

WESTERN REGION SOCIAL SERVICE FORUM

WRSSF

ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Western Region Social Service Forum was established with the goal of facilitating integrated human development in social, educational and environmental aspects. The Forum functions essentially to promote all activities aimed at the development of the marginalized sections of society. Its main objectives are:

- ↓ To promote noble values and facilitate integrated human development.
- ↓ Train personnel for promoting development and education.
- ↓ Promote activities connected with ecological and environmental concerns.
- ↓ Organize a documentation centre.

The Western Region comprises three states namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, the Union territories of Daman and Diu and four districts of Madhya Pradesh.

MEETINGS

I- Fourth General Body Meeting 2004-05

The fourth Annual General Body Meeting of the WRSSF was held on 6th July 2004 at Atma Darshan, Mumbai. The meeting was attended by

- The Chairman of the Forum Archbishop Abraham V.
- Vice-chairman Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao
- The other member Archbishops, Bishops, Diocesan Directors of Social works and representatives of Caritas India including the Executive Director - Fr John Noronha.

II Governing Body Meetings

The first Governing Body meeting was held on 6th July 2004 at Atma Darshan Mumbai and the second meeting at Ishwani Kendra, Pune on 10th December 2004.

III- On the 5th July 2004 at Atma Darshan, Mumbai the following meetings were held:

- a) A meeting between DDSWS and Partner agencies

The objective of the meeting was

- To share the work, concerns and issues of each diocese in the region
- To review the work of the diocese in addressing the issues in the region
- To determine areas of networking and collaboration between the Diocesan Directors and partner agencies.

The members present at the meeting were all the Diocesan Directors and partner agencies (Caritas India, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, AFPRO,

Intermon Oxfam, CASA, College of Social work.) The following is a summary of the presentations made by the representative of each diocese.

Issues and Challenges Faced	Efforts Made by the dioceses
Tribal Issues	Awareness on Human Rights issues
Communalism	Communal harmony awareness sessions for women, teachers, trained volunteers, youth groups and children
Health issues	Health awareness programs like HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment programs for malaria and T.B.
Gender discrimination	Empowerment of women through formation of Mahila mandals, SHGs
Illiteracy	Educational programs such as boarding schools, non-formal education, balwadis etc
Water Scarcity	Watershed Management programs, Rainwater Harvesting

Through this one day meeting, we were able to articulate with the funding partners the issues faced by the Dioceses of the region and sought their collaboration in addressing them.

b) Input session on Government schemes

An input session was organized for the DDSWs on 6th July 2004 on various government schemes available at the central and state level for people Below the Poverty Line and methods to avail of these schemes. The session was conducted by Fr. James Mascarenhas (Director of Janhit Vikas Trust, Riagad). The purpose of this session was to provide the DDSWs information on various government schemes meant for tribals and BPL groups. A hand book in Marathi under the title '*Vikas Yagna*' prepared by us in collaboration with Janhit Vikas Trust was also made available to the directors.

c) Regional Survey

Fr. John Noronha the Executive Director of Caritas India recommended the need for a comprehensive survey of each diocese in the country. This survey would include the socio-economic conditions prevailing in each diocese, the work and challenges faced by them. As an outcome of this meeting a workshop was organized at Bangalore from the 27th to 29th July, 2004 where inputs on tools of data collection, methods of data collection, data analysis and methods of data processing for the survey were explained. The WRSSF deputed four member team for this workshop.

The findings of the study was presented at a workshop at Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai from 25th to 27th November, 2004 organized by WRSSF in collaboration with Caritas India. The major highlights of the survey were:

- Various Development projects undertaken by each diocese
- Problems encountered while implementing the projects
- Expectations from Caritas India
- Socio-economic and political profile of the diocese
- Issues that need to be addressed by each diocese. The entire workshop was facilitated by Fr. (Dr) Victor Sunderajan. As an outcome of the findings of the survey, a Revised Regional Perspective Plan was drafted which needs to be ratified by the General Body.

III- Health and Gender Coordinators Meeting cum workshop

A four days meeting cum workshop was organized for the gender and health coordinators of the 14 dioceses of Western Region from the 20th to 23rd July 2004 at Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai. The objectives of the meeting were:

- To involve SHGs and health coordinators in creating awareness and motivating the local communities towards offering a community-based approach to PLHA.
- To clarify and strengthen the vision of the Gender coordinators in area of women empowerment.

The following inputs were provided on

- Basics of HIV/AIDS, Body anatomy, modes of transmission, testing facilities, stages of infection, symptoms, care of the person, counseling, nutrition for PLHA, working with people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Gender and Development issues: Gender stereotyping, sexual division of labour, roles of men and women, causes of women oppression, Gender Planning: Strategic and practical gender needs, policy approach to women development.

IV- Gender coordinators and DDSWs

On the 16th February 2005, the gender coordinators and DDSWs met at the Bio-medical Ethics Center, Mumbai. The meeting was chaired by Archbishop Filipie Neri Ferrao. At this meeting it was stressed that the issue of 'Human Trafficking' must be the main focus for the year 2005-06 at the diocesan and regional level.

WORKSHOPS

I- HIV/AIDS

A two day residential program was organized at each of the 14 dioceses for key SHG leaders and health workers, to train a diocesan team that can involve the SHGs members and health coordinators in offering community based care and support to the families and PLHA. A summary of the main highlights of the sessions are presented as follows

Topics covered

- ✦ History of HIV/AIDS
- ✦ Magnitude of the problem
- ✦ Modes of transmission.
- ✦ Prevention measures
- ✦ Myths and misconceptions
- ✦ Care and nutrition for PLHA
- ✦ Pre and post test counseling for PLHA
- ✦ Role of family and community in providing care and support for PLHA

Key Participants

Total 500

- ✦ SHG leaders
- ✦ Health workers
- ✦ Gender coordinators
- ✦ Animators of communities

Impact:

- ✦ A team of 35 members from each diocese have been trained on community based care for PLHA.
- ✦ The trained women play a key role in identifying PLHA for the centre
- ✦ These women will be responsible for disseminating information at their communities

As a part of the program evaluation, some 10 key beneficiaries of the program from each diocese would be invited to a two days workshop from June to December 2005 to

- a) Review the work and the effects of the sessions on the skills, attitudes and knowledge given to the SHG members and health workers towards PLHA
- b) Review the health policy of CBCI towards the issue of HIV/AIDS

II- Log Frame Analysis

A three days workshop was organized on Log Frame Analysis by the WRSSF in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) from the 15th Feb to 17th Feb. 2005. The workshop was mainly organized for the DDSWs, Gender coordinators and key social workers of each of the 14 dioceses. For this workshop the following were invited as resource persons.

- Ms. Rekha Abel (Asst Country Representative, CRS, Hyderabad)
- Ms. Snigdha Chakraborty (CRS, New Delhi)
- Mr. Tripathi (CRS, Lucknow)

The following topics were covered at the workshop

- Planning of Project Design
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Assessment
- Analysis and Objective Setting
- Strategy Review
- Log Frame Format

OTHER ACTIVITIES

I- Relief and Rehab Work

A) Floods in South Gujarat

Fr. Rocky Banz and Mr. Arun D'souza (CRO, Caritas India) visited the affected areas of South Gujarat and Daman and Dadra & Nagar Haveli from the 20th to 22nd August 2004. Meetings were held with the Bishop of Baroda, DDSWs and other church based organizations to ensure proper planning of relief and rehabilitation work for those affected.

B) Tsunami Tragedy

The DDSWs of all the dioceses of the region responded to the tsunami tragedy immediately through kind and cash. The amount collected was directed to Caritas India (Delhi) for the relief and rehab work. Fr. Rocky Banz visited the affected areas of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry and had various meetings with the Bishops, Regional Forum Director and the Diocesan directors of Tamilnadu and Ms Lorraine Fernandes (Documentist-WRSSF) personally visited the affected villages in Tamilnadu for the purpose of documentation.

II- Communal Harmony

a) "No to violence and Yes to Peace"

The KSSS (Kaira Social Service Society), Ahmedabad organized a peace rally on the 21st March 2004 which was attended by about 1200 school children. The peace march began from Sabarmati Ashram of Gandhiji to Gujarat Vidhyapith, a centre of education established by Gandhiji. The objective of the peace march was

- "To proclaim the need for communal peace where the members of different communities live together, share together, interact together and work jointly as a nation for the welfare of India"

b) Interfaith Consultation

On 17th September 2004 an Interfaith Consultation was organized at Bishop's House, Mirzapur, Ahmedabad. The meeting was called by Rev. Bishop Thomas Macwan. The purpose of the meet was to dispel doubts and prevailing misunderstanding among the followers of different religions. Leaders of different religions like Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Parsi participated at the meet.

III- Capacity Building Program

A one day workshop was organized at St. Micheal Community Centre, Mumbai centre on 14th October 2004. The purpose of this workshop to disseminate information to community based animators on social issues.

Topics covered

- ↓ BMC schemes for self help groups.
- ↓ Role of leadership training program in women's empowerment.
- ↓ Human Rights approach to development
- ↓ SHG a tool for women empowerment

Participants

Total 60

- ↓ Community Coordinators
- ↓ Community animators
- ↓ Social workers
- ↓ SHG leaders

III- Prison Ministry India

Today the PMI work is not unknown to the WRSSF members. Due to the tireless initiatives of the Bishops and the DDSWs of each diocese, the Prison Ministry has gained roots. As a result of which, hundreds of volunteers have enrolled for PMI work

This year also activities were held to strengthen the PM work

1. Workshop on counseling skills on the 26th January at Bandra Retreat House, Bandra to equip the PM volunteers with skills that would help them interact and communicate with the prisoners.
2. On 27th January 2005 a meeting was organized for the Diocesan PMI coordinators of Maharashtra state. This meeting was attended by Bishop Bosco Penha, Sr. Grace (Maharashtra State Coordinator), Fr. Sebastian, Fr. Rocky (WRSSF Director) the national coordinator and 10 other members from different dioceses. The purpose of the meeting was to share the work done in different dioceses as well as working towards building close contacts with the state government officials in order to have better and easy access to the prisons in the state.

DOCUMENTATION & PUBLICATIONS

WRSSF Diary:

The major highlights of the WRSSF Diary the year:

- Social Apostolate of Chanda Diocese (Vol: 5, No.1 Jan - April, 2004)
- Social Apostolate of Rajkot Diocese (Vol: 5 No.2 Nov - Jan. 2005)

Manuals Released

- "There's No Place like Home" This manual provides information on the need for Community-Based care and Support for People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- "Vikas Yagna" by Fr. James Mascaranhes. The book is a guide to the government schemes present at the state and centre level for BPL groups.

Broucher

- Rain Water Harvesting- Provides information on simple ways of practicing rainwater harvesting in urban areas.

FAREWELL TO OUR DEAR STAFF

We take this opportunity to sincerely thank Sr. Philomena D'souza for her dedication and commitment for the tireless work done by her during her tenure as the gender coordinator of WRSSF.

We also would like to thank our documentist Ms. Reena Martin who through her documentation made us aware of various social issues faced through her writings.

WELCOME

A hearty welcome to our new Chairman Archbishop Stanislaus Fernandes SJ.

We are also glad to welcome Ms. Lorraine Fernandes our newly appointed Gender Coordinator cum documentist for WRSSF.

We wish both of them best wishes and success for their future tenure with us.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We are glad to inform that we have obtained the permanent FCRA number.

FUTURE PLANS

- The main focus at the Regional level for the upcoming year 2005-06 will be to address the issue of "Human Trafficking". For this purpose would network with the other Regional Fora of the country.
- Keen efforts will be made to promote Rainwater harvesting at each diocese.

Fr. Rocky Banz
Honorary Secretary

Acknowledgement

WRSSF thanks our energetic, active and dynamic Chairman of the Forum Archbishop Abraham and Vice Chairman Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao for their timely guidance and encouragement.

We are also grateful to all the member Archbishops and bishops, the Diocesan Directors of Social Works, and the Gender Coordinators for the support and cooperation.

We acknowledge our office staff for their dedicated commitment in the progress of our Forum.

We also thank our donor agencies, particularly Caritas India and CRS for supporting our various projects.

Inspite of the linguistic, cultural and geographical diversities, we, as a team of bishops, Diocesan Directors, Gender Coordinators are always looking forward to come together to move forward with the hope of fulfilling the vision and the mission of the Forum.