

REPORT ON INTERNSHIP

TOPIC: GENDER ISSUES

SNEHITHA GENDER HELP DESK

COMMUNITY COUNSELLING

SUBMITTED TO: KUDUMBASHREE, STATE MISSION OFFICE

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Preface and acknowledgement

For 14 days from may 2 2019 to may 15th 2019, we, a group of 2 people did an internship at Kudumbashree, Snehitha- gender help desk, on the gender issues across the state. The internship program is based on our 5 year BA LLB program at Kerala university.

I am very appreciated to Ms. Soya mam, who gave us very in-time valuable instructions and guidelines and put us in contact with the counselors of Snehitha gender help desk and Gender resource center, perunguzhy.

Through the internship we have learnt many things on gender issues, it's solutions and also about gender self learning program and crime mapping. We got to interact with the inmates of snehitha gender help desk. We would like to thank all those who has helped us in creating a perfect ground in our law career.

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KUDUMBASHREE

Kudumbashree, the Kerala State Poverty Eradication Mission was launched on 17th May 1998 inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Mission aims to eradicate absolute poverty within a definite time frame of 10 years under the leadership of Local Self Governments formed and empowered by the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution of India. The Mission launched by the State Government with the active support of Government of India and NABARD has adopted a different methodology in addressing poverty by organizing the poor in to community-based organizations. The Mission follows a process approach rather than a project approach.

Kudumbashree, a community organization of Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala, has been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas: bringing women together from all spheres of life to fight for their rights or for empowerment. The overall empowerment of women is closely linked to economic empowerment. Women through these NHGs work on a range of issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture, etc. besides income generation activities and seeking micro credit.

Kudumbashree differs from conventional programmes in that it perceives poverty not just as the deprivation of money, but also as the deprivation of basic rights. The poor need to find a collective voice to help claim these rights.

Kudumbashree was conceived as a joint programme of the Government of Kerala and Nabard implemented through Community Development Societies (CDSs) of Poor Women, serving as the community wing of Local Governments. Kudumbashree is formally registered as the "State Poverty Eradication Mission" (SPEM), a society registered under the Travancore Kochi Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1955. It has a governing body chaired by the State Minister of LSG. There is a state mission with a field officer in each district. This official structure supports and facilitates the activities of the community network across the state. Kudumbashree differs from conventional programmes in that it perceives poverty not just as the deprivation of money, but also as the deprivation of basic rights. The poor need to find a collective voice to help claim these rights.

The grassroots of Kudumbashree are Neighbourhood Groups (NHG in short) that send representatives to the ward level Area Development Societies (ADS). The ADS sends its representatives to the Community Development Society (CDS), which completes the unique three-tier structure of Kudumbashree. Today, there are 2.77 lakhs NHGs, over 19,854 ADSs and 1073 CDSs in Kudumbashree.

It is this network that brings women to the Grama Sabhas and helps them bring the needs of the poor to the attention of the local governments. The Community Development Societies are also very active in Government programmes and play significant roles in development activities ranging from socio-economic surveys and enterprise development to community management and social audit.

Though its efforts to engage women in civil society in development issues and opportunities, Kudumbashree in association with the local self government of Kerala is charting out new meaning and possibilities for local economic development and citizen centric governance.

MISSION

There are two distinguishing characteristics to Kudumbashree which set it apart from the usual SHG model of empowerment. These are,

1. The universality of reach – from its very inception Kudumbashree has attempted to bring every poor woman in the state within its fold, as a consequence of which today Kudumbashree is present in every village panchayat and municipality, and in nearly every ward, colony and hamlet. The sheer spread is mind boggling, and it is only because the local community of women drive the system that it has managed to persevere.
2. The scope of community interface in local governance – the functioning of Kudumbashree is tied up to the development initiatives of the local government be it for social infrastructure, welfare or right based interventions or for employment generation. From food security to health insurance, from housing to enterprise development, from the national wage employment program to the jagratha samiti, every development experience depends on Kudumbashree to provide the community interface.

It is using these opportunities that Kudumbashree strives to convert a microfinance led financial security model into a more comprehensive model of local economic development.

THE MISSION STATEMENT

To eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of local governments, by facilitating organization of the poor for combining self-help with demand-led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty, holistically.

VISION

Kudumbashree strives to develop the model of a micro finance led financial security process into a more comprehensive model of local economic development under the aegis of local governments. This would hopefully sustain the transformation of the local governance agenda from welfare to entitlement. Such a transformation does not come about easily and requires rewriting established administrative and development practices

It requires the community acquiring voice and being heard. It requires institutionalizing processes that allow for participation and meaningful contribution. And when we speak of community we speak of the people for whom government is a palpable entity influencing the quality of

their lives, as well as of the people on the periphery, both social and physical, for whom manifold deprivations have snuffed out hope of change.

We speak of the women who are finding, through collective endeavour, the stepping stones leading from participation to citizenship in its truest sense. It is through the realization of citizenship that Kudumbashree would be able to significantly address issues of equity and justice.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Various forms of microfinance practices have been in existence in Kerala from early days. When the concept of SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGs) was introduced in 1980s, it was quick to gather momentum.

In the early nineties a community led poverty identifications format was developed as part of the Alappuzha UBSP program. By this time the NABARD promoted SHG, linkage banking program had established itself as a viable microfinance model.

In 1994, the CBNP project of Malappuram assimilate these experiences and develop a women based community structure for service delivery of governmental programs. The 73rd and 74th amendments strengthened PRIs and ULBs.

Shortly afterwards, the People's plan campaign for decentralized governance created strong local self governments (Panchayats and Municipalities) in the state.

Kudumbashree was launched in 1998 as a community network that would work in tandem with local self

governments for poverty eradication and women empowerment.

Evolution of community counseling

Community counseling is a generic term for any kind of professional counseling that treats dysfunction occurring within a group of related people. This term describes a preventative system of counseling that works to combat psychological impairment through the improvement and development of community support. A community is defined as a group of interacting individuals who share a commonality. This commonality can be anything from location of residence to career interest, but a community counselor will use this common characteristic to council groups of people.

Importance

Community counselor can work with groups of people experiencing an increased amount of psychological distress to help determine and address the source of the disturbance. Such interventions are used in communities which are poor and unsupported to improve mental health resources. Dysfunctional environments can lead individuals to develop social and psychological impairments. Vulnerable and marginalized populations such as children, minorities, or

individuals of a low socioeconomic status are disproportionately at risk of experiencing psychological impairments. Through the holistic treatment of a community, counselors can help alleviate mental health issues on a large scale. Community counseling provides leadership for creating better access to mental health services. Through the analysis of individual interviews, Jon Boller and Burton Nolan revealed that many students report a need and desire for community counseling programs. To meet these needs, community counseling continues to expand its reach.

HISTORY

The Great Depression and World War II created a need for jobs and counseling services in the United States. This need was met with the expansion of career, school and personal counseling services. At the same time, experts in the field began to emphasize the importance of preventative counseling in combating the need for remedial counseling. In 1965, the United States government allocated federal funds to the training of school counselors, a type of community based counseling. At the start of the 1970s, the more general idea of community counseling was developed to meet the increasing needs of the public. The discipline of community counseling grew slowly at first due to its lack of clear definition. However, in 1993, community counseling received recognition as a counseling specialization from the governing council of the American Counseling Association (ACA). This recognition allowed the Council for Accreditation of

Counseling Relation Education (CACREP) to develop standards for the training of community counselors. With recognition and accreditation, community counseling expanded in popularity.

ROLE OF COUNSELOR

Community counselors can work in a variety of settings such as private practice, mental health centers, rehabilitation facilities, or prisons.¹ Regardless of the setting, a community counselor's job is to work with individuals to develop appropriate mental processing and provide preventative services to the community. Preventative efforts can be made by providing access to community-based organizations or educational programs. Community counselors need to be strong leaders who can make these direct and indirect services available for their clients.

COMMUNITY COUNSELLING – PROCESS AND CASE ANALYSIS

Community counselors work with a wide variety of groups and help the common people to solve their problems. They provide their services directly in the community. Women and children are the most socially and economically marginalized people in the community. This make them more vulnerable to

abuse and harassment. The community counselors of Kudumbashree thus focus on children and women more.

The kudumbashree select counselors from across the state who're mostly women and train them to become community counselors so that they can get directly involved in various issues in society. The community counselors help a group of people to open up their problems, talk about it and finally help them to find solutions themselves. The gender self-learning programs among the self-help groups help the women having different views and opinions come together and discuss their problems.

Community counseling and support services primarily aim to give premarital counseling, counseling services to the parents of BUDS/BRC children, old age people and adolescent students. Community counselors with the help of vigilant groups identify the key areas where crime is frequently occurring and find solutions to reduce the crime rate.

Services provided

Community counselors are involved with gender self-learning activities by providing social support, legal support and at times financial support, counseling support to cases registered in block level community counseling centers, gender resource center, Snehitha gender help desk. The counselors take care of each case individually, calling upon the person who is in need of counseling support and interact with them in order to find their problems and help

them overcome it and the follow-up sessions are also conducted after the initial counseling session. There are certain categories of cases the community counselors focus upon:

- 1. Family issues**
- 2. Adolescent issues**
- 3. Mental health problems**
- 4. Kudumbashree issues**
- 5. Other problems**

Community counselors use various techniques such as case study, mental status examinations, behavior therapy, positive reinforcement etc.

PROCESS OF CASE ANALYSIS

The community counselors are given the training for case study analysis. It includes:

- Personal details of the client, family background, current status: It includes age, sex, marital status, family tree, socio economic status of the client as well as the family.
- History taking: It includes taking the family history, health status of family members (if needed) and details on illness.

- Problem statement: the counselor states the problem as mentioned by the client.
- Identifying underlying key issues and persons involved: counselor analysis the problem and identify the key issues and persons involved in the issue.
- Contact with key persons (client and other persons involved, professional support (if needed): counselor contacts all the key personnel and government authorities (if needed) and dates for sessions will be fixed.
- Session wise details: number of session varies with each case.
- Possible solutions: counselor helps the clients to reach possible solutions.
- Outcome: the outcome of the counseling.
- Referral (if needed)
- Follow up
- Case summary

Some of the brief case analysis details

The name and address of the client (and family members) are hypothetical considering their privacy and their ethical standards of the profession.

Case study 1

Background details

Ms X, age 16 shows decreased academic performance and her family expects her to over perform all other students. She wanted to study well and started going for extra coaching classes. But she started to feel dull at times. She could not understand what she read and used to sleep on the study table. She started getting angry easily. As per the instruction by one of her teacher, parents brought her for counseling.

Session 1

Counselor talked to her normally with general things and daily routine. She talked about the studies and other problems.

Interventions

The counselor teaches her some techniques for concentration. Counselor taught her about relaxation techniques and meditation. Counselor advised her to take proper sleep and participate in recreational activities.

Session 2

She brought the prepared time table for study and the counselor encouraged and appreciated her efforts. She started to sleep well and getting up early in the morning. Counselor encouraged her to spent time with her family

members more. The counselor talked to her parents as well regarding not to give too much stress on the child.

Outcome

The client accepted and followed most of the suggestions and she showed major improvement in her academics and life as well.

OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY COUNSELING PROGRAMS

- ∞ Community counselors can provide services in a range of ways. Rather than defining counseling or group work, community counselors are powerful tool in the society to make interventions.
- ∞ They try to decrease the trauma of people exposed to violence and negligence.
- ∞ They try to reduce the crime rate of certain key areas through crime mapping.
- ∞ They have the ability to challenge the power, and rise of common peoples' rights.
- ∞ They are able to provide emotional support through comfort talking.
- ∞ They could serve people with available resources and support systems of the society.
- ∞ They are capable of giving support to adults, parents of specially able children and old age people etc.

SNEHITHA- Gender help desk

Snehitha is a 24 hours working gender help desk. It works to avail support and help to the shield less women in society. The main aim of the center is to provide help and support to those women and children who are in distress and provide voice for their issues and concerns, also to prevent, protect and prevail over domestic violence through advocacy, empowerment and social change. Snehitha also looks to enhance the socio-economic status of young, underprivileged women by empowering them with self-confidence and the required skills to enable them to become independent and contribute to family and society. Snehitha facilitating the women in distress to access the service of other institutional agency (legal services authority , police department, CWC, NGO's etc) to address the issues. Snehitha provides immediate help, shelter, counseling, motivation, and legal assistance to the victim of violence. Women and children are availing shelter as well. Snehitha is the only place where women and children are provided shelter at any time of the day. Snehitha is working on the principle of convergence, which is followed by a close interface and collaboration with the service providers and counselors. There will always be a counselor available in day and night. They provide tele-counseling for those in distress.

DURING OUR VISIT

Without asking personal any information , we got to interact with a 19 year old girl during our internship in snehitha. We got to talk to the 2 counselors who explained to us the variety of cases being registered there. One among them was a domestic violence case. The counselors explained about the self-help groups and the various programs conducted by them. She also gave a class on “the difference between gender and sex” and how this class affected the people in society.

SERVICES OF SNEHITHA

- ✓ 24 hrs working gender help desk.
- ✓ Short stay home for women and children who are facing atrocities and violence.
- ✓ Short stay for those women who are travelling alone in night.
- ✓ Family, individual, adolescent and premarital counseling.
- ✓ Awareness campaigns.
- ✓ Legal and medical assistance.
- ✓ 24hrs tele-counseling.
- ✓ Rehabilitation through the convergence with other department and NGO's.

Difference between gender and sex

This give rise to two questions:

1. What do we have in mind when we talk about 'women'?
2. What do we have in mind when it comes to 'men'?

When it comes to 'women' we think of certain qualities such as: gentleness, empathy, sensitivity, caring, sweetness, compassion, tolerance, nurturance, pregnancy and delivery, breastfeeding etc.

When it comes to men: toxic masculinity, strength , courage, independence, leadership, violence and assertiveness , responsibility.

The question here is:

Is gentleness and empathy is associated with women only? No man shows gentleness or empathy?
Or that do women always have gentleness and empathy?

Is strength and courage always shown by men?
No women show strength and courage?

But there are certain qualities which only women can do such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, menstruation. Beard and moustache comes to men only. These are the basic biological differences between men and women.

Since society influence us in a wide range of ways, when it comes to men and women we think of certain traits that differentiate men and women.

For example: courage, leadership , strength, gentleness, empathy, sensitivity are shown by both men and women not by men or women.

Here sex is the basic biological difference between men and women. Gender is the society made difference between men and women which cause gender inequality in the community. Sex is universal. Gender, here, differs from place to place. It changes from time to time.

To reduce gender inequality in our society there should be various counseling and talking sessions which certainly will make people think and will lead to a change in our society. Snehitha, the gender help desk and the counselors takes a initiative on this.

FUNCTIONS OF GENDER RESOURCE CENTER/BLOCK LEVEL COUNSELING CENTER

It is a space established in collaboration with local self government to coordinate the activities for gender

development and women empowerment under local government. Local self governments will provide infrastructure facilities and Kudumbashree will coordinate the activities and manage the running of center. Kudumbashree gender resource persons and community counselors will be managing and facilitating the programs. This year kudumbashree aims to start 5 centers in a district.

It aims to:

- Capacitate women in different levels
- Analyze the status of women and design project
- To prevent and address the atrocities against women and children in the area
- Support to Jagratha Samithi and other bodies to address the issues of women and citizens
- Organize gender sensitization training to the elected representatives and other community leaders
- Counseling support to the needy
- Impart knowledge and resources for the community development programs
- Small studies and researches based on gender development and promote internships
- Convergent programs of different departments

Gender resource center- perunguzhy

On our last day of internship, we visited the gender resource center perunguzhy. Perunguzhy is a village in Chirayinkeezhu Taluk , Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. It is under the jurisdiction of Azhoor panchayat. Perunguzhy is a region where a lot of drug related cases were registered.

We met the community counselor and discussed about a request on counseling by a boy's mother. The boy has been showing behavior change, short-temperedness and lack of concentration in studying. A counseling sessions was arranged for the boy and on talking with him, the counselor found out that it was a case of drug-addiction. The counselor talked to him and some follow-up sessions were also arranged.

Suggestions:

- The snehitha gender help desks and the gender resource centers should be provided with more facilities.
- There should be a systematic way of organizing things.
- The counselors should be provided with a specific amount of work only according to their capacity.

