

# WESTERN REGION SOCIAL SERVICE FORUM

# WRSSF

## A N N U A L R E P O R T

A P R I L 2002 - M A R C H 2003



Eucharistic Congress Building No. III  
5, Convent Street, Mumbai - 400 001  
Tel.: 2202 1509 / 2202 2987

Fax: 2285 6751

E-mail: [wrssf@vsnl.net](mailto:wrssf@vsnl.net)

Web: [www.wrssf.org](http://www.wrssf.org)

**Your Excellency, Your Grace, Bishops and Priests,**

On the occasion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Body Meeting of the Western Region Social Service Forum I extend my warm greetings to each one of you Chairman of the Forum, Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara, Vice-Chairman, Bishop Filipe Neri Ferrao and all the members present.

The last Annual Meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2002. Following members were not present for this meeting.

Bishop Thomas Bhalerao  
Fr. Vinod Shelke  
Magr. Alberto Luis  
Fr. Benny Ezhormattam.

**Joyous Welcome, Bishop of Ahmedabad:**

We welcome Bishop Thomas Macwan of Ahmedabad as a new member of this Forum.

**Congratulations:**

**Archbishop Stanislaus Fernandes:**

We congratulate Archbishop Stanislaus Fernandes as the Archbishop of the new constituted Archdiocese of Gandhinagar.

The Western Region Social Service Forum has been established with a goal of facilitating integrated Human development in social, educational and environmental aspects.

The Forum basically functions to promote all activities aimed for the development of the marginalized sections of the society in the Western region comprising of 3 states namely Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

**With the objectives**

- To promote noble values and facilitate integrated human development,
- Train personnel for promoting development and education
- Promote activities connected with ecological and environmental concerns
- Organise a documentation center.
- Promote people's participation leading to people's organizations for development work and to
- Represent the region to the various authorities for justice and peace.

The WRSSF has conducted the following programs in the year 2002-2003.

**WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND TRAININGS:**

**Animation and Capacity Building:**

**1. Region: Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.**

A seminar was organised on Initiating and Strengthening Self Help Groups in the western region from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2002 at Vinayalaya, Andheri, Mumbai in order to promote the Forum's objectives of training personnel in the social field.

The participants were given an indepth presentation on the Government Schemes categorized under the Swarna Jayanthi Swayamrozgar yojna. Focus was laid on the Self Help Movement and the animation and building of small groups.

**2. Zonal SHG Training of Trainers:**

The TOT programmes for all the four zones were conducted. It covered topics of structural analysis of the society, gender, equity, local sources of income and credit, functioning of SHGs etc.

The Training programs were arranged as follows.

16<sup>th</sup> evening to 19<sup>th</sup> afternoon February 2003 - Vidharba zone.

16<sup>th</sup> evening to 19<sup>th</sup> afternoon March 2003 - Marathwada zone.

24<sup>th</sup> evening to 27<sup>th</sup> afternoon, March 2003 - Konkan Zone

4<sup>th</sup> afternoon to 6<sup>th</sup> noon April 2003 - Gujarat Zone.

**3. Maharashtra - Aurangabad diocese.**

A two day capacity building programme cum follow-up of the Diocesan Perspective Planning was organised by the Forum at the Bishop's House, Aurangabad on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2002. The historical perspective of social development in India, models of development, gender perspective and reinforcing the Diocesan Perspective Plan with the identification of current social issues in the diocese and working out an action plan to address the issues were the key sessions of the programme.

**4. Maharashtra - Bombay Archdiocese:**

One day training programme was conducted for the community centres of the Archdiocese of Bombay on 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2003 at the Salvation Seva Kendra Hall, Dadar Mumbai. The session offered information about various welfare schemes by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, which included the Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojna.

Another programme was conducted on herbal remedies and nature cure on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2003 by Fr.Varghese SVD

**Environment and Disaster Management:****Region: Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat:**

A workshop was organised on Environment Management and Animation from August 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 at St. Pius College Campus, Mumbai to acquaint the participants with the prevailing situation of wide spread famine and drought which is gripping the whole of Western region. Doctor James, Hydrologist & Environmentalist from Kerala, Fr. Verghese, Assist. Director and Dr. Haridas, Head of the Department of Environment from Caritas India were the resources persons for the same. Fr. Francis D'Britto of Harit Vasai, an environmental group in Vasai, highlighted the fact that now political powers have been forcing the construction of concrete jungles which have now resulted in high increase level of saline water thus creating lack of potable water for the inhabitants living there for several years.

**TOT PROGRAMS:****Region: Goa and Maharashtra:**

(These training programs were not conducted for the State of Gujarat, as due to the earthquake such trainings were already conducted on several occasions in the affected areas.)

The trainings were conducted in two batches to fulfill our objectives of promoting activities connected with ecological and environmental concerns.

**Batch #1 :** A three day training programme was held from 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2002 for the dioceses of Vasai, Pune, Goa, Kalyan, Mumbai, Aurangabad and Nashik.

**Batch #2 :** This training was held from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2003 for the dioceses of Chanda, Nagpur, Amravati, Vasai and Nagar Haveli.

A team of experts in the field of watershed management, from the Social Center, Ahmednagar gave in the necessary inputs. Their learnings were enriched with an exposure programme of Ahmednagar villages where the watershed projects have been implemented.

**Prison Ministry of India:****Nagpur Archdiocese.**

A one day seminar was organised to discuss the work of the Prison Ministry at Nagpur on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2002, for the volunteers of Maharashtra. The Seminar was aimed at motivating the volunteers to work with the prisoners and their families to help ensure their rehabilitation and integration into society.

#### **Goa Archdiocese.**

A two day awareness programme on Prison Ministry was conducted by the PMI team from Bangalore on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> February 2003, to create an awareness of the situation of the prisoners and their families. 79 participants attended the programme. Need for such work in social development was discussed.

#### **Region: Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat:**

From 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2003 a workshop was organised on Prison Ministry. It was attended by 57 participants. The four-day workshop discussed the origin and developmental work of the Ministry, Dos and Don'ts for those working for the prisoners and the THREE R theory of Release, Renewal and Rehabilitation. The THREE 'R' theory was highlighted by the pioneer in PMI at Ishwani Kendra, at Pune.

#### **Visit to the Yerwada Prison, Pune.**

Fifty-five participants visited the Yerwada Prison on 26<sup>th</sup> February from 9am to 12:30pm as an exposure trip. The participants visited unoccupied cells that had housed freedom fighters during the freedom struggle, they were also escorted around the prison's kitchen and saw the prisoners cleaning vegetables, baking chapatis and cooking their food.

#### **MEETINGS:**

##### **DDSWs:**

The **first meeting** was held on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2002 at St. Pius College, Goregaon East, Mumbai, which was chaired by Vice-Chairman of the Forum Bishop Filipe Neri Ferrao. At the meeting it was decided to implement the suggestion made by the Bishops of Western Region in regard to the Prison Ministry. It had been suggested that a team of four from each diocese of the region could be trained to start working with prisoners and their families in a systematic manner.

The **second meeting** was held 26<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at Ishwani Kendra, Pune. This meeting was conducted by Vice-Chairman of the Forum Bishop Felipe Neri Ferrao. At the meeting it was decided work with prisoners and their families in the prisons areas within the diocese of the western region.

A Core-team was formed comprising a Priest, religious sister, layman and woman. The work of the team is monitored and co-ordinated by a State Co-ordinator, which is functioning in three regions i.e. Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat.

### **GENDER CO-ORDINATORS:**

- 1) A meeting of the Gender co-ordinators of the 13 dioceses was held on August 20<sup>th</sup> 2002 to discuss the Domestic Violence Bill. The topics of discussion included working together as a team, legal literacy, awareness of women's rights, financial empowerment, freedom from caste and other oppressions, developing leadership among women and networking with other NGOs.
- 2) Meeting of the Gender co-ordinators was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2002. The objective of the meeting was to help sustain the SHG movement at the grassroot level, making it an effective means of empowerment for the poor women.

### **RELEASE OF AUDIO CASSETTE:**

Lalkar, a cassette of social awareness songs in Hindi and Marathi, produced by the WRSSF was released by Bishop Valerian D'Souza at the inaugural ceremony of the Prison Ministry workshop in Pune on February 24<sup>th</sup> 2003.

### **CARITAS RUBY JUBLIEE CELEBRATIONS:**

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 the regional assembly of 350 participants, including 2 Cardinals, 7 Bishops, 45 priests and representatives from all dioceses of the region gathered for a thanksgiving service, followed by a cultural programme, put up by various groups including the tribals of the region. This resulted in a sense of solidarity and bonding between all the different sections of the region.

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

1. The announcement of Fr. John Noronha, the Executive Director Caritas India about the plan to set up a National Center for Environmental studies at Nagpur.
2. The Blessing of the Foundation Stone of the full fledged training Center for Social Development in Goregaon East, Mumbai by His Eminence Cardinal Ivan Dias.
3. The launching of the newly created website [www.wrssf.org](http://www.wrssf.org) of the Western Region Social Service Forum by the Chairman of WRSSF- Most Rev. Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara.
4. A book on "Home Remedies and Medicinal Plants" compiled by Sr. Geeta Joseph was released by Bishop Valerian D'Souza of Pune.

**ADIEW, SR. GEETA JOSEPH:**

Sr. Geeta Joseph has served WRSSF in the capacity of Documentation and Research Co-ordinator. Her dedication and loyalty to the Forum is appreciated by all of us. May God bless her in her new ventures.

We express our gratitude and appreciation to all the **Out Going Members** of the Forum, Fr. Jose Kattakara of Chanda, Fr. Vinod Shelke, Aurangabad, Fr. Benny Ezhormattam, Kalyan for their total participation in building the Forum.

**CORDIAL WELCOME**

We welcome Fr Francis Dabre the Programme Coordinator, Sr Philomena D'Souza fma the Gender Coordinator and Ms. Reena Martins as a Documentation and Communal Harmony Project Co-ordinator. All the members and staff cordially welcome them and wish them all success during their tenure of service.

WRSSF thanks Chairman of the Forum Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara, Vice-Chairman, Bishop Filipe Neri Ferrao, for their timely guidance and encouragement. We are also grateful to all the member Archbishops and bishops for their support and co-operation. We acknowledge our office staff for their dedicated commitment in the progress of our Forum. We remember and thank Msgr. Alberto Luis, Caritas Goa for his dedicated and sincere efforts, who is now called for eternal rest.

Finally I thank all of you, present here for the meeting and sparing your valuable time. **GOD BLESS YOU.**

**FR. ROCKY BANZ**  
**HONORABLE SECRETARY**