

## KAVAL- ACCLAIMED KERALA MODEL

### KAVAL- PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

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*KAVAL is an innovative program implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development with technical and scientific support from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru. It is the first program in India towards the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children in conflict with law through a psychosocial approach. The program is successfully implemented in all the districts of Kerala.*

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#### **Background:**

The reports and records in the area of children in conflict with law in Kerala showed that there is a tendency to repeat crime among children in conflict with law (recidivism). The study by Butterflies, (2015) reports 25% recidivism among children in conflict with law in Kerala. Judiciary and police further confirms the higher chances of children coming into conflict with law and lack of programs by the social justice department to address this issue and this results in the jails filled by young offenders as well as an increased number of cases registered against children. As per the JJ Act, all the programs till 2015 were focusing on children in need of care and protection and there was no program for the social reintegration and rehabilitation of CCL, it is under this circumstance that department of Social Justice Government of Kerala collaborated with NIMHANS to initiate a program for children in conflict with law in Kerala. Life stories of adults involving in crimes show a childhood history of crime. This shows the higher tendency for children to involve in law-breaking activities or recidivism. Kaval is a futuristic program focusing on identifying vulnerable children and providing support to prevent them from involving in law-breaking activities and thereby reducing the higher crime rate in the state.

KAVAL adopts professional social work methods and techniques to accomplish the social rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with law as envisaged in the J.J.Act 2015. The results show a reduction in recidivism from 13 percentages at the beginning of the program to 5%, which is evidence for the technical superiority and success of the program

#### **1.1 Aim**

- Provide psychosocial care for children in conflict with law
- Create a better and conducive environment for children in conflict with law
- Prevent the circumstances in which the child may be forced to commit an offence

## **1,2 Objectives:**

- To understand the psychosocial problems among children in conflict with law
- To develop an intervention module for working with Children in conflict with law by the services provider
- To train various stakeholders and institutionalize psychosocial care in existing services for Children in conflict with law.
- To incorporate psychosocial care in the existing services for Children in conflict with law in all districts of Kerala in the subsequent phase.

## **1.3 Planning**

Activities carried out as a part of pilot program include : Developing training modules, training stake holders and develop their skills to work with children in conflict with law, networking and convergence with different departments, developing reporting and recording system.

## **1.4 Period of implementation**

Kaval was initiated in 2015 as a pilot program on an experimental basis, in three districts. The program was modified and developed to its final version as per the experience and information gained from the field and through academic research. in the second phase (2017-18)the program was implemented in 6 districts and in the third phase(2018-19) the program was extended to 5 more districts.

### Stage-1 districts

1. Thiruvananthapuram 2. Palakkad 3. Kozhikode ( these districts were selected for pilot study and implementation of the program on the basis of the highest number of cases registered in JJB also this served to reach out to a diverse population who need services(tribal, fishermen community, urban, rural, border districts, etc.))

### Stage-2(2017-18)Districts

1. Pathanamthitta, 2Kottayam, 3. Ernakulum, 4. Thrissur, 5. Malappuram, 6.Kannur

### Stage-3 (2018- 19) Districts

1. Kollam, 2.Alapuzha, 3. Idukki, 4. Wayanad, 5. Kasaragod

### **1.5 Strategies Adopted Implementation**

KAVAL adopted community-based psychosocial intervention strategy through regular follow-up aiming at supporting children to keep away from the situation that will lead to lawbreaking. The interventions for children in conflict with law followed three levels of professional social work intervention: *Curative, Preventive and Promotive*.

The program is carried out in 4 levels: *Individual, family community and program and policy*.

The program is carried out through 4 major systems in the state: 1. Educational institutions 2. Legal and law enforcement bodies 3. Correctional institutions 4. Local self-government bodies  
The preventive and promotive activities carried out in the families primarily focus on parents. The program focus on developing a conducive environment at home to enhance child psychological and social wellbeing.

Parent management program focuses on educating parents on the parenting styles and practices in the family and among the family members that lead to various unacceptable behaviours in children as well as training them on good parenting practices.

### **1.6 Networking and convergence**

Holistic care for children in conflict with law is carried out in collaboration with Juvenile Justice Board(JJB) Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Special Juvenile Police Unit(SJPU) , the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) is administratively in charge of the program in the district.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM**

The program is carried out with legal permission from the Juvenile Justice Board in every district and administratively headed by the district child protection unit, and with support from Special Juvenile Police Unit and Child Welfare Committee.

KAVAL district team comprises of district child protection officer who is the administrative head and the legal cum probation officer, OH/JJB counselors, the program coordinator, and caseworkers from the selected NGO's. They collaborate with other government and non-government agencies to provide mental health support, de-addiction, vocational training, educational support, rehabilitation, legal support etc. The program is carried out with support from parents and support of stakeholders involved in care and protection of children.

## **2,1 Intervention through NGOs**

The intervention for children is in three levels, individual, family and at school. The psychosocial problems of each child are studied and an individual care plan is developed for each child with support from parents and other important stakeholders. a through follow up is ensured at each level and psychosocial services that a child in conflict with law should receive are ensured.

## **2.2. Major responsibilities of Non-Governmental Organisations**

- Provide psychosocial care for children in conflict with law
- Conduct regular intervention and follow-up for the activities carried out at family, social, and educational levels.
- Collaborate with JJB and DCPO for ensuring services for children form other major stakeholders

## **2.3 Major activities carried out by the NGO's.**

- Towards providing conducive family environment for children conduct regular house visits, parent orientation, and parent management programs and other specific support services for the family.
- Provide psychological and asocial support for children through casework and group work approach.
- Individual counseling.
- Group work activities.
- Life skills education workshops for children.
- Conduct classes for teachers on the psychosocial problems of children in conflict with law, children in difficult circumstances and guide them to support children in schools
- Initiate community-level intervention where ever needed
- Work in collaboration with government and non-government agency
- Provide social welfare services for family and children
- educate family and children on the treatment and follow-up and provide necessary services on this regard
- Conduct thorough follow yup of the activities carried out.

### **3. EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTING OUTCOMES,**

**3.1: Family visit:** Each child is subjected to structured and systematic services in stages. The family visits will help in understanding a child's psychosocial, social, economic background, family structure interactions between family members, relationships in the family, and neighbors. This is very essential to explain how the child came into conflict with law and to develop an individual care plan

#### **3.2 Individual care plan**

A scientific approach using standardized tools are adopted to understand the child's psychological, social, emotional, and behavioral problems as well as, social interactions. An individual care plan is developed for each child based on the assessment. The intervention involves approaches such as social casework, group work, mental health support, psychosocial support de-addiction treatment and support, educational and vocational rehabilitation. All children are provided with life skills education

#### **3.3 Parent management training**

Problems in parenting are found to be one of the major problems among the families of children in conflict with law, understanding and identifying the problem and educating parents on understanding adolescents, their psychosocial development and needs, and supporting them to develop skills to address the unacceptable behavior among adolescents. Parents have reported that this program is very much helpful in dealing with adolescent (refer the report from one District)

#### **3.4 Group work among children in conflict with law**

Group work is a social work approach carried out by the professional social workers by identifying the skills of children to help them deal with the challenges in life. Childs individual and interpersonal issues can be identified and managed through this method. Children are asked to write on their emotions using emotional cards, other mediums used are family portrait, doll family, drawing, writing, thematic story cared, and clay modeling. Information from the group work is again used for providing psychosocial support services for children

#### **3.5 Life skills education for children**

The life skills education module is developed in the line of 10 life skills proposed by the World Health Organization. Apart from the 10 life skills, 13 psychosocial problems identified among children in conflict with law is also addressed in the module.

### **3.6. Electronic management information system**

An electronic management system was developed to record the individual care plan of each child and the interventions, developments in the child, daily activities of the staff, observation, district-level consolidation, and review of activities. The system is beneficial to capture the intervention for each child and by each district. The head of the department can review the progress of the program.

### **3.7 Sustainability**

A multidisciplinary intersectoral approach has been developed to support children with intense and holistic care with support from various professionals such as mental health, family support services, vocational and skills development, institutional services, and social welfare services. This will help in developing skills and capacity among children, solving the problems and ensure effective receipt of welfare services by children. This enhances the sustainability of the program

### **3.8 Process documentation**

A documentation process by the name 'Padavukal' is currently being carried out on a participatory basis to document KAVAL program in each district, the process, techniques, progress, challenges faced. Ways of addressing the challenges, prominent case studies (confidentiality of the child is maintained). There will be one book for each district and one state-level document (in English and Malayalam). The first draft is completed for all the districts (attaching draft report of one district). This will help in learning about the project, extending and expanding the program, training and replication for the program

## **4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE KEY PERSONS WHO ARE/ WERE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT**

### **Primary collaboration**

- Department of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Kerala- Implementing department
- Department of Psychiatric Social Work, NIMHANS Bengaluru- Technical support agency

### **Collaboration for implementation in the state:**

- Kerala Judiciary
- Kerala Police
- Integrative child protection scheme

### **District level collaboration**

- District Child protection unit
- Juvenile Justice Board
- Child welfare committee
- Special Juvenile Police unit
- Non-Governmental organizations

### **Other collaboration**

- Department of education
- Department of health and family welfare
- Local self-government
- Kerala excise department

## **5. INOVATIVE METHODS USED:**

- **5.1 Program as per JJAct:** The program was developed as per the provisions in J.J.Act 2015, thereby giving legal sanctity for the program
- **5.2 Identifying and using local resources:** NGO s were identified and involved. The staffs were selected and provided to support children in bail.
- **5.3 Convergence with departments:** Existing government and non-government resources were utilized for the program through networking and liaising with the departments for the best interest of the child
- **5.4 Child centric approach with best the interest of the child:** Each child is supported separately by a professional social worker trained exclusively in the modules on casework, group work, family interventions and other intervention strategies to work with children in conflict with the law.

## **6. EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTING OUTCOMES,**

**6.1 The first program in India that can be replicated by other states:** KAVAL-Psychosocial care for children in conflict with law – Kerala is first of its kind in the country to develop a system for social rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with law.

**6.2 Novel academic model:** Through KAVAL a sustainable psychosocial model using social work approach was developed for the social rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with law. Kerala thereby contributed to the field of social work education and became forerunners in the country in psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with law and contributing to academics in social work. Kalady Sri Sankara University has incorporated KAVAL in their M.S.W syllabus which need a special mentioning here.

**6.3 Contribution to MSW syllabus:** The model developed with scientific technical support of NIMHANS is a contribution to the social work curriculum where a new area of intervention is developed for professionals social workers. And an internship guide was developed and sanctioned by the government. Social work students are trained as interns in the project through a 21 days module developed through the project. This will ensure sustainability and incorporation of KAVAL in the social work curriculum.

**6.4 Global recognition:** The project got great appreciation from scientific circle of social work across the world in 24<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Joint Regional Social Work conference 2017 at china and in 2019 a symposium was conducted at 25<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Joint Regional Social Work conference at NIMHANS, Bengaluru that received international appreciation for the program.

**6.5 Development of training materials: Towards sustainability and replicability of the program.** Training materials, IEC materials and other publications were developed (see annexure)

#### **7. POSITIVE CHANGES AND IMPACT,**

- The program is supporting 1912 children, their siblings, and families in 14 districts, and the number of beneficiaries is approximately 7648 people.
- Children were supported to ensure conducive family environment and 1530 parents are trained in positive parenting to develop a supportive family environment for the child.
- The issue of drop out leading to conflict with law was addressed by supporting 325 children to reenter the education system
- 37 children who reinitiated studies through KAVAL cleared 10<sup>th</sup> standard in 2020
- 205 children were sent for vocational and skill training using the current system in the state.
- 85 children completed vocational skills training. others are still studying and 67 children got placed after vocational skill training
- 465 children were placed in jobs without training and are under through follow-up
- Substance use among children is one of the reason identified that leads to conflict in law situation which was addressed by providing a motivational program to prevent substance use among 826 children
- 165 children were referred for de-addiction treatment to 'Vimukthi' and other de-addiction centers in the state, and 100 children are continuing the treatment without relapse.

- The interventions have helped to reduce recidivism from 13% at the time of initiation of intervention in 14 districts 5% after the intervention showing the continuous support through psychosocial social care, the program has brought in positive change in children's behavior that prevents further unacceptable behaviors in children.
- The program has received wide acceptance across India. Other states such as Orissa, Chattisgarh and Tamil Nadu are taking up the project to implement in the state.

## **8. CHALLENGES FACED WHILE IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT AND HOW IT WAS OVERCOME.**

- Lack of a model to follow in India was a major challenge:
- To address this, existing Juvenile Justice System models in other countries were reviewed. Existing community-based programs in India were studied
- The community percolation model developed by Sekar & Kavitha (2006, 2012) NIMHANS in disaster and for children in difficult circumstances were considered.
- NGOs were attached as stakeholders and the models were modified as per the provisions in Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2015 and existing system in the state, and later attaching to the existing Juvenile Justice System in Kerala.
- The multidisciplinary intersectoral approach needs convergence from various departments which were a challenge in the beginning. Various steps were introduced for this.
- Team building through training where all stakeholders are brought together for the in-house capacity building
- A participatory approach was adopted where inputs from all stakeholders were taken to develop the model
- Special training for the police for a sensitive approach as police is the first point of contact
- Roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder were specified and circulated as a government order
- A standard operating procedure was developed and submitted for approval from the government.

## **9. SUSTAINABILITY**

NIMHANS provided project support for the first three years, one of the important focus was to develop the capacity of the stakeholders in the state to carrying out the program in the absence of NIMAHNS. Various steps were taken to ensure this

1. Skill-building of the stakeholders through training
2. Developing a systematic program, standardizing the program through scientific methods and obtaining legal and administrative approval from the state
3. Developing materials for reference for the stakeholders (materials appended)
4. A standard operating procedure was developed and standardized and approved by the Government
5. NIMHANS provided Handholding support for the period 2019-20 with limited support thereby equipping the state to take over the program.
6. An exit plan was developed and implemented to absorb the program into the current ICPS system.

#### **10, TRAINING MATERIALS DEVELOPED (MATERIALS APPENDED)**

- Work book for training
- Facilitator manual for the trainers
- Compendium of psychosocial care for children in conflict with law
- IEC materials (Brochure and pamphlets)

#### Training modules

- 15 days training module for the master trainers of Juvenile Justice system
- 5 days skill development module for counselors/ JJB members/ CWC members
- 3 days basic Module for social workers
- 2days Orientation module (Police)
- One day sensitization module (Magistrates/Police/ Teachers)

#### 11. SPECIAL INTERVENTION BY KAVAL TEAM

##### **Psychosocial first aid for persons affected by flood**

Kerala witness the worst flood in the century. KAVAL team swiftly responded to the situation with the technical support of NIMHANS to provide psychosocial first aid to persons affected by the disaster. The team took lead and organized 1040 psychosocial volunteers who were trained and joined with various departments of Government and non-governmental organizations and demonstrated an admirable model to work in disaster situations, the detailed report is attached.