

## Kolaayakkootam ( Kasaragod)- To tackle Vaccine Resistance

### Novel health awareness initiative Kolayikootam going places

Request placed before directorate of health service to take steps to help gain nat'l recognition

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
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GIVEN the wide public acceptance of the conversation-based health awareness programme 'Kolayikootam-Vettumuttam Arogyasamvaadam' organised by the health department's Kasaragod district unit, the district medical officer (DMO) has placed a request with the directorate of health services to initiate steps to help gain national recognition for the programme. DMO A V Randas made the request on Friday.

The programme was organised recently in Cheruvathur panchayat against diseases caused by polluted water. The conversation format enables people to participate and share their experience and knowledge related to diseases. Supported by the Cheruvathur panchayat authorities, seven doctors - including the DMO and two paediatricians - and four health inspectors guided the programme. People from old and new generations shared their stories relating to health.

"In the face of diverse epidemic challenges, Kolayikootam provides a platform for



Kolayikootam-Vettumuttam Arogyasamvaadam conducted at Cheruvathur panchayat

**Through continuous engagement and scientific understanding, the programme empowers individuals and helps build a healthier future**  
Dr A V Randas, DMO

crucial health dialogues. Through continuous engagement and scientific understanding, the programme empowers individuals and helps build a healthier future," Dr Randas said.

To create a vintage ambience, the organisers used fire to light up the venue, with electrical

lighting kept at a bare minimum. That apart, properties resembling the past were used. A crowd of almost 400 people immersed themselves in the programme that began at 7pm and lasted until after 10pm.

Started in 2019, Kolayikootam-Vettumuttam Arogyasamvaadam was conducted in all the wards of Cheruvathur panchayat. But it had to be stopped as Covid broke out. After its resumption in 2021, the programme has covered a variety of topics. In 2022, Kolayikootam was organised in Manjeswar on immunisation

and in Padanna panchayat on anaemia prevention.

Kasaragod Epidemic Control Cell health inspector P V Mahesh Kumar said Kolayikootam turned a huge success when it was conducted in the evening, in a shift from the normal practice of day-time sessions.

"The programme was a great success in creating awareness among people against the spread of diarrhoea and hepatitis A, and in teaching them how to use the ORS correctly. We are planning to conduct the next programme, on tuberculosis, in Peliode panchayat," Mahesh said.

In March 2019, Kolayikootam was made part of the state government's Aadram campaign and the organisers were asked to hold it in every panchayat, the health inspector said.

"The programme was conducted in front of an old house. The use of traditional methods gave a vintage mood to the programme. The participation was high, which gave a perfect platform to spread awareness," said Cheruvathur panchayat member Mahesh Kumar K.



In order to overcome the vaccineresistance, the district team has organised a community event named "Kolaayakkootam". A good platform for focus group discussion and panel discussion ensuring the active involvement of speciality doctors, district level health team members, elected representatives, officials of other line departments, voluntary organisations and local hubs. This is a community event including heterogeneous groups such as lactating mothers, adolescent groups, working women etc. After conducting impact study of specific IEC events, misconceptions on vaccination have been reduced and the vaccination status has been improved.