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.

LIFE SKILL TRAINING AT CARDINAL SCHOOL



A Personality Development and Life Skills Training session was conducted for Higher Secondary (+2 Science & Commerce) students of Cardinal Higher Secondary School, Thrikkakara by Second-Year MSW students of Bharata Mata School of Social Work. Around 50 students participated in the program. The objective of the session was to enhance essential life skills required for personal, academic, and social development. The trainees began with an orientation on class management and session planning, after which they divided into pairs and facilitated sessions in different classes.

Key components included leadership qualities, communication skills, time management, decision-making, non-verbal communication, teamwork, and confidence-building. Interactive ice-breaking activities and practical life skill exercises enabled students to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. Students actively participated throughout the session and showed great enthusiasm, especially in leadership challenges and decision-making tasks. The session created a positive, participatory learning environment and provided valuable practical exposure for MSW trainees in facilitation and group handling.



PUPPET SHOW AT BORSTAL SCHOOL



The social work trainee, along with the Wisdom Grove team, had the opportunity to conduct a meaningful session at the Borstal School, Kakkanad. The program aimed to promote personal growth and rehabilitation among the inmates through interactive and creative learning. The trainee began by teaching songs and sharing life experiences, drawing insightful comparisons with experiences in South Sudan, which inspired the students to reflect on resilience and positive change. Engaging games and activities were conducted to build teamwork, trust, and a sense of joy. This was followed by an educational session on good habits and healthy living, highlighting the importance of discipline and constructive behavior.

The Wisdom Grove team also presented a powerful puppet show on substance abuse, depicting how addiction affects one's health, family, and overall well-being. The performance served as an eye-opening experience for the students, leaving a strong message about making positive life choices. The session concluded with a song that encouraged hope and self-reflection, after which the Borstal School students expressed their gratitude through a heartfelt vote of thanks. Overall, the program was a valuable experience for both the inmates and the trainee, emphasizing the role of social work in correctional settings through creativity, empathy, and education

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY OBSERVANCE AT WELFARE SERVICES , ERNAKULAM



An orientation class on Psychological First Aid (PFA) was held at Sahrudaya Welfare Service, Ernakulam, as part of the inauguration of EDAM's Counselling Centre for Women in connection with World Mental Health Day. The session was led by Dr. Heena Haneefa, a psychologist and mental health professional. The programme aimed to raise awareness about mental health and to train participants in providing psychological support during crises. Participants included MSW students from Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, and women from the stitching unit at N. Paravur. Dr. Heena highlighted the importance of mental well-being and early emotional intervention. The session helped participants gain practical knowledge and confidence in offering Psychological First Aid in real-life situations.

PARTICIPATION IN ONE - DAY STATE LEVEL CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

On 13th October 2025, MSW first-year students Khaira Shehza and Sreya C Sam attended a state-level conference at Naipunnya Institute of Management and Information Technology, Thrissur, organized by KAPS and ESAF in connection with World Mental Health Day and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. The sessions included student proposals on substance use, a research paper on mental health, and an expert talk by Mr. Francis, stressing the need for skilled mental health professionals.

MSW FIRST SEMESTER CONCURRENT FIELD WORK

The MSW students of the 2025–27 batch successfully completed their first semester panchayat fieldwork in September across 6 Gramapachayat in Ernakulam District. The internship provided students with valuable practical exposure and insights into various areas of social work. Through their active participation in field activities, they strengthened their professional skills and deepened their understanding of community service and social development practices.



PUTHENVELIKKARA

Puthenvelikkara is a 1st grade Grama Panchayat located in the Ernakulam district of Kerala, situated in the fertile low-lying coastal plains nourished by the Periyar River. Comprising two villages—Puthenvelikkara and Karumalloor—the Panchayat blends rural traditions with semi-urban progress. It consists of 17 wards and is known for its strong local governance, rich cultural heritage, and commitment to participatory development. Various standing committees focus on key areas such as health, education, social justice, women's empowerment, and environmental protection, ensuring holistic community growth. As part of our social work fieldwork, we gained firsthand experience in community realities and participatory approaches to development. Through home visits and the application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, we assessed socio-economic conditions, family structures, and local issues. A major highlight of our fieldwork was organizing the mega awareness program "Agni – Igniting Minds", conducted in collaboration with the Panchayat, Kudumbashree, and the local fire station. The event focused on fire and safety awareness and encouraged active public participation. This field experience provided valuable insights into community engagement, local governance, and the practical applications of social work principles in promoting inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

VADAKKEKARA



Vadakkekara Grama Panchayat in North Paravur Taluk, Ernakulam, is a semi-urban coastal village characterized by its serene environment, agricultural richness, and active community life. Its proximity to Paravur, Kodungallur, and Kochi ensures strong connectivity and diverse livelihood opportunities. During our 18-day fieldwork, we used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools to understand the community's socio-economic structure and development dynamics. We also conducted case studies on Kudumbashree, Anganwadi, Harithakarmasena, and MGNREGA, and participated in programs like Samanvaya and Bhinnashesi Kalolsavam. These experiences enhanced our professional social work competencies, including communication, organization, and community engagement.



MSW FIRST SEMESTER CONCURRENT FIELD WORK

CHEMPU



Chempu Grama Panchayat, situated in Vaikom Taluk of Kottayam District, is a serene and progressive rural area surrounded by beautiful backwaters and greenery. It is well known for its agrarian lifestyle and traditional occupations such as fishing and coir work. These activities reflect the community's deep connection with nature and its sustainable way of living. The Panchayat consists of several wards and functions as an active local self-government body. It ensures people's participation through decentralized planning and democratic decision-making. Various standing committees address issues related to health, education, women's empowerment, and environmental protection. This structure helps promote inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

During our fieldwork at Chempu Panchayat, we received valuable exposure to rural realities and community life. We used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and conducted home visits to assess social and economic conditions. These exercises helped us understand family relationships and local needs more effectively. We also organized awareness programs in collaboration with Panchayat officials. Interaction with Kudumbashree members provided insights into women's empowerment and self-employment initiatives. Overall, the experience strengthened our knowledge of participatory governance and enhanced our professional social work skills.

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KUNNATHUNADU



Kunnathunad Grama Panchayat, located in the midland region of Ernakulam District, Kerala, comprises the villages of Pattimattom and Kunnathunad. Classified as a 1st grade Panchayat and divided into 18 wards, it is a semi-urban region where agricultural traditions coexist with growing urban development. Bordered by the Periyar and Muvattupuzha rivers, the Panchayat's geography includes both hilly and plain areas, contributing to its agricultural richness and scenic beauty. Kunnathunad functions as an efficient local governance body, promoting people's participation through decentralized planning. Various standing committees focus on health, education, social justice, women's empowerment, and environmental protection, ensuring inclusive and sustainable development.

Our fieldwork at Kunnathunad provided valuable exposure to community realities and practical aspects of social work. Through home visits and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, we studied the socio-economic conditions, family relationships, and local challenges. Collaborating with Panchayat officials, we organized the mega awareness program "Agni – Igniting Minds", which focused on fire and safety awareness with active involvement from the Pattimattom Fire Station and Kudumbashree members. This experience deepened our understanding of participatory governance, community engagement, and professional social work practice. Overall, the fieldwork enhanced our communication, organizational, and intervention skills, bridging theory with real-life application.

EDATHALA



The social work trainees reported that their fieldwork experience at Edathala Grama Panchayat was both educational and inspiring, providing them with valuable exposure to the functioning of local governance, community participation, and developmental initiatives. The Panchayat, comprising 21 wards, is actively engaged in various projects such as the construction of open gyms and community halls aimed at improving the quality of life for residents. A notable recent initiative was the inauguration of the Grama Vandi, a mobile service that brings government facilities closer to the public. The trainees observed that departments like MGNREGS, Kudumbashree, and Haritha Karma Sena were effectively addressing community needs and promoting sustainable development. They also highlighted the significant participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making, reflecting the Panchayat's commitment to participatory governance.

As part of their fieldwork, the trainees organized a Mega Event in collaboration with Panchayat authorities and local organizations. The event included honoring Haritha Karma Sena members, conducting a Basic Life Support (BLS) training session with Aster Medcity, and arranging a puppet show in partnership with Wisdom Grew at VHSS Thrikkakkara, focusing on social awareness. Overall, the experience enriched the trainees' professional competence, interpersonal skills, and dedication to inclusive community development.

UDAYAMPEROOR



Udayamperoor Grama Panchayat, under Thrippunithura Block of Ernakulam District, covers 24.85 sq. km with a population of 39,538 (19,375 males and 20,163 females). Comprising 20 wards, it is historically renowned for the Synod of Diamper (1599) and reflects a harmonious blend of tradition, culture, and modern development. The major occupations include agriculture, small-scale industries, and service sectors, while decentralized governance and active Gram Sabha meetings ensure strong community participation.

During the fieldwork, trainees engaged with various programs such as Kudumbashree, ICDS, MGNREGA, and Haritha Karma Sena. Through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools like social mapping, resource mapping, transect walks, and problem analysis, they studied local needs, resources, and power structures. The experience emphasized women's active participation, effective governance, and coordination among departments.

A major highlight was the Eye Check-up Camp organized in collaboration with RCM Hospital, providing free screening, consultation, and medicines to about 50 beneficiaries, especially from economically weaker sections. Trainees assisted in registration, guiding patients, and supporting doctors. The fieldwork enhanced skills in community organization, communication, leadership, and documentation, while applying social work values of empathy, acceptance, and self-determination, offering deep insights into grassroots governance and sustainable development.

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL WORKSHOP



The BSW 4th Semester students (2024–28 batch) attended a PRA Workshop on 30th October 2025 handled by Mr. Sooraj M.V., Asst. Professor, BMC, Thrikkakara. In the workshop, students were introduced to different PRA tools and learned how these tools help in community-based data collection and understanding local situations. In the afternoon, the students visited the Kollamkudimugal community for practical field experience. They invited community representatives to the Mini Auditorium, Kollamkudimugal, and interacted with them to collect necessary information using various PRA tools. Students were able to apply what they learned in the morning session directly in the field and gained hands-on experience. After the field activity, each group prepared and presented their findings based on the data collected from the community. The workshop helped the students to understand the importance of participatory approaches in social work, and they learned how community involvement plays a major role in planning and development activities.











ACADEMIC REFLECTION

COMPASSION IN ACTION: MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK AT ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL, BANGALORE

The Medical Social Work (MSW) department at St. John's Hospital, Bangalore, demonstrates an insightful and enriching model of patient care, featuring a team of approximately 29 social workers integrated across key departments such as ICUs, Hematology, Gynaecology, Emergency, Opthalmology. Their core mandate is to ensure the holistic well-being of both the patient and their family by addressing the complex psychosocial issues and challenges, like role changes, relationship strain, and financial resources, brought on by illness. This is accomplished through a thorough psychosocial assessment to arrive at a social diagnosis, which guides tailored interventions. MSWs are critical in the clinical setting, joining interdisciplinary ward rounds to understand medical conditions before conducting independent rounds to identify those needing support. They provide essential services like pre- and post-surgery counselling to manage anxiety, and in emergency and ICU settings, they deliver crucial crisis interventions and grief counselling. Furthermore, they proactively tackle the pervasive issue of financial difficulty by mobilizing fundraising methods (like crowdfunding) and securing financial aid through NGOs, such as the Indian Cancer Society (ICS), for cancer patients.

The Medical Social Work team's commitment extends significantly beyond the hospital walls and into the community through St. John's Hospital's Community Health Centres, focusing on the welfare of people in rural areas. They are the driving force behind vital programs like the Community Health Awareness Program (CHAP) and the Family Adoption program, handling all the groundwork: securing sanctions, coordinating with institutions, and understanding the unique house-to-house dynamics to effectively guide practicing doctors. Their community engagement is multifaceted, involving outreach to local Panchayats to promote useful government schemes and organizing various support groups —including Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Women's Groups (Mahila Mandal) for empowerment, and groups for people with disabilities and mental health support.

Additionally, they assess the socio-economic status of individuals to ensure necessary concessions on medicines and dressings are provided. These social workers also play an educational role, training practicing doctors in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools (like transect walks and Focus Group Discussions) to better grasp the real-world problems faced by the community, while also serving as part of the hospital's research team to identify key community issues.

Complementing their clinical and community roles, the MSW team has spearheaded impactful initiatives that directly enhance the patient experience and access to care. The Sahaya Center for assistive devices is a testament to this, providing almost 28 essential devices (including wheelchairs and nebulizers) on a refundable security deposit to improve patient independence. Another notable initiative, the Cartoon Painting Project, was launched with the support of The Open Arms Foundation (TOAF), successfully transforming walls and corridors with beautiful artwork to create a more child-friendly ward environment. These initiatives underscore the team's commitment to patient welfare that goes beyond medical treatment, recognizing the importance of practical assistance and an empathetic environment. Ultimately, the medical social workers at St. John's Hospital serve as indispensable agents of compassion, ensuring that patients receive not just medical intervention, but comprehensive support for their holistic well-being.



Sneha Suresh
MSW 2nd Year

BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS OF CNCP CHILDREN: A COMPARATIVE REFLECTION BETWEEN MUMBAI AND KERALA

During my fieldwork at Mumbai, I had the opportunity to interact closely with Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP), including homeless and street children. Through daily interactions, I observed several differences in behavior compared to CNCP children I had previously met in Kerala.

In Mumbai, the CNCP children appeared very energetic and active in almost all situations. They were eager to engage in games, conversations, and activities. Many of them were quick learners, especially when motivated or praised. However, despite their energy and curiosity, most of them were academically weak and found it difficult to concentrate on studies. Their background and exposure to street life made them more expressive, talkative, and sometimes impulsive in their behavior. I noticed that their extra energy often came from a need to gain attention and express themselves freely in a less restricted environment.

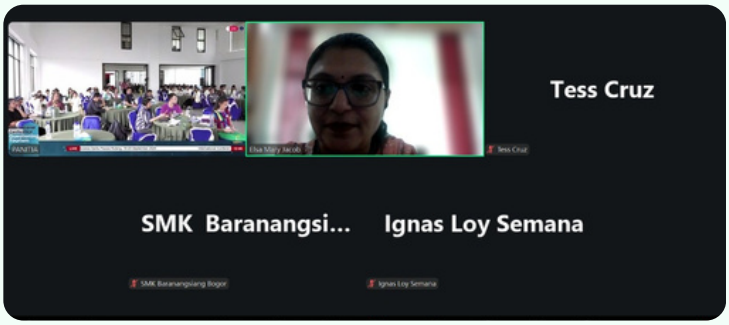
In contrast, CNCP children in Kerala were quieter and more reserved. They were often shy to express their feelings or ideas and preferred to observe rather than speak. However, they showed more responsibility and discipline in their studies and school activities. Their behavior reflected emotional dependency but also respect toward teachers and caregivers.

Through this experience, I learned that both groups have unique strengths. Mumbai children reflect resilience and adaptability, while Kerala children display discipline and emotional sensitivity ,both requiring different approaches in care and support.



Anannya Jose
MSW 2nd Year

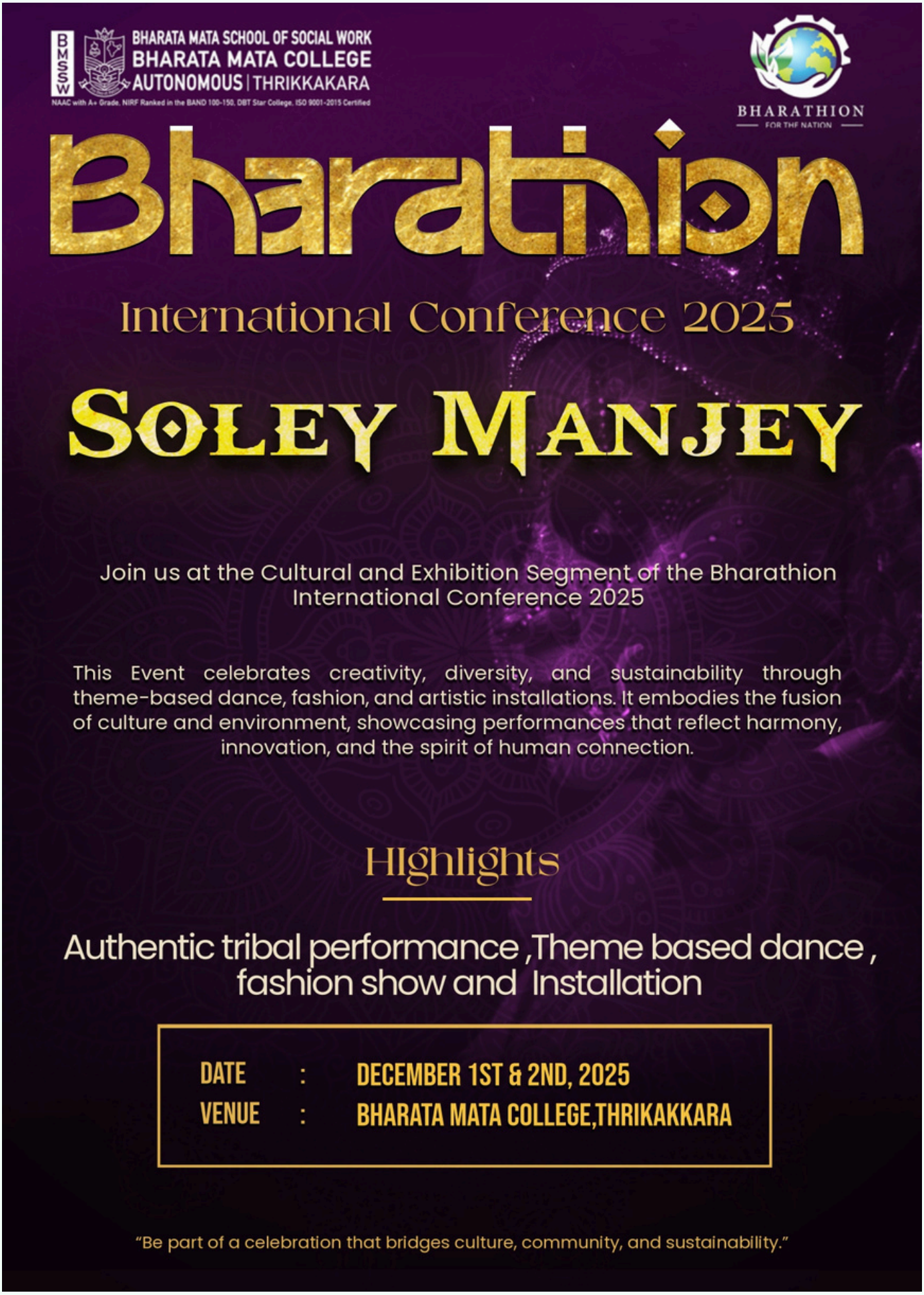
FACULTY AS RESOURCE PERSON



On 8th October, the Centre for Women and Family Studies at the National University of Advanced Legal Studies, in association with the Senior Citizens Division, National Institute of Social Defence, conducted a workshop on Intergenerational Bonding. During the workshop, Dr. Elsa Mary Jacob handled a session on the topic “U3A – A Model for Intergenerational Bonding.” Since this institution has an MoU with our institution, the workshop also contributed to the collaborative MoU activities.

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Highlights
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The Exhibition Segment of Bharathion International Conference 2025 – "Soley Manjey" highlights innovative approaches to climate action, indigenous art, and sustainable development. It offers a creative platform showcasing visual narratives that promote ecological awareness and community-driven sustainability.









"We invite you to experience Bharation — a journey of art, unity, and inspiration."

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