

ACTIVITY REPORT OF INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1999 TO MARCH 2000

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECTS

PROJECT SUSHIKSHA

Definition:

It is a functional literacy center for the disadvantaged groups, primarily the adult women and girl children of the underprivileged families.

Purpose:

To bring about more independence in the lives of the deprived poor women with regard to reading, letter writing, doing signatures and maintaining accounts in their daily lives. Higher literacy levels would facilitate women to understand and utilize the various opportunities provided by the government and other sources. This would enable them to avail amenities provided by the government and other bodies to improve their quality of life and those of their families, since women play a pivotal role in the family that is the basic unit of a society. Hence the project would contribute towards a better world.

Population coverage:

Closely and remotely, this project would have effect on a population of 50,000 slum people at least.

Place:

In Tollygunge slum at Deshapran Sasmol Road, Calcutta 700033, India

PHASE I:

A 2-hour study in vernacular and arithmetic for students is being conducted.

PHASE II:

Research and data collection on the families attending the education center, to study the effect of education on women. Their attitude towards family affairs, home management, family planning and children rearing after attending the study center is being studied. In addition, the percentage of implementation of their lessons in their day-to-day lives and an analysis of Project Sushiksha on the lives of those families closely or remotely attached to it are being studied.

PROJECT SUSWASTHYA

Definition:

It is a primary health care facility for the rural/urban underprivileged families.

Population under consideration:

50,000 plus people directly or indirectly.

PHASE I:**Program:**

Monthly free health check-up camps for pregnant women, lactating mothers, children and senior citizens.

Place:

In Tollygunge slum at Deshapran Sasmol Road, Calcutta 700033, India

PHASE II:**Program:**

Conducting free medical consultations at a center and also providing common medicines at the weekly free clinics. This is aimed at improving the health conditions of the underprivileged families by providing free medical consultations.

PHASE III:**Program:**

Conducting research based on case studies on the plight of the slum dwellers or poor families under critical economic crisis and non-availability of health care facilities or limited health care facilities.

The project is aimed to improve the general health conditions of the underprivileged people. It is also aimed at documenting the causes of diseases common to the locality under consideration and making proper arrangements for its eradication.

PROJECT HOPE (Sonagachi)**Definition:**

It is a comprehensive welfare program for the sex workers and their children.

Program:

The project is aimed at bringing primary healthcare facilities, functional literacy and awareness on social issues in the lives of the sex workers and their children to improve their quality of life.

Place:

In Sonagachi Red Light area in Calcutta, India.

Population:

Around 40,000 sex workers and their children.

PHASE I:**Program:**

Free distribution of condoms encouraging safe sex, distribution of pictographic posters and leaflets on prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS. This phase is aimed at creating awareness on personal health care services and anti AIDS movement.

PHASE II:**Program:**

A permanent free clinic at Sonagachi has been established to draw an idea of the diseases that afflict the sex workers and their families and provide them with healthcare facilities.

PHASE III:**Program:**

A research team is preparing a record of types of diseases common to the locality along with the record of the suspected STD/HIV and AIDS cases in the locality for further study and treatment.

PHASE IV:**Program:**

Initiated a functional literacy program for the sex workers so that they can read, write and maintain accounts of their earnings. That would make them more self-reliant and make informative welfare documents meaningful to them.

PHASE V:**Program:**

The project has initiated a crèche cum primary education center for children of the sex workers. The idea is to frame the minds of the children like that of their counterparts in the normal society and put them away from repeating their mothers' profession or receive any psychological setback for being the illegal children of the workers.

PHASE VI:**Program:**

Income-generating skills are being developed through training among the sex workers so that they can seek alternative careers in the mainstream and lead healthy, better lives in future.

PROJECT HOPE (Kalighat)**Definition:**

It is a comprehensive welfare program for sex workers and their children.

Population coverage:

5,000 sex workers

Place:

Kalighat Red Light area, Calcutta, India.

PHASE I:**Program:**

A literacy center is running for the sex workers to enable them understand the messages on health and hygiene, methods for preventing AIDS, HIV and STDs and also for making them functionally literate. This will make them more self-reliant and more aware of their choices for improving the quality of life.

PHASE II:**Program:**

A free clinic is also running for the sex workers and their children to make primary healthcare facilities easily available to them.

PHASE III:**Program:**

There is an informal school cum crèche for the children for the sex workers. This is aimed at giving them a time to relax and enjoy and educate themselves to join the mainstream.

PHASE IV:**Program:**

An intensive research with case studies is being conducted for identifying the social problems faced by the sex workers and their children.

PHASE V:**Program:**

Conducting vocational training to provide income generation among the unemployed youths of that section of the society and also for the sex workers seeking alternative styles of livelihood. It is aimed at discouraging prostitution.

PHASE VI:**Program:**

Regular counseling on ending child prostitution and rehabilitating sex workers willing to opt out of the profession. This would shift the population from the red light area profession into the mainstream style of living. Hereby, anti-social tendencies can also be checked.

TRAINEES FROM ABROAD:

Mr. Chris Popma of **Holland** and **Ms Julia Jeugerns** of **Germany** came during this year for 3 and 1 months respectively, to render service and educate themselves from these projects conducted by the Institute of International Social Development.

GENERAL PROGRAMS**WORLD HEALTH WEEK**

The institute observed '**World Health Week**' from **April 7 to April 13, 1999** in different locations for seven days. It included: **Free Hepatitis B vaccination** to sex workers and their children and free medical check up camp (April 7, 1999) at Sonagachi Red Light area in the presence of matinee idols Victor Banerjee, Tapas Paul and politician Paras Dutta and conducted by Dr A. Panja, and Dr S. Ghoshal; **Free distribution of health drink packets** to 30 families of adult women and girl children of the Sushiksha center in Tollygunge (April 8, 1999) under the supervision of Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General; **Free Medical check-up camp** and free distribution of health drink packets to 100 sex workers and their children in Kalighat Red Light area in the presence of Dr M.K. Das, TV artiste Baishakhi Majumdar, and Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General (April 9, 1999); **Mass vaccination camp of Hepatitis B** at a subsidized rate to more than 1000 people at the Institute's headquarters in the presence of Paras Dutta, politician, and Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General (April 10, 1999); **Blood donation camp** in association with Alipore Kalyan Samiti Blood Donation Camp at Alipore (April 11, 1999) in the presence of film personality Arjun Chakraborty; and **Free medical check-up camp** and free health drink distribution to 100 eunuchs at Chetla Eunuch Locality in the presence of Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General (April 12, 1999).

ENVIRONMENT

The institute, in association with Calcutta Telephone's District Circle Staff Welfare Society, organized a 2-day **Sit-and-draw contest** for more than 1,500 students on the theme '**environment**'. The inaugural session was graced by Mr. Ramanujan, General Manager of Calcutta Telephones, and many others. The winners were given prizes and encouraged to paint socially supportive thematic paintings.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

In observance of '**World Environment Day**', **June 5, 1999**, our institute organized in association

with ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) **food distribution** and **kirtans** (chanting of God's Name) in a move to sanctify the polluted environment of Sonagachi Red Light area, Kalighat Red Light area and Tollygunge slum. The program received tremendous appreciation from the residents of these areas and perhaps sowed the seed of values and appreciation of higher thinking in them for a better life.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

The institute celebrated **India's Independence Day** of August 15, 1999, with a **procession** along with Gujarat Youth Club with 500 walkers from Laxmi Narayan Mandir at Landsdowne Road to Elgin Road, Ashutosh Mukherjee Road, to Northern Park. There, the institute officials did **flag hoisting** jointly with Gujarat Youth Club at Northern Park.

This was followed by **Hepatitis B mass vaccination camp** jointly with Gurudwara Sant Kutia at Elgin Road. Mamata Banerjee, Member of Parliament, graced the occasion as the Guest-in-Chief. She vaccinated herself and later expressed full support for such health awareness ventures and reliability of the institute's activities. She further said that the lack of macro-level infrastructures and negligence on health programs by the local machinery has led to the proliferation of the disease in the state. Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, presided over the meeting. The institute also awarded twelve students from the slums, who had gained 75% marks in the Secondary Examinations in the State level examinations.

Numerous members of the Sikh community also vaccinated themselves.

ANNUAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

The institute donated a **rolling soccer challenge trophy** of pure silver to South Calcutta Amara Sabai Club for organizing a **yearly tournament of Football** for talented footballers of South Calcutta on August 22, 1999. The trophy is in the memory of Sri Kishan Lal Dalmia, late father of Mr. Purshottam Kumar, President of the institute.

The trophy was handed over to the winning team at the prize distribution ceremony in Dhakuria Lake Grounds after a two-day tournament. Present on the occasion were Mr. Amal Dutta, noted footballer of yesteryears, Purshottam Kumar, President and Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

SCIENCE OF SELF-REALIZATION

The institute organized a discourse by His Holiness Jagadguru Ramanandacharya of International Chaitanya Mission on the **science of self-realization** through Om Kriya Yoga at the institute's headquarters in Calcutta. Present in the program were Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, Purshottam Kumar, president, and numerous other eminent personalities.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The institute, in association with Alipore Kalyan Samiti, organized **Children's Festival** for premier school students by way of a poster painting competition on **PEACE** at Alipore on November 14, 1999. More than 100 students participated in the competition. Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, conducted the program.

WORLD AIDS DAY

The institute, in association with Vivek, a Kalighat-based organization, observed '**World AIDS Day**' on December 1, 1999, at Kalighat Milon Sangha. The program consisted of a film on AIDS, followed by a seminar on AIDS, and a HIV blood test. The program was graced by Mr. Kshiti Goswami, Minister-in-Charge, PWD, Government of West Bengal; Mr. Noboru Kawagishi, Consul General of Japan; Mr. Christopher Sandrolini, Consul General of USA; Mr. Paras Dutta, politician; besides other luminaries. Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, presided over the meeting.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The institute was donated a plot of land by Sri Sri Lokenath Seva Pratisthan of South Chamrail, Howrah, for the purpose of a **comprehensive welfare home for the senior citizens**. As a symbol of preservation of the rights of the elderly, this transfer was conducted on December 10, 1999, 'Human Rights Day', at the Ashram premises at South Chamrail, Howrah. The program was graced by Mr. Kshiti Goswami, M.I.C. PWD, Government of West Bengal, Mr. Debdulal Bandopadhyay, noted orator, Mr. Nemai Goswami, footballer, Mr. Kartick Bose, footballer, and Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

To observe the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the legendary freedom fighter, the institute organized a two-day festival for 1000 street and disabled children at Vivekananda Park, Southern Avenue, Calcutta, on January 23 and 24, 2000.

The festival consisted of sit-and-draw contest, exhibition of handicraft and handloom items of disabled and distressed artisans, sports, 'go as you like' contest and film show. The inaugural session was graced by Mr. Subhas Chakraborty, Minister, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of West Bengal, Mr. Rabin Deb, M.L.A., Ballygunge Constituency, Mr. Paras Dutta, politician and Ms Mamata Shankar, noted film and cultural personality. It was presided by Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

The prize distribution session was graced by Mr. Biswanath Choudhuri, Minister, Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal, and Mr. Satya Brata Mukherjee, Member of Parliament. Ms Rajyashree

Chaudhuri presided over the ceremony.

MEDICAL CHECK-UP

The institute organized a **medical camp** in association with Herbal Medical Research Center, for 300 sex workers and their children at Sonagachi red light area on January 26, 2000, on the occasion of India's Republic Day. Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General, conducted the program.

EXHIBITION-CUM-SALE

The institute organized an exhibition-cum-sale of exclusive tribal-made exquisitely embroidered saris and garments, costume jewelry made by slum women and jamdani saris at the institute's headquarters on January 30, 2000. The proceeds of the sales went to the poverty-stricken artists and this was an attempt to market these exclusive works of art to revive the art and to provide the artists with a proper source of income within their field of expertise.

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER TONGUE DAY

The institute organized an evening of **quiz** involving the students of 10+2 standard and those in college followed by **oration** by the literary personalities of Bengali literature at Alipore Kalyan Samiti, on February 21, 2000. Ms Soma Dutta, coordinator, Ms Pompei Chakraborti, convenor and Ms Santa Basu Sinha, chief advisor, helped organize the program and it was presided by Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The institute, in association with the Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organization, Howrah, organized a panel discussion on '**The status of Women in the 21st Century**' on the occasion of '**International Women's Day**', followed by the inauguration of a month-long **exhibition-cum-sale** of handicraft and handloom items made by the distressed people. The program was held in Tridhara Showroom, Howrah Station, March 8, 2000.

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