

PROJECT VENDA™



EVENT REPORT

Country/State: Ernakulam - Kerala

Submitted by:

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Project VENDA™

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Asian Regional Forum Against Drug 2019(ARFAD)

Day 1

The Asian Regional Forum against Drugs organised by the World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) and the Fourth Wave Foundation's Project VENDRA was inaugurated by His Excellency Shri Arif Muhammed Khan, the Governor of Kerala, on 25/09/2019 at, Four Points by Sheraton Kakkanad, Cochin. The event was organised in partnership with the United Nations Office Against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Commissionerate of Excise-Govt of Kerala.

The significance of the forum expands globally owing to the striking increase in demand, supply and distribution of drugs and narcotics in the last two decades. A serious public health epidemic of prescription drug abuse driving up the rates of overdose deaths has become a health concern in many nations. Compounding these problems, a global movement has emerged, working to normalize non-medical drug usage and sale of illegal psychoactive substances. Well-funded efforts by global elites are working to legalize and commercialize drug sales and use.

In this context, the Asian region decided to come together to discuss what needs to be done immediately and what can be planned for the future to ensure a drug-free world.

The chief guest, the honourable Governor Shri Arif Khan, addressed the audience on the need to work together and manage the menace collectively. The governor stressed the importance of the role, youth could play in this collaborative effort against substance abuse.

A Forum of this kind said the governor, has a significant role in sharing best practices through networking and advocacy that will be benefited by the region in working together to combat the issue. His Excellency lauded the

organisers for bringing the youth together on the third day because he said it is youth who should lead these efforts. His Excellency also mentioned the need to include the Professionals especially the technology leaders and start-ups to work in tandem with the community for a Substance abuse-free Environment and thus containing the issue. "A social audit is required in ensuring a substance-free environment in their premises," said the governor, "Substance abuse appears to be a big threat but this is not subject which can be deliberated in single forum but efforts should be made in a regular basis to create more awareness, campaigns and through concrete proposals. We cannot ignore this menace because we need to save our children."

His Excellency mentioned "For him, this was the first time he is attending a conference against substance abuse" and offered his support for fighting this menace of drug abuse in Kerala.

Mr.Raja shanmugam, Ex-CPO Happiest Minds Technologies and a member of the Advisory board of Fourth Wave Foundation gave the welcome address. Mr Balagopal Chandrasekar, director of Federal Bank stressed on the importance of corporates investing in social development initiatives. Federal Bank was the title sponsor of the ARFAD 2019. The Director of the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), Mr Veerendra Mishra felicitated the forum and explained NDPS act and the need to reduce drug demand.

Mr Shibulal, Ex-CEO Infosys and Founder Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives gave the presidential address on 'Need for Supporting efforts of civil societies working towards a National Action Plan' in the context of drug abuse in Kerala. Honourable Shri Mohammad Arif khan was presented with the storybook 'Nammal Ariyatha Nammude Kochi': A Handful of Heroes. Mr C C Joseph, director of Fourth wave foundation given the vote of thanks.

The inaugural was followed by 3 plenary sessions by the representatives from the partner organizations and continued with 3 panel discussions on carefully curated topics on drug demand reduction, best practices for prevention and recovery. Mr Esbjörn Hörnberg, International President, World Federation against Drugs (WFAD) delivered the keynote address on the 'Extent of the World Drug Problem and World Drug Report 2019'. Mr Sergey Kapinos UNODC, ROSA - South Asian Representative addressed the gathering on 'The Asian Context - Effective Strategies for Prevention of Substance Abuse-Role of Civil Societies'.

Mr C.C. Joseph Director of Fourth Wave Foundation stressed on the need for community-led intervention. Followed by insightful discussions from panellist from WFAD, UNODC, law enforcement personnel from India were part of the panel discussions. International standards on prevention, Drug Policy Advocacy efforts in Asia and Community role in empowering, prevention and recovery were the major panel discussions.

Panel 1

Moderator: Regina Mattson (Secretary-General WFAD, Sweden)

Dr Rakesh Lal - (Head, National drug Treatment Centre, India) who stated the challenges in the drug field involves ever-changing compounds, ever-changing names and inadequate data. Mr Muhammad Riduan Bin Samad (Senior Executive SANA, Singapore)

Mr Shakya Nanayakkara (Secretary General-Healthy Lanka, Sri Lanka)

Panel 2

Moderator: Mr Johnson J Edayaranmula (Director ADIC, India) who is a pioneer in drug abuse prevention in the National level stated the need to empower community action which will enable prevention and recovery.

Dr Atul Ambekar (National investigator and professor, AIIMS) focused on the resource allocation for prevention and treatment that should be based

upon the credible estimation of the magnitude of drug use problem. Rima Saade Turk (Executive Director Nusroto Association, Lebanon) and Mr Pubudu Sumanasekara (International Vice President IOGT, Sri Lanka) elucidated about the gap between legislation and enforcement which is deliberately affecting the advocacy measures in Sri Lanka.

Panel 3

Moderator: Dr Veerendra Mishra (Director National Institute of Social Defence) who moderated the panel stated that in India drug consumption at a very young age is prevalent therefore the focus should be on the prevention more than anything else. Mr Subrata Biswas (Special Excise Commissioner, West Bengal) a law enforcement officer working in a supply reduction, spoke also about the preventive strategies involving youth participation Ms Mulka Nisic (regional Coordinator, Celebrate Recovery, Bosnia and Herzegovina) spoke extensively about recovery process and the support the community needs to render in recovery efforts. Rogers Kasirye (Executive Director of Uganda Youth Development Link) also spoke about the need for community participation and grass root level intervention.

The first day of ARFAD 2019 was closed with a vote of thanks by Diana Joseph, Director of Fourth Wave Foundation-Project VENDAA

Day 2

(26.09.2019)

The second day of the Asian Regional Forum against Drugs 2019 started with a recap of the previous day followed by a plenary and 3 panel sessions on key topics to help world leaders in creating a drug-free society, prevention, rehabilitation and integration of the abused, role of civil societies as well as Rights of a Child.

Panel 1

Creating Drug-Free Societies Moderator: Ms Shalini George

Mr Mousa Daoud (president, Jordan Anti Drugs society) spoke about the challenges faced by civil societies in creating a drug-free environment. He concluded the discussion with a recommendation that we need to enable capacity building programs at regional and international levels. Dr Sandeep Bhola (District Hospital Punjab, India) addressed on the less emphasised topic around drug abuse, i.e female drug abusers within the context of Punjab. He also talked about the systematic, structural and socio-cultural barriers associated with gender perspectives of drug abuse. Mr Rishi Raj Ojha (President Just say No Nepal, Nepal), started his presentation by highlighting the current flaws that Nepal faces in achieving a drug-free society. He also elucidated the activities in Nepal for creating a drug-free society.

Panel 2: Rehabilitation and Integration into Society and the Workplace - Reducing Stigma and the Gender Perspective

Moderator: Raja Shanmugam

Mr Iqbal Masud, (Dhaka Ahsania Mission Bangladesh), pointed out the crucial role of individuals, groups and society play in the life of a recovered/reintegrated person. The main challenge is that there is no established statistics on drug use in Bangladesh. Further, he mentioned the need for reducing stigma being a major recovery measure among the rehabilitated. Ms Rasika Manohari, Program Officer, ADIC Sri Lanka) in her 10-minute session, explored the gender-specific methods used by dealers to reach to common people; The issues faced by different genders in the later stages and how re-integration becomes difficult for them. Dr Dharav Shah's, (National Consultant ADIC India), insightful session dealt with the internalized stigma and its impact on individuals after recovery; ways to reduce stigma; way to cope and also, why women find it difficult to get support, treatment and rehabilitation Mr Shah stated.

Panel 3: Right of a Child and Article 33 UNCRC - Need for a prevention approach

Moderator - Diana Joseph.

Ms Sumnima Tuladhar, (Executive Director, CWIN-Nepal), highlighted the Child's Right to grow up in drug-free environments. It must be ensured as stipulated in Article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Further, every state party must protect and defend this right. Hence, UNCRC Article 33 must be the initiation point for any discussion on drug policy and human rights, internationally as well as nationally. Mr Frederick Bavand, (Section Chief Municipality of Malmo, Sweden) briefly broached the risk factors for the child's development and well-being whether a social intervention is required or not. And to identify the risk factors associated with drug abuse among teenagers. Dr Rajesh Kumar - Fingodap - Executive Director, SPYM, India), raised the issues around prevention of substance abuse among children. He explained the necessity of demand chain control over drugs through social and educational measures.

The afternoon session of the Asian Regional Forum Against Drugs (ARFAD) 2019 discussed the Role of the Family and School in working with Children and Students. The panel was moderated by Dr Edward Edezhath. The panellists for the session were Mr Augusto Nogueira (President, IFNGO and Exec Dir ARTM, Macau), Mr B Chandrashekar (IGP, Special task Force, Punjab-Buddy Program) and Ms Frida Ayu Nur Hayati (Green Crescent, Indonesia).

Mr B Chandrashekar elaborated the inclusive action implemented by the State Government of Punjab through Comprehensive Action against Drug Abuse (CADA) to throttle the supply and demand through the 'Buddy Program'. A program is a preventive approach that covers all the

government and private schools, colleges and universities in the State. Ms Frida furnished how dynamics of Psycho-social theory is associated with drug abuse and presented the Addiction Prevention Training Program of Turkey.

After few informative panel discussions, which saw some important recommendations for creating drug-free societies, Mr Billy Batware (Drug and Crime Prevention Consultant, UNODC) took the plenary session on 'Political and Strategy Document from the High-Level Segment of the 62nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs March 2019-UN Vienna.' The informative session discussed the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, which most of the delegates were unaware of. The Ministerial Declaration is about:

- Strengthening actions at the national, regional and international levels
- Accelerate the implementation of joint commitments
- Address and counter the world drug problem.

The second day of the Asian Regional Forum Against Drugs 2019 came to an end with recommendations brought forward by representatives of various countries.

Day 3

(27.09.2019)

The final day of the Asian Forum Against Drugs centred around S.A.F.E (Substance Abuse Free Environment) Forum, 2019. The Asian Region Forum Against Drugs began with the recap of the previous day, followed by the warm welcome given by the day in-charge Mr C C Joseph Director, Fourth Wave Foundation, extended to the 100 student representatives from 14 districts of Kerala. The S.A.F.E. (Substance Abuse Free Environment) Forum, is a multi-stakeholder forum organised by Fourth Wave

Foundation's initiative - Project VENDA, to analyse the Indian National action plans for drug demand reduction and create a multi-stakeholder road map for a substance abuse free environment through panel discussions and workshops.

The plenary session of Mr Khagesh Grag (Director-Drug Preventions, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India) explained the roles and responsibilities of social justice, preventive approaches for a drug-free society.

Mr CC Joseph (Director, Fourth Wave Foundation, Project VENDA) spoke on Fourth Wave Foundation, the milestones, challenges and future of Project VENDA. He closed the session with a note "we build a culture of taking ownership of the child's problem and not hold children alone responsible."

Panel 1

The plenary sessions were followed by a panel on 'Need for a Statewide Protocol on Prevention Approach for Action against the menace of Drugs with special emphasis on India' which was moderated by Mr Jacob Punnoose IPS (Former DGP, Govt of Kerala). The panellists were Dr Veerendra Mishra, (IAS, Director, National Institute of Social Defence - Delhi) who stressed on demand reduction in the context of National Institute of Social Defence, an autonomous body of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Mr Bruno. A (Deputy Zonal Director, Narcotics Control Bureau) emphasised on the glitches of NDPS Act and the need for perfect monitoring of laws and policies so far implemented in the country. Mr Rajeev D (IOFS, CEO Vimukthi Mission, Additional Excise Commissioner, Govt. of Kerala) focused on the prevention approaches with regard to Vimukthi Mission under the aegis of the Excise Department of Kerala.

Panel 2

The second panel for the morning session concentrated on creating a Substance Abuse Free Environment. The moderator for the session was Mr Sunil Kumar (Deputy Director, National Institute of Social Defence). Mr Esbjörn Hörnberg, (International President WFAD), shared his experiences and perspectives about the role of civil societies in creating S.A.F.E. Mr Billy Batware (Drug and Prevention consultant- UNODC) brought out the need for community engagement and effective family skill programs in empowering the community and thus creating drug-free societies. Ms Diana Joseph (Director, Project VENDA), stated that “Prevention is the way forward” through the eyes of the model followed Project VENDA in creating S.A.F.E.

Afternoon session discussed the need to strengthen efforts by the civil societies and stakeholders to prevent drug abuse and create a substance abuse free environment for the teenagers.

Panel 3

Role of Media & Tourism in S.A.F.E

Moderator: Fr. Dr Kuriakose Augustine SDB (Director Don Bosco Projects, Trivandrum)

Dr Ampady (IIS, MD, Samunnathi, Former Director, Information and Public Relations, Kerala) mentioned social media has a role in putting pressure on social policies and the need to devise messages responsibly for communications. If demand reduction is the concern, then it needs quantitative and qualitative focus, for the target audience, the youth.

Mr Jose Dominic (Former CEO, CGH Earth, and India) stressed on responsible tourism and demand reduction. Ms Sudha Namdudhiri (Asst. Editor, Times of India, Kerala) being part of the print media, she

emphasised on the role of newspapers in social transformation and in enabling S.A.F.E.

S.A.F.E. Forum 2019 emphasized on multi-stakeholder road maps for a substance abuse free environment through panel discussions and mainly by involving the youth through a bunch of workshops:

- Role of enforcement and options for youth involvement in creating S.A.F.E. (Substance Abuse Free Environment)
- Child Centric approach to prevention, care and recovery
- Prevention strategy and the cannabis example
- Role of youth and civil societies in creating S.A.F.E.

Mr. Prince Augustine, Ms Lida Jacob IAS, Dr. Nayana Dharshini Dhanapala, Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Augustine, Mr Fredrick Bavand, Ms. Regina Mattsson, Dr Sanju George Chakkungal, Mrs. Rima Saada Turk, Mr. Rogers Kasirye, Mr. Johnson Edayaranbmula, Mr. Billy Batware, Ms. Shalini George coordinated the workshop with the focus of enabling a S.A.F.E. platform for the young generation.

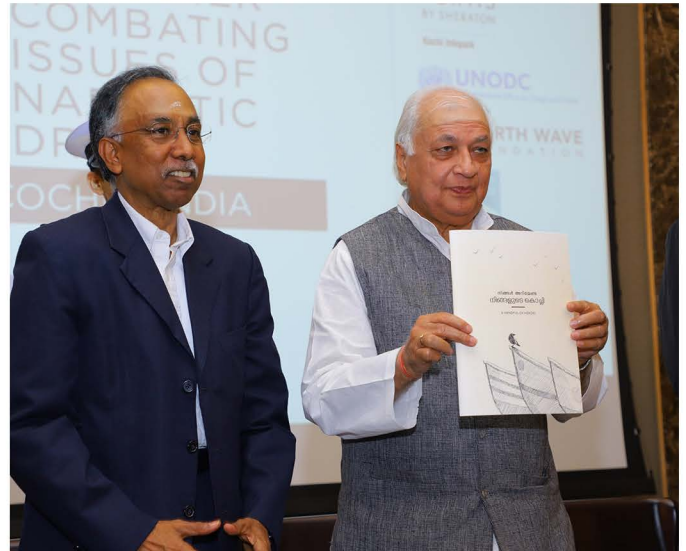
The three day forum came to an end with certain recommendation from representatives across the globe and best practices in S.A.F.E. the closing ceremony of Asian Forum Against Drugs came to an end with welcome address by Dr Edward Edezhath (Assistant Professor, St. Alberts College, Ernakulum), Mr Esbjorn Hornberg (President, WFAD) gave the closing remarks with an announcement that next edition of Asian Forum which will be hosted by Singapore. Mr. Dinesh Rai (GM, Four Points by Sheraton, Kochi Infopark) Mr Billy Batware (Drug prevention consultant, UNODC), Mr Anil Kumar (Zonal Manager Federal Bank) and Valedictory Address by Mr Hibi Eden (Member of Parliament), who closed the Forum conveying the socio-political aspects of best practices in enabling a drug free society.

ASIAN REGIONAL FORUM AGAINST DRUGS

TOGETHER
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25 -27, SEPT 2019, COCHIN, INDIA

GALLERY



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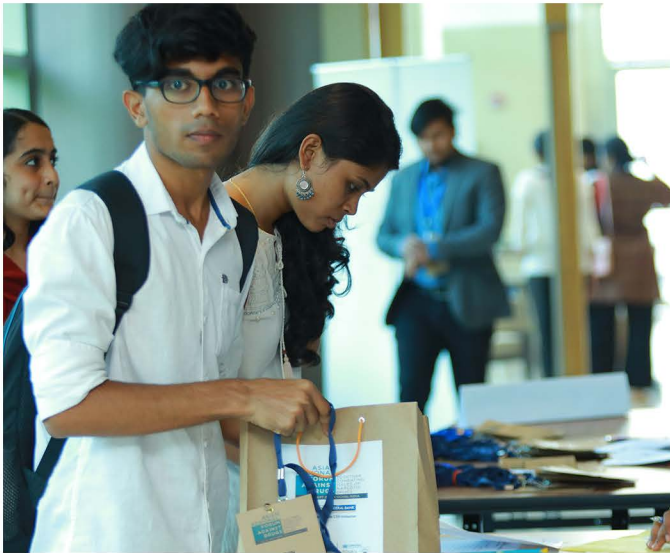


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