From the Director's Desk....

International Women's Day is celebrated every year all over the world with lot of enthusiasm. Many political leaders and leaders of different nations speak about the contribution of women. They emphasise upon their participation in nation building and in the development of their society. When it comes to making them part of the government and governance they take a backseat. This is the reality we are living with.

Of course, there is no doubt about the importance of women in the society and the contribution they make in building a better and humane society. On the one hand we see women occupying important position in society, on the other hand we find lot crimes against women. At this juncture we need to ask ourselves a serious question - Why is this happening? When to some extent women are getting empowered in various fields and competing with men as equals and sometimes even better than men, the disparity has not changed. What we need here is not only political will and making policies and laws in favour of women, which we have already in place. What is needed is change of mindset both among men and women.

After taking part in the workshops conducted by Gender at Work on gender sensitivity and gender awareness, we tried out a small experiment in our Children Parliaments. We added Gender Minister in our parliaments, who would take up the issues of girl children in the parliament. This made a great impact in the way in which children, both boys and girls, take up issues of girl children and try to solve them. They discussed issues like why boys are sent to English medium schools and the girls only to Telugu medium schools, girl children dropping out of school when they come of age, child marriage of girls etc. This brought about lot of change in the ways in which boys treated the girls. Sometimes boys were elected as gender ministers. This was an eye opening experience for us. This makes us understand that what we need at all level is change of mindset.

We are striving in all our interventions and developmental activities to work towards a paradigm shift. We have a lot of committed staff and well wishers who support us to achieve this reality.

Fr. Thomas Santiagu sdb
Executive Director

Saluting our Women Staff

On the occasion of Women's Day being celebrated in March, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate all our women staff across the province of Hyderabad. We have over 100 women working - in the BSK implemented projects alone-to make our mission a success—be it their Street Presence that effectively coaxes children on the street to consider a better life, or the teachers who work with total commitment to ensure marginalized children don't drop out of school and perform well in class, or the women working to empower other women, realizing a dual purpose. We understand women fight various forms of gender biases and violence to eke out a living regardless of the pressures and at times violence from family and society.

One such case is of our teacher at one of the tuition centres in the urban slums of Hyderabad. She is a true fighter, who despite experiencing domestic violence, continues regardless to put up a brave front with a smiling disposition to teach the children from the slums in the evenings, after a day's work at a government school.

We are sure several other staff have similar experiences and daily struggles. We salute their courage and indomitable spirit.

Saluting our Women Staff

Kumari Helps her Family Business Grow

Kodamanchili Kumari belongs to P.Gannavaram, and joined Ramakrishna SHG of the Swayamkrushi MACS, on 12 October, 2011. In a span of four years, she has been instrumental in taking her family business of making bricks from a struggling enterprise to a flourishing one, even providing employment to others.

“I am a member of Bosco Swayamkrushi MACS. I have two children and wish to give them good education. My husband and I make mud bricks and sell them. We used to make a profit of ₹300 per day.

“When we got a loan of ₹10,000/- from MACS, we invested it in our business and now we are earning a profit of ₹500/- per day. We are regularly paying our instalments and also saving some amount. Now we have also employed two persons to work at our brick-making unit and business is doing well. We are thankful to Swayamkrushi MACS for giving us this opportunity to improve our life.”
The Aim of Courts of Women is Towards violence-free homes, a violence free society, and a violence-free world.

The History: The Courts of Women evolved with the involvement of AWHRC and El Taller International. Beginning in the 1992 in Pakistan, China, Japan, covered South East Asia, Africa, the Arab World, Latin America, the Pacific, and the US. Corinne Kumar of CIEDS/Vimochana is the dreamer of this Concept. She took it to the world with her team even to the extent of organizing The World Court of Women. It can be accessed in the web. The Courts of Women question the very foundations of the systems which are inherently violent. It is important to note at the outset that The Courts of Women is not a Forum for Justice. It is the vast silence that surrounds it, it is the silence that speaks. That silence is the huge Violence that surrounds women. We think violence against women is perfectly natural and normal in our Society. We think it is natural for a husband to beat his wife to subjugate her in myriad ways. We too accept and endorse the huge silence, the huge violence. Something somewhere, is terribly wrong. We have to start our search for new ways to justice, new concept of justice. We have to listen in new ways to their pain, see their struggles of courage with new eyes, struggle to resist violence and to survive. It is a sacred space that we bring to the centre of the Court of Women. The testifiers don’t have to prove their

Visitors from MANOS UNIDAS

Renewing our decade-long relationship with Manos Unidas, we hosted Ms. Carmen Pedraza, the Asian Desk in-charge at Manos Unidas and Ms. Ana Luna in charge of A.P. Telangana, and Orissa who came on a 5-day visit to the Salesian Province of Hyderabad. Fr. Thomas Santiago, Director of BSK took them on field visits to projects in the districts of Kadapa, Kurnool and Kollapur. They interacted with the staff, students, beneficiaries and Salesians implementing the respective programs on the field.

They discussed about the existing projects and were very appreciative of the committed work done being done by the Salesians in collaboration with the staff and other stake holders. They also studied the possibility of future cooperation and collaboration with Manos Unidas. The visit was from 23rd Feb 2015 to 27th Feb 2015. We thank them for the visit and look forward to a continued association.

The Courts of Women
Fr. P. Arul Das - Asst. Director and Mr. K. Satyanand - Sr. Program Manager, BSK, participated in the First National Seminar on Youth Development organized by the National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumbudur on 26-27 February, 2015. The seminar had over 200 delegates from across the country. Around 50 professionals from different areas were present in the plenary and parallel sessions.

They presented technical papers on the themes of Entrepreneurship and Education respectively. Fr. Arul Das presented the paper on Entrepreneurship focused on the ‘Significance of Transforming Youth as Entrepreneurs’ - young women entrepreneurs created by BSK’s Micro-credit initiative. The study revealed that the women needed continued mentoring and monitoring in order to achieve total self-sustainence in their chosen area of business/enterprise and the MACS as a whole.

Mr. K. Satyanand presented a paper on the reasons for girl children from marginalized, tribal populations not opting to go for higher education. The study revealed multiple issues that ail the socio-cultural and economic set up not only in these communities but in the so called ‘mainstream society’ with regard to acceptance of gender and social equity.

It was an excellent platform for sharing of experiences, learnings, initiatives and policies among youth workers and experts from across the country for the common goal of Youth Development.

BSK @ National Seminar on Youth Development

BSK is exploring possibilities of partnership with the Taj Group of Hotels, as part of their CSR activities. Ms. Zoha Karmali from Corporate Sustainability - Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces, visited the office and Trainees at Don Bosco HRD Centre at Bagilapuram had a special guest at their facility on Sunday, 15 February, 2015.

Ms. Karmali had a formal interaction with the Hospitality course trainees.

One of the students, Naresh shared, “We are learning discipline and punctuality here. The staff and center Incharge are showing love and affection to all students who are coming here. This makes us to stay freely and to learn more and more without any fear.”

Ms. Karmali asked the girls why they joined this program. One of the students Geetanjali said that she had heard that DBHRDC is a good center so she came. “My parents did not have any problem in sending me here because the centre is run by Don Bosco. After coming here I observed love and affection of the staff so I continued my training in DBHRDC.”

She advised them to make the most of the training at the centre itself and prepare themselves for the best and worst in the workplace. “A strong sense of time, hard work and discipline are very important characteristics in this field.” She congratulated all the students and wished them all the best.

Head of NSFDC Appreciates DBHRDC, Gagilapuram

National SC-ST Finance & Development Corporation team comprising of Mr. R. R. Singh Chairman & Managing Director and C Ramesh Rao Asst. General Manager visited Bosco Seva Kendra on 14 February, 2015 to explore possibilities of engagement.

NSFDC is the apex institution for financing, facilitating and mobilizing funds from other sources and promoting the economic development activities of the persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes living below double the poverty line.

Mr. Singh and Mr. Rao were taken on a field visit to the Human Resource Development Center at Gagilapuram. They interacted with the students where Mr. Singh shared briefly about how the NSFDC was setup by the Govt. of India on February 08, 1989 with the name National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC). It was incorporated as a fully owned Government Company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. It has been assigned the task for financing, facilitating and mobilizing funds for the economic empowerment of persons living below Double of the Poverty Line (DPL). It provides financial assistance for income generating schemes for the target group through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) which are nominated by respective State/UT Government.

The officials then had an informal interaction with the students.
A meeting of parents of the Don Bosco Navajeevan Tuition Centers was organized on 17th February, 2015 in Don Bosco, Ongole.

Parents representatives from the slums of Ongole were invited to the program by the Program Co-ordinator and tuition teachers. The parents of tuition children from ten slums of Ongole, namely 1) Balaram Colony 2) Papa Colony 3) Kesvarajkunta 4) Indira Colony 5) Joshuva Colony 6) Balaji ST Colony 7) Dattraya ST Colony 8) ST Yanadi Colony 9) Vijayanagara Vadera Colony and 10) Pragathi Colony gathered in Don Bosco at 10 AM. As the parents arrived the staff served them with refreshments.

The meeting began with the words of welcome by Fr. Joji. In his address to the parents Fr. Joji explained the motto of Don Bosco Navajeevan tuition centers to them. For the last two years DBNJ has been rendering service in the field of slum education, eradication of dropouts and child laborers in Ongole. As part of this, the parents were invited to be partners in this mission.

The common strength that became clear was the children's improved academic performance that was attributed to their daily home work at the tuition centre. A common weakness was lack of a conducive place for teaching. Many of the centres are being run in the open exposing children to mosquitoes.

The parents were exhorted not to take or send the children for work. If the children were sent to work instead of school, legal action would have to be taken in future.

The parents promised to support the tuition centers by sending the children regularly to the tuitions and decided to have regular meetings with the teachers and ensure mutual support.

The coordinator and teachers facilitated the day’s program which ended with a sharing of lunch.

Dhisha, the Career Guidance and Job Placement Cell of BSK went on a spree of job placements, and was instrumental in getting over 200 young people placed in reputed companies within one month.

On 2nd February, it organised a campus drive for Dr.Reddy’s Labs at Don Bosco School, Sanathnagar where close to 275 youth took part. After a round of written test 93 were selected.

In another event, Dhisha organised a Recruitment Drive at St. Theresa’s Church premises on 22nd Feb, 2015. The initiative brought together close to 650 job-seekers and 19 companies seeking suitable candidates. Separate stalls were allotted to different companies to enable one-to-one interviews and group discussions as per their requirements. At the end of the day that lasted six hours from 10 AM to 4 PM, 110 candidates were selected.

School going students - Moggas, Ankita of Don Bosco Navajeevan Bala Bhavan Vijayawada went on their annual picnic to ‘Haailand’ Theme Park, Chinna Kakani, Guntur District on 21st February 2015.