kottayam presided over. Dr. Ipe Varghese, HOD, Dept. of Social Work & Gen. Secretary KAPS welcomed the gathering. Dr. Ipe has also mentioned the components of Samanwya 16 and also the recent initiatives KAPS has undertaken for strengthening the profession. Fr. Dr. Prasanth Palakkappillil (President, KAPS & Principal, S.H College, Thevara) delivered the key note address. Mr. Sriganesh M.V (Secretary General, India Network of Professional Social Work Associations – INPSWA), Sr. Betsy (Principal in-charge, BCM College), Fr. Philmon Kallathra (Bursar, BCM College) and Prof. Gandhi Doss (President, India Network of Professional Social Work Associations – INPSWA) has delivered felicitation messages. Mr. Sriganesh MV has presented the achievements of profession in India and the initiatives for bringing all the organizations in India together with INPSWA and becoming a member of IFSW. Two professional social workers, Mr. Subhash TV (SDM, Tirur) and Mr. Anu S Nair (ADM, Pathanamthitta) who could make good achievements in their career as civil servants were honoured in the function. Mr. Jomin John delivered vote of thanks.

Academic sessions

The subthemes for the conference were:

- a. Social work interventions in practice to ensure a drug-free Childhood
- b. School as a sanctum for a drug free childhood
- c. Innocence and technology: A media for marketing of drugs

15 people (including social work practitioners, educators, research scholars and social work students) have presented papers related to the main theme. There were serious deliberations based on the papers.

The participant colleges were asked to prepare a model against drug abuse and implement it in their community/nearby schools. Nine colleges have done interventions and presented their models.

Meeting of students and teachers representatives

A meeting of the teachers and student representatives from various colleges was held. This meeting has discussed different concerns the profession face and need for strengthening the profession. The representatives had a meaningful interaction with the International and national leaders during the session. The members have shared their intention to continue engaging the theme of the conference in their respective schools.

Cultural Infotainment Program

Samanwaya Sandya the cultural infotainment program was inaugurated by Sri. Dilish Pothan (Director, Malayalam cine film 'Maheshinte Prathikaram'). Mr. Shynoj OV, an alumnus of BCM directed the show titled "God Father". The show was a message against drug abuse among children. About 160 participants comprising all faculty members and students of department of social work, students from other departments, children from children's home, children's village Pampady, St. John of God Centre, Velloore, Santhanam, Thirubalabhavan Uzhavoor have participated in the two hrs long show.

Valedictory function was held at 2.30 p.m. on 8 Nov 2016. Mnsgr. Michael Vettikkattu presided over the function. Prof. Mariko Kimura, Mr. Sriganesh and Mr. Gandhi Doss were chief guests. Prof. Mariko has delivered a valedictory message. Prof. Sheela Cherian, Dr. Ipe Varughese and Fr. Philmon Kallathra. Mr. Visakh Mohan presented the report of the program. Prize distribution was conducted by the dignitaries and faculty members from different colleges.

Social Work Practitioners' Congress

After the inaugural ceremony, the social work practitioners assembled separately. 10 practitioners have presented/shared their social work interventions in different fields. Prof. Mariko Kimura, Mr. Sriganesh and Mr. Gandhi Doss have addressed this gathering. The practitioners had very good interaction with IFSW Vice President, INPSWA President and Secretary General. Later the participants have discussed some of the problems faced by the professionals and decided to intervene in those matters.

Participation:

572 social work students from 40 colleges and 145 social work practitioners (including teachers) number of faculty members have participated in Samanwaya. 17 people from other fields have participated in the program. Hundreds of school children

also became part of the program through the intervention programs organized in their schools.

Samanwya 16 was a great success as its name suggests 'blend of all'. It was a milestone in the history of professional social work in Kerala. The social work students and practitioners got a wonderful opportunity to come together and deliberate on a social issue, plan intervention strategies, discuss professional growth and improve the unity. The presence of Vice President IFSW was a different experience and the presence of other office bearers of INPSWA has shown the people the growth of profession at the national level in India. The International Conference and Social Work Practitioners' Congress has helped the development of the participants and the social work profession and the Society as a whole. A sincere thanks to Prof. Mariko Kimura, Vice President IFSW, Mr. Sriganesh and Mr. Gandhi Doss, KAPS leaders and members, other social work practitioners & students, the teachers and children from different schools and the children from child centred organizations who were part of Samanwya 16 and made it a success, useful for the society and memorable event.

Dear social workers I present this report with a call to unite and work together for strengthening of profession and for the betterment of the community. Thank you.