

Report of the ACRCI Zonal Meeting – 2014 -15

Inauguration

The ACRCI Zonal Meeting was organized at Panthankote, Punjab, on the 11 and 12 of September, 2014.

The ACRCI Members from various Institutions and Organizations participated in the meeting and discussed issues faced by the disabled segment of society.



The meeting commenced with a prayer dance performed by the students of St. Francis Special School, Panthankote.

Subsequently, a cordial welcome was accorded to all the participants by Rev. Fr. Joseph Puthenpura, the President of ACRCI. In his welcome speech, he also thanked all the participants for kindly accepting the invitation and coming for the meeting.



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



Following the Inaugural address, a Punjabi Banghara was performed by the hearing-impaired and mentally-challenged children of St. Francis Home, Panthankote. The inauguration

came to an end with a vote of thanks by Rev. Fr. BaijuManiyamprail, the Zonal Co-coordinator of ACRCI.



Key-note Address

The Key-note address was delivered by Fr. Thomas Valiyaprambil, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Jalandher. "You are doing the work but am just an observer from outside," said Fr. Thomas. He presented a paper on Disabilities in the light of the Old Testament and New Testament. He interpreted and

elucidated the biblical understanding of disabilities and popular conception regarding their origin and cause.



According to the Old Testament, disability was the outcome of one's sins and wrong-doing. Fr. Thomas, quoting from the Bible, adequately explained the topic. Further, referring to the New Testament, he said that Jesus held a more pragmatic view on disabilities and their causes. Looking at a blind man, Jesus said to his disciples in answer to their question regarding the disability of that man that it was for God's glory to be revealed through him that he was born blind.

General Discussion

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.

Following points arose in the discussion:



- a. Difficulties in attaining Government grant for the support of the disabled people

b. Importance of acquiring membership with National Trust and obtaining the PWD (Persons with Disability) License.

Outing

After the lunch on the first day of the Meeting, the participants went to Dharamashala as part of an informal outing and sight-seeing. The outing was really enriching and worthwhile as it provided a panoramic view of Dharamashala and a few neighboring places.



Paper Presentation

On 12, Friday, 2014, 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.



Concluding Session

In the concluding, everyone came together under the guidance of Fr. Thomas C.T. MSD, the vice-president of ACRCI. He tried to acquaint the participants with National Trust and the procedures for getting a membership with it.



The meeting came to an end with the concluding session and it was decided that the next ACRCI Zonal meeting would be conducted in Delhi.

Fr. Baiju Maniyamprayil
Zonal Coordinator