

EDITORIAL

ACRCI NEWS

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“Spread a culture of encounter, solidarity and hospitality towards persons with disabilities, not just asking for the proper social services but also encouraging their active participation in society.”

Pope Francis

MESSAGE

It gives me great joy to wish all success ACRCI' s attempt to bring out a News Bulletin which is a must for building up networking among the member units. Moreover, the new approaches in the rehabilitation field would help the children with disabilities. All those who use this professional bulletin to share their experiences in the field would be a great encouragement for the people who work with the children. God bless you for your endeavor!



Archbishop Mar Abraham Viruthukulangara

MESSAGE

I extend my whole hearted congratulations to the ACRCI for opening a new chapter in its ongoing endeavor to provide the best rehabilitation services to the children with disabilities by disseminating the success stories and new methods in rehabilitation. The News Bulletin would go a long way to bring the professionals on a common platform by making it possible for them to share their expertise that would help and improve the services rendered by the member units. God bless you!



Bishop Joshua Mar Igantious

ACRCI

(ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC REHABILITATION CENTRES OF INDIA)

ACRCI- is the Association of Catholic Rehabilitation Centres of India. It is the national association of all catholic organizations/ institutions working for the cause of persons with disabilities, run by various dioceses and congregations and represented by priests, religious Brothers and sisters across the country. The main objective of ACRCI is to develop effective networking among the Catholic Rehabilitation centres at the national level so that with a coordinated approach to the problems faced by the persons with disabilities, a better service could be provided, and share the information with member units about latest techniques in the field of rehabilitation and government policies both at the state and central level.

Objectives:

- To recognize the committed services of the priests, religious brothers and sisters in this particular ministry
- To bring to light the contributions of the catholic church in the society through this service.

- To help the individuals and institutions to find solutions to the problems faced by them in running the institutions.
- To enter into dialogue with various Government departments at the state and central level.
- To work for the protection of the rights of the marginalized in an organized manner.
- To reflect the merciful love of Christ in the society through affirmative action.
- To foster mutual collaboration by coming together and forming an organized pressure group before the Government
- To help the catholic organizations / Institutions on important matters like Registration and Administration of our institutions, membership in national bodies like the National Trust, legal requirements, Rights and benefits, Grant-in-aid from Government, Fund raising etc.



A Humble Beginning For a Greater Cause

Ministry for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons with physical and mental disabilities is one of the several main ministries of the Catholic Church. The true nature of service of the Catholic Church is well explained through these kinds of services and



institutions. Each person is created in God's image, yet there are variations in individual abilities. Positive recognition of these differences discourages discrimination and enhances the unity of the Body of Christ. As Saint Pope John Paul II puts it "the wounded humanity of the disabled challenges us to recognize, accept and promote in each one of these brothers and sisters of ours the incomparable value of the human being created by God to be a son in the Son."

Catholic Church in India runs above 500 special schools and therapy centres educating and training the children with physical and mental disabilities, besides several hundreds of care

homes, orphanages and old age homes across India. Services to the disabled include primary education, higher education, vocational training, early intervention, rehabilitation, care homes, respite care, teacher training, therapy services etc. It also provides home based and community based rehabilitation programmes for integrating the persons with disabilities. Thousands of special children and their families benefit from the services rendered by the church. Following the command of Jesus Christ the church is involved in the rehabilitation ministry for the welfare of the persons with disabilities which has been an essential part of Church's mission throughout her

history, even before the society at large realized that disability is a condition born with and not an illness to be treated.

But lack of coordination among the Catholic rehabilitation centres prevented the Church from playing a leading role in developing new methodology and techniques to deal with the disabilities people suffered from. The new and simple techniques developed by the individual centres could go a long way

to alleviate the challenges faced by the persons with disabilities. The success of rehabilitation work depends on effective net-working among the member units in the field. Though the Church run units have begun to build up networking, it has always been localized or region wise. Its impact was very limited.

A DREAM COMES TRUE

It is a fact that those who are working in this



service sector face several difficulties and challenges in spite of their commitment and dedication. There are no much opportunities for mutual consultation, sharing and collaboration. It is in this context that a group of fathers, brothers and sisters thought of the need of coming together for mutual cooperation, consultation and sharing of ideas and resources. It was Rev. Fr. Joseph Puthenpura from the diocese of Jalandhar who took initiative in gathering all

priests, brothers and sisters together for the first time. The first national level meeting was organized by him personally with the support of the then Bishop of Jalandhar, Most Rev. Anil Couto in March 2013 at Holy Trinity Centre, Jalandhar.

ACRCI TAKES SHAPE

Around 200 participants including priests, religious brothers and sisters participated in this first national conference.

Archbishops Most Rev. Anil Couto, Most Rev. Abraham Viruthakulangara and Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignatios blessed the conference with their gracious presence and guidance. Dr. M.P. Raju highlighted the legal provisions in the field of disability rehabilitation. Several deliberations were

and sharing. A national Association of Catholic Rehabilitation Centres of



India (ACRCI) was the outcome of this conference.

ACRCI aims to coordinate the activities of the Catholic rehabilitation centres across India and to help the individual units to update their skills so as to maximize the benefits for the children through the facilities and services they provide. It also facilitates to develop networking among the various service providers in



made and the participants were convinced of the need of coming together for better coordination, net working

the field, to share their experience in the field, develop new techniques and methods in dealing with the disabilities and promote local and national collaboration for



safeguarding the interests of the children. It also promotes partnership with other local

and national NGOs and



Government to work for better facilities and equal opportunities in every field. As a Catholic Association it strives to uphold the dignity of the human person, in spite of all his or her disability, because every person is created in the image of God.





Second National Conference at Nagpur

The second national conference of ACRCI- Association of Catholic Rehabilitation Centres of India was held at Pallottine Animation Centre, Nagpur from 3 to 5 March 2014. The theme of the conference was "Catholic Rehabilitation: A call to enable the



disabled in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” More than 100 delegates representing regional units across India participated in this national conference at the orange city of Nagpur.

The presence and interventions of Archbishop Abraham



Viruthakulangara of Nagpur, Bishop Joshua Mar Ignatios of Mavelikara and Bishop Gerald

Almeida of Jabalpur was a great blessing and encouragement for the participants.

There were several input sessions on various



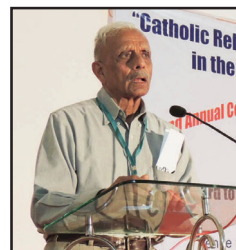
important topics which enhanced the knowledge of the participants. The topics of the input sessions were Partnership with Government by Fr. Thomas C.T., Child Protection Act and its implications for rehabilitation centres by Advocate Mr. Mohammed Raffiq and Psychological and Sexual Issues in children and adolescents with special needs by Dr. Avinash D’Souza.

During the inaugural function four eminent catholic personalities working in the field of disability rehabilitation in various capacities were honoured by the dignitaries. Rev. Fr. Thomas



Felix CMI was honoured for his lifetime achievement by committing more than four decades of his priestly life for the cause of the disabled.

Major General Ian Cardozo, Chairman of the Rehabilitation Council of India, Air Marshal Denzil Keelor, Chairman of Special Olympics Bharat and Mr. Victor Vaz, Sports Director, Special Olympics Bharat were honoured for their dedicated and meritorious services for the disabled population in India.



Major General Ian Cardozo, in his key note address highlighted the main points of the draft copy of the CBCI policy on persons with disabilities in India. He exhorted the participants to discuss on the policy paper and propose a plan of action for better implementation of the policy. This policy paper

was discussed in detail during group discussion sessions and a draft of suggestions for the plan of action was developed and sent to the CBCI.

During this conference the new Governing Body was elected for a period of two years. The new Governing Body consists of:

- Fr. Joseph Puthenpura (president),
- Fr. Thomas Chenganariparampil MST (Vice president),
- Fr. Roy Kannanchira CMI (Secretary),
- Sr. Pushpam CSS (Joint Secretary),

Sr. Maria Joyline AC (Treasurer),
Fr. Thomas Felix CMI (member),
Bro. Augustine Polaprayil (member),
Sr. Shiny ASMI (Member),
Sr. Bindu Michael (member).



It was also decided to organize and coordinate ACRCI at zonal level for better management and effective functioning. Zonal level coordinators also were elected during this session. Their duty is to contact all the catholic institutions in their respective states organize them and coordinate for effective collaboration. ACRCI Zonal Coordinators are:

1. Maharashtra: Fr. Thomas Thadathil (09422038672)
2. Madhya Pradesh: Fr. Tom Maliekal (09685969503)
3. Uttar Pradesh: Fr. Baiju (09412428984)
4. Chathisgarh: Sr. Anie Lakhra (09669902316)
5. Orissa: Sr. Mercy Anto (09438157469)
6. Andra Pradesh: Sr. Subha Francis (09618969636,
09963862390)
7. Karnataka: Sr. Maria Sruti (09741150669)

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Four regional level conferences were organized to discuss the concept of networking with more units and ensure more participation.

South Indian Conference

South Indian Conference was held at Pastoral Orientation centre (P.O.C.), Kochi. More than 300 participants came together for this South Indian conference at Kochi. This conference was inaugurated by the Major Archbishop of the

Syro Malabar Church His Eminence Cardinal George Alencherry. Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara and Bishop Joshua Mar Ignatios also participated and motivated the members. Various issues were discussed during this gathering. In this gathering the participants included both those who are working in the special education centres and major superiors or their representatives of various congregations. It was a very good occasion for mutual



sharing. The Major Archbishop and the Bishops encouraged the participants and praised them for their committed service in this field.

The north Indian zonal meeting

The north Indian zonal meeting was held at Pathankott

in his inaugural address, mentioned that we have received a special call to serve the underprivileged sections of society. Jesus always felt compassion for the poor and the sick. In the same way, our call is to empower and uplift the differently-abled people drawing strength and



in Punjab. In this meeting the participants were from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, U.P. and Uttaranchal.

The Key-note address was delivered by Most. Rev. Bp. Franco Mulakkal, Bishop Diocese of Jalandher. Bishop,

inspiration from the life and works of Jesus. In addition, Bishop Franco appreciated the humanitarian works being carried out by the Christian Organizations, particularly in the Northern Regions.

A general discussion was held for appraising and

understanding the issues and problems faced by the different Institutions in the Northern Zone while serving the poor and the disabled people.

On the second day of the seminar, a paper was presented by Dr. Avinash D'Souza from Mumbai. Dr. D'Souza is a well-known personality who has specializations in this area of child psychology and Disability in children. In the presentation, he pointed out that there are two kinds of learning for a disabled child: Auditory and Visual. He shed light on a variety of topics concerning the developments and behavioral modifications that could be brought about in disabled children through constant and persistent efforts.

The Central India Regional gathering

The Central India regional gathering of ACRCI was held at Bhopal at the CMI Provincial house. Representatives from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha participated in this gathering.

Fr. Kurian CMI the provincial superior of CMI St Paul province in his inaugural address appreciated and encouraged the group for accepting the invitation and taken extra mile to come for this meeting. He stated every rowdy in the class waits to be listened, to be understood and to be loved. Quoting the Gospel of Lk: 4:18 he said the role of ACRCI is to carry out the manifestal agenda to follow the new mathematics, new economy and new ethics of law. In new mathematics he gave the example of lost the sheep, looking for the lost, one is greater than "99". In new

economics he gave the example of lost coin and in new ethics of law is to follow the law of love. we are called for love and compassion. In order to follow this, at times we may have to choose the less travelled path to reach out to the needy.

Fr. Thomas CT MST, the vice president of ACRCI gave short description about the history of ACRCI. He also gave the valuable information about the legal matters regarding rehabilitation centre specially for those who were not present in Nagpur for annual conference. After which followed the general discussion. The participants were asked to express their doubts and queries such as registration of the society under different headings. He also stressed upon the need to update oneself and know the fast changing rules, regulation

and policies at the state and in national levels. He informed the members about the regional gathering of Kerala and Punjab. During his session it was discussed that how to make our region more vibrant and participatory under the umbrella of ACRCI. For the detail information about the institutions, forms were distributed area wise.

The western Regional Conference

The western Regional Conference was organized at Sattara. Participants from Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat came together and discussed various issues and deliberated on selected topics. Bishop Thomas Elavanal of Kalyan diocese opened the conference with his encouraging words and motivated the participants to go forward with added courage. Several input sessions were



also organized for getting up to date information regarding several issues. Dr. A.T. Thresiakutty from NIMH Secunderabad beautifully presented the status of rehabilitation work in India and motivated the participants to come together to give more strength to the work of the church.

ACRCI is a small beginning. Let us come together and march towards our common aim. Our coming together will encourage and motivate each one of us to go ahead with more vitality and share what we have and what

we know for the benefit of all. Let this sharing be a manifestation of the Kingdom of God as explained by Jesus Christ himself.

Education, vocational training and rehabilitation of our mentally and physically disabled brethren is the true ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. I sincerely appreciate and support this noble course. Our priests, brothers and sisters who dedicate their life for this differently abled and disable children are the living witness of our Loving Lord Jesus . I congratulate all the

organisers who work behind the ACRCI

*Cardinal Mar George Alencherry
Major Arch Bishop, Syro Malabar Church*

“We have a prophetic role to play for ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities.



We are doing this out of our love for Jesus Christ.”

Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara



“The society and all its facilities including churches and religious services should be accessible to persons with disabilities. We have to identify with the last, the lost and the least. We love God by serving the disabled children.”

Bishop Joshua Marignatios (Bishop of Mavelikara and CBCI commission chairman for education and Culture)

“If God is not partial who are we to discriminate among the disabled in the society? Role of the church is very important to empower the disabled, building them up and strengthening the society”

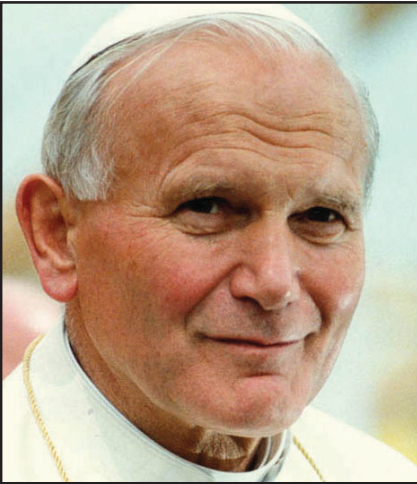


Bishop Gerald Almeida of Jabalpur

“Do your best in your service to the disabled children with love, without fear and with perseverance and never give up.”



Major General Ian Cardozo, Chairman, RCI



“Even when disabled persons are mentally impaired or when their sensory or intellectual capacity is damaged, they are fully human beings and possess the sacred and inalienable rights that belong to every human creature. Indeed, human beings, independently of the conditions in which they live or of what they are able to express, have a unique dignity and a special value from the very beginning of their life until the moment of natural death. The disabled person, with all the limitations and suffering that scar him or her, forces us to question ourselves, with respect and wisdom, on the mystery of man. In fact, the more we move about in the dark and unknown areas of human reality, the better we understand that it is in the more difficult and disturbing situations that the dignity and grandeur of the human being emerges. The wounded humanity of the disabled challenges us to recognize, accept and promote in each one of these brothers and sisters of ours the incomparable value of the human being created by God to be a son in the Son. “

St. Pope John Paul II