

Substantial improvement in Kerala in Voluntary Blood Donation sector

Kerala reportedly achieves substantial improvements in the voluntary blood donation sector. This leap is the product of an efficient strategic plan for encouraging voluntary blood donation, which is formulated and being implemented by Kerala State AIDS Control Society.

During the last year out of total blood collected through the blood banks across the state, voluntary donation was only 29%. Obtaining blood in the replacement mode is more prone to many hazards including lethal infections and diseases.

Hence action plans are being formulated and implemented in the state for encouraging voluntary blood donations. Voluntary blood donation forums have been established at the state and district levels for this. Blood donation camps are

being organized in partnership with political parties, youth organizations, community based organizations and colleges.

As a result a steady progress is observed in the rate of voluntary blood donation from the initial months of this year. In 2008 September the percentage of blood donation in the state was only 22%. This has progressed to 34% in 2009 January, 40% in February, 44% in March, 60% in April and 61% in May.

Wide blood donation camps were organized in the state in the month of June 09 as part of World Blood Donor Day observance with the slogan "100 percent voluntary / non remunerated donation of blood". This has led to a progress of 75% of blood donation in the state in June 09. This further scaled up in July to 88%. These statistics shows that Kerala

is rapidly approaching the goal of 100%.

37 blood donation camps were organized at different centers across the state during the month of August as part of Independence Day celebrations. Academic institutions, various clubs, religious organizations, State Youth Welfare Board, Technopark companies etc. have actively cooperated for the conduct of these camps. A total of 1075 persons voluntarily donated blood through these 37 camps.

Kerala State AIDS Control Society is endeavoring to develop a group of voluntary blood donors in Kerala by regularly organizing series of blood donation camps partnering with various voluntary organizations. It is expected that this will enable a situation where availability of safe blood can be assured for people in need at any time.

Controlling HIV: voluntary organizations also take part

Voluntary Organizations also take part in the HIV control and prevention activities of the State. In a workshop arranged for voluntary organizations by Kerala State AIDS Control Society, a framework has been developed on their mode of partnership in the areas of controlling HIV, care and support for the people living with HIV etc.

In his inaugural note Dr. T.V Velayudhan, Additional Project Director of Kerala State AIDS Control Society remarked that more women and children

are turning victims of HIV as the Infection is wide-spreading to the villages and rural areas.

It is significant to find out the children who turned as orphans after the death of their parents due to AIDS.

He added that the voluntary organizations will be able to function effectively in this sector. The programme was chaired by S. Ajai Kumar, Joint Director of the IEC Division of the Kerala State AIDS Control Society.

G. Sunil Kumar, Consultant – Mainstreaming extended welcome to the participants and J. Domi, Asst. Director, Documentation and Publicity proposed vote of thanks. Following this, Dr. Rita Cross, Joint Director, Care and Support and G. Sunil Kumar, Consultant – Mainstreaming engaged sessions in the areas concerned. Representatives of the voluntary organizations including those who are active in HIV prevention and awareness fields took part in the workshop.

Training programme convened for leaders of KCYM



Fr. Jaison Kollannur, State Director of KCYM inaugurating the training programme conducted at Kozhikode

Training programmes were organized by Kerala State AIDS Control Society at Palai and Kozhikode for the leaders of Kerala Catholic Youth Movement as part of the activities in encouraging voluntary blood donation.

The Training programme organized at Palai was for the leaders of KCYM from Ernakulam, Thrissur, Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts. Fr. Jaison Kollannur, State Director of KCYM inaugurated the programme, presided by S. Ajaikumar, Joint Director (Information, Education, Communication) of KSACS. Youth Affairs Consultant of KSACS V.J. Nijo extended welcome to the participants and Santhosh Arackal, State General Secretary of KCYM proposed vote of thanks.

The Training programme of Kozhikode convened at Hotel Nalanda was attended by leaders of KCYM from Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, Thrissur and Kasargod districts. State Director of KCYM, Fr. Jaison Kollannur inaugurated the programme. Programme was presided over by the Youth Affairs Consultant of KSACS V.J. Nijo, in which Muraleedharan, Programme Coordinator of Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust welcomed the participants. Santhosh Arackal, State General Secretary, KCYM felicitated and Sibi Joy, Secretary, KCYM expressed vote of thanks.

Thousands Volunteer for Blood Donation

KSACS and KCYM Joining Hands

KCYM, the Catholic Youth Movement of Kerala links up with Kerala State AIDS Control Society in HIV prevention and voluntary blood donation activities. A consensus has been arrived to convene extensive training programmes centered at the 29 Catholic Dioceses across the state. Faith based organizations (FBOs) are found very influential in the society and KCYM is associating with this move as per KSACS' decision to involve FBOs in such activities as active partners.

During Phase-I, 20 master trainers will be identified and trained at each of the 29 dioceses. This group will train another fifty number leaders in each forane. When each of these 17500 trained members train another 10 member group at their concerned diocese a volunteer group of 1,75,000 youth will be equipped to commence massive campaigns in the fields of HIV prevention and voluntary blood donation.

Also it has been decided to include HIV prevention focused programme in KCYM activities.

Alongside, voluntary blood donation camps are being organized by KCYM across the state. So far around 30 such camps have been organized at various locations in Kerala through which nearly 1000 persons have donated blood. It is expected that thousands of youth will come forward voluntarily through KCYM with the realization of the plan of action in association with KSACS.

Also it has been decided to impart training inputs of HIV prevention and voluntary blood donation in the Marriage Preparation courses being conducted at the dioceses. The entire 29 diocese across the state convene 3-days' Marriage Preparation courses regularly on a monthly basis.

The message can be disseminated to an average of 3625 participants in a month through addressing this programme hence covering a large folk of 43,500 in an year spreading the message of voluntary blood donation. Alongside the cultural groups functioning under KCYM will present performances in folk mode disseminating the messages,

which help to enhance the spirit of HIV prevention and voluntary blood donation. It is planned to start the training programmes at diocese level by the middle of November 09. Considering the need and significance of encouraging voluntary blood donation in the state, Kerala State AIDS Control Society has drafted a specific strategic action plan and started implementing it.

It envisages involving youth organizations, faith based organizations, political parties and other voluntary organizations to take part as active partners in encouraging voluntary blood donation. Within this time we could achieve a considerable growth in the voluntary blood donation sector. KSACS authorities appraise that the partnership of KCYM will add more values to these activities.

A total of 3,50,806 people donated blood in Kerala during last year. Among them those who voluntarily came forward to donate blood were only 99,508. The current efforts being coordinated are intended to make a difference to this status.

• Jyothis centers at prisons

HIV prevention activities started

HIV prevention activities have been started at the 21 Prisons along 6 Districts of the State. These activities were initiated with a move of starting a new Jyothis Center (Integrated Counselling and Testing Center - ICTC) at each District controlled by Kerala State AIDS Control Society.

Jyothis Centers have been established at Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kozhikode and Kannur Districts. Preparative steps have been started at Palakkad District for establishing the Jyothis Center. HIV testing, counselling and awareness is being organized through these Jyothis Centers.

A team comprising one Counsellor and one lab technician is employed at each Jyothis Center. With the support of Prison Superintendents and Medical Officers, these professionals engage in HIV prevention activities as well as HIV testing

for the willing inmates. Besides, they organize activities among the Prison inmates to create awareness on HIV.

Motivating both male and female prison inmates for HIV testing, awareness creation on HIV, seeking treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) etc. are the objectives of such programs. Prisons are assumed as more susceptible corners for unsafe sexual practices including homo sexual acts. The chances of getting infected with STIs or HIV are very high through these routes.

It is in this context, State Prisons Department and Kerala State AIDS Control Society have jointly started efforts in bringing in systems at Prisons for HIV awareness as well as testing facilities. Besides the service of Counsellors, training is provided to selected inmates from each prison.

Instigating awareness building, prevention

activities and creating a conducive environment for counselling etc. are the systems activated through these volunteers.

The new services are made available at the following Prisons: In Thiruvananthapuram region, District Prison, Open Prison, Sub-Jail (Attingal) and Women's Prison (Neyyattinkara) under Central Prison Circle of Thiruvananthapuram, in Kollam region, Sub-Jail (Kottarakkara) under Kollam District Prison Circle, Mattancheri, Aluva and Muvattupuzha Sub-Jails in Ernakulam Sub-Jail Circle, Iringalakkuda Sub-Jail under Trissur - Vayur Central Prison Circle, Koyilandi and Vadakara Sub-Jails and Kozhikode Special Sub-Jail under Kozhikode District Prison Circle and in Kannur region, Kannur Sub-Jail, Thalasseri Sub-Jail and Kannur Special Sub-Jail under Kannur Central Prison Circle.

Editorial

HIV awareness and prevention strategies are likely to adopt different modes from time to time. Hence the area demands modifications in patterns of behaviour and lifestyle of individuals, the usual methodologies or strategies may not succeed in all settings.

It is in this context the role of Faith Based Organizations found pertinent. A vast majority of Keralites are devotees and those beliefs have more meaningful space in their life. Faith Based Organizations has considerable influence among their communities in the areas of HIV prevention and voluntary blood donation, as these subjects are very much related to values and principles in life. It is from this realization Kerala State AIDS Control Society has decided to partner with FBOs, actively involving them in its core activities.

In the special strategy for voluntary blood donation, other Faith Based Organizations, Political Parties, Youth Organizations etc. will be networked for an active and productive collaboration. Their commitment, systematic functioning

Innovative steps in prevention of HIV and Voluntary Blood Donation

and organizational strength at the grass roots level are certain factors that would help us accomplish true goals.

Blood donation messages and HIV awareness messages are imparted to the youth in the colleges through the RRC. Now this initiative will also reach the majority of youth outside the campus. It was in this context awareness programmes and plan of action has been formulated involving other youth organizations also.

Various programmes have been initiated jointly with Kerala Catholic Youth Movement (KCYM), the youth wing of Catholic Church in the state. The association with FBOs is an innovative approach of Kerala State AIDS Control Society to reach out to out of college youth.

KCYM plans to build a volunteer base of one

million youth. Well planned activities to achieve this goal are proceeding in the field. It can be confidently proclaimed that this is the beginning of a great process, which will bring about revolutionary changes in the voluntary blood donation sector in the state. Likewise, through the institutional frameworks of the Catholic diocese the message of HIV prevention is going to reach thousands of its youth folk effectively.

We wish all success for this endeavor of KCYM rooted from their social commitments. And we hope this may turn out to be an inspiration for all the other youth organizations in the state.

Dr. Usha Titus IAS
Project Director

Free food for HIV infected in-patients at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College

The HIV infected people in treatment along with their bystanders at Trivandrum Medical College are now provided with food on free of cost together with medicine. This free food distribution project is initiated jointly by Kerala State AIDS Control Society and Lourde Matha Care, a voluntary organization.

The project has been inaugurated by Dr. Usha Titus, Project Director of Kerala State AIDS Control Society. Currently treatment is being provided free of cost to the HIV infected. But it came to the notice of the Government that these people are struggling for food. Following that observation, this new project was implemented in collaboration with Lourde Matha Care. Every



Dr. Usha Titus inaugurating the project of free food distribution at the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospital, jointly initiated by Kerala State AIDS Control Society and Lourde Matha Care.

HIV infected person who undergoes in patient treat-

ment at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College will be able to avail this service.

Lourde Matha has deployed three volunteers for the delivery of food at the hospital. Free food will be provided three times a day for the HIV infected, for a period from the time of admission at the Medical College up to discharge.

In the function arranged at the Medical College, Dr. T.V. Velayudhan, Additional Project Director, Kerala State AIDS Control Society, S. Ajai Kumar, Joint Director, IEC, J. Domi, Asst. Director, Publicity & Documentation, Anjana, GIPA Coordinator, and representatives of Lourde Matha Care Fr. Sony Mundunadakkal, T.M Tomy, K.M Thomas, and Ambily Raju were present.

Let's work together for the wellbeing of the new generation

Recognizing the significance of voluntary blood donation in the Kerala society, Kerala Catholic Youth movement (KCYM) has come forward to orient and encourage

people.

The active workers of KCYM in the 29 dioceses spread across 14 districts of the state are stepping into the field. Let us work to-

gether to care for the wellbeing and safety of the new generations.



Joseph Thomas
President, KCYM

Youth Church with a mission of love

'Love' – is the only credible and comprehensive answer for the appalling crises of the contemporary world both in physical and spiritual domains. The official youth wing of the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC) commission for youth – KCYM propagates this 'love' to individuals and society through diverse ways.

This organization is characterized by a group of youth who practice the gospels of love and openly express and speak out their hope. They show us the pure and genuine face of God almighty and at the same time the actual face of man who was created in the shape and resemblance of God.

KCYM is the official youth movement of the Catholic diocese spread over 29 dioceses falling in three rites covering 14 districts of Kerala. Founded in 1978, KCYM is having more than 5 lakhs of official members who are committed and service oriented.

With the motto of 2009 "youth for serving nation with intensified beliefs" the members of the organization work with emphasize on three areas this year i.e., dignity of humanity, secularism and voluntary service. The organization also focuses on the responsible management of available resources and encouraging cooperation.

The members always care for humanitarian activities in more meaningful and extensive ways, reaching to the most deserving people, by involving all possible

sectors of the society as well as recognizing the local institutions and individual expertise.

Natural disasters and man-made disasters devastate millions of people every year. Whenever human beings have diverted from moral values, the decline has reflected in the society, and even it has caused destructions to communities round the world. It includes a huge number of common people.

Hence KCYM functions vigorously in this sector, intervening in the humanitarian activities where awareness and service mentality play vital roles, raising the necessity for appropriate and effective global responses, guided by firm directives of empathy and dignity, thus lighting into the continued challenges in this field.

This youth movement through its various initiatives, offer humanitarian services without any sectarian attitudes and share concepts and best practices with likeminded people or organizations. We are pledged to intervene to help needy people in their crises, without any communal or racial discrimination.

Belief in the rights of individuals, families or societies in obtaining help and support on humanitarian aspects and ones rights in seeking protection from guardians in terms of social, physical and spiritual domains without any restrictions are the inspirational factors behind these steps.

Gandhiji explained the duty of humans in the doctrine of dharma to reconcile with all living beings through one's life. To serve mankind and to understand them was Mahatma's vision of God and means of salvation. He insisted the necessity of fearlessness, hard work and character to resist the influence of modernity.



Through the joint effort with Kerala State AIDS Control Society, KCYM aims at the sermons of Jesus Christ. "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly" (John 10:10). We are preparing for revolutionary steps in blood donation.

When voluntary blood donation is encouraged specifically among youth each individual is getting involved in this process of offering life or sustaining life. When the inaugural function of the Billion Blood Donors' National Forum was conducted at Chalakkudy, the overall objective of KCYM was to array maximum possible youth into the process.

The prime attention always goes to the individual along with his physical, mental and spiritual needs. Each individual takes part in the nation building process when his needs are properly identified and met through right means. Safeguarding individuals and society from the infections like HIV shall be through such missions for true love. Wholehearted cooperation from Kerala State AIDS Control Society will add more value to these efforts. Let us join our hands and work together with a revolutionary spirit in this mission.

Fr. Jaison Kollannur
Secretary, KCBC Youth Commission

KCYM with a definite action plan

Kerala Catholic Youth Movement is a youth movement in the state founded for nurturing values and moralities which function actively in the 29 dioceses across 14 districts of Kerala. The organization efficiently involve in various social issues of the Kerala society with a distinctively value based approach for the last 30 years.

This year in collaboration with Kerala State AIDS Control Society, KCYM is entering into various activities including campaigns for HIV prevention as well as encouraging voluntary blood donation.

Establishing a resource team of not less than 20 members at each of the 29 diocese is envisaged

as the first phase of these activities. The process will further be led by this 600 member team trained by the expert trainers of Kerala State AIDS Control Society. The functions will be coordinated from the State Office of KCYM at Ernakulam. Second phase is planned for convening 75 HIV prevention and 75 voluntary blood donation seminars and extending the activities to Higher Secondary schools and Colleges. Activities aiming off-campus youth are focused in the third phase. Extensive orientation programmes through Gramapanchayaths, Voluntary and Civil Society Organizations and various Trade Unions will be organized during this phase.

In brief, KCYM is getting equipped with a concrete plan of action to reflect its vigorous presence in the HIV awareness and prevention fields as well as encouraging voluntary blood donations.



Santhosh Arackal
General Secretary, KCYM State Committee