

**A GREAT PERSONALITY DEDICATED TO SOCIAL SERVICE: MRS MEENA
KURUVILLA MADAM RCSS KOCHI KERALA**

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A woman is the foundation of society. She is not a thing to be trampled on. The Queen of Jhansi is also a woman, but the bravery she displayed is no less than that of men. Her work in history is a new direction and inspiration for the female race. I met Mrs Meena Kuruvilla Madam while working at Rajgiri College of Social Sciences. I saw her work. She is extremely hardworking and is known as a very good person. A great personality dedicated to education and social service. Meena Madam has a lot of potential in social work. Mrs Meena Kuruvilla is the Project Director of Rajagiri outREACH, the flagship live lab in the campus and prior to it has served as a member of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) during the period 2014-2017. Meena has a Master's Degree in Social Work from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and graduated from Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery. She has held positions in committees of various international and national institutions and has conducted over 22 programs. Mrs Meena Kuruvilla is the Project Director of Rajagiri outREACH, the flagship live lab in the campus and prior to it has served as a member of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) during the period 2014-2017. Meena has a Master's Degree in Social Work from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and graduated from Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery. She has held positions in committees of various international and national institutions and has conducted over 22 various programs.

She says, Indian women have had many restrictions since ancient times. Women are very gentle by nature. Once married, their husband is their world. But if she does not fulfil her responsibilities in some families, some family members give her terrible troubles, many crimes are committed and the world of her breaks down. Superstition and women are very closely related. Due to this, many atrocities and crimes are committed. Even today, even though Indian women are earners, there are many restrictions from their in-laws, such as that daughter in laws parents should not come to their house, and she should not go to her parents' house much, all these conditions should be followed. One common thing in all this is that these women have their own PAN card, Aadhaar card, and ration card, and their husbands should also control them. Therefore, even if they are asked to take some decisions, there are limits here and there. Even today, good thinking cultured women tolerate all this due to the pressure of society. No matter what kind of husband they have, they have to accept him. If they do not have children, they have to face the harassment of their in-laws. I do not want to say that all men are bad. This type of thing does not happen in villages or among uneducated people but among educated people. It is also true that some women take the help of the law and oppress men or in-laws. But on average, women are more atrocities, while living in

society, if this is happening in front of you, help such people, make people in the house understand, show the fear of the law if they do not listen, I think everyone should be alert in social crime. If a woman helps a woman and cooperates, many problems will be solved. And life will become easier”.

Meena madams’ valuable contribution in social work are as follows

- Supporting education of children from underprivileged families through child sponsorship programme.
- Promoting child rights
- Coordinating community based programmes to support underprivileged children, youth, women and the aged
- Monitoring and conducting remedial sessions and summer camp for tribal children residing at four pre-matric hostels in collaboration with Tribal Development Department, Government of Kerala as part of Kuttampuzha Tribal Development Project
- Coordinating social impact assessment studies and need assessment studies for the State Revenue Department & District Administration (conducted 80 such studies as on date)
- Conducting awareness campaign on zero waste management.
- Organizing community based programmes with special focus on natural resource management (water conservation, waste management, sanitation and organic farming.
- Monitoring of women beneficiaries CSR projects.
- Created awareness on Prevention of Sexual Harassment of women at workplace.
- Organizing programmes for prevention of HIV among migrant labourers
- Reaching out to community through various family centered programmes
- Monitoring of KRWSA Jananidhi project, incorporated with sanitation projects, rain water harvesting, bio gas units as Project Director in various grama panchayats
- Monitoring the Prevention of Substance Abuse in Community Setting among adolescent children .
- Monitoring Kaval (Psychosocial support for the children in conflict with law) and Kaval Plus (Children in need of care and protection and Survivors of child sexual abuse) programme of Dept of Women and child Development.
- Monitoring the Training Programmes on Road Safety and First Aid to Tank Truck Crews.
- Coordinated and Monitored the UNICEF as well as other post flood relief activities in Kerala State in 2018
- Actively participated in COVID-19 Relief Activities
- Participated as a Sectoral Expert to conduct Joint Disaster Need Assessment of 2021 flood in Kerala conducted by State Disaster Management Authority and UNICEF.

Jan 2014 to Jan 2017 Member, Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (appointed by Department of Social Justice, Government of Kerala) Kerala State Commission for protection of child rights

- Issued orders on petitions received in violation of child rights based on which the state government framed policies

- Facilitated organizing of samvadams, state level consultations on prevention of child marriages, drug menace, child abuse, foster care and sponsorship
- Monitored Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO ACT) & Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act) and JJ Act 2015
- As co-chairperson of the ECCE Committee constituted by Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, took initiative in developing “Kokal”, a handbook for Anganwadi teachers of Irula tribal community of Attappadi, Palakkad District to enable them to impart education at pre-primary level
- Conducted enquiry to assess situation of children living in tea plantation of Peerumedu in Idukki District and submitted recommendation to the Government of Kerala
- Conducted a detailed study on the condition of tribal children living in Edamalakkudi tribal Panchayath in Idukki District and submitted recommendations to the State Government
- Conducted a study on the condition of children of migrant labourers at Perumbavoor in Ernakulam district and submitted recommendations to the State Government
- Selected as subject expert, clarifying queries of listeners/viewers in phone-in programme of All India Radio, Doordarshan and other channels to spread awareness on child rights and legal adoption
- Carried out a study on Government Children’s Home and submitted recommendations to govt. to improve the facilities
- Organized consultation meetings / trainings for JJBs, CWCs, SJPU, DCPUs, about Adoption Regulations, JJACT, RTE Act and POCSO Act
- Organized consultation meetings for judges of special courts (POCSO Cases) jointly organized by KeSCPCR and Judicial Academy of Kerala High Court.

June 2013 to December 2013: *Programme Manager, State Adoption Resource Agency of Social Justice Department functioning at Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery, Kochi*

- Monitoring of all child adoption activities undertaken by various childcare institutions in the State of Kerala.

March 1993 to June 2013 **Project Coordinator - Adoption Coordinating Agency (recognized by Central Adoption Resource Authority, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India)**

- Coordinated adoption activities in the state of Kerala from 1993 to 2014
- Facilitated 6000 adoptions of orphaned and abandoned children in the state of Kerala
- Created awareness on child rights, JJ Act, Integrated Child Protection Scheme and legal adoption among people from all walks of life
- Conducted home studies of prospective adoptive parents and carried out post adoption follow-up
- Conducted pre and post adoption counselling
- Carried out counseling for adolescent adoptees and victims of child sexual abuse

- Organized regional, district and state, level adoptive parents get together
- Organized national, state, regional and district level training programmes, consultation meets, seminars and workshops on child rights, child mental health, legal adoption procedures and JJ Act for various stakeholders with support from Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India and Department of Social Welfare, Government of Kerala, UNICEF and CRY
- Prepared database of adoptable and adopted children in the State of Kerala.

Jan 1987 to Sep 1988 Teacher, Marthoma Pre-primary Teachers Training School Thiruvalla recognized by Govt. of Kerala

- Gave training on child psychology and prepared lesson plan to the trainees based on government pre-primary curriculum

Sep 1988 to Aug 1992 Teacher, Baker Memorial Kinder Garten and Pre-primary Teachers Training School, Kottayam recognized by Govt. of Kerala

Dec 1993 to May 2002 Part time Counselor, Family Court, Ernakulam

- Conducted marital counseling and carried out enquiry for guardianship and custody of children at Family Court Ernakulam

❖ **Professional Positions Held**

Jan 2008 to Jan 2012 Former Member Child Welfare Committee Ernakulam District from (constituted by Social Justice Dept, Govt. of Kerala as per JJ Act 2000

- Dealt with Children in need of care and protection including victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, child labour, and child beggary, domestic violence, street children, child marriage, abandoned and surrendered children and institutionalized children,
- Conducted inspection visits of child care institutions in Ernakulam district and prepared a model of standards of child care in institutions.

Jan 2009 to Jan 2014 & Member, Kerala State Selection Committee of Juvenile March 2015 to Jan 2017 Justice Act

- Involved in selecting members of Child welfare committees and Juvenile Justice Boards in fourteen districts of the state of Kerala and also provided training for CWC and JJB members.

Jan to Dec 2016&2021 Member, Working group on Child Development and Nutrition under Social Services Division of the Kerala State Planning Board

- Involved in planning new projects for children on nutrition and child development for the State Government.

Jan to Dec 2014 Former Member, State Adoption Advisory Committee

- Involved in monitoring of adoption activities in the state of Kerala and also supported Govt. for framing policies on legal adoption.

2002 to 2013 & Former Member, Kerala High 2017 to till date Court Internal Complaints Committee of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace

1999 to 2005 & Existing Member & Former Member, as representative 2018 to till date of social worker in Kerala High Court Legal Services Committee

18-11-2021 to till date Nominated as an advisory Committee member of High Court Victim Rights Centre

Trainings Attended & Conducted

- Attended training programmes on child adoption, child rights, Juvenile Justice Act, POCSO act, counseling, child abuse and child mental health organized by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, NIPCCD, Social Justice, Women and Child Development Dept. Govt. of Kerala, KILA and UNICEF.
- Organized training programmes on child adoption, child rights, Juvenile Justice Act at national and state level for various groups like lawyers, Govt. officials, NGO representatives, members of CWCs and JJBs, special juvenile police officials as per JJ Act, counselors, care takers, tribal children, adoption agencies and adoptive families with the support of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, Central Adoption Resource Authority, and Social Welfare Dept, Women and Child Development, Kudumbashree, Govt. of Kerala, UNICEF and CRY.
- Organized trainings on sexual harassment of women at workplace, dowry prohibition.

Paper Publications & Presentations

- Published an article on “Juvenile Justice- children in need of care and protection and Rehabilitation programme” in a magazine named Yojana (Malayalam), Govt. of India publication in November 2011 issue.
- Published an article on Family based Rehabilitation of Orphan, Abandoned and Surrendered children through Adoption in Kerala Calling Magazine 2017
- Presented a paper on “Documenting the Adoption process in Kerala as a good practice” in a National consultation meet on Adoption on 24th November 2006 published by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India and UNICEF in a book named National Adoption Study
- Presented a paper on “Children in need of Care & Protection” in a Regional Conference on Rights of Children at High Court of Kerala on 8th August 2010 published as a Resource Material by National Legal Service Authority and Kerala State Legal Service Authority
- Presented a paper on “Adoption Scenario in Kerala” in a State Level Adoption Meet held on 25th May, 2007 published by Social Welfare Department Govt. of Kerala.
- Meena Kuruvilla (2021) “Engaging Social Work practice among migrants during COVID 19 Pandemic ; Reflections from the field”. Book chapter in COVID 19 and Mental health, Clever Fox Publishing, 2021, p; 66-76
- Article has been published as a book chapter in Social Work Engagements and Challenges: Response to COVID -19 by KY Publications.

Research

Carried out research studies on:

- Women workers in fish processing Industries.
- POCSO cases entrusted by Govt of Kerala
- Situational Analysis of Adopted Children in the State of Kerala entrusted by Women and Child Development Dept Govt of Kerala.

- Condition of government children's home as a member of Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.
- Study on School drop-outs phenomenon among tribal Communities in Edamalakudi ,Kuttampuzha and Neriamangalam tribal hamlets authorised by Sarvasisksha Abhiyan ,Govt of Kerala
- Issues of children residing in tea plantations
- Status of children of migrant labourers
- Condition of children of women prisoners in women's prison.
- A study on the Current Status of Children those who are residing with parents without legal adoption court orders in the State of Kerala authorized by department of women and Child Development.

Meena Madam has a lion's share in social work. I learned a lot from her. If someone asks me what a woman should be like, I think she should take care of the house and serve the country. She should in still good values in her children and spread happiness. And most importantly, she should love herself. We know women in different forms like mother, daughter, sister, wife, lover and friend; but, the form of a woman is not limited to this, the definition of this femininity is much bigger than this. However, due to the influence of the male-dominated culture, it is possible that many of us men and even women do not know her. It is not so easy to define her form. Everyone has problems at home. But I salute Meena Madam and all the women who have created their own unique identity and devoted themselves to social work.