

*Editorial Note...***Turning Obstacles into Opportunities**

The COVID-19 pandemic which has the year of outbreak in its title itself, is apparently haunting the year 2020 like a ghost from the past. It has certainly added its own sizeable share to the already existing miseries of mankind. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor once said, "The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way." Indeed, to force one's nerve and sinew to turn obstacles into opportunities and adversities into advantages is no ordinary feat.

As Coronavirus began to spread all across the globe, nearly three billion people lived in lockdowns. While most people drew back into their own cocoons, to the safety and comfort of their own homes, the poor and the marginalized had to wage the battle of their lives for mere survival. Thousands of people who had left villages and reached metropolitan cities in search of jobs decided to walk back hundreds of miles to their native places. The plight of those who decided to stay back were not pleasant either.

On the other side, even in the encircling gloom, goodness and humanity began to shine brighter than ever. The Corona Warriors- Doctors, health professionals, police personnel and people afire with social consciousness rendered selfless service to humanity round-the-clock. E-Street Voice salutes every superhero that reached out to the needy placing their own very lives on the line!

*Fr. Prasad SDB***International Women's Day Celebration**

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme, BOSCO Bengaluru, and BOSCO Nivas, organized International Women's Day for the mothers

of Anganwadi children, AWC workers, community members, SHG members, and mothers of tuition children at Ambedkar Bhavan, JJR Nagar, Bengaluru, and the mothers of tuition children and community members at Navbaharsha School, Mackan Compound, Shivajinagar, on March 7, 2020. The celebration was organized to enlighten the mothers on Early Childhood Care and Education, the role of women in child care and protection, and women empowerment.

Fr. Regi Jacob, Director, ECCE Programme, in his introductory address said, "Society begins at Home. Women lay the foundation by educating children who are our future generations."

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Fire Safety Training



Rainbow Home, BOSCO Bengaluru, organized a training on Fire Safety to raise awareness of fire hazards in schools, hostels, workplaces, and

how to act safely in the event of an emergency fire situation, including selecting and using the correct fire extinguisher for the children of the center, on March 8, 2020. Mr. PM Nagesh, District Fire Officer, Jayanagar, Bengaluru, explained in detail about the causes of fire, types of fire extinguishers like Dry Chemical, Electrical Equipment, Ordinary Combustibles, Flammable Liquids, and A, B and C – the most common types of fire extinguishers in a school or hostel. He also explained about fire safety tips and first aid during injuries caused by fire.

Mr. Anand, team member and Mr. Mangesh, driver, were also present during the training. Fifty-nine girls, six staff of BOSCO Rainbow Home and two staff of Sneha Ghar Rainbow Home attended the training.

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International Women's Day

Ms. Meenakshi Kabadi, CDPO, Bengaluru Central Division, emphasized on ECCE and motivated mothers to teach gender equality. Ms. Sulochana, PSI, JJR Nagar, asked women to set high goals and work towards achieving them. Ms. Surekha, AWC Supervisor, ICDS, motivated the mothers to bring up girl children on par with boys. Ms. Geetha, Project Coordinator, Sadhana Mahila Sangha, shared relevant incidents emphasizing the importance of teaching safety measures to girl children. Mothers were guided to inculcate values in children. Mr. Keshav, Social Worker, Ward 137, Rayapuram, appreciated the team for organizing such programmes and assured BOSCO of his support. Fr. Mathew Thomas, Executive Director, BOSCO Bengaluru, explained about the importance of the roles of stakeholders in child protection and promotion of child rights.

The guest of honour, Dr. Noor Fatima, DDPI, Education Coordinator, North III Range, shared about her tales of struggles and successes. Fr. Stephen Lawrence SDB, Member, CWC, Bidar, said that it was



time to uphold women's achievements, recognize challenges and focus greater attention on women's rights and gender equality.

A mime show was presented by the children from Mackan Compound, depicting the atrocities faced by women, and the evil of infant foeticide. Party games were organized by Fr. Regi, Ms. Varalakshmi, Ms. Shalini and Mr. Waseem, for the participants. Ms. Shashikala, Ms. Seema and Ms. Pushpa, AWC Supervisors, ICDS, and Fr. Stephen Lawrence SDB, Member, CWC, Bidar, were present on the occasion. Around two hundred mothers participated in the celebration.

Foster Care Training Programme



Foster Care Programme, BOSCO Bengaluru, conducted training programmes for the staff of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Bengaluru, on March 3 and 10, 2020. The purpose of the training was to create awareness about foster care and to identify potential children in need of foster care and eligible foster parents. Mr. Shivamallu, Coordinator, Foster Care Programme, BOSCO Bengaluru, started the session with

the introduction of BOSCO, its activities, centers, CHILDLINE toll free number 1098, child rights, etc. Ms. Nandini, Asst. Coordinator, Foster Care Programme, BOSCO Bengaluru, spoke about the foster care concept, types of foster care, eligibility criteria of children and parents, procedures involved in fostering a child, awareness and strategies used for foster care, roles and responsibilities of parents and children, time frame for placements, legal procedures involved in becoming foster parents, follow-up of children placed in foster care and follow up with Child Welfare Committee (CWC). Foster Care Promo Video was screened during the training.

Dr. Naveda Khatoun, Assistant Director, NIPCCD, was present during the training. Veena B, Project Coordinator, NIPCCD, welcomed the gathering and proposed the vote of thanks. Eighty-two staff of the CCIs of different states attended the training programmes.

Stree Suraksha Chakra Award

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Bengaluru City Police East Division, organized "The Ring of Women Safety" at Lido mall, MG Road, Bengaluru, on March 8, 2020. Ms. Vinnarasi, Cluster Coordinator, ECCE Programme, BOSCO Bengaluru, was given the 'Stree Suraksha Chakra' Award for her service in the field of Child Rescue and Rehabilitation. She was felicitated for safeguarding the rights of children. Other awardees included a Zomato Delivery Girl, a Police Constable, a Kabaddi Player in Asian Games, the C.E.O of Goodwork Labs, a BMTC Bus Driver, the first Transgender RJ, the first International Yoga Champion, a Cancer Survivor and Paper Napkin Business Entrepreneur, a Traffic warden, a Body Builder, a girl who scored 91.87% in degree examination from BBMP Degree College, a Safai Karmachari, and a Martial Arts and Self-defence Champion. These are the women who have brought about a change in vari-



ous people's lives by beating all odds.

Dr. Tessa Thomas, DS and DG (AERO), DRDO, Dr. Jija M. Harisingh IPS, Director General of Police (Rtd), Mr. Jagadish Hiremani, Member, National Safai Karmachari Commission, Mr. Jaggesh, Kannada Film Actor, Mr. Bhaskar Rao IPS, Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru City, and Mr. S. Murugan IPS, Additional Commissioner of Police, East Zone, Bengaluru city, were present on the occasion.

Training on Ecology

BOSCO Nilaya organized a training programme on Ecology for its staff at the center, on March 14, 2020. Welcoming the resource persons and the staff, Fr. Regi Jacob, Director, BOSCO Nilaya, briefed everyone about BOSCO and its activities. Mr. Ramesh, Netsurf Communications, Pvt. Ltd., substantiated the need for saving mother earth through giving vital statistics of the effects of deforestation, faulty practices, etc.

He explained the need for organic farming and planting more and more trees. He elucidated the extinction of animals and deforestation and how it has affected global warming, farming and ground water levels. He stressed on the importance of educating children about conserving the planet and teaching them to



plant trees, maintain gardens and greenery in their vicinity.

Ms. Shivaleela, Netsurf Communications, Pvt Ltd., demonstrated the use of the Netsurf App and urged everyone to use organic products. Eleven staff and students participated in the training.

Health Camps and Awareness Programmes



BOSCO Health Care Department organized COVID -19 Awareness programmes for the children and youth at BOSCO Rainbow Home, Vatsalya Bhavan, Mane, Vikas, Sumanahalli, Yuvakendra and Yuvodaya from March to May 2020 at the respective centres. The awareness was given by Dr. Abraham and team, St. Martha's Hospital, Bengaluru. Dr. Abraham, explained in detail about COVID -19, its symptoms, causes and prevention through a power point presentation. He stressed on the need to maintain personal hygiene, washing of hands, use of hand sanitizers, maintaining of social distance, etc. Hundred and fifty eight children and youth from the centres attended the awareness programmes.

Health camps for the children and youth from BOSCO Vatsalya Bhavan, Mane, Vikas, Sumanahalli, Yuvakendra, Yuvodaya, and Rainbow Home at the respective centres from May 22 to 30, 2020. The camps offered services like eye check-up, dental check-up, skin, thyroid, and general health check-up. Health issues of children like tonsils, cough, congestion, mouth ulcers, neck nodes, obesity, lice problem and other related problems were also attended to by the doctor.

Dr Abraham and team, St. Martha's Hospital, Bengaluru conducted the camp. Hundred and fifty nine children and youth availed the services.



Reach Outs During Lockdown



Distribution of Food Kits



The communities in the city of Bengaluru where BOSCO is working are economically poor. Most of the community members are daily wagers, rag pickers and others who do odd jobs to earn a livelihood. They find it difficult to manage their family with their income even during ordinary days. As the lockdown due to COVID-19 was in force, most of them lost their jobs and income.

In order to support the needy, BOSCO Bengaluru with the support of Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) organised distribution of three thousand Food Kits in five communities namely Bhangi Colony, Anandhapuram, Bakshi Garden, Mackan Compound, and Magadi Road from April 27, 2020 to May 2, 2020. Communities in KR Market and Shivajinagar areas were identified as most deserving for supporting through our previous experience of working with vulnerable children from these communities.

Adhering to the precautionary measures for COVID -19 and getting prior permissions from the concerned Police Stations, door to door distribution of food kits were made. During the distribution, area leaders took initiative in organizing the programmes. Community youth and elders supported in carrying and orderly distributing the food kits and also helped in maintaining discipline. Some volunteers too joined the staff. Community members were thankful for the support rendered at a difficult time in their lives. Efforts of BOSCO in taking initiatives even during lockdown to help the needy was appreciated by community members, area leaders, Police, BBMP Officials and other Government Officials. They were happy to receive good quality materials. Three thousand families with 18,006 members in five slum communities benefited from the distribution of provision kits. Fr.Regis Jacob, Director, BOSCO Nilaya and Nivas, five Nilaya staff, one Nivas staff and four volunteers carried out the distribution.



Reach Outs During Lockdown



BOSCO Nilaya and Nivas identified eighteen communities in KR Market and Shivajinagar areas as most deserving for supply of food kits. During April 2020, with the support of BREADS, Bengaluru and Zomato, BOSCO distributed food kits to 3,045 families covering 14,652 members.

Under the guidance of Fr. John, Director, BOSCO Mane, food kits were given to thirty-five families of the children residing in Vikas during April 2020. A team from **BOSCO Mane**, Fr. John, Director,

BOSCO Mane and Sr. Silvy, Director, BOSCO Yuvakendra reached out to a Migrants' camp in St. Philomena Pasrish, Magadi Road and distributed one set of clothes to nearly hundred migrants from North Karnataka and North India during April 2020. During May 2020, the team reached out to eighty migrants taking refuge at St. Joseph's School and hundred and sixty migrants - both men and women, at the same locality by distributing clothes, shoes, both indoor and outdoor games articles.

During the lock down period, Railway CHILDLINE staff contacted the children who were rescued and restored back to their families to understand their situation during the lock down period. During the interaction on May 1 and 8, 2020, the team distributed food kits to eight families. Fr. Varghese Pallipuram, Director, Railway CHILDLINE together with BOSCO Yuvodaya staff visited all the families and distributed the food grains and medicines. Food kits were distributed to around six hundred migrants living near Lingarajpuram, Bengaluru East during May 2020.

Distribution of Hygiene and Sanitary Kits

CHILDLINE Collab, BOSCO, Bengaluru team conducted a survey among the migrant labourers at Raghuvanahalli, Channasandra-1, Channasandra-2, Channasandra-3, Tande Periyar Nagar, Cow beggars Colony, Byrappa Layout 1, Byrappa Layout 2, Byrappa Layout 3, Jawaregowda Doddi, Mallathalli, Shivanpalya 1, Shivanpalya 2 and Devaraj Urs Slum on April 21 and 24, 2020.

The migrant families from North Karnataka/Tamilnadu/Andhra Pradesh who are stranded in these areas were identified during the survey. After the lock down was announced, they were lacking necessities of life. They acknowledged that they were getting two meals per day from the BBMP and some provision kits once a while. But these were not sufficient for

them to carry on their normal life.

Based on the request of the residents, the team decided to provide hygiene and sanitary kits. A single hygiene kit contained two washing soaps, two bathing soaps, one bottle of oil and shampoo sachets. A Sanitary kit contained two packets of sanitary napkins.

Two hundred and sixty-six hygiene kits and 158 sanitary kits were provided considering the number of beneficiaries in the families. In addition to these, the team provided provision kits to twenty migrant families and rag picking families at Kadabagere, Dasanpur and Machohalli, Bengaluru.



Activities at CCl's During Lockdown



dance, singing, rangoli, drama about covid-19, couple dance, story composing, fancy dress, clay modeling, mehandi, art & craft, cooking, hair style, clay modeling, drawing, action song, fancy dress, story writing etc. were conducted.

Art and craft classes included quelling, drawing, painting, mask making, greetings card, artificial flowers making, paper bags, pen stand, flower bouquet, ear rings, necklace, leg chains, bangles, paper craft, door mats, woolen wall hangings, clay modeling, basic stitching, and knitting. Awareness programme on COVID – 19 and preventive measures, was held on every Monday.

BOSCO Rainbow Home organized summer camp from April 1 to April 30, 2020, at the centre. Basics of Kannada, English, and Hindi were taught by identifying letters through reading and writing. Spoken English class was conducted for 6th to 10th std children. Every day online classes were organized for 5th to 7th std children by Agastya International Foundation. To enhance team spirit, competitions in skit, group

Life skill sessions on team work, leadership, punctuality, and personal hygiene were conducted. Value education was taught through motivational videos, stories and documentary films. Sr. Leena, Home Management Coordinator, Sr. Suganya, Home Manager, Ms. Shruthi, Documentation In-charge and Ms. Suma, House Mother were the resource persons. Fifty-two children were a part of these activities.

BOSCO Yuvakendra, continued with the routine activities in the centre, and ensured that safety of children during the lockdown period. Project work was assigned to the children based on the theme “PREVENTION IS BETTER THEN CURE”. General medical camp and awareness was conducted by Dr. Abhram and team from St. Martha’s Hospital, at the centre on May 28, 2020. Every day, children were engaged in spoken English classes for an hour or two. Fr. CV George, Director, SJPU and ARSP programmes, BOSCO Bengaluru and Br. Pavan took initiative and helped children in overcoming the fear of speaking English.



There were online life skill classes from May 18 to 23, 2020 by Ms. Pooja, and Mr. Nagaraj, on the topics - happiness, overcoming fear and anxiety, importance of education and Coping up with emotions. Thirteen youth participated in the activities.

Activities at CCIs During Lockdown

BOSCO Vatsalya Bhavan

The inmates of **BOSCO Vatsalya Bhavan** were given opportunities to learn new things in order to increase their knowledge about the world and surroundings through various activities like- Study of Continents and Countries (Flags, Currency, various cultures and customs, interesting facts about the countries, important crops, Rivers, Parks), General Knowledge (Biology, Geography, History, Computer fundamentals, famous personalities of India, seven Wonders of the World and Miscellaneous), Study of various Awards (National / International), Sports Events, types of sports and sports personalities, In-depth knowledge about human rights, the importance of first aid; natural home remedies; study of medicinal herbs; ill effects of drugs, junk food, excess use of cosmetics; benefits of Yoga and Games, knowing Cancer and Tuberculosis (causes, symptoms, prevention, medication), awareness on general and Menstrual hygiene, nutritional value of fruits and vegetables (vitamins, proteins, sugar, calories, minerals), good food habits like sufficient water intake, maintaining good hemoglobin levels, including balanced diet, etc.



Sessions on Phobias and managing them, best out of waste (Making door mats), drawing and painting, quiz competition, cooking experience, awareness dance on COVID-19 organized by BREADS, ethnic days and health check-up cum awareness on COVID-19 by Dr. Abraham and his team from St. Martha's Hospital, Bengaluru, were organized. Thirty-three girls participated in these activities.

Along with the regular activities of the centre, **BOSCO Sumanahalli** in coordination with the BOSCO Health Care Department organized an awareness programme on COVID-19 and general health camp for the inmates of the centre on May 25, 2020. The programme was conducted by St. Martha's Hospital team headed by Dr. Abraham.

Youth gained information about how Corona virus spreads, prevention methods, maintaining personal hygiene and social distance, covering mouth and nose with a mask and washing hands frequently to stay away from the infection. Eighteen youth availed the services of the health camp.

Apart from the routine activities **BOSCO Mane** and **BOSCO Vikas** conducted regular health awareness programmes for the children during the lockdown period. Medical students from Victoria Hospital, Bengaluru gave awareness on maintaining personal health and hygiene and its importance.

Dr. Abraham and team, St. Martha's Hospital, Bengaluru, explained about COVID-19 through a power point presentation. Through demonstrations he showed the use of mask and hand sanitizer. He stressed on the importance of maintaining social distance and washing hands frequently to avoid the infection. Twenty-five boys benefitted from these awareness programmes.

In Conversation With a Winner!



BOSCO Bengaluru organized the national level annual essay competition for college students, spanning from October to December 2019. Around 150 colleges/universities from across India were given information regarding the competition. Students from the Under-graduate, Graduate and Postgraduate levels of different disciplines like Management, Social Work, Sociology, Mass Media, Economics, Engineering, Law, Commerce, Psychology and Life Sciences, participated in the competition.

Diksha Garg emerged as the first prize winner of the essay competition. She is a 3rd year student of LLB at St. Joseph's College of Law, Bengaluru. Diksha shares her thoughts and perspectives in an exclusive interview with Sheena John.



Q: What was the topic of your essay?

A: The topic chosen was, 'Scope of alternative care for children without families.' Actually, the initial thought for the essay came from the time I spent in BOSCO as an intern. While being in the organization, I had the opportunity to interact with children and students who were abandoned or neglected by their parents.

Q: How would you articulate the situation of vulnerable children in the current scenario?

A: We see a lot of child slavery, beggary and exploitation of children on the streets, but there are only few hands working towards solutions.

Q: About catering to the children in need of care and protection?

A: Well, there are shelter homes run by governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, foster care is a preferable, alternative form of care where children can receive love, attention and family-based care.

Q: About your penning the prize-winning essay?

A: The primary data and inspiration came from my experience in BOSCO as an intern. In addition to that I have referred literature reviews and studies on the subject from India and abroad.

Q: The role of law?

A: As a student of law, I firmly believe that vulnerable children need the protection of law more than anyone else. They are subjected to various forms exploitation and suffering.

Q: So, what's the takeaway?

A: Now I have a better understanding of the plight of vulnerable children. Most importantly, I have a different paradigm.