

REPORT

OF

INSTITUTE OF

INTERNATIONAL

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

For the period September 1996 to March 1997

Address: P65, Lake View Road, Calcutta 700 029, West Bengal, INDIA.

Phones : (91 33) 466 2056, 466 5597, 466 6735, 466 4014.

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INTRODUCTION

The **Institute of International Social Development** is a registered non-governmental, non-profit-making organization committed to fulfil the aims and ideals of the United Nations through all its activities and programs. The Institute undertakes programs on recommendations of the United Nations and organizes conferences, workshops, symposia, seminars and projects on social issues.

The main beneficiaries of the multi-dimensional programs of the Institute are the poor, deprived and disadvantaged women, children, senior citizens, marginalized groups and youths. A group of dedicated and experienced social workers and eminent experts constitute the Institute. We present here, a brief summary of our manifold activities during the period under review.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUSHIKSHA

Project SUSHIKSHA was launched after a survey by a team of experts who confirmed that “education of women is the key to development”.

SUSHIKSHA is an educational program, especially for females from disadvantaged backgrounds with no accessibility to the light of knowledge and self-reliance. The curriculum includes basic reading and writing of the local vernacular and basic arithmetic for accounting. Besides, gradual awareness on environmental development for a sustainable better quality of life is also carried out.

The venue for this project is a slum at Tollygunge in South Calcutta, India. More than fifty non-literate adult women and girl children living in the slums or bustees, initiated their literacy program successfully. They now learn the vernacular language, Bengali and Mathematics and are also trained to make paper-packets and other handicrafts as a commercially applicable skill for their economic upliftment.

The Institute also proposes to expand further into other slums in the urban areas and in the poverty-stricken rural areas with the success of the first one within a five-year time. The Institute has received stationeries as donation from Nehru Children’s Museum to start with initially. The Center was inaugurated by Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, I.I.S.D.

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THE VISIONARY

'THE VISIONARY' LAUNCHED

A bimonthly magazine, '*The Visionary*', was launched in February 1997, to promote and propagate the ideals and the principles of the United Nations. It also attempts to explore solutions to the various problems that the world is afflicted with, through the time-tested intrinsic value system that the past legacies have bestowed on us and the developmental policies that have been formulated by the UN. Edited by Mr. Shomik Chaudhuri, Vice President, the magazine is aimed to act as an option for the decision-makers around the world to implement as a policy trend. It attracts contribution of articles from eminent personalities from around the world like UN Representatives, UN organizations, and other important persons and organizations. The Magazine has already got a carte' blanche to publish any non-copy-righted articles published by the United Nations System. It is circulated globally.

SHRAMDAAN

In the developing world, overpopulation and backward means of production makes unemployment a great problem.

In a bid to curb, at least temporarily, the immense problem of unemployment among willing, honest youths, the Institute refers jobless men and women in different companies for employment taking full guarantee of the persons in case of any mishap. 80% of our candidates pass the test of hard work smoothly and build up a better life for themselves.

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

ANTAKSHARI

An inter-school 'ANTAKSHARI' and singing competition for young students from all schools having Interact Clubs, was organized in collaboration with the Rotaract Club of Kalighat and the Interact District Council for a couple of days in October, 1996. A group of fifty school students participated. Berger Paints (India) Ltd. was gracious in sponsoring the program.

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AIDS

Generation of proper awareness and knowledge about the dreaded diseases like AIDS, is one of our major concerns. We observed the '**WORLD AIDS DAY**' in association with the Rotaract Clubs of Kalighat, South-West and North-West and the Rotary Club of Calcutta at the Rotary Sadan on December 1, 1996. A film 'AJANA ATANKA' (Unknown terror) on AIDS, made by the renowned film director, Mr. Tapan Sinha, was screened on the occasion. Speeches by specialists and relevant informative handouts made a deep impression in the minds of the 250 odd young people who attended.

HUMAN RIGHTS

An open forum was organized in observance of '**Human Rights Day**' in association with the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, by the Institute. Ex-Justice Chittotosh Mukherjee, Chairman, Human Rights Commission, West Bengal, spoke on the Concept and Origin of Human Rights. The Head of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Professor Gautam Basu, discussed the issues concerning social security and human rights problems. Professor Om Prakash Mishra of the same department, gave a statistical review of the violation of human rights in India and some other parts of the world. The delegates Ms. Lopamudra Bandyopadhyay spoke on the evolution of human rights and Ms. Sohini Banerjee elaborated on the significance and observance of human rights. There was lively interaction between the speakers and the audience.

“VALUES FOR A BETTER WORLD”

The Institute organized the **First International Conference** on '**Values for a Better World**', in association with Bhaktivedanta Institute from January 14th to 17th, 1997, at Mayapur, West Bengal. The Bhaktivedanta Institute is a reputed, non-profit-making, autonomous, research foundation which promotes consciousness research within the framework of contemporary science in a variety of fields including artificial intelligence, quantum mechanics, origin of life, bio-ethics and the philosophy of science. UN Representatives including **Dr Robert Muller**, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, and eminent personalities from the education, social and political fields from all over the world graced the Conference. The issues discussed included the relevance of values in today's world - in the individual, the family, the society, the economy,

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in management, in the political system and governance and as a solution to the various `ills' afflicting the world. The **Mayapur Declaration**, which emerged from the proceedings, is under the perusal of various local, national and international decision-making bodies for consideration for implementation.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The ***INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY*** was observed by the Institute on March 8, 1997, at the Janakalyan Samiti premises in Tollygunge. A women's organization, Rashtriya Sevika Samity, Rotaract Club of Kalighat, Sevapith, a voluntary medical organization, participated in the symposium. The speakers highlighted the status, ideal role and educational problems of women. Women attended the meeting from the underprivileged section of the society, mainly living in the slums, who found the program very enlightening.

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PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUSHIKSHA

The project is going on successfully with a lot of corporate support. Black boards and 500 slates for the center and for the future centers were given by State Bank of India in June 1997. These were distributed to rural NGOs to start the SUSHIKSHA program jointly with I.I.S.D., at centers and NGOs like Satya Seva Sangha, Nadia; Balarampur Unnayan Samity, 24 Parganas, being the district areas of West Bengal and Kalighat Slum in Calcutta.

THE VISIONARY

The publication of the magazine is continuing with a tremendous support from the UN system and the eminent personalities from around the world. We hope to expand its reach to various other countries of the world in the near future.

SHRAMDAAN

The project is continuing with more and more youths getting some assistance in getting themselves usefully employed and building healthy lives with their families.

SUSWASTHA

In the developing countries, the greatest threat to the quality of life is the unavailability of primary health care services to all the sections of the society.

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The Institute, after an initial survey of the adopted Tollygunge slum at South Calcutta, framed a medical information center and a free monthly check-up facility for the residents of the slum numbering about 500 families.

HOPE

The Institute launched an initial 2-month long AIDS & HIV Positive Prevention Campaign at the red-light area of Sonagachi in Calcutta on September 14, 1998. This project, HOPE, was inaugurated by the renowned actress Ms. Moon Moon Sen by way of counseling the hundreds of sex-workers and distributing condoms to them.

Also present for counseling were Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, I.I.S.D., Ms Shamita Omote, AIDS counselor and others. The Institute plans to have a permanent health-care unit for these sex-workers at Sonagachi.

HOPE II

The Institute, along with Tarun Smriti Sangha of Sonagachi, organized a health clinic at the Sonagachi area for sex-workers. Apart from a routine health check-up of about 100 women and children, they were also given food packets donated by the National Egg Coordination Committee. The distribution was done to promote the intake of good diet amongst the population in that area.

WORLD PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

Social welfare activities often face implementation problems in the primary society due to religious beliefs especially on issues like education of women, family planning program, monogamy and self-reliance of women. Moreover, it has been noticed that most of the terrorist activities around the world originate from a religious passion, however misdirected that may be.

Hence, the Institute decided to work towards an **ALL RELIGIONS CONFERENCE** to know in details the teachings of all the holy books on social issues. The Institute would compile the recommendations of all the holy books on peace, prosperity and progress for a better world and make it the basis of all welfare projects as it would have more acceptance and universality.

This conference would be held once every year for the next 5 years to serve as a guide for our policy-makers to consider it during decision-making for social welfare.

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HOPE (KALIGHAT)

The Institute, in collaboration with Rotary Club of Belvedere Gardens and Kalighat Junior Sporting Club, inaugurated a Literacy Center to educate the sex-workers of the Kalighat red-light area in Calcutta.

The enrolled students received books and stationery along with Boroplus antiseptic cream and Horlicks biscuits from noted film personality Ms. Debasree Roy, who was the Guest-in-Chief for the occasion.

The other personalities present on the occasion were Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General and Dr. B.K. Khetawat, President, Rotary Club of Belvedere Gardens. Ms. Chaudhuri called on the sex-workers to receive education for maintaining their financial accounting, letter writing and having their personal signatures. Basic education would enable them to be more aware of their rights and opportunities and help them to improve their quality of life.

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

WORLD HEALTH DAY

A health check-up camp for pregnant women and lactating mothers and the children below the age of five, was organized in the Tollygunge slum area in observance of '**WORLD HEALTH DAY**' on April 7, 1997, in association with Rashtriya Sevika Samiti and the Rotaract Club of Kalighat. Smithkline Beecham (India) Ltd. donated biscuits for the patients and East India Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. donated medicines and vitamins for the patients. The President, Mr. Purshottam Kumar, inaugurated the camp and the Secretary General, Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, delivered the welcome address. Dr. Kalpana Gupta of City Medical Center and her team conducted a general health check-up, especially, the chest condition and blood pressure of 50 poor pregnant women of the slum.

EARTH WEEK

The Institute organized an open forum on '**ENVIRONMENT**' in association with the Rotaract Clubs of Kalighat and Calcutta North West on April 27, 1997, at

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Mahajati Sadan as a follow-up program to the 'EARTH SUMMIT' held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, in June, 1992. Noted environmentalist, Dr. Tarak Mohan Das, also the Coordinator of Environmental Science, Calcutta University, was the Moderator. Mr. Shomik Chaudhuri, the Institute's Vice President & the Representative of the United Nations System in India to the 'WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT' at Copenhagen, Denmark, in March, 1995, enlightened the people about Agenda 21 of the Rio Summit. Members of the Rotaract Clubs also spoke on the occasion. Mr. Sourav Das was adjudged as the Best Speaker.

FELICITATION OF SRI L.K. ADVANI

Mr. L.K. Advani, President, Bharatiya Janata Party, after being the only one cleared from the Hawala Scandal, was given an appreciation by the Institute for being a clean and patriotic politician. Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, presented the memento, at the Calcutta Indoor Stadium on April 28, 1997.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

The Institute observed '**World Environment Day**' in association with The Indo-Japan Welfare & Cultural Association (I J W C A) and organized a 3-Day workshop on '**IKEBANA**', a 500 year old traditional Japanese art of floral decoration from May 30 to June 1, 1997.

The Inaugural session was graced by Mr. T. Yuasa, Vice Consul, Consulate General of Japan; Mr. T. Kawai, President, IJWCA, and Mr. Samar Bagchi, former Director, Birla Institute of Technological Museum, Calcutta. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, presided over the meeting and Dr. D.N.Bakshi, General Secretary, IJWCA, delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The speakers emphasized on the importance of preserving the environment and the relevance of Nature in our lives. After the workshop and training, Dr. Mira Banerjee, Vice President, Ikenebo, Calcutta Chapter, and Dr. D.N.Bakshi of IJWCA conducted an examination. Ms. Babita Sinha, Ms. Aparajita De and Ms. Sipra Roy got the top three positions.

The Closing Session was graced by the Hon'ble Mr. Norbu Kawagishi, Consul General, Consulate General of Japan, Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, IISD, Mr. Ashok Kumar Roy, Deputy Manager, Safety and Environmental Protection, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri presided over the meeting and Dr. D.N. Bakshi delivered the Vote of Thanks.

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The Hon'ble Mr. Kawagishi, stressed on the importance of the tradition of 'Ikebana' flower decoration and mentioned the workshop as a landmark in Indo-Japan friendship. Mr. Purshottam Kumar highlighted the imperative need of Nature to become an intimate part of our lives through Ikebana arrangements in our homes and offices. Mr. Ashok Kumar Roy spoke on the environmental degradation and the need for international awareness and actions.

WORLD POPULATION DAY

The Institute organized an orientation program on '**World Population Day**' in association with Marie Stoppes Clinic and Rotaract Club of Kalighat. The orientation was on Family Planning with special emphasis on the reduction of unwanted childbirth and the harmless birth control measures for adult women of the slums of Tollygunge on July 11, 1997. Mr. Swapan Kumar Roy, Field Publicity Officer, Department of Health, Government of India, inaugurated the program and spoke on the policies of the Central Government for checking unwanted population and also on the need for nutrition for the underprivileged pregnant women. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, extended welcome to the audience and stressed on the necessity of family planning for a healthy life. Dr. Sushmita Sen from the Marie Stoppes Clinic, Calcutta, counseled on the birth control measures and their utility. Ms. Vaishali Chaudhuri from the Rotaract Club of Kalighat delivered the Vote of Thanks. Women in the audience expressed their gratitude for what they learnt, since they were all from the underprivileged families of the locality and did not have access to all these information previously.

POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT

A seminar on '**Population & Development**' was also organized jointly with The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, at the Society's Vidyasagar Hall on July 30, 1997. Professor Amalendu De, General Secretary of The Asiatic Society, gave the welcome address and stressed on the importance of population control for social development. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri delivered the keynote address. She emphasized on the need for women's education for effective implementation of family planning programs and proper rearing of children for a better world. Hon'ble Ms. C.J. Sim, Consul General of U.S.A., spoke about the support her country was extending to the developing countries and the under-developed nations for implementing the family planning programs. The Guest of Honor, Mr. Anil Mukherjee, Deputy Speaker, West Bengal State Legislative Assembly,

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asserted the need for vigorous implementation of the literacy drive at the grass-root level for initiating the small family norm. He called for the participation of the government and the non-governmental organizations and socially conscious individuals towards checking the population explosion. Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, delivered the vote of thanks, stressing on the utility of such seminars for orientation of social workers and NGOs.

ORIENTATION ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL POLICIES

On August 14, 1997, the Institute organized an orientation program on the Central Government's Financial Aid Policies for the underprivileged families of the slums, in observance of the **50th Anniversary of India's Independence**. This was conducted jointly with the Field Publicity Office of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, for the benefit of the slum dwellers at our Tollygunge Sushiksha Center. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri extended a cordial welcome to the slum dwellers of Tollygunge Bustee, and the orientation talk was delivered by Mr. Swapan Kumar Roy, Field Publicity Officer, Government of India. Over 200 slum dwellers attended this program. Biscuits from Smithkline Beecham (India) Ltd. were distributed to all the participants.

SIT-AND-DRAW CONTEST

A Sit-and-Draw contest was conducted by I.I.S.D. and Rotaract Club of Kalighat at the Tollygunge Slum Center with children under 12 years belonging to the slum in observance of India's independence on August 15, 1997. More than 150 children participated and the best three artists were given stationery for studies as prizes.

50th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS / NGO PARTNERSHIP

A team of six members from the Institute, led by Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, and Mr. Shomik Chaudhuri, Vice President, visited the United Nations Headquarters at New York to attend the **50th Annual DPI/NGO Conference on 'Building Partnerships'**. The Conference took place from September 10 to 13, 1997.

BLOOD DONATION CAMP

A Blood Donation Camp was organized in collaboration with the Inner Wheel

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Club of Central Calcutta on the '**Voluntary Blood Donation Day**' on October 1, 1997, at our registered office. Sixty youths donated blood. The blood was handed over to the Thalassaemia Society, Calcutta.

CHILDREN'S DAY

Children's Day was observed on November 14, 1997, jointly with the Directorate of Field Publicity, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, for the underprivileged children at Kalighat Park in South Calcutta. His Excellency, Mr. Raghunath Reddy, Governor of West Bengal, graced the occasion and stressed on the need for active role of the non-governmental organizations in improving the lot of the children. This day also coincided with the birthday of Guru Nanak, the great Sikh Guru. To celebrate the auspicious day, we inaugurated the Phase II of our Project Hope at the Sonagachi red-light area by way of setting up a Free Dispensary at 11 Abhinash Kabiraj Street, Calcutta. The Mayor of Calcutta was also present at the function.

WORLD AIDS DAY

The '**World Aids Day**' was observed by the Institute on December 1, 1997, by the inauguration of a Free Clinic for sex workers at Sonagachi area. The sex workers were given orientation on prevention of AIDS by eminent personalities like Dr. S. B. Nandi, renowned Anthropologist, Dr. N. Dutta, Chairman, AIDS Cell, Calcutta Municipal Development Authority, Dr. R. Raja, General Manager, Mother Dairy and Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General. Mr. R.K. Gupta, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Calcutta North), graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Clinic was organized in association with Marie Stoppes Clinic and Tarun Smrity Sangha. Biscuits, Boroline (antiseptic cream) and Condoms were distributed to the patients attending the clinic. Mother Dairy products like milk, yogurt, etc., were distributed among the children of the sex workers. The sex workers expressed their gratitude for the setting up of the clinic.

ART EXHIBITION

An Art Exhibition was organized jointly with Alliance Francaise de Calcutta and the support of eminent artists and patrons of fine arts from December 3 to 6, 1997, at the Alliance Francaise Auditorium, Calcutta. This was in celebration of the **Fiftieth Year of India's Independence**. The inaugural session was chaired by the Vice Consul of France, Ms. G. Genandeanu, while Ms. Moon Moon Sen,

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renowned film personality, adorned the function as the Special Guest. The session was convened by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri and Mr. Denis Pluger, Director, Alliance Francaise, welcomed the guests. Hundreds of people visited the exhibition.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

In observance of '**Human Rights Day**', the Institute arranged free distribution of clothes to several underprivileged families of Tollygunge slum areas followed by an open forum on Human Rights with the support of the Rotaract Clubs of Kalighat and Calcutta North West on December 10, 1997. This was organized at East India Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. Auditorium. Professor O.P. Mishra of Jadavpur University, was the main speaker. Several youths expressed their views on the issue of better awareness about Human Rights.

CHRISTMAS DAY

'**Christmas Day**' was celebrated at the Sushiksha Center in the Tollygunge Slum area. Over 100 food packets were distributed to the poor children of the slums with wishes of "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". Most of the children belonged to the underprivileged section of the society who cannot afford 4-square meals a day.

ART WORKSHOP

A series of art workshops were conducted for interested students by the eminent Painter from Russian Federation, Lady Larisa Utesheva on January 18, January 25 and February 1, 1998. On February 1, also the Saraswati Puja Day (Goddess of Learning), Horlicks biscuits and Boroplus ointments were distributed to over 200 slum women and children at Tollygunge by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General. The program was also attended by eminent guests from Russia and Rotary Clubs.

36th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

A 3-Member Team comprising of Shomik Chaudhuri, Vice President, Dr. S.B. Nandi and Prof. O. P. Mishra attended the Commission for Sustainable

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Development at the United Nations Headquarters at New York, U.S.A. from February 10 to February 20, 1998.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8, 1998, International Women's Day was observed by the Institute by way of a seminar at the registered office of the Institute. To grace the occasion as the Guest-in-Chief was present Ms. Mamata Banerjee, Member of Parliament for South Calcutta to the Parliament and adorning the observance as the Special Guest was actress cum social worker Ms. Moon Moon Sen. The function was very well attended and received wide media appreciation.

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PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

SUSHIKSHA

The project is continuing and consolidating in the areas where it has been undertaken. We hope to consolidate further and then expand into further areas for lighting the lamp of knowledge for the underprivileged.

THE VISIONARY

The bimonthly magazine has started publishing once again with a great impetus notwithstanding the financial quagmire that it had found itself in earlier during the year. We hope to make the magazine more effective and qualitative in the months to come.

SHRAMDAAN

This project is also continuing with full vigor. We are trying to come up with an employment-generating program which can make the project more directly effective.

PROJECT SUSWASTHA

A permanent weekly free medical consultation clinic along with free distribution of medicines, has been set up to provide primary health-care services for the poverty stricken Tollygunge Slum dwellers.

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HOPE (SONAGACHI & KALIGHAT)

The Institute is conducting counseling sessions on a regular basis and plans for some long-term benefits for the sex-workers and their children staying there.

TRIFED

As a Poverty Relief Program for the rural poverty-stricken talented artisans, the Institute has started in association with the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, to supply selected handicrafts, handloom items and organic food made by them to the consumer outlets under this Ministry.

The group of artisans falls under the marginalized and ethnic group and their poverty relief is essential to preserve the dwindling remains of the ethnic culture.

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

WORLD HEALTH DAY

The Institute observed the 'World Health Day' on April 7, 1998, by distributing condoms, Horlicks biscuits and Boroplus antiseptic cream to over 100 children and 100 sex-workers at the Sonagachi red-light area.

Present for the occasion were Mr. Jean Louis Riche, Consul General of France, Mr. T. Yuasa, Vice Consul of Japan and Ms. Moon Moon Sen, renowned film personality besides other eminent persons.

Mr. Riche wished to participate on behalf of the French Government for Health Improvement Programs in that area. He donated Rs. 2000/- to the organization on behalf of the Consulate.

Mr. T. Yuasa, Vice Consul of Japan, also wished to involve the Consulate in the benevolent activities of Project Hope.

Ms Moon Moon Sen called for the awareness about having protected sex for maintaining a healthy life for the sex-workers in Sonagachi.

Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, called for the participation of the local people, sex-workers and their children in the forthcoming health programs of the Institute, namely the free clinic, counseling and awareness programs.

Tarun Smriti Sangha lent a helping hand to this program.

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EARTH WEEK

The Institute organized a film show on environment at the Japanese Consulate in association with Rotaract Club of Kalighat and Belvedere Gardens on April 27, 1998. This was followed by a seminar.

The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Bikram Sircar, M.P., with the Guest-in-Chief being Mr. S. Scadden, Deputy High Commissioner of U.K., Guest-of-Honor being Ms. Janey Cole, Director of U.S.I.S. and the Special Guest being Mr. Sitaram Sharma, Secretary General, W.E.B.F.U.N.A.

All expressed concern over the lack of awareness among the general public on the issue of environment and the need to implement proper environment protection projects for "Saving the Earth and Building a Global Community".

The meeting was convened by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, who invited the social workers to take an active and conscious role in minimizing the threat to the environment.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE FAMILIES

The Institute along with West Bengal Federation of UN Associations observed 'International Day of the Families' on May 15, 1998.

Mr. Sitaram Sharma, Secretary General, WEBFUNA, read out the message of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan for this day.

In his inaugural address, Justice Chittotosh Mukherjee, Chairman of Human Rights Commission, spoke on the Human Rights violation in various aspects of today's family life and shared some of the cases handled by the Commission.

Dr. Dilip Sinha, Vice Chancellor, Viswa Bharati University, called for the revival of values that create a family that acts as the seat of emotional support, economic base and the center of interaction.

Prof. Bharati Roy, M.P., analyzed that the concept of family is under scrutiny and called for sharing the responsibilities by all the members of the family.

Justice Yusuf deliberated on the importance of awareness of Human Rights, especially the women dowry deaths and bride burning in spite of such numerous pledges taken by the society.

Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, conducted the session and called on people to enjoy and advocate Primary Health Care and education along with awareness on various social issues.

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U.N.E.S.C.O. CONFERENCE

A 2-member team representing the Institute, attended the U.N.E.S.C.O. Conference on 'Longevity and Old Age Solutions to Problems' at Paris, France, from 18th to 20th May, 1998.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

The Institute, in association with The International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), conducted a mass planting of Tulsi trees at the Tollygunge Slum, Kalighat red-light area and the Sonagachi red-light area.

Launching the project, Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, encouraged the inmates of these underprivileged areas to grow and take care of Tulsi plants, which are essential for their daily Primary Health Care, curing cough, generating good health and for purifying the surrounding polluted air. The inmates at the three locations were also asked to chant the Name of the Lord as a means of improving their mental makeup. Amidst the sounding of the drums and chanting, the audience was blessed by H.H. Tatpar Maharaj of ISKCON. This was followed by planting of Tulsi saplings and distribution of Tulsi seeds and Boroplus antiseptic ointment to more than 300 families. The observance was supported by Tarun Kalyan Seva Samiti, Kalighat Junior Sporting Club and Tarun Smriti Sangha.

ANTI DRUG ABUSE & ILLICIT TRAFFICKING DAY AND WORLD DAY FOR SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE & UN CHARTER DAY

The Institute observed the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking by taking out an awareness rally from Tollygunge area. The participants comprised of social workers, local people, slum dwellers and students numbering more than hundred.

Posters discouraging intake of drugs, peddling of drugs and health awareness slogans were adorning the rally.

There were posters in support of victims of torture in observance of this day being dedicated to them.

The movement received support from Janakalyan Seva Samiti and was inaugurated by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COOPERATIVES

More than 150 unemployed youths of both genders carried out a signature campaign making an appeal to Mr. Bhakti Bhusan Mondal, Minister-in-Charge, Cooperatives, Government of West Bengal, to help them financially in forming cooperatives to earn their livelihood. The youngsters belonged to I.I.S.D.'s project areas of Tollygunge slum, Kalighat red-light and Sonagachi red-light areas. The youths got an assurance from the Minister concerned, for getting help. The entire program was organized by I.I.S.D.

WORLD POPULATION DAY

The Institute spearheaded a free distribution of condoms in the underprivileged area of Tollygunge slum along with distribution of attractive posters on family planning and population control measures on July 11, 1998.

In continuation of this family planning program, the Institute organized an orientation program in association with Marie Stoppes Clinic, which was conducted by Ms. Indrani Mukherji at the Tollygunge slum on July 21, 1998. The program was attended by the ladies living in the slum, who gained a lot of knowledge on family planning methods.

CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY – DONATION OF MEDICINES FOR SONAGACHI FREE CLINIC

After a year of irregular medical camps and constant AIDS Prevention awareness, the Institute opened the Permanent FREE Clinic for Sex-workers and their children at Sonagachi red-light area on August 15, 1998. The initial medicines were donated by the French Consulate office. The French Vice Consul, Mrs. G. Genedieu, handed over the medicines to the two doctors who took charge of the clinic, Dr. M.N. Chakraborti, Homeopathy and Dr. Saroj Kumar Ghoshal, General Medicine.

The Free clinic is situated at 11, Abinash Kabiraj Street. It is an extension of Project Hope.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MOTHER TERESA

The Institute, in association with Tarun Smriti Sangha, organized a Blood Donation camp at Sonagachi red-light area at the institute's free clinic premises

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on September 5, 1998.

More than a hundred donors donated blood. Present on the occasion were film personalities Ms. Moon Moon Sen and Mr. Tapas Paul. Besides them, other eminent personalities were also present.

The sponsor for the program, Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, I.I.S.D., congratulated the donors. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, recalled the contribution of Mother Teresa towards the upliftment of the poorest of the poor and invited everyone to render selfless service to the underprivileged and join the movement for a better world.

KANTHA EXHIBITION I

In a bid to popularize and market the intricately embroidered garments with the specialized Kantha-stitch by poverty-stricken artisans of rural Bengal, the Institute organized an exhibition-cum-sale of these richly embroidered garments in the office premises from September 5th to 9th, 1998. This was inaugurated by the renowned film personality, Ms. Moon Moon Sen. As a poverty-relief program for the artisans, this was a success.

WORLD LITERACY DAY

The Institute organized a program for the slum-dwellers of Tollygunge on September 8, 1998. Free exercise books were distributed to fifty very poor students in the slum.

Present on the occasion were Mr. Shobhondey Chattopadhyay (M.L.A.) and Mr. Madan Mitra (General Secretary of Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Society). Both expressed the need for functional literacy for improving the quality of life of the slum families.

The program was conducted by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

I.I.S.D. observed the 'International Day of Peace' in association with Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Society on September 15th, 1998 at the Ashutosh Birth Centenary Hall by way of a seminar. Along with that was an exposition of paintings and kantha-stitched fabrics done by famous persons and talented poverty-stricken persons from the rural areas.

Mr. Madan Mitra, General Secretary, R.G.M.S., expressed the urgency of the

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people of various faiths and professions for scrutinizing the issue of peace. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, called for selfless service for the betterment of environment as the only answer to the prevention of increase in crime and anti-social activities. For lasting peace, she continued, focus has to be given on macro interests than in micro.

Rtn. Amit Majumdar, Past District Governor, Rotary International – 3290, expressed the need for creating mass movements for preventing the acts of terrorism, warfare and cold relations by way of understanding and thus bring in peace.

Dr Phool Renu Guha, the renowned social worker, observed that without the control of desires, an individual can never attain peace of mind and cannot go beyond vested interests. A society that does not go beyond vested interests, cannot have an effective welfare scheme without which there cannot be any improvement in the quality of life and, hence, no peace.

Dalim Vaidya, the student who secured the second position in the class 12 Higher Secondary Examination from a remote rural village and a humble family background, was recognized by way of a scholarship from Rajiv Gandhi Higher Education Scholarship of Rs. 10,000/-. Another amount of Rs. 5,000/- was given as medical aid to a girl who was in hospital with 80% burns.

Sister Nirmala's (Superior General, Missionaries of Charity) message of peace was read at the conclusion.

MAHALAYA DAY

This being an auspicious day in Bengal, especially, as it heralds in the festival season, the Institute conducted a medical check-up camp for slum dwellers of Tollygunge. More than 70 patients were checked up.

KANTHA EXHIBITION II

To create a sustainable market for the exclusive Kantha-stitched garments in the urban area, another exhibition-cum-sale was organized at the office premises.

Mr. P.C. Sen, Chairman, National Backward Castes Finance & Development Corporation) and Ms. Debasree Roy, renowned film personality were the guests for the exhibition.

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CHILDREN'S DAY

The Institute organized a cultural program and distributed food packets to more than 100 children in the Tollygunge slum.

The program was inaugurated by Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, I.I.S.D. He invited the guardians of the slum's children to utilize the opportunities offered by the Institute and improve the quality of life of their children and also theirs.

Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General and Ms. Vaishali Chaudhuri, District Council Member of Rotaract District 3290, were also present. The program was supported by Rotaract Clubs of Kalighat and North-West.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE

The Institute organized a symposium with representatives of four religions that play a dominant role in the Indian society, namely Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Mr. Kamal Das of the Hindu faith emphasized that the Vedas and the prophets have taught people to respect and follow their own faiths religiously, since the origin of all the religions and of course, creation, is the one Almighty Lord who is addressed to by different Names. The state of bliss that the love of God would create would help in accepting every faith and individual's doctrine with pleasure. Mr. Ibrahim Khan, the representative from the Islam religion, stressed on the orthodox stand on the husband and wife relationship of staying together till death and the husband taking care of the wife. He expressed the opinion that the Muslims do not follow the teachings of the Koran properly now and that creates a wrong impression about the religion and the system.

Dr Sukwant Singh, the representative from the Sikh religion, said that the instructions in the Guru Granth Sahib come from 6 Sikh Gurus. The rest come from thirty other saints from different religious background. This itself is an excellent example of religious tolerance. Besides, every Sikh is meant to chant the Lord's Name, put in hard labor to earn and donate 10% of their earnings for the underprivileged for exemplifying social tolerance.

Pastor Vijay Gain from Christianity, explained that love is the pivotal word in Christianity. Forgiveness to all wrong doers is what a true Christian has to follow. Hence, tolerance in every aspect of social living has been instructed.

For the Institute, Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President, said that the Institute plans to make a compilation of the suggestions from the Holy Books of all the major religions for future developmental plans. This would make grass-root problems

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easier to solve and bring the necessary development amongst the illiterate, God-fearing and superstitious people of the primary society.

WORLD AIDS DAY

On 'World AIDS Day', the Institute organized a program at the Sonagachi red-light area, where 250 sex-workers were given condoms, Boroplus antiseptic cream and biscuits.

Mr. Simon Scaddan, Deputy High Commissioner of U.K., Ms. Moon Moon Sen, film personality, and Dr. Kanai Banerjee, Calcutta Medical College, were present. Mr. Ramesh Gandhi, Chairman, Rainbow Productions, gave a donation of Rs. 5,000/- for the Free Clinic at Sonagachi, run by the Institute, to Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

Health cards for availing free health-care services were distributed to 250 sex-workers and their dependents as a special feature of the observance.

The program was organized in association with youth clubs like Rotaract Clubs of Calcutta, Kalighat and South-West and Tarun Smriti Sangha.

WORLD DISABLED DAY

The Institute observed 'World Disabled Day' by organizing a seminar in association with Rotaract Clubs of Kalighat, Calcutta North-West and Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Society on December 3rd, 1998.

The Guest-in-Chief was the famous painter Mrs. Sheila Kapoor. She offered to guide spastic children in making commercially acceptable and viable greetings cards to help them becoming self-reliant.

A future convention for disabled children was planned in view of giving the children the opportunity to interact, learn and explore the possibilities of becoming self-reliant.

The observance was convened by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

PULSE POLIO WALK

The Institute and the Rotary Club of Kabitirtha organized a Pulse Polio awareness Walk on December 5th in the slum area of Kidderpore specially

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Watgunge red-light area, so that free polio Vaccination could be availed by the children from those poor areas the following day at the nearby centers. More than 1200 students from nearby schools participated. In addition, the local Councilors, President, Rotary Club, Kabitirtha and members, President, I.I.S.D. and its members took part in the walk. The Guest-in-Chief was Mrs. Dorothy Rozga, State Representative, Eastern Region, UNICEF.

HUMAN RIGHTS WALK

The Institute organized an awareness Walk on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights on December 27, 1998. Participating in the Walk were Tollygunge Slum Children displaying posters and festoons on Child labor, Children's Rights while adult women displayed festoons on Women's Rights with demands for improved status of women. Students and youths from various walks of life displayed pictographic demands on Right to employment, basic health care facilities and minimum living standards for survival. Social workers joined the rally to demand justice to all and legal support accessible to the underprivileged. The Walk was inaugurated by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

DISABLED CHILDREN FESTIVAL

The Institute organized a **2-day Street and Disabled Children Festival** at Vivekananda Park, Calcutta, India, on January 23 & 24, where more than 1,000 children participated. The program was inaugurated by Ms. Moon Moon Sen, renowned film personality, who released a white pigeon for peace, love and fraternity. Other guests included Mr. D.K. Sanyal, I.P.S., Director-General of Police, who promised to take steps for the betterment of the platform children. Mamata Banerjee, Member of Parliament, Guest-in-Chief, distributed prizes to more than 100 winners of various sports and other activities involving the street and disabled children. The program was conducted by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General. The following day, the children performed various cultural programs and thereafter, had a free health check-ups.

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INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY

The Institute distributed health drink packets, biscuits and sweets to more than 100 street children of Refugee Camp I, South Calcutta, on the occasion of ***India's Republic Day*** celebrations. The President of the Institute, Mr. Purshottam Kumar, was the Guest-in-Chief and was conducted by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

In celebration of the '***International Women's Day***' on March 8, 1999, the Institute organized a unique program, possibly the first instance of its kind in the world. At the site of Project Hope of the Institute at Sonagachi, the biggest and the oldest red-light area, **12 sex-workers pledged their bodies for medical and scientific research after their demise.**

Termed as the 'Pledge of the Millennium', the pledge was accepted by the Guest-in-Chief, Mr. Partho De, Minister-in-Charge, Health, Government of West Bengal. Ms. Moon Moon Sen, the renowned actress turned social worker, was also present at the program. The program was conducted by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.
