

ANNUAL REPORT - 2011

“Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking” (SIGN) is the official Body of the Catholic Bishops of Jharkhand for social concern and human development. It anchors the efforts of the 8 Social Service Societies of the dioceses of Ranchi, Gumla, Jamshedpur, Simdega, Khunti, Daltonganj, Hazaribagh and Dumka in promoting a just and humane society based on the gospel values of love, peace, equality and dignity to all. The Society, established in June 2006, was registered in Jharkhand on 23.12.2009 bearing the Registration Number 731. It was granted the 12A registration of tax exemption on 25.05.2010 and has been granted FCRA Registration on 24th December 2010. The Registration Number of FCRA is 337800203.

SIGN undertook many programs in the year. The major programs are:

- a) **Natural Resource Management** being carried out in all the 8 dioceses of Jharkhand promoting sustainable livelihood by restoring and regenerating Natural Resources through Integrated Management techniques and enhancement of capacity of the partners and communities to empower them for an effective takeover of the responsibilities for the implementation of development plans, strategically for better accessibility, impact, control and the management of the resources available in the area. The project used the strategy of capacity building of the staff and stakeholders, strengthening the local bodies, mapping the local resources; watershed approaches to re-charge the existing water bodies and creating more as per the need assessment etc. The outcome and the impact of the project intervention have been phenomenal. The effect can be seen from the perspectives of Governance, Livelihood, networking and Attitudinal change. The stakeholders have been empowered to get their entitlements from the government. The project has made very concrete impact on the life of the rural village folks of Jharkhand.
- b) **‘Inclusive, Integrated, Sustainable Development Program’** is a novel initiative to make 8 Panchayats, one from each diocese, into models for further replication. The purpose of the project is empowering the communities with the development dynamics and mantras of people’s awakening, people’s education, people’s organization, people’s power and people’s action emphasizing on the trust areas of livelihood, Agriculture, Governance, Empowerment, Gender Equality and Sensitivity, Health, Tribal Forest Act, MNREGA. The expected impact will be the emergence of model Panchayats for replication. Asset-based, community oriented and right based approaches are used for reflection and action.
- c) **‘Buniyad’** is a project with a goal of achieving good governance in the villages of Jharkhand. The objectives of the interventions were, ‘Mass awareness about the importance and implications of Panchayats Raj Institutions and Identifying and capacitating grassroots level leaders’. SIGN organized a preparatory meeting addressed by his Eminence Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo and a TOT for selected leaders from each diocese. These leaders capacitated by the training implemented the plan in each diocese training 65157 people on the importance and need of PRI.
- d) The Catholic **Health Care** efforts in Jharkhand have been phenomenal down the years. The Nurse Sisters have wrought wonders in the life of the marginalized people being effective health service providers in the remote villages of Jharkhand. Their commitment and dedication is unparalleled. In fact, they have been already realizing the goals and objectives

of NRHM in a micro way in their own area and context. However, they remain almost invisible and go unnoticed.

The Bishops of Jharkhand in their meeting held on 9th March 2010 dwelt upon the need to give visibility to the contribution of the Church of Jharkhand in health sector. They entrusted the endeavor to Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking (SIGN), their official body for social concern and human development. SIGN held reflections with a group of doctors and nurses and arrived at a conclusion to undertake a health facility survey before making a comprehensive health strategy for Jharkhand.

Focus group discussions were held in each diocese with the doctors and nurse sisters giving input and clarification on the designed tools. The nurse sisters, enlightened by the discussion, extended their support in completing the health facility survey. SIGN engaged AISD (Asian Institute for Sustainable Development), Ranchi to do the data entry and tabulation of the data. The result is a book titled, 'Towards Partnership' containing the findings and outcome of the feasibility study and required information about every health centre and hospital. SIGN also conducted a major meeting in SDC, Ranchi on 22nd March 2011 to discuss on the findings as well as to release the book, "Towards Partnership". The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Aradhana Patnaik I.A.S., NRHM Mission Director and His Eminence Cardinal Telesphore P Toppo, Dr. Pradeep Baskey, the State Malaria Officer; all the Bishops of Jharkhand; dignitaries from NGO sector and public life; all the Development Directors; Doctors & Nurse Sisters; Friends from Media and other participants numbering to 200 were present in the meeting cum reflection. The resource persons were: Dr. Suranjeen, Dr. Issac; Dr. Jeevan, Mr. Sanjay Singh-UNICEF, Mr. Poddar from CDMU Calcutta and Fr. S. Christu Das, Director SIGN.

The finalized focus, objectives and strategies for health intervention in Jharkhand:

Focus: Improving the health care status of the communities served by the Faith Based Health organizations in Jharkhand in convergence with NRHM

Objectives

- Reduction of Maternal & Infant Mortality Rate
Reduce death due to communicable diseases, with special focus on Malaria, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, Diarrhoea, STI and Kala-azar (only in the endemic districts)

Strategies

- Capacity Building
 - Behaviour Change Communication
Promote all the essential services of Primary Health Care with family/household focus
- e) **Control of Malaria Outbreak in Dumka and Pakur Districts:** Dumka, Pakur, Sahibganj are malaria endemic zones. Gopikandar and Litipara blocks of Dumka, Pakur districts came under the spell of malaria with a sudden break of Plasmodium Falsifurum (PF) in October 2010. Having been contacted by the Jharkhand State Malaria Office, SIGN partnered with Dumka Social and Educational Society, Dumka and conducted several malaria camps in the villages to support the government to bring under control the malarial outbreak. The camps treated 1587 positive cases and supported the people.
- f) **Elimination of Kala-azar through Institutional Care and Support:** Kala-azar (Leishmaniasis) is prevalent much in the districts of Dumka, Pakur, Sahibganj and Godda

and it is a major public health problem. The gradual building up of vector population, in spite of much effort, is a concern for the government and for those committed to the cause of the poor. The government has taken a big step by depositing trust in the faith-based NGOs to be partners in the operation for the elimination of kala-azar. Facilitated by SIGN, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Jharkhand Rural Health Mission Society (JRHMS), Ranchi, and the Dumka Social and Educational Society (DSES), Dumka to eliminate kala-azar in the districts of Dumka, Pakur, Sahibganj and Godda. The MoU was signed on 10th March 2011 in the presence of the Hon'ble Health Minister, Jharkhand State, the Health Secretary, Jharkhand, the State Malaria Officer, Jharkhand, other dignitaries, representatives from SIGN, DSES and CRS in the office of the Hon'ble Health Minister. The MoU gives provision for free and complete cure of 800 patients through Institutional Care and Support in partnership with 10 hospitals identified in the area.

- g) **Research in Lac Cultivation:** “Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking” (SIGN) engaged Access Livelihoods Consulting India Pvt. Ltd., Secundrabad to carry out a feasibility study to elucidate the viability of sustainable lac cultivation in Khunti district. A detailed study was carried out in Khunti, Murhu and Torpa blocks of the districts. Study covered around 145 farmers, 5 lac traders, concerned line departments and various active livelihood promoting agencies in the district. The highest no. of lac farmers (87) participated from Murhu block compared to Khunti and Torpa blocks.
- h) **The Capacity Enhancement Program (CEP)** is an important step initiated by the Social Initiatives for Growth and Networking (SIGN) to strengthen the Diocesan partners. The concept is based on the fact that the capacity building of the partner staffs and other selected members would strengthen them and in turn make them a strong resource team for implementing quality programs for the development of communities. The net-working of the partner societies and their efforts for people's development are made more effective when the staffs are motivated and capacitated and their systems are at place. SIGN is committed to the building of the partner society, its systems and staffs and other important stakeholders from the community engaged in development. SIGN has completed 52 workshops in all the dioceses on Governance, Livelihood, Health and Rights.
- i) **Training was organized at XLRI, Jamshedpur** on Managerial and Leadership Development for High Performance for all the Directors and Asst. Directors of Jharkhand and Bihar from December 07 – 10, 2010. The program was inaugurated by Most Rev. Charles Soreng S.J., the Bishop of Hazaribagh and present during the inauguration were Fr. Abraham, the Director of XLRI, Prof. M. G. Jomon and other faculties. Most Rev. Felix Toppo, the President of SIGN too spent quality time with the Directors.

Conclusion

SIGN is fully committed in its responsibility of facilitation and coordination of the diocesan social service societies. The various programs conducted in this year brought all the societies together and have been instrumental in capacitating their staffs and stakeholders.

Fr. S. Christu Das
Director-SIGN