

Breaking the Barriers

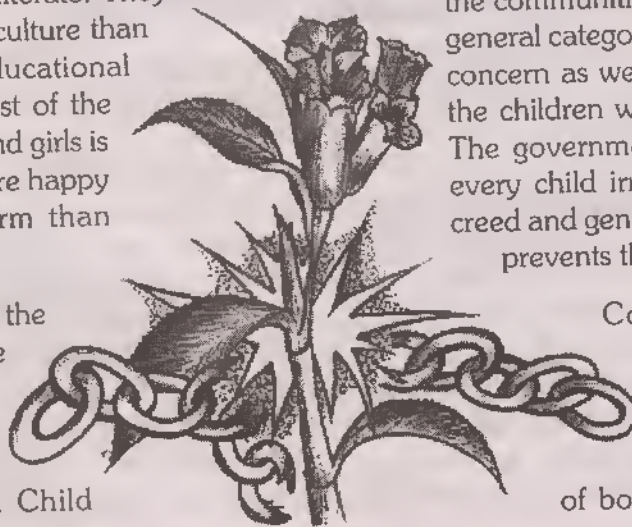
"Casteism, corruption and communalism are great enemies of the people" said Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer. Working with people of Pathara one of the villages in Dharampuri I too was affirmed of this saying. Pathara is located in eastern Khandwa district inhabited by people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (S.C. & S.T.). They are simple and loving people but strictly practice untouchability and casteism. The people from S.T would never eat or drink anything from the people of S.C. Majority of the people are illiterate. They focus more on agriculture than education. The educational qualification of most of the youth, both boys and girls is class 5 or 6. They are happy to work in the farm than going to school.

Our ministry here is the education of the children as well as strengthening the Government ICDS (Integrated Child

Development Scheme) or Anganwadi centers. We focus on hygiene, regular attendance of the children, providing nutritious food etc. However our efforts to educate the children are often faced with problems due to the practice of casteism. At the same time the parents are hardly concerned about the upbringing of their children as responsible citizens

Recently one of the centers lacked personnel for cooking as the woman who was doing it discontinued. She was appointed by the representatives of both the communities and belonged to general category. This was a great concern as we could not provide the children with nutritious food. The government avails food for every child irrespective of caste, creed and gender but the castesim prevents them from having it.

Consequently a meeting was organized at Anganwadi with the representatives of both the communities



together with ICDS staff and myself. This resulted in appointing a woman from S.C as no S.T women were willing to take up the task. In spite of the decision made by their own members they refused to send their children to Anganwadi. And this went on for more than a month. Then we as a community felt the need to do something because the innocent children were the victims of this evil system. They were deprived of their right to nutritious food as well as education.

Thus we again held a meeting and tried to communicate how the casteism is destroying the future of their children. None of the members were keen on listening or understanding the concept. Frustrated we informed them of our final decision to report the matter to the collector. This created fear

and in turn realized the seriousness of the whole matter as they had already learnt that practicing casteism is a crime and punishable offense. We also made them to sign on the agreement paper which mentioned that they will have no problem on anyone cooking the food for children. This ended the trouble of S.C. women preparing food in Anganwadi.

Truly it was a great success. This attempt was a great encouragement for us and we continue our constant effort in creating awareness to respect and value life irrespective of caste, creed and gender. We look forward to have the people of Pathara liberal and open.

**Sr. Sushma Dung Dung SSpS,
Dharamपुरi**

The Golden Opportunity

"The field of experience is the whole universe in all direction. Theory remains shut up within the limits of human faculties" says Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. This was my experience in Vidhan Sabha at Bhopal the capital city of Madhya Pradesh. Our college, Bhopal School of Social Science had organized a two day seminar on 'Vidhan Sabha' at old Vidhan Sabha. We thirty students from B.A Humanity Department attended the same.

The theory and the practical knowledge on Vidhan Sabha widened our understanding about its functions. It was a gorgeous event in my life. Like a studious student my eyes wandered every corner of the house where

the minsters share, express their views and take decisions.

Our professors took sufficient care to explain in detail how Vidhan Sabha works. They explained to us of its history, voting system, question hour etc. and these clarified many of our doubts. Having learnt about the functions of Vidhan Sabha I felt I am better prepared to help materialize the dreams and aspirations of the less privileged people of our society. Of course experience is essential to widen ones perspective. I am grateful to the institution that offered me the golden opportunity to know-how of the Vidhan Sabha.

Sr. Sunita Toppo SSpS, Bhopal

We are Proud of You!

Sr. Rosily Panjikanan SSpS was awarded for her remarkable service to the unorganized women in Indore city. She was honoured on the occasion of International Women's Day celebration organized by Madhya Pradesh Bank officer's Association, Indore branch on March 10, 2012. We also acknowledge the four other women who too were awarded along with her for their out standing contribution to the society. The SSpS family in India Central congratulates Sr. Rosily and the committed service she renders to women.



*There is in every
true woman's heart,
a spark of heavenly fire,
which lies dormant in the broad
daylight of prosperity,
but which kindles up
and beams and blazes
in the dark hour of adversity.*

Washington Irving



International Women's Day at Jatkhedi Slum, Bhopal



The International Women's Day was celebrated in Ambedkar Park, Bhopal on 10th March. It was organized by Uday Slum Project with the help of women from Jatkhedi and Bagamugalia slums. The programme began with the lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest Mr. Babulal Gaur, Urban Administration and Development Minister cum Minister for Gas Relief and Rehabilitation, Guest of honor Mr. Laja Shankar Hardiniyaji, a retired journalist and member of secular forum, Mrs. Kumud Singh, social activist and secretary of Sarvokar organization, Mr. Abhai Singh, Manger of Micro Credit Indian Bank Bhopal branch and myself as the Director of Uday Slum Project. The guests were officially welcomed by memento and saplings and this was followed by the welcome address by me. Thereafter Mr. Prakash Upadhayay, the coordinator of the slum project presented a short report on the present activities of Uday.

On this occasion the women from one of the self-help groups presented a song based on the importance of education. Mrs. Kumud Singh addressed the women and appreciated them for their contribution to the family and society. She also mentioned that the atrocities against women are on the increase in Madhya Pradesh which has to be taken seriously by the public and Government. The children from the slum sang awareness songs on the theme of child marriage and other social evils like corruption, and exploitation at all levels. The programme was well appreciated by the public and the guests.

Mrs. Leelavati Choudhary, one of the women from the slum shared about her life. She expressed that she was a person who wouldn't get out of her house due to shyness and fear. She joined the tailoring class conducted by Uday Slum Project and acquired the skill within six months. She became member of a self-help group which

Women's Day Special

helped her to become self-confident and courageous. Now she is the tailoring teacher and animator of the self-help groups in the slum. She expressed her gratefulness to Uday Slum Project for helping her to be a strong and bold woman. She also requested and encouraged the other women to come forward and assert their rights.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Babulal Gaur distributed the prizes to the winners of the games conducted prior to the women's day celebration. He appreciated the efforts made by the Uday slum project for the selfless service to the people of Nai Basthi Jatkhedhi and Bagmugalia. He acknowledged the contribution made by the missionaries in the fields of social service, education and health. He

appreciated the organization for arranging the Women's Day celebration and was delighted to see the crowd participating in the programme in discipline. He promised an amount of Rs. 10,000 to maintain the park and entrusted it to Uday slum project.

Mr. Hardiniyaji, Mr. Abhai Singh and Mrs. Chandramukhi Yadav, the ward incharge appreciated the women's contribution in every sphere of life and encouraged them to be collaborators with Uday in building a just human society. Mrs. Sulochana Dawar, one of the pre-school teachers thanked everyone present for their support and participation in the programme.

Sr. Rosina Joseph-SSpS, Bhopal

Women's Day in CDP, Aulia

10th March was a colourful day for Uday Community Development Project (CDP), Aulia as we celebrated the International women's day. The celebrations were based on United Nations' theme for International Women's Day 2012 - **Connecting Girls, Inspiring Future**. The theme intends to focus on the over all development of girl children & women. The idea is that if girls are included in some way in the international womens day 2012, thousand of minds will be inspired globally. This inspiration will stimulation more awareness and involvement around



womens rights. It is also expected that the theme will help younger women understand the struggle their gender has

endured, and the achievements that have been made with many sacrifices, so as they are never forgotten. World women's day is celebrated in order to remember what happened and simultaneously protect what was achieved.

450 women from nine villages around Aulia and 180 girls from Government High School and Mission School participated in the event. It was very touching and inspiring to see the women coming by tractor, foot and bus. However the mission vehicle also availed its service for those who had no possibility of any conveyance. Forgoing their day's wage and coming forward to celebrate their womanhood, status and achievements in the society was notable and appreciable.

The Chief Guest Mr. Tiwari the Assistant Development Officer Chegaon Makhan, Special Guests Mrs. Rajkishori from KDSS (Khandwa Diocesan Social Service) and Mrs. Lata Mandlekar the Block Officer added further colour to the whole event. Program began with lighting of the lamp at 11.30 am. Mrs. Sayali the Sarpanch, Mr. Shantilal the Janpad Secretary, Mr. Ramchandra the Janpad member and Sr. Antonette our community leader were also present on the occasion. Being the Director of CDP, I welcomed the guests by

Women's Day Special

presenting each with a Badam sapling. This was followed by cultural programme like prayer dance by our pre-novices, action song on environment by boarding girls, a skit and song by the youth. The skit depicted the importance of the girls' education.

The guests also enlightened the gathering with their thought provoking speech like Mrs. Rajkishori talked on 'Women Empowerment.' Mrs. Leela spoke on 'Women's Health, Hygiene and Child Care'; Sr. Antonette gave a very brief picture of 'Woman as a Mother and her responsibilities' and Mr. Vinod (KDSS staff) spoke on 'Women as Gem.' He also shared about the women who have played important role in his life.

There were also games conducted to make the day enjoyable and lively. The winners of the games were given prizes. The programme ended with refreshments for all the participants. The women also expressed their gratefulness for organizing such a wonderful programme. They said, 'At least a day we could spend together forgetting all our tensions and worries of daily life'. Thus all departed happily with new energy and zeal.

Sr. Viji SSps, Aulia

Who discovered America?

Teacher: Elinor please point to America on the globe.

Elinor: It's here.

Teacher: Well done. Now Little Tommy, who found America?

Little Tommy: Elinor did.



Women's Day Special

Celebration of International Women's Day in Sirpur

On March 15, 2012 the CDP - Community Development Project in Sirpur had the joy of celebrating the International women's Day. The program began at 11 a.m. Mr. Jitendra Shrivastava, Human Resource manager of N.H.D.C. was the Chief Guest. The presence of around 250 women from five villages namely Slayakheda, Bhagava, Malgaon, Mohniyadhan and Kundaimal obviously marked its success.



The girls from the tailoring center welcomed the gathering by a welcome song. The Chief Guests and other special guests were cordially welcomed with a bouquet each. The cultural items presented by girls and women like drama, songs, dance, puppet show, folk songs enthralled the audience. A short play on the participation of women in Gram Sabha left the audience to ponder on the potentials that the women have within them. There was also an exhibition put up by the girls with samples of stitching, embroidery and knitting materials. This encouraged number of women to send their daughters also for tailoring.

Mr. Jitendra Shrivastava was very much appreciable of the whole program. In his speech he encouraged the girls and promised to provide the center with 10 sewing machines. Later he also provided with 10 more sewing machines for the out

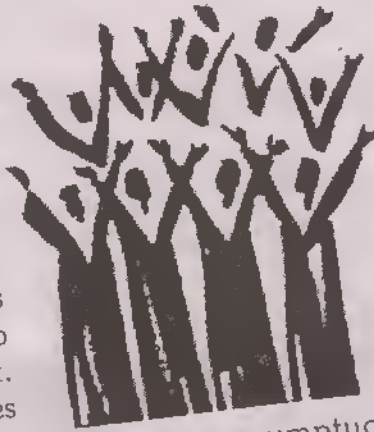
going girls individually besides Rs. 18,000/- as salary for the teachers and Rs. 3,000/- for the purchase of materials were given too. The center is truly grateful to N.H.D.C, Khandwa for their sincere support in its endeavour to uplift the less privileged girls of the society. Further he congratulated the out going girls as he distributed the certificates to them.

There were also games conducted which helped the gathering to have some fun and relaxation. At the end of the program all were provided with sumptuous meal. Of course the whole program was meaningful and helpful for all the women present at the occasion. Definitely it was also a platform for them to express their latent talents and in turn to realize their strength as women.

**Sr. Anna Tirkey SSpS
Sirpur**

Women's Day in the Parish, Aulia

The Sacred Heart Church, Aulia celebrated the International Women's Day on March 11, 2012. In prior preparations Sr. Anupa SSpS, the incharge of Pastoral Ministry, visited 44 families of the parishioners encouraging the women to participate in the event. While enrolling their names for the celebration she assured them that the programme would be very promising and enriching.



The day began with Holy Eucharist. The liturgy was meaningful and the homily helped the women reflect deeply on their womanhood. Intercessory prayers for women, offertories and melodious singing further solemnized the liturgy. Thereafter they went back to their home and returned by 10 a.m. Sr. Anupa and our Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Sakshayadas conducted a beautiful prayer service. Sr. Philo and myself organized games in three groups like bombing the city, Anthakshari etc. The whole atmosphere was filled with laughter

and fun. The winners of the games were awarded with attractive prizes too.

Taking lots for the 'Lucky Woman of the Day' by taking lots, marked the culmination of the whole program. She was honoured and encouraged to take lead in the women's group. Thereafter we had a

sumptuous meal and preceded to 'Tapovan' a place where Hermit Srs. Sanjeevni Regina and Mary stay. Having spent few hours in the blissful place we returned with joy and gratitude to God in our heart. The group also took some resolutions and they are:

1. First Sunday of the month attending Holy Mass followed with Meeting.
2. First Friday of the month devotion to the Sacred Heart.
3. Regular participation in the Ward Prayers and Bible sharing.

Sr. Antonette SSpS, Aulia

Dedicated to all women

*When I was born, A Great Woman was there to hold me --> My Mother
When I grew as a child, A Woman was there to Care for Me & play with me --> My Sister
When I needed company, & love, A great woman was there for Me --> My Wife
And When I Die, A Woman is there to absorb me in --> My Motherland
If you're a Man then Value Every Woman - & If you're a Woman, Be proud to be One..!*

Seminar on Child Marriage

The general survey taken by our C.D.P (Community Development Project) in 2010 - 2011 showed number of Child marriages prevailing in various villages of Khandwa particularly in the village, Mohinya Dana. In view of this we conducted an awareness based seminar on March 8th 2012 in Mohinya Dana on the occasion of International Women's Day. Around 75 women from the village participated and benefitted from the programme.

The programme began at 9:00 am. The Sarpanch Mr. Mangilal and the resource person Ms. Rajkishori from KDSS (Khandwa

Diocesan Social Service Center) were welcomed with garlands by the villagers. The Sarpanch brought to the notice of women the various schemes that were available from the government for the development of the village. Further he encouraged them to come forward and to participate regularly in the meetings of Gram Sabha. He said, "If the women are together several things can be done in the village". The response of the women to his speech was very positive as they assured

him of their wholehearted cooperation in building a better village.

Ms. Rajkishori through her sturdy speech enlightened the villagers about the consequences of child marriages. She brought to light the adverse effects of child marriages on the children as well as on the society as a whole. She recommended the women to take responsible action against

such atrocities as it affects them more than men. Also she spoke about the different schemes available especially for women and children. The women were encouraged



to attend the Gram Sabha meetings as well as to join the vocational training programmes which would strengthen their status in the society.

They were given the opportunity to share about their learning and insights in groups. It was a platform for the women to express and share their views and to gain knowledge for an enhanced life in the society.

Sr. Anna SSpS, Sirpur

The Get-together of CDWs

IDWS – Indore Domestic Workers solidarity organized a get-together for the CDWs – Child Domestic Workers in Indore on February 12, 2012. Eighty six children from different slums of Indore took part and benefited from it. The programme began with a short prayer which was followed by breakfast and meeting in the hall assigned for it. Time was given for them to get accustomed to one another by introducing themselves in the group. Then the staff of IDWS along with the volunteers informed the children about the purpose of their get-together and prompted them to take maximum advantage of the whole programme.

There were number of sessions to help the children grow physically, spiritually and mentally. From the perspective of building their self confidence and public speaking extempore was conducted based on topics like Mother, Father, Teacher, Environment etc. First of all they were given few guidelines to face the audience with courage and conviction. Being impelled, some of them made attempt to express their views on the given topics however some backed out. Those participated were awarded in order to further motivate them and encouraged others who were still afraid. There were also other competitions which were helpful and fun oriented.

In view of creating awareness about how they are abused and exploited by their employers and families a skit was put up by Child Line. They also sung awareness based songs and stressed the necessity to be aware and cautious on child labour



and trafficking. Further the children were instructed about their rights and the consequences on being manipulated by someone. Thereafter they were provided with time to interact with the staff of Child Line and its volunteers. This widened their knowledge and assured them of the right support upon facing such issues in life.

After a sumptuous meal the children were taken to a nearby traffic park. There they had a short session on traffic rules by Mr. Prafula Joshi, the traffic instructor. He instructed them about the traffic rules very creatively and meaningfully. As for him it was for the first time he got such a group of children to teach the traffic rules. The children were also happy to learn and take along a chart of the signals written with the names of grains and things used in the kitchen. His session ended as one of them thanked him for availing himself to teach them.

As a whole the children had a wonderful and meaningful day. After the small refreshment in the park the group dispersed carrying fondly the memories and learning they had.

Sr. Rosily Panjikanan