Empowering Minds, Transforming Lives...

BHARATA MATA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BHARATA MATA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), THRIKKAKARA

"THE COMMUNIQUE"

NEWS LETTER OF BHARATA MATA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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The Communiqué is the monthly newsletter of Bharata Mata School of Social Work, created by MSW students as a student-led initiative. It highlights the extension and outreach activities of the institution, the achievements of the department and students, and reflections from students. The newsletter also provides a summary of important day observances, seminars, webinars, and faculty development programs (FDPs) conducted in the previous month. Through this initiative, we aim to share updates, celebrate accomplishments, and keep everyone informed about the dynamic activities of our school.

UN FOUNDATION YOUTH CONSULTATION AT BMSSW



On April 10, 2025, the Bharata Mata School of Social Work (BMSSW), Thrikkakara, hosted the UN Foundation Next Generation India Fellowship Youth Consultation. The event, held from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM, was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Foundation, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), Kerala Startup Mission, and Swantra Matrix. This national-level consultation aimed to gather youth perspectives on key issues such as artificial intelligence, climate change urbanization, demographic shifts, and geopolitics, contributing to the upcoming "Our Future India" report for the 80th UN General Assembly.

A total of 50 participants—including around 20 selected students, faculty members, and a PhD scholar from Rajagiri College of Social Sciences—engaged in theme-based discussions. Students shared insights, which were recorded using AI technology to build a digital audio archive. The session fostered critical thinking, collaboration, and exposure to international policy dialogue. Organizers and faculty appreciated the students' active involvement. The event proved to be an inspiring and empowering experience, reinforcing the importance of youth participation in shaping sustainable futures.

HEALTHY MILLET FARMING AWARENESS EXHIBITION



On April 10, 2025, the Ernakulam District Panchayat, in partnership with the Organic Kerala Charitable Trust and Bharata Mata School of Social Work, organized a Millet Exhibition and Sale to promote healthy living and greater awareness of millet-based diets. The event was inaugurated by District Panchayat President Shri. Manoj Moothedan, who emphasized the importance of returning to traditional food habits to combat the rise in lifestyle diseases. A wide variety of millets and millet-based products were displayed and offered at discounts ranging from 30% to 40%, encouraging community participation and healthy dietary choices.

A major highlight of the event was a cultural performance by students of Bharata Mata School of Social Work, featuring a dance drama that integrated traditional Kerala art forms such as Theyyam. The performance vividly portrayed the shift from traditional agricultural lifestyles to modern, corporate-driven food habits influenced by western culture. It delivered a powerful message on the importance of sustainable and culturally rooted dietary practices. The event was well-received and praised for its creative blend of cultural expression and nutritional education, fostering greater awareness and enthusiasm for healthy living in the community.



Help age sri Lanka orientation



On April 10, 2025, social work trainees Aakash P R, Sanjay Menuvin, Jomon M, Roshy Alex, Anandhu R, and Sebin Kuriyan attended an online orientation session for their internship with HelpAge Sri Lanka. The session, held via Google Meet, was led by Dr. Harsha Bandara, Mr. Chaminda De Silva, Miss Ekanayake, and Miss Nelum. The speakers introduced Help Age Sri Lanka as a non-governmental organization committed to improving the lives of older persons through free medical services, cataract surgeries, and awareness programs advocating for elder rights. A video presentation gave attendees a deeper understanding of the organization's impactful work.

The orientation also outlined the roles and responsibilities of interns during their time with the organization. Interns may assist in health camps, field visits, office work, and various support programs aimed at elderly welfare. Clear guidelines were given regarding punctuality, professional behavior, confidentiality, and active participation.

The session proved to be informative and motivating, providing the trainees with a strong sense of direction and purpose as they prepare to engage in meaningful service with HelpAge Sri Lanka.

BIDDING ADIEU

Bharata Mata School of Social Work (BMSSW) extends heartfelt gratitude and warm wishes to three esteemed faculty members—Mr. Praisewin J Kallingal, Ms. Shema Elsa Daniel, and Ms. Simmy Xavier—who recently concluded their tenure with the institution.

Mr. Praisewin J Kallingal served as the class teacher for the MSW First Year students and also took on the role of Coordinator for International Student Affairs. His contributions were marked by dedication, leadership, and a genuine connection with students. He now embarks on his PhD journey at Rajagiri School of Social Sciences, Kalamassery.





Ms. Shema Elsa Daniel, known for her academic sincerity and student-focused approach, continues her PhD research at Christ University, Bangalore, further advancing her academic pursuits. Both served the department with commitment and enthusiasm, leaving a lasting impression on the BMSSW community.



Ms. Simmy Xavier, who served for sixteen months, was the class teacher for the MSW Second Year students. She was known for her enthusiasm, professionalism, and active involvement in both academic and student development activities. Her time at BMSSW was marked by warmth, guidance, and a strong commitment to the holistic growth of her students.

BMSSW expresses deep gratitude to Mr. Praisewin, Ms. Shema, and Ms. Simmy for their service and commitment. We wish them continued success and fulfillment in their future academic and professional endeavors.

ACADEMIC REFLECTIONS...

Contaminated Streams, Dry Futures: Water Conservation in Rural and Urban Areas

"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one."

— Jacques Yves Cousteau

Water, the essence of life, is under severe threat due to pollution, climate change, and unsustainable consumption. As global temperatures rise and natural water sources deplete, both rural and urban communities face alarming water quality crises. High concentrations of calcium, iron, and fluoride along with industrial waste contaminate streams, rivers, and groundwater. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water (WHO, 2023). Meanwhile, the United Nations estimates that by 2030, global water demand will outstrip supply by 40% (UN Water, 2023) and by 2025, half of the world's population will live in water-stressed areas. If current trends persist, water scarcity could trigger mass displacement and conflict. This article examines the deteriorating state of water conservation through the lens of a social work trainee's fieldwork, explores the role of social workers in advocacy, and suggests actionable steps for sustainable water management.

The Crisis of Contaminated Water in Rural and Urban Areas

1. Alarming Water Quality Issues

During the internship, the social work trainee documented severe water quality degradation in both rural and urban settings. In rural areas, groundwater contamination from excessive fluoride and iron causes skeletal fluorosis and anemia (Ayoob & Gupta, 2006). Urban areas, despite advanced infrastructure, suffer from hard water due to excessive calcium and magnesium, leading to kidney ailments and pipe corrosion (WHO, 2022). Shockingly, even premium hotels in metro cities supply poorly filtered water, exposing guests to health risks.

2. Climate Change and Deforestation – Accelerating the Water Crisis

Deforestation disrupts the natural water cycle, reducing groundwater recharge. Climate change intensifies droughts and erratic rainfall, worsening water scarcity. The WHO (2023) states that by 2030, global freshwater demand will exceed supply by 40%. If current trends persist, future wars may indeed be fought over water (United Nations, 2021).

3. Hard Water Havoc and Hard Water Havoc:

The calcium and magnesium deposits in metro cities damage kidneys and corrode plumbing (WHO, 2022). In urban hotels and found 62% exceeded safe TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) limits (Primary Research, 2024).

The Role of Social Workers and common individuals in Water Conservation



Aakash P. R
FIRST YEAR MSW

Social workers play an important role in addressing water crises by implementing community awareness programs, such as educating villagers on rainwater harvesting and well maintenance, and collaborating with NGOs to install affordable water filters. They also engage in policy advocacy, lobbying for stricter industrial waste disposal laws and camp-

aigning for government-funded water testing in rural schools. Additionally, social workers provide psychological support to communities traumatized by waterborne disease outbreaks. Individuals can contribute by reducing water wastage through actions like fixing leaks, using low-flow faucets, and adopting rainwater harvesting. Also, individuals can demand accountability by petitioning local authorities for regular water quality checks and support sustainable brands that follow ethical water usage policies.

A social work trainee's just a couple of days of experiencing our surroundings explain that water contamination is a silent killer threatening millions with thirst, disease, and displacement. To prevent this crisis, social workers must spearhead efforts through education, advocacy, and policy reform. As WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom emphasizes, "Safe water is not a privilege; it is a basic human right." Urgent action is necessary, requiring social workers to lead grassroots movements and individuals to adopt conservation practices to secure a sustainable future

Guiding Youth Away from Drugs: The Social Worker's Role

"Social workers play a vital role in shaping the future of young people by empowering them to resist the lure of drugs and guiding them toward healthier life choices."

— National Association of Social Workers

Youth today face numerous challenges, and one of the most dangerous is substance abuse. Social workers stand at the frontline of this crisis, using their training and empathy to prevent, intervene, and rehabilitate. Their work is not just about managing consequences but about addressing root causes like trauma, peer pressure, poverty, and mental health issues.

Social workers engage with youth through schools, community centers, shelters, and rehabilitation programs. They educate teens on the risks of drug use and provide counseling that helps them cope with emotional distress. Early intervention is key—by identifying warning signs such as sudden behavior changes or academic decline, social workers can offer timely support before drug use escalates. Outreach programs, workshops, and one-on-one mentoring are just a few tools they use to build trust and foster resilience.

Beyond direct care, social workers advocate for policies that improve access to education, mental health care, and substance abuse prevention services. They collaborate with families, educators, and law enforcement to create environments that protect and empower youth. Research shows that a combination of education, emotional support, and community involvement significantly reduces the likelihood of drug use among teens (Miller & Thompson, 2021).



Aleeta Godfrey
FIRST YEAR MSW

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However, challenges persist. Social workers often operate with limited resources and must navigate complex social dynamics. They must also be culturally sensitive, adapting their strategies to meet the unique needs of diverse communities.

Despite these hurdles, the dedication of social workers remains unwavering

In a world where youth are increasingly vulnerable to the pressures of drug use, social workers offer hope and guidance. By blending professional skills with compassion, they help young people make healthier choices, paving the way for a brighter, drug-free future.







BHARATA MATA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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