

Geriatric Medical Camp

The Geriatric are the most vulnerable community in the society. As per the 2011 Census Data, 12.8% of people are above 60 years of age. By 2030, the percentage of the elderly people would cross 20%. That means, one fifth of the population of Kerala would constitute elderly people. Elder people are highly vulnerable to health issues, loneliness and social isolation. Kudumbashree Mission had identified the need of addressing their issues and had brought in the concept of Elderly Neighbourhood Groups all across the state for their physical and mental well-being. Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission had conducted a medical camp for the Geriatric people to ensure their health fitness. An optometric medical camp was organised by the Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission to address one of the health issues of the geriatric people in the district. Let us see what Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission had done for the Geriatric.

Elderly NHGs

Elderly group plays a major role in social development by their productive participation and there by the challenges face by them has direct reflection over society. On realising that it's our responsibility to ensure their rights, security, freedom and prestige, Kudumbashree aimed to make sure whether government plans reach elderly citizen to empower them socially, financially and economically and launched the concept of the neighbourhood groups of Elderly people.

Elderly NHGs are special NHGs started for those above 60 years of age. Compared to other NHGs of Kudumbashree, elderly NHGs have some peculiar features that, not only women but also men can become part of elderly NHGs and personal savings and bank loan are not compulsory. Concessions are given to elderly NHGs from normal NHG. Savings and internal lending are not mandatory if needed they can start these activities.

The elderly NHGs aims at ensuring the participation of the elderly people in social development and find solutions for their issues. Elderly NHGs consist of 10 to 20 people. (NHG cannot be

formed with less than 10 members). Kudumbashree thought about such an idea during 2018 and was piloted in Mulanthuruthi block of Ernakulam district and Chavara block of Kollam district. As of now, there are 23,858 Elderly NHGs functioning in the state of Kerala with 2,83,615 people as members. A total of 1922 Elderly NHGs were formed in Malappuram district which has 23,106 elderly people as members.

Importance of Eye Care

Your eyesight is one of your most important senses: 80% of what we perceive comes through our sense of sight. By protecting your eyes, you will reduce the odds of blindness and vision loss while also staying on top of any developing eye diseases such as cataracts and glaucoma.

Eye health equals brain health. Healthy brain function needs healthy eyesight. The brain is our most vital organ, allowing us to live complex lives. Considering that your optic nerve connects your eyes and your brain, a healthy co-dependent relationship is necessary. By keeping your eyes healthy, you keep your brain healthy – improving your overall quality of life! So Good vision contributes to improved athletic ability, better driving skills, improved learning and comprehension and better quality of life.

Eye Health of the Geriatric

Vision changes occur when one gets older. When one reached 60s and beyond, he/she needs to be aware of the warning signs of age-related eye health problems that could cause vision loss. Many eye diseases have no early symptoms. They may develop painlessly, and one may not notice the changes to the vision until the condition is quite advanced. Wise lifestyle choices, regular eye exams and early detection of disease can significantly improve your chances of maintaining good eye health and vision as people age.

Elder people may not realize that health problems affecting other parts of the body can affect the vision as well. People with diabetes or hypertension (high blood pressure), or who are taking medications that have eye-related side effects, are at greatest risk for developing vision problems. Regular eye exams are even more important in the senior years.

Geriatric Medical camp organised by the Malappuram District Mission

Elderly NHGs had already been formed in Malappuram district to address the issues faced by the elderly community and to save them from social isolation. Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission had realised the need of conducting various welfare activities including health check-ups and social awareness classes. And so a Geriatric Medical Camp was conducted for the elderly people in the district.

It was a coincidence that when Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission thought of approaching some hospitals regarding the conduct of the health camp, the brochure/ an invitation from Al Salama Eye Hospital reached their hands showing their willingness to partner in any such association that would result in the welfare of the common women and their families. And after the discussions with Al Salama Eye Hospital, they had showed their willingness to conduct the Geriatric Medical Camp-Nethram 2019 absolutely free of cost for the Geriatrics. Al Salama Eye Hospital, Perinthalmanna is one of the famous eye hospitals in Kerala. Through this programme the eye test for the Relationship Kerala Elderly NHGs and other benefits was also arranged.

The benefits of the Nayanam Programme include:

- Lifetime free Consultation of the Doctor.
- Issuing of RSBY- Ayushman Bharath (Karunya Arogya Suraksha Padhathi).
- The Cataract Surgery for the card holders absolutely free of cost and for others at 25 % discount rates.
- 25 % discount for other eye treatments and surgeries.
- Those who need spectacles would be issued at 10 % discount.
- Operations at absolutely free of cost for those who are financially backward.

Implementation Phase

A total of 5362 elderly people from 103 CDSs in the district were given free eye test and treatment. Out of them 3831 were ensured follow up treatments and Cataract Surgery was

done absolutely free of cost to 682 elderly people. The hospital is located at Perinthalmanna of Malappuram. So, for those who found it difficult to reach Perinthalmanna, Eye Health Camps were arranged as per the convenience of the elderly people. The Hospital had made travel arrangements to take the elderly people from their respective houses to the hospital at Perinthalmanna. The elderly people had found it just like a leisure trip as they were so much relaxed by the trip. The Block Coordinators were entrusted with pre scheduling the health check-ups of each CDSs. And the Block Coordinators directly dealt with the hospital for further communications and activities.

The expense of the food for the elderly people was shared between the hospital and the respective CDSs. All those who had attended the medical camp was convinced of the care of the hospital and the CDSs and they are happy that their eye health is ensured. As the programme was found successful, it is also planned to conduct a Health Camp for all focusing on the eye health during 2020-21 financial year as well.

Scope

Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission, through their good relationship with the other institutions in the district made fruitful convergence and helped the elderly people, one of the vulnerable communities in Kerala gain the maximum out of it. It is the relationship of Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission with the Al Salama Hospital, Perinthalmanna resulted in the medical camp for the elderly communities in the district. The District mission of Malappuram identified the scope of convergence and it is that idea worked out and resulted in the welfare of the elderly people, who are usually isolated during their old ages and least care about their own health. This model of convergence by Kudumbashree Malappuram District Mission may be replicated by the other districts as well, as the elderly community needs a support from Kudumbashree Mission. As Kudumbashree has Elderly NHGs that give extra attention to the elderly people, the elderly people, one of the vulnerable communities in the state would be benefitted maximum out of such convergences. Let us look forward to more such fruitful convergences.