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JMJ AND MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICE IN SOUTH INDIAN HISTORY 1904 -2014.

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ABSTRACT

Social service activities are those which reach out to the persons who are victims of violence, structures of oppression, poverty, sickness, disease, ageing, depression etc. The activities are geared to self empowerment, experience of honor and dignity freeing them unjust structures of oppression particularly with regard to women and children. They are included in human relationship with participatory roles and equal opportunities in every realm. The role of the church is to work for establishing peace and justice and value of forgiveness. The society of JMJ following the teaching of the Church through its various activities and works towards this ideal. In a very direct tangible way this is attempted in the ministry of social service. The JMJs also rise to the occasion to bring relief in times of catastrophes natural calamities, emergency etc. the voluntary option is to aim at the emancipation of the poor and marginalized. Equality and liberation from unjust structures on the basis of sex, caste, language or religion is worked at.

KEYWORDS : South Indian History ,Social service activities ,self empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

JMJs are identified with social ministry right from the inception of the Society. Though initially in an informal way the Charisma of the founder Fr. Mathias Wolff S.J, "An Ever Adaptable Apostolic Availability", opened new vistas to launch out to the social apostolate according to the signs of the times and need of the hour. No doubt, if reviewed the social apostolate as was practiced from the very start of the society, but very different from what it is today. But the main objective has always been clear, the target group always being the poor, needy,

oppressed, voiceless and marginalized. At the same time, to enlighten the empowered of their duties towards these victims and of their responsibility of sharing is being inculcated in the young minds by the students. Ever since the society started in India in 1904, a number of activities were carried out by JMJ sisters in different parts of India in all the JMJ communities together with other major apostolate like Education and Health Care. From 1904 to 1987 the social activities were conducted under a single province. In the year 1987 the single JMJ Province was divided into three autonomous Provinces of Guntur, Bangalore and Hyderabad. In 1987 the two Indian Provinces which branched out set their head quarters for social service



activity in Mahabubnagar, Hyderabad province and Sivadi in Bangalore province respectively while Guntur province continued in the self same town. In the three Provinces social service is being actively and vigorously carried out under the direction of social apostolate committees of each Province along with lay collaborators who have a sense of dedication and service.

Hypothesis

The establishment of the society of JMJ in India is to improve the villages and promote holistic development to the rural and empowerment of women and children in South India.

Methodology

The presentation is empirical and descriptive. The method use by the researcher for gathering information to write this article is by obtaining data from written documents, books, archives and interviews.

1. Social Service Society

The JMJ Social Service Society of Bangalore province, Sivadi in Chittoor District was registered under Societies Registration Act on 18 January, 2005. Sr. Bertilia pioneered the mission. The activities are conducted by the JMJSST, Sivadi covering the Districts of Kadapa, Nellore, Chittoor, Prakasam in A .P. Bangalore, Bellary, Raichur and Bijapur in Karnataka.

In general the main activities are geared towards the following by the three provinces separating within independently or in collaboration with like agencies.

- Orphanages
- Hostels for girls
- Technical training centers, skill training centers
- Adoption centers – Tender Loving Care (TLC)
- Home for the street children
- Home for the Aged Programmes and homes for the physically and mentally challenged.
- Programmes on eradication of child labour, open school for school dropouts, play schools, Balawadies and day care centers, including Bridge Course.
- Literacy Programmes
- Women integrated development/ micro – enterprises/ tree plantation/ Kitchen Garden/ MahilaMaha Sabha and leadership training programmes/ Adult literacy
- Prison ministry
- Rehabilitation of the centers
- HIV/ AIDS counseling centers
- Relief Work Housing, Sanitation and Water projects for the poor in collaboration with the Government.

1.1 Orphanages

The purpose of running orphanages is to cater to the children of the under privileged classes and educate them. The society of JMJ has generously contributed to their maintenance of the orphanages mentioned here below. Every institution has a boarding and hostel to enable the children from far off villages to provide educational facilities, consideration is shown in the charges to the marginalized. There by the Society of JMJ has been the reason for thousands of girls who have benefited education.

Social service commenced as early as June 1904, when Fr. Merkers, Mill Hill Missionary, who saw a few neglected children in the villages brought them to the JMJ sisters who welcomed them into their home. This was actually the beginning of the idea of an orphanage for the poor and orphan children. Subsequently in the following year 1905 the orphanage was opened accommodating 15 children. This proved to be successful, meeting a great demand for the admissions to the orphanage. From 1934 the orphanage was admitted to grant in aid which was continued till early 1980's. With the increase in number and inability of the society to give free board a nominal fee was being charged on the boarders. It was their utmost satisfaction that the society could

enable the helpless neglected children to have the advantages of education.

1.2. Balawadies

The programme strengthens the educational foundation of children particularly from the underprivileged sections of the society. If every child can avail of childhood education, the chances of going to a regular school for the children are high. Moreover, the pre-school exposure is to enhance and strengthen the child's subsequent school performance, in terms of achievement and attendance. The age group for the pre-school children is 3 to 5 years.

There are many centers in Kondramutla, Durgi, Sivadi, Achampet, Mahabunagar, Jagadhergutta, Sanathnagar, Vejendla, Ongole, Porumamilla and Hanuman Junction. Which are functioning successfully giving benefit to these children who would otherwise be running around the streets.

1.3. Adult Education

The Adult education programme was first introduced in 1979-80 in Bellary District with the main objective of making the masses literate in the age group of 14 to 35 years, especially in rural areas. From the year 1982-83 onwards the state government has also taken the Adult Education Programme with the functionaries of State Adult Education Council. In 1992-93 all these project were stopped to start Literacy Campaign in the district.

Education is a progressive discovery of oneself, leading one to awake into freedom, truth and justice. This program started in the year 2000 and is partially sponsored by National Education Group (NEP) and supported by JMJSSS, Nallapadu. Almost all the employees and women in the Self- Help Groups (SHG) are able to write and read or at least write their names and affix their signature.

Creating awareness in women of their family life and social movements, adult education was taken up in many villages. Much improvement was seen in the social behavior and economic situation of the women. There are many centers at Kondramutal, Durgi, Sivadi, Achampet, Mahabubnagar, jagadhergutta, Sanathnagar, Vejendla, Ongole, Porumamilla, Hanuman Junction, PedaPential and Tenali. In Guntur St. Joseph's College of Education staff and students, have made it very special by actively participating in the AsksharaDeepthi programme and have succeeded in spreading literary in and around Guntur District. All the students participated in the concurrent Evaluation programme, covering 20 mandals, three municipalities and Guntur Corporation and in all the rallies of AksharaDeepthi and public meetings organized in the VenkatswaraVignamMandir, Guntur.

1.4. Technical training Centers

Academic qualification and achievement of degree are not possible for everyone. So, technical education supplements this providing them training in their individual skills. Rev. Sr. Corneli has pioneered this mission as early as 1996. The below mentioned outlines the detail of these programmes

The society of JMJ came forward to invest on the establishment of a social welfare center in 1971 which accelerated the uplift of the poor girls and women. In this center practical arts like tailoring, handicraft, child care and development, home management, personal and village hygiene, gardening and cooking are taught, in order to prepare the ignorant ladies to be useful and better house-wives. Thus the center enables many young girls to be self reliant.

1.5. Adoption Centers -Tender Loving Care (TLC)

A problem which confronts the society today is the question of unwanted babies for several reasons. To shelter these babies the hospitals of JMJ took a lead till a foster parent was found. The below given matter traces the origin and present status of this commendable service.

Initially in St. Joseph's Hospital, Guntur the destitute babies were in a crèche. Later it was shifted to sattenapalli Holy Family Hospital. This practice continued till late 1980's. Such babies were directed to Hyderabad St. Theresa's TLC Home, Sanathnagar which had a proper infrastructure with staff. This is the beginning of the TLC Home St. Theresa's Sanathnagar.

Though Sr. Theresa Maria had started for the abandoned babies from December 1989, a separate Home as such was opened in the year 1996. The inmates were mainly, abandoned girl babies. There were also a few boys, who were abandoned by their parents due to poverty or their handicaps and children of unwed mothers who didn't want to expose unwelcome liabilities. Some women went in for abortion, when the scanning

revealed that she was carrying a girl child. Some dared even to abort the baby or abandon them in dustbins or gutters and some handed them over to some convents for adoption.

1.6. Home for the Street Children.

The society faced another problem of children run away from homes due to various factors and found on the streets, railway platforms etc., besides a very prevalent injustice was seen in the employment of children below teenage. To counter the exploitation JMJ stepped in with bridge courses in conjunction with the Andhra government.

The children come from different background; many of them are runaway kids, who are victims of neglect or torture at home. Some are made to beg by their own parents to supplement the family income or fall into the hands of middlemen who hire their services to mint money. Some live on the railway platforms and begin trains. They indulge in all sorts of vices like gambling, smoking and even consuming liquor. Sometimes they are rescued by voluntary organizations. But most of them prefer a free life to return to the streets and live the way they want instead of going back to the family and getting beaten up by their drunkard father or ill treatment by a stepmother.

Looking after these children is not a mere service but a responsibility and the duty to give them a home where they can experience love, care, security and a family atmosphere. Besides providing them with basic needs, food, clothing, shelter, education and health, they train them in certain skills and trades so as to enable them to earn their livelihood and inculcate in them self respect, self esteem and personal dignity as a must. Realizing this fact JMJ took up the programme in the year 1982 in Tenali and later this was followed by Achampet, Mahabubnagar.

The children are well cared, loved and provided with opportunities to grow up happily. As these children were deprived of their normal basic childhood facilities, they were found to be very naughty, aggressive, moody, sad, troublesome and possessive in the beginning. As they received love, care and guidance they slowly began to open up their life story which indeed is very painful to hear. They are given counseling and guidance for him/herself acceptance and character formation. Some of them are sent for bridge course and others enrolled in the different schools mostly supported by the government.

From the total number of children that came to the centre, some of, their parents have been identified, such children were handed over to their families, some of the grown up girls were provided with jobs and some settled through marriage. Future thrust of the institution is to have; skills training and vocational training projects, with a production centre, so that eventually they can be self-reliant, and live dignified lives.

1.7. Stitching Lillian Funds (SLF)

Stitching Lillian Funds (SLF) is an organization in Holland to support rehabilitation for children with disabilities in developing countries. SLF offers small scaled, person centered assistance to disabled children. But the indispensable basis of it all is the respect and the belief in the strength and value of every human being, regardless of how vulnerable or insignificant he or she may seem to be. SLF has its national coordination office at CHAI in Hyderabad, and a JMJ sister is collaborating as the national coordinator. In this concern Sr. Mary Kurissery JMJ Guntur province worked for 9 years and since 2002 Sr. Celine Alapat JMJ, Hyderabad province is incharge of National Coordination Office. At present the work has spread over to 23 states in India having 220 mediators supporting 6500 children.

SLF convinced donors that their contribution will be used according to their expectation, namely for the benefit of the children with disability, has ensured the continuous flow of contribution and even the increase. SLF makes sure that the contribution ends up in the right place. Future thrust is to give help to more children and young adults to give them human respect and dignity. JMJs being the coordinators of SLF are able to reach out to the physically challenged particularly of A.P promoting their health and welfare activities towards self reliance.

1.8. Swadhar

Swadhar is a scheme sponsored by Dept. of Women Development and child Welfare, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, India. Swadhar is designed with more flexible and innovative approach to address the specific vulnerable women in distress, in diverse situation under different conditions. The target group includes women who are trafficked and rescued from brothels, deserted, ex-prisoners, homeless, victims

of violence, HIV affected, mentally challenged and others in difficult circumstances.

The project 'Swadhar' is sanctioned to JMJ Social Service Society, Nallapadu which is registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 (FC Exemption). It is the first Swadhar Home in Guntur District, functioning at Tenali through JMJ College for women as one of the extension programmes of the college from 5th April 2005.

In JMJ Swadhar home there are about 100 such adolescent girls and women are provided with food, shelter, clothes etc. They are given constant counseling and various vocational skills training to make them self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-confident and build up their self esteem. They rehabilitate the inmates socially and economically through education, awareness programmes, developing skills and training them to fit in the society. They arrange clinical, legal and other support for women and girls in need of intervention by linking and networking with other organizations.

At present vocational training given in hand embroidery, tailoring, dyeing, batik work, bag making etc., to empower them economically. Linkages are developed with other organizations both government and non-government to impart these skill training.

The future thrust of Swadhar is the need of a permanent building to accommodate the inmates more comfortably in a homely atmosphere, to build the confidence in the women who have passed through crucial and traumatic times.

Sr. Mercy Chacko, Sr. Rosalina Gade, and Ms. Hemalatha a team of sisters and staff were the pioneers under whose leadership Swadhar is a home for the homeless, a refuge for the abandoned and rejected women and children, running efficiently.

1.9. Home for the Aged

Ageing is natural and inevitable; the effects of ageing are a part of life and deterioration in organic functioning which can be reduced by regular activities. The illness, the disabilities and the unpleasantness of the old age bring tension and self-pity, which today's youth fail to understand, to add to it the present computer era finds no time to spend with the elderly.

The painful cry of the elderly in the different parts of the country, being rejected by their own children, relatives and neighbors, is the driving force that prompted the society of JMJ to start homes for the aged. These homes aim at providing care and support to the elderly, who have no one to care for. Holy Family home for the aged Veeranyapalya Bangalore was opened in the year 1967. St. Ignatius' home for the aged at Durgi, Guntur was opened in the year 1995 which was renovated and converted into home for the aged as many other private clinics began taking care of the patients.

The medical care /hospitalization, etc, is attended to by St. Joseph's convent/hospital, Guntur. The senior citizens who joined as the inmates of the home experience great relief, peace, joy, and the blessings of spiritual facilities in this fag end of their lives.

Aged sisters of JMJ are looked after by the society by having a separate home for the aged sisters in each of the three provinces.

1.10. Prison Ministry.

Prison Ministry is about transition and helping inmate's rehabilitation back into society as self confident, productive believers and citizens. The society of JMJ in collaboration with other congregations and laity has plunged into this new venture.

Their visit to the prisoners is a fulfilling experience for them and a joy to the prisoners. These victims are locked up within the four walls of the prison and when they see someone who is concerned about them they have a great joy. Their initiative to visit prisoners and arrange programmes for them was accepted by the prison authorities. At present sisters, staff and students from different institutions, like Gunture, Kurnool, Koilakuntla, Mahabubnagar, Kadapa, Anakapalli, Hyderabad and many more, are actively involved in the prison ministry.

The prisoners are given moral support, counseling, faith formation and cultural programs on different occasions which are recreational and give them hope leading to self awareness and forgiveness which, assists in lifting them to a spirit of freedom, peace and joy.

1.11. Rehabilitation of the Lepers

The endemic is high in the Southern and Eastern States of India. The National Leprosy programme has been in operation since 1956 but only after 1980, it received high priority from the Government of India. St. Ignatius convent, Durgi launched a number of welfare program, especially for the rehabilitation of lepers.

In 1978 the project for the rehabilitation of the lepers was started. The then provincial superior Sr. Josepha Rachamalla trod the path to the helpless lepers who were eagerly waiting for the aid. She worked at constructing 35 houses well equipped and provided a kitchen garden; a spacious multipurpose hall, with the help of the Caritas, Holland. Since the lepers struggled for drinking water the problem was solved when 'BalaVikasa' a voluntary Social Service Organization sanctioned a bore well, a motor and a water tank. The service to the victims are continued and the society of JMJ is meeting their medical and other essential needs. They are cared for by St. Ignatius community, Durgi and financed by the Guntur province.

In the year 2006 JMJSSS adopted 40 families of lepers in Mahabubnagar who used to spend their lives in begging. When the society surveyed this colony, they found 20 children who were not affected with this dreadful sickness. Seeing their plight they applied to CFCA for the sponsorship of their children's education and to the government for the medical facilities. Both the applications were favourably considered.

1.12. HIV/AIDS- Care and Support

The care and support center for HIV/AIDS at Holy Family Hospital, Sattenapalli was inaugurated by Mrs. Jaya Lakshmi the then District Collector and Magistrate of Guntur, on 25th May 2005, for institutional care for those finding it inconvenient to live in their own homes. The sisters are greatly interested in this ministry of caring for these people whose lives are broken with the fear of impending death and helplessness. They care for them with concern, compassion and dedication, giving a listening ear to their anxieties. Their aim is 'to provide care for the patients of HIV/ AIDS who are terminally ill'. Counseling is a part of their programme, which is essential in treating these cases. The AIDS Department, Hyderabad together with the Society of JMJ, Guntur province is meeting the expenditure.

In St. Theresa's hospital Kurnool, a 20 bedded hospital was constructed in the same year to accommodate all the HIV/ AIDS patients that come to their hospital and also referred to by other institutions. Nutrition diet is provided to all patients in the hospital. And family members, who are care takers of tuberculosis and AIDS patients. Children who are victims of these diseases are also beneficiaries of this programme.

The hospital which has been working in the area of health for over three decades has expanded its areas of work of not just providing curative care but also preventive and promotive care through its community department (CHD). As the HIV/ AIDS cases were increasing, the hospital reached out to them. A department was setup in collaboration with CHD called the AIDS Resource Centre (ARC) on 17th July 1993 with the support of JMJ Society, Generalate, Holland. The ARC mainly aimed at prevention, training of medical, non-medical personnel concerned with the issue, laying emphasis on counseling the person and their respective families. From the time of initiation, the ARC has given awareness classes and education to school and college students, mahilamandals, youth groups, slum communities etc., it has trained both medical, paramedical and other groups concerned in areas of medical, social in counseling issues.

Another major aim was to intensify counseling services. Over the years since many patients' mainly young men and women were presenting various medical problems, both the patients and their families are counseled. The patients admitted in the normal course are treated for the infections and are informed of the necessary precautions to be taken. All the work in ARC is supported by a good team with a lot of encouragement from the management. The ARC in the future plans to expand its work and co-ordinate with both government and non-governmental organizations.

Awareness programmes were conducted in collaboration with Balavikasa, APSSS, CHHAP, CHAI life Insurance Company and GO's other NGOs all the educational institutions of Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda Districts covering 150 institution by Sr. Julie Plakkal.

Social Service activity is incomplete without relief work which meets the crucial moments in case of natural calamities and accidents. JMJ has always giving its services in various ways by way of personnel or financial assistance. The below details speak of their services.

The catastrophe of November 1927 needs to be mentioned here, as the JMJ sisters boldly raised to the magnitude of the cyclone which crippled and ravaged Nellore. The Dutch sisters of JMJ braved their steps to bring back life and happiness to the cyclonic victims. Due to decomposition, and decay, cholera broke out and the sisters were at the beck and call of the afflicted.

Sr. Arnoldine as superior in 1939 was generous and her kindness was personified. The government recognized her untiring and endless social service and honoured her with the National award The Kaisari Hind silver medal on 11th January 1938.

The killer cyclone that hit Andhra Pradesh on 19th November 1977, washed away a number of villages in Krishna, Godavari and Guntur District; DIVI SEEMA was the most affected area. Lakhs of people were homeless, cattle and other animals were totally deprived of food. Crops worth crores of Rupees were either submerged or washed away. Disruption of telecommunications and transport took weeks to be restored. The church in Guntur and Krishna Districts formed relief and reconstruction committees, on par with that of VRO, Red Cross, Rama Krishna Mission, Government Agencies etc., in planning and executive relief in the spirit of brotherhood. Financial, material, medical and technical aid flowed from the four corners of the world. Society of JMJ had its lion share. To start with, the news of the unheard calamity reached Sr. Louise van Laarhoven the Superior to be used for the cyclone victims. Later she came to India and went round these devastated areas, along with, Sr. Emmanuelle Gopu her assistance, and studied the situation personally and offered further financial aid.

Sr. Josepha Rachamalla the then provincial Superior and her councilors seized the opportunity of extending hands to the victims, soothing them with their presence, offering the help required in assisting the suffering and the tragic victims. Many Florence Nightingales walked out into every nook and corner, giving vaccination and distributing medicines.

Sr. Anna Maria Gali as the secretary General of the Guntur Diocese Cyclone Relief and Reconstruction Committee played a major role in planning and organizing the relief and reconstruction operations. Sr. Theresalena Kodiganti, a member of the same committee shouldered heavy responsibility of meeting the need, and giving solace and succor. Sr. Herinia Mummadi and Sr. Evaline Udumala assisted them in the office round the clock not a lot of constructive, creative and concrete relief work.

It was remarkable to note that the JMJ sisters of St. Joseph's convent, Guntur, JMJ convent Tenali, and Repalle provided shelter, food and clothing to thousands, for a month. The NSS students of JMJ college, Tenali, rendered enormous service in the field even burying the dead decomposed as they were, at the risk of their health.

While the JMJ sisters in India were actively involved in bringing relief and consolation at that critical juncture, JMJ sisters in Holland deeply moved at the calamity, in solidarity sent messages of sympathy and concern, and shared the grief in a practical manner too. It is encouraging and touching that they sacrificed the money ear-marked for their personal clothing in 1978 and sent it to cloth the victims of cyclone in India.

The natural calamities and accident sites at different times and occasions all over the country were the memorable events when they could be witnesses of God's goodness by extending the loving service to the victims. The intensity of the calamity was a challenge to the sisters to leave their security. JMJ Society, in collaboration with others, participated in the following relief works

- a) Among the refugees at Bangladesh in the year 1970 organized by Caritas India, along several other set ups JMJs namely Sr. Gertrude and her team worked with great vigor in the relief work.
- b) In the year 1977, after the killer cyclone hit the Divi Seema Andhra Pradesh, in the month of November. JMJs collaborated in the team work with the Jesuits for the emergency relief work; and some of JMJ sisters continued their service with Diocesan of Social Service Society of Guntur and Krishna for a long period to organize the people in their rehabilitation.
- c) In the year 1990, the severe storm that hit the districts of Guntur, Krishna, East and West Godavari and Prakasam Districts, and the drastic effect it had on human lives, animals, vegetation and buildings. The victims were helped by the Society of JMJ financially for the purchase of animals as a source of livelihood.
- d) In the year 1992, the Earth Quake at Lathur in Maharashtra a memorable event in the history of the state brought about loss of human lives, property leaving many widowed and orphaned. JMJ sisters Sr. Gertrude, Sr.

Lourd's Mary, Sr. Jacintha Nagothu and Sr. Mary Kommareddy collaborated in the team work organized by CHAI, the victims in various ways.

e) The cyclone of 6th November 1996 hit the East Godavari was totally shattered. The society of JMJ along with the Jesuits set up base camps and rendered relief services.

f) Super Killer cyclone that hit Orissa in the year 1999, and the devastation caused left a sad memory to the survived. The sisters of JMJ among many others gave their service, though it was only a drop in the ocean. God's protection, however, was immense and ever to be remembered, so too the generosity of the many kind-hearted people.

g) Massive outbreak of Tsunami, the killer's waves on 26th December 2004 rendered several thousands of people including many women and children, homeless and orphans. Besides the loss of human life, people have also lost livestock, cultivation, boats and nets of fisher folk. A few sisters from JMJ Hyderabad in collaboration with other likeminded people and NGOs has made the survey of the affected places on the Andhra Pradesh coast, and found that the villages around Machilipatnam needed immediate relief work and rehabilitation. They requested the SLF organization to help in this situation with some financial help. They immediately sanctioned Rupees Ten Lakhs for three villages of Machilipatnam with boats and nets. Thus 300 people in these villages were rehabilitated.

h) In the case of fire accidents where ever and when huts were burnt down the society comes to their relief by way of supply of food stuffs, clothing and temporary housing.

1.13. Housing and Sanitation

In view of settling people in one's own land and to provide one of the basic needs for shelter where by one could live with honour and dignity. JMJ at construction of houses for the landless of both employees as well as the needy.

Sanitation and hygiene are essential to give dignity to human life. With this concern JMJ has taken up a number of projects in providing facilities in rural areas independently and in collaboration with Balavikasa. As such quite a number of villages have been given this benefit by the following activities.

The society of JMJ has been funding towards the construction of houses for the needy and ministerial staff of the institutions in Rapalle, Durgi, Kondramutla, Nallapadu, Vejendla, Hyderabad. Numerous villages benefited through this scheme, a kind and generous gesture of the society of JMJ in providing home for the homeless as its top priority.

With the collaboration of BalaVikasa (Non-Governmental Organization) proper sanitation was provided through the construction of toilets, benefiting thousands of families covering the areas of Vejendla, Guntur, Nambur, Sattenapalli, Durgi, Kondramutal, Sivadi, Achampet and Jagadhergutta. In Karnataka Siruguppa, Deverahiparagi.

In 1995 the JMJ sisters joined hands with the programmes of BalaVikasa for the upliftment of women in providing bore-wells, water tanks and sanitation etc.

1.13. BalaVikasa

BalaVikasa is a sister concern of an international development organization SOPAR established in 1977, based at Gatineau, Quebec, Canada. BalaVikasa was established during the year 1991 by Mrs. Bala Theresa Gingras an Indian born visionary and a noted philanthropist who married a Canadian Mr. Andre Gingras and settled in Canada 35 years ago. SOPAR in Canada and BalaVikasa in India are the outcome of the desire to help her state of Andhra Pradesh in India. BalaVikasa receives funds to help women with WID programmes from different donor organizations in Canada, Europe, and Asia etc. It plays a dual role of donor and executor and provides funds to different NGOs and also implements directly various integrated development programs. It is one of the leading NGOs in the country particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

In September 1997, the JMJ sisters introduced BalaVikasa programme for the empowerment of women in the areas of Sivadi and Chittoor. Initially the programme was started in 2 areas with 44 groups and 1746 women. At present the programme is carried out in 100 villages, 540 groups and 12000 women. The province was in collaboration with BalaVikasa until December 2003. The original intention of BalaVikasa was to hand over the programme to the concerned congregation after a period of 6-7 years. This execution of handing over was

done in January 2004 as the sister gained sufficient knowledge and skills to run the programme independently.

1.14. CONCLUSION:

Contribution to education and health care was a prerogative at the same time welfare activities had their own place, right from the very beginnings. Responding to the needs of the village folk, who flocked to the JMJ sisters in all their necessities social service was started in an unofficial manner catering to all human needs for the development of the total person. Braving all hazards voluntary services in cases of fire accidents, havoc from floods and cyclones were always given as and when need arose.

Children who lacked facilities were provided education through orphanages and boarding homes on reasonable payment. Free ships were also in practice for the deserving. The organizational set up was in later years having a network of activities under its pure view.

Now the services are extended by way of Balawadies, homes for the abandoned children, physically challenged and street children. Besides courses for the school drop outs, young girls and adults are taken into account. Free homes for the aged are a present trend of the society. A further step has been in collaboration with other NGO organizations both within and outside the country.

Major Findings

- JMJ establishments mostly found in interior villages rendering services.
- The social services they have taken care of the poorest of the poor and mostly in villages.
- Weaker section people have enjoyed the privileges.
- Women and children benefited from the social work.
- Their institutions have provided more employments to the locals and their living conditions improved

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