

**DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES &
RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK**

RURAL EXPOSURE, DECEMBER 2025

PLACE: HANGAL

AGENCY: LVK (LOYOLA VIKAS KENDRA)

DATE: 2-12-2025 TO 6-12-2025

DAYS: 5

Introduction

The Rural Immersion Program is an integral component of the Master of Social Work (MSW) curriculum designed to expose students to rural realities, socio-economic challenges, community structure, and development needs at the grassroots level. The immersion aimed to develop practical understanding, strengthen community engagement skills, and encourage participatory learning among students.

The First Year MSW students, along with the faculty member Dr. Prithwi M, began their journey to Hangal for rural exposure on 1st December 2025 at around 10:00 p.m. by bus and reached Hangal at 6:30 a.m. the next morning.

At 9:30 a.m., the group attended an orientation session conducted by Fr. Vincent Pais, who provided an insightful introduction to the work carried out by Loyola Vikas Kendra (LVK). He explained the organisation's social initiatives, briefed the students about the villages, and shared essential guidelines regarding local customs, cultural practices, belief systems, and the general dos and don'ts to be followed during their stay. Later, the students were allotted to three different villages by the faculty member, Dr. Prithwi M, along with the Field animators. The camp was conducted for five days in three selected villages: Katrikoppal, Sringeri and Sagarawalli located in Hangal taluk of Haveri district. Students stayed in the villages, interacted with the community, and conducted various need-based activities.

Objectives of Rural Immersion Program

1. To provide experiential learning on rural life, culture, and socio-economic conditions.
2. To encourage hands-on participation in development-oriented activities.
3. To build rapport with community members through home stays and interaction.
4. To enable students to design and implement community-based activities and awareness programs.
5. To conduct field surveys for academic and developmental insights.

Activities Conducted

1.Cleaning of School Premises

Students voluntarily cleaned the Government School premises in all three villages. Tasks included:

- Sweeping the grounds
- Removing plastic waste
- Cleaning classrooms and surroundings

2.Making a Playground for children

In collaboration with school teachers, students assisted in:

- Levelling the ground
- Removing stones and debris
- Marking playing areas for games

3.Painting of Anganwadi Centre

Students painted the Anganwadi building using bright, child-friendly colours. They also created:

- Educational wall murals
- Alphabet and number charts
- Attractive theme illustrations

4.Activities for Children in Government Schools

Engaging educational and recreational sessions were conducted, including:

- Group games and team-building activities
- talks on education and hygiene
- English speaking and grammar

5.Cultural Programs

Evening cultural events were organized with villagers.
Activities included:

- songs and dance
- Awareness skits

This strengthened cultural exchange and community bonding.

6. Awareness Programs

Awareness sessions were conducted on:

- Health and hygiene
- Government welfare schemes

- Importance of education

Day-wise Proceedings of the Rural Immersion Programme

Day One: December 2, 2025

The students reached their assigned villages, where they were formally introduced to the community by the LVK animators. Following the introduction, each student was allotted a host family. The villagers extended a warm and affectionate welcome, making the students feel comfortable in their new environment.

After settling into their respective homes, students interacted with the household members to establish initial rapport and gained insight into the family's routine. In the afternoon, they walked through the village, meeting various residents and engaging in informal conversations to understand their lifestyle, occupational patterns, and surroundings.

Later, the students conducted simple recreational activities for the village children, which helped them build connection and trust. They also participated in a friendly cricket match with the villagers, further strengthening community bonding.

The day concluded with a group meeting in the evening, where students collectively shared their observations, reflected on their first-day experiences, and planned the tasks and activities scheduled for the next day.





Day Two: December 3, 2025

The day began with a pre-programme meeting, during which the team finalized the schedule for the awareness sessions. Students then proceeded to the local government school, where they conducted interactive sessions on two important themes:

- **Cleanliness and personal hygiene**
- **English education in the modern world**

Following the sessions, the trainees and school children jointly undertook a cleanliness drive on the school premises. They cleaned the surroundings, arranged the outdoor area, and prepared a simple cricket pitch for the children, allowing them a safe and dedicated space for play.

Later in the afternoon, a review meeting was held with the village coordinators to evaluate the day's progress, reflect on student engagement, and identify areas for improvement.

As part of cultural exposure, the group visited the **Shri Guttama Devi Temple** in the neighbouring village of Samasgi. This visit offered students an opportunity to understand the religious and cultural significance of the temple within the rural community.

The day concluded with an evening group meeting, where students discussed their learnings and collaboratively planned the activities for the following day.



Day Three: December 4, 2025

The day began with a short reflection and group discussion, allowing students to share their initial experiences and set goals for the day. The team then proceeded with **village resource mapping**, during which students identified key landmarks, public facilities, natural resources, and important community spaces. This exercise helped them understand the geographical layout and available infrastructure in the village.

After completing the mapping activity, the team worked together to prepare a **household survey questionnaire** to gather detailed information from villagers. Students then visited the local **Anganwadi centre**, where they interacted with the Anganwadi teacher and collected information on the centre’s functioning, enrollment, nutrition services, and preschool activities.

During the visit, a reporter from **E-Dina**, a local media outlet, met the team, interviewed the students, and discussed the purpose of the rural immersion programme, their field experiences, and their observations about rural life.

Later in the afternoon, the students initiated the cleaning and preparation of the Anganwadi building in order to repaint it the following day. This included removing dust, washing walls, and clearing the surroundings.

Other key activities of the day included:

- Conducting household surveys in the village
- Preparing a detailed and updated village map based on the resource mapping exercise
- Organising recreational games and educational activities for children



Day Four: December 5, 2025

Students continued to explore the village, gaining a deeper understanding of its layout, resources, and the daily rhythm of rural life. Their interactions with villagers further strengthened rapport and enhanced their awareness of local practices and livelihoods.

The major activities for the day included:

- **Completion of the Anganwadi painting:**

The team finished repainting the Anganwadi building, adding child-friendly colours and simple educational designs. This created a more vibrant and welcoming learning environment for preschool children.

- **Continuation of household surveys:**

Students revisited the remaining households, completing the survey process and ensuring comprehensive data collection for academic analysis.

- **Preparation for the cultural evening:**

Students coordinated with village children, women's groups, and youth to organise performances and plan the sequence of events.

The cultural programme held in the evening was one of the highlights of the immersion. Children, women, and youth showcased their talents through songs, dance, and traditional performances. The enthusiastic participation of villagers created a lively and joyful atmosphere. The event also strengthened the bond between students and the community, fostering a sense of mutual respect and cultural exchange.



Day Five: December 6, 2025

On the final day of the Rural Immersion Programme, the students returned from their assigned villages to Loyola Vikas Kendra (LVK) for a comprehensive feedback and reflection session. **Fr. Jaison**, along with the staff Dr Prithwi M and field animators, facilitated the evaluation process. During this session, students shared their experiences, learnings, challenges, and key insights gained through their stay in the villages. Faculty members and coordinators offered constructive feedback, guiding students to connect their field interactions with classroom theories and social work frameworks.

After the reflection session, the group visited the **Tibetan Colony**, where they observed the cultural practices, livelihood activities, and settlement patterns of the Tibetan community. This visit provided students with a broader understanding of cultural diversity and Later, the students proceeded to **Loyola School, Mundgod**, where they interacted with hostel children. They engaged in informal conversations, recreational games, and group activities, which helped them understand the educational environment, care facilities, and support systems available to children residing in the hostel. After dinner, at around **10:00 p.m.**, the students began their return journey to Mangalore,

Observation

During the Rural Immersion Programme, the students made several important observations about village life, community functioning, and developmental needs.

The village demonstrated a strong sense of **unity, cooperation, and social cohesion**. Families led simple lives with limited resources but displayed remarkable **resilience, adaptability, and contentment**. Their daily routines were largely centred around agriculture, household activities, and community relationships.

Students noted that **Loyola Vikas Kendra (LVK)** played a pivotal role in rural development through its interventions in education, health awareness, capacity-building initiatives, and community mobilisation. The presence of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**—particularly those led by women—significantly contributed to financial stability, collective decision-making, and improved community organisation.

While the village possessed basic infrastructure, students observed several areas requiring improvement, particularly in **sanitation facilities, drainage systems, and educational resources**. Schools and Anganwadis operated with minimal staff and limited materials, yet the children displayed enthusiasm, curiosity, and a strong willingness to learn.

Environmental concerns were also highlighted. Villagers frequently reported issues such as **crop damage due to heavy rainfall, unpredictable weather patterns, and threats from wild animals**, all of which affected their livelihoods and sense of security.

Overall, the Rural Immersion Programme enabled students to gain a deeper understanding of rural realities, community strengths, traditional cultural practices, and the importance of empathy, active communication, and participatory engagement in social work practice.

Learnings

The students reported significant personal and professional growth during the Rural Immersion Programme. Living with limited resources taught them adaptability and helped them appreciate the value of simple and sustainable living.

Key learnings included:

- **Programme planning and execution:**

Students enhanced their ability to organise awareness sessions, plan community events, coordinate activities, and manage time effectively.

- **Communication skills:**

Interacting with people from diverse age groups and backgrounds improved their communication, listening, and interpersonal skills.

- **Empathy and cultural sensitivity:**

Close engagement with villagers helped them develop empathy, patience, and a deeper understanding of rural culture, social norms, and daily challenges.

- **Coping skills and teamwork:**

Living and working in groups strengthened their resilience, problem-solving abilities, and team collaboration.

Evaluation

The Rural Immersion Programme successfully achieved its objectives. Students completed all planned activities, including surveys, awareness sessions, resource mapping, and community participation programmes. They received strong cooperation from villagers, local leaders, and LVK staff.

Despite challenges such as limited facilities, unfamiliar environments, and occasional language barriers, the students adapted well and demonstrated initiative and responsibility. Overall, the programme strengthened their practical field skills, enhanced teamwork, and offered meaningful exposure to the realities of rural community life.

Conclusion

The Rural Immersion Programme provided the students with a deep, enriching, and transformative learning experience. Living with rural families enabled them to appreciate the community's culture, traditions, lifestyle, and food habits. They witnessed the simplicity of rural living and observed how people maintain contentment and harmony even with limited material resources.

The immersion strengthened the students' understanding of rural society, promoted cultural appreciation, and highlighted the importance of empathy, respect, and community engagement—core values essential for professional social work practice.