

Educate, Organize, Empower; *Tidings from Uday*

In his first Christmas *urbi et orbi* message, Pope Francis issued a impassioned pleas for peace in the Middle East and war-torn countries in Africa. Looking at the Child in the manger, he said “our thoughts turn to those children who are the most vulnerable, victims of wars, elderly, battered women, sick, trafficked persons and refugees.

Christmas is a celebration of **God with us**. When I reflect on this facet, my thoughts are with our **sisters in INC** who are involved in the mission of education, child care institutions (boarding & hostel) health, JPIC, media, art and music etc. with passion and compassion as envisaged by our Pope. Every mission work in the Province is carried out with commitment and competency in an innovative manner without much going for infrastructural development; purely forming and empowering the stakeholders of rural & urban community.

In this regard, I take the reference of 6 units in INC coordinated through Uday social development society started in 2003 with right based approach among the deprived community especially for women and children. At present the sisters involved in these units are Sr. Rosily Panjikaran -Indore Domestic Workers’ Solidarity (IDWS), Sr. Rosina Joseph- Slum Development Project Bhopal, Sr. Nirmala Marandi - CDP Badi Dhamini, Sr. Anna Tirkey- CDP Sirpur, Sr. Roslin Pathiyotil –CDP Aulia and Sr. Jency T O -CDP Dharampuri. The purpose of this non-institutional or non-infrastructural approach is towards *bearing everlasting fruits -John 15:16*. Once we form people, they will engage in the issues and developmental works; only it requires accompaniment. Thereby people start taking responsibilities and effective leaders emerge in the society. We take this as our priority because our **General Chapters and Provincial Chapters** give sufficient prominence towards preparing leaders for our ministries.

The various articles of this chapter from the mission are a reflection of how people are trained to address the needs of their own community issues. The members in these centres are provided with professional guidance to carry out the planned activities. During the Review Visits, based on the annual plan we discuss the previous quarterly plan & implementation, and plan for the next quarter; field visits are arranged as part of the visits.

The team members of Uday have organized women through SHG and its federation is also formed naming it as Vikas Manch in order to deliberate on the development work. Women of this forum have taken initiatives to address the local issue like ban of liquor, unemployment, quality education of children, Public Distribution System (ration) etc. These women not only address the local issues but also motivate other women to join hands with them in the programs of Panchayath as Mrs. Angoori, Mrs. Sangita, Mrs. Krishna, Mrs. Rashmi and many more leaders. The leadership and contribution of our sisters, staff and women are recognized by the people wherever we work, **our empowering and collaborating presence is felt**. Despite of various hindrances the women continue to take up activities with vigour and enthusiasm.

A new venture is begun In order to provide quality education to the children who are studying in Govt. schools. Uday has implemented 24 Shiksha Sehayog Kendra (special tuition centres) in the rural areas and 1 coaching centres in Jatkhedi slum of Bhopal. These centres are supporting children

from deprived community by providing them additional coaching classes. 24 Bal Mitra (volunteers) are appointed in order to teach these children through activity based learning. Initially the team faced much opposition from the Govt. schools saying the children do not require this facility. But the parents supported this plan because they wanted their children to be educated. The model is adopted from Goeka project and we have begun this program with 2 objectives. (1) To improve the quality of children's education studying in Govt. schools (2) To reduce absenteeism of children and teachers in the schools.

Child labour is rampant in urban areas and we see many children going for work without getting education. Among the 65 children who were identified as labourers, 41 children are admitted in the Govt. school. If this step was not taken, all of them would have been victimised of child labour and abuses. Thanks to our SSpS Generalate Rome & Central Govt. Delhi who supported this mission; today their future is secured in safe hands.

The rights of domestic workers are another priority for us who are vulnerable to several abuses and exploitation. They are accompanied by providing leadership trainings to be organized. More than 7000 domestic workers are registered with IDWS from 105 slums of Indore, Bhopal and now it is initiated in Khandwa too. Till date 2920 members are enrolled in union of domestic workers to collectively demand their rights. Trainings and workshops are periodically conducted to enhance their skills and capacity.

Malnutrition is a burning issue in Madhya Pradesh especially in the tribal belt. Additional Prevention & Promotion of Health initiatives have proved a better step towards community health. We provided nutritious food and health check up to the children in the non- formal -education centres.

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