

## In the Slums of Bhopal

An exposure programme in the slums of Bhopal was something that we eagerly looked forward to from the moment we were told about it. We were all filled with curiosity and enthusiasm as we left for Bhopal on 2nd September by train. The journey was comfortable and thrilling with beautiful scenery outside and the good company of each other. We reached our house in Bhopal around 3 O' clock and were warmly welcomed by the sisters.

The next morning we began our mission with much fervour. The first thing we did was to attend a talk on women empowerment which inspired us. We were touched by the stories of many courageous women who fought for their rights and that of others. The self help groups organized by our sisters and some other NGOs have empowered many poor women in the slums to rise up with heads held high and boldly fight for their rights.

We prepared lunch and took it along with us. We enjoyed our walk from the house to the slum. At times it was raining and the roads were muddy and it was difficult to



walk. Some of us took tuition for the children while others visited the families.

Among all the children those from the Dholak Basti (colony of those who make drums) seemed the poorest in studies and discipline. The condition of the people there was very pathetic compared to the others. This slum was near to a gutter and rain made the situations worse. The children do not go to school as they were compelled to help their parents at home. Most of them had no idea about books. Some time they fought with each other, hitting and pulling each other's hair, they also snatched slates and pencils from each other since there were not enough of them. In the beginning we found it very difficult to make them understand. But gradually they started paying attention to what we said and taught. We played, sang and danced with them which made them more friendly and comfortable in our presence.

As the days went by they got more and more interest in learning and they were eager to study more. One day after having

written the alphabets in the slates some of the students ran to their houses which made us feel that they were not interested. But to our surprise they had gone to show what they had written to their parents, as they felt they had achieved something. At times we felt that we three of us were insufficient to teach such a large number of children.

As a preparation for the celebration of the Birthday of Our Lady, we had Novena in the parish for nine days. On 8th September there was a solemn celebration of the feast with a meaningful Eucharistic celebration and procession with the statue of Our Lady, which was followed by a love meal for all.

Thus the days went very fast with lot of

experiences which enriched our lives. On 17<sup>th</sup> September there was a short cultural programme by the children. For some of them it was the first time they were performing something on the stage and they were really thrilled about it.

The next day we left for Khandwa feeling heavy in our hearts because we had almost become part of their community, especially with the women and children. Those 15 days of our presence in the slums has taught us many lessons for life. We are ever grateful to those who have opened our eyes through their life stories.

**Sarita Bhabor, Pre-Novice,  
Khandwa**



## Tidings from Uday

Christmas is a celebration of **Emmanuel – God with Us**, a God who came down to the poorest, the oppressed and the unwanted of the society. As I thought of Christmas this year what came to mind was our sisters who are involved in the lives of the people, especially through the six projects undertaken by Uday. The projects are motivated by 13th General Chapter Directives - **To be in communion, to be interconnected, to learn non-violence, and to form and to be transformed.**

It is encouraging to see the efforts of our sisters and the changes found due to the diverse programs initiated by them in these places. Therefore I would like to make a reference to the six units of Uday and its Directors: Indore Domestic Workers' Solidarity (IDWS) - Sr. Rosily Panjikaran, Badi Dhamini-Sr. Nirmala Marandi, Bhopal- Sr. Rosina Joseph, Sirpur- Sr. Anna Tirkey, Aulia- Sr. Viji Christy and

Dharampuri – Sr. Sushma Dung Dung. The sisters and the staff are involved in the ordinary activities in an innovative manner to make our ministries vibrant. They deserve appreciation and acknowledgement for empowering the communities through the welfare programs for women, children, youth, farmers and the communities at large. Following are some of the many undertakings and achievements of these six projects.

### 1. Slum Development Project, Bhopal

1. Total number of Self Help Groups (SHG) is 35 with 200 women.
2. The women have improved their capacity to interact with bank & Govt. Offices, in decision making in their family matters and increased participation in social issues.
3. Twenty three women received loan for Income Generation Programs (IGP)

from the bank and started activities which bring additional income to their families.

4. One day training & awareness program successfully organized for the federation members.
5. Eight awareness programs were organized on RTI and PDS (Right to Information & Public Distribution System) which motivated the community to use RTI and organized themselves to fight against the irregularities of PDS.
6. Through an awareness program on de-addiction the community became aware of the adverse effects of drug addiction and 6 people got treatment for the same.
7. Twelve drop out children were motivated for mainstreaming them towards formal education.
8. Three individuals applied for RTI on slum displacement and 9 persons went for public hearing.
9. Seventy three persons filled Jan Shree Scholarship form and 2 women got benefit from Janshree Bima.

## **2. Indore Domestic Workers' Solidarity (IDWS)**

1. Sixty groups are formed by domestic workers (non-SHG).
2. Ten trainings were organized for domestic workers.
3. Thirty one people were assisted to avail Govt. schemes.
4. Information dissemination among the domestic workers through various means on their rights and government schemes.
5. Organizing/participating in the meetings, protests, dharna etc.
6. Formation of Domestic workers' union is on the process.
7. Seven hundred and fifty children were supported with stationary items.
8. Six hundred and seventy six women were provided with counseling to support domestic workers and their families.
9. Eleven domestic workers were provided with 'legal aid to women' and advocacy.
10. Imparting information to child domestic workers on rescuing the women caught in trafficking.

## **3. Community Development Project, Badi Dhamini (CDP)**

1. Formation of 16 SHGs with 168 members and strengthening them through regular meetings
2. Two Farmer's Groups are formed with 40 members.
3. The youth group comprising of 22 members is registered with Nehru Yuva Kendra, Jhabua
4. Adult literacy program was planned for 50 women. Among them 20 are able to sign and identify letters and 4 women are able to read and write.
5. Awareness program conducted for farmers on new technology in agriculture, animal husbandry and the farmers are on the process of registering their group.
6. 52 women participated in the rally on observing Women's Day and

submitted the memorandum to Collector and a copy is sent to Governor of M.P and 3 women are motivated for tailoring classes.

7. Members from two SHG groups have received a total of Rs. 6.5 lakh for IGP. They purchased engine pipe for irrigation facilities and flour mill.
8. Eighty women participated in the Gram Sabha and submitted application for infrastructure facilities in the project area such as tube well and construction of toilets in Kotda and Badi Dhamini villages.
9. Personal investments are also made for fishery in view of IGP
10. Availing Govt. schemes.

#### **4. Community Development Project, Sirpur**

1. There are 17 girls who have taken admission for tailoring class during this year. Among them, 10 attend residential training and are also being prepared for the bridge course which is taking place for the first time in CDP, Sirpur.
2. One of the girls from Sirpur village was sent to Punjab for training in tailoring and now she trains the girls in tailoring.
3. There are 18 SHGs with 204 members.
4. The SHG members are becoming aware of the importance of educating their children. They have sent 10 girls and 2 boys for quality education from Bagava and Salia village to Sirpur.
5. Four Balika Sangh groups are formed in the villages with 48 girls. They are involved in many activities such as

teaching the illiterate women to sign, tree plantation etc.

6. This year 500 trees have been distributed to SHG groups and villages.
7. The members of SHG were encouraged to put up stalls during the Malgaon fete. So that they could draw some income for the group and support their families.
8. Two boys are sent to Pune to get trained in technical education.
9. Job opportunity availed to five youth.

#### **5. Community Development Project, Dharampuri**

1. Motivating the parents through home visits to send their children regularly to the ICDS.
2. Visiting the ICDS, being with children and teaching them in a creative manner.
3. The Anganwadi worker has learned creative ways of teaching the children.
4. The Anganwadi worker and the Helper are made aware of their responsibilities and to spend their time qualitatively.
5. Improved number of children at the center even up to 30-35 (40 children are registered)
6. The kids are enthusiastic to learn
7. The children are encouraged through little incentives when they perform well
8. Proper distribution of nutrition has improved and the children get food sufficiently. The menu now followed at ICDS is as prescribed by the Women and Child Department (WCD) of the Government.



9. Srs. Sushma, Lizy Thomas & ICDS workers had a discussion with the newly appointed Secretary of Panchayat and after listening to the various activities undertaken by sisters together with the ICDS, he has assured his support to strengthen the activities.
10. The ICDS workers are also happy with the presence of sisters at ICDS.

#### **6. Community Development project, Aulia**

There are total fourteen ICDS Centers in 9 villages of Aulia.

1. Increased number of children in the ICDS centers (earlier it was less than 40% and now it is 70% and above)
2. Regular active presence of ICDS teacher.
3. 500 children benefited from 7 health education programs, conducted in various schools.
4. Awareness program on RTE in the villages and Mid Day Meal (MDM).
5. Education to the 30 drop out students and mainstreaming them for formal education. The tuition centers are arranged in 3 centers of the villages and they pay Rs. 200/- each for the facilities they receive.
6. Additional coaching to 100 children who are weak in studies.
7. Formation of 11 new SHGs and strengthening of 5 old SHGs.
8. Bank loan for two SHGs (Rs.4.20 lakh).
9. One of the groups has started IGP with the support of bank loan. Various

IGP (Income Generation program) are buffalo and goat rearing, poultry etc.

10. Three SHGs managed to get MDM (Mid Day Meal) preparation in schools so that they get some earning for their group and families
11. Three of the SHGs worked together to ban alcoholism and liquor shop in one of the villages and stopped wife battering in one of the families -Karoli village.
12. Including the Director, staff of CDP, 25 women participated in the Gram Sabha for the first time and presented the issues of the project area.

#### **Other Programs undertaken**

1. With the support of St. Luke's hospital, 17 families and other resources, CDP Aulia has utilized an unused open well for providing water facilities for drinking and other domestic use.
2. Environment protection- 6000 plants were given by Forest Department of Khandwa with the support of Aulia Panchayat and were distributed to farmers, SHGs, youth group and community as a whole
3. Promoting organic farming, reduced use of pesticides
4. 14 people were helped to obtain BPL card, widow pension and pension for the differently abled.
5. Drinking water facility- open well under the Kapil Dhara project of the Govt. and one tube well from the Panchayat.

**Sr. Lizy Thomas SSpS, Bhopal**

## The Story of Alka

On 19th October I received a call from Sr. Deepthi, from Bijalpur. She introduced me to the Parish priest of Raidy, of Rourkela Diocese, Orissa. The priest talked to me and gave me a phone number and name of an area where there was an urgent need to be met. I was asked to rescue a girl who had fallen victim to human trafficking.

Alka (name changed) was a 14 year old girl from village Raidy who was trafficked to Delhi by one of her villagers, Ms. Sayogita Kullu. Sayogita's husband, who lived in Delhi 10, gave the girl to Dr. Priyanka as a house maid through an agent they knew earlier. She was over burdened with work and was treated cruelly. There was another male domestic worker who took the advantage of the girl by letting her do all the work by herself. He even abused her verbally and physically. The worse happened when she became the prey for his lust on a day when they were both alone in the house.

Alka reported the incident to Dr. Priyanka who called for the agent and did nothing else for a child who went through so much of mental and physical trauma. The agent reached only after a week and he was paid Rs. 3500 as Alka's salary. The money was not given to Alka.

The agent took her from there to one of his friend's house and kept her there for a

week. Then she was sent to Manishpuri, Indore in July with a person who gave the girl to Rathore family for Rs.20, 000. The girl somehow made a phone call to her family and told that she was in Indore. So, her family asked for her salary but Mrs. Rathore informed them that they had already paid it to the agent.

I tried contacting the Rathore family and it went in vain as they refused to let me meet the girl. I insisted on meeting the girl and phoned them up many times. By evening a man rang me up and the girl talked to me saying that she was fine. From her voice I could feel that she was forced to say that she was alright. So I called back on the same number and a male voice from the other end told me not to call on that number. I then called Mrs. Rathore who

said that she was out of Indore till 26th October and not to disturb her again. I felt something fishy about it. If I waited till 26th it could have been too late to save the child. So I immediately contacted the Child Line and narrated the entire incident to Mr. Deepesh. So I went to the Palasiya police station with Mr. Deepesh and Ms. Rachna (IDWS Staff) and reported the case to the ASP.

The address of the place where the girl was kept was traced by the phone number given. We went there accompanied by four



police personnel among whom one was a cobra police (in civil dress). The family talked to us politely and even offered us water to drink. We straight away put forward our need of meeting the girl. After a while the girl was called. When we asked her to come with us she refused and said that she wanted to stay there because she was afraid if her parents would sell her again to someone else. She revealed that she worked from 6 in the morning to 11 at night. We brought her to the police station along with us and the ASP came at 3 pm to begin the procedure. The FIR was filed and all the other formalities were completed and by 10pm she was sent to Children's Home.

On Sunday at 1 pm Mr. Deepesh and I were called to the station to write our account of the case. The police did not want to take the case the way we wanted, as we emphasized on human trafficking, which would cause them more work and complications. But we held on strongly. They were in a hurry to take her to Delhi which would relieve them from their

responsibility. Knowing that her father and an NGO member were coming to Indore on the next day we didn't want the girl to be sent to Delhi. On 24th her father came and we send him to the children's home to meet her and talk to her. On 25th Mrs. Nirupa Roa, came from Bhopal to meet the girl (In-charge of Women's Commission, MP.). She talked to the girl, her father, the NGO member, Mr. Deepesh and myself.

On 30th she was taken to Delhi and we are not allowed to have any contact with her or know the whereabouts until now. We have informed the Child Line in Delhi to follow up with the case.

There is some progress in the case as Sayogita, the one who brought her has asked her mother to meet the girl's family and asked them to come to Delhi. We have requested that there should be no compromise made between the girl's family and the culprits involved. The girl should be brought back to Indore and we want to hand her over to her parents.

**Sr. Rosily Panjikkaran SSps, Indore**