



LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE INDIA TRUST

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LWSIT

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NEWS IN BRIEF

- Dr. Kunchala Rajaratnam, leader of millions of Lutherans in India and an outstanding Economist, expired in Chennai on 7th April, 2010. The LWSIT observed two minutes silence during Board Meeting held on 9th April, 2010 paying tribute to his life and work. 'May his soul Rest in Peace'.
- Ms. Rebecca Young and Mr. Henry Pirade from Presbyterian Development Assistance (PDA) based at Jakarta, visited Tsunami hit areas and made an observation. PDA, a new partner, sanctioned over USD 1, 000,000 for the project.
- Ms. Ulrika Bohman and Mr. Leif Gustavsson from Church of Sweden visited the STEER Rural Project in Bankura and the Stone Quarry workers rehabilitation Project in Birbhum and Kolkata Urban Project. They were impressed with the work done by LWSIT.
- Mr. Mani Kumar, Regional Programme Officer-Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Dan Church Aid visited Puri and Ganjam field units. LWSIT planned for the DRR work with DCA.
- The ECHO representative Mr. Talha Jamal, Mr. David Boyes Regional Humanitarian officer of DCA visited relief and recovery projects of the Cyclone, AILA hit areas.
- The Executive Director visited the European and USA Donors. June and July 2010 to strengthen LWSIT's relationship with traditional partners and to seek new opportunities.
- Ms. Anjana Biswas attended the ACT Alliance Gender Working Group Meeting held at Geneva.
- The World Health Day was celebrated on 7th April on the theme "Urbanization A Challenge to Public health". Programs were conducted in STEER-Urban Project unit Bhubaneswar, in close cooperation with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).
- Mr. B N Biswal of STEER Rural Puri was part of the evaluation team of UELCI "Dalit Awareness and Liberation" project from 19 to 25 June 2010. The evaluation was conducted in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.
- A tropical storm hit the eastern Bihar killing 120 people and left many homeless. LWSIT relief materials including food distribution and rehabilitation works were initiated to assist 5200 families through ACT Appeal.

The LWSIT Phenomenon

An appropriate subtitle for my message might be "What is the thing called LWSIT?" Why are all these people saying so many wonderful and terrible things about it? But all that would not fit very well on dust jacket. So I am content with the more sedate version: "The LWSIT phenomenon" No doubt that the organisation in the past had been engaged by the fascinating experience in contemporary Indian life, called protecting the cause of the oppressed, which is nothing more than expression of love in action to the oppressed, has become one of the most widely discussed and hotly debated topics of the 1990- 2000s.

In a few years what Dr. Hodne a Norwegian Missionary to India started in 1974 as a relief operation, evolved as one of conversation starters all over India- not to mention Geneva, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, USA, Japan and all the rest.

LWSIT is a big story because it touches oppressed people's lives in many ways which the dollars alone cannot do. Even MacDonald's with all those golden arches and television ingles and forty million Big Mac has not touched people's lives in the west the way LWSIT does in India. When you talk LWSIT, you are talking millions of people. You are talking about a story of poor Indian life that had been shaped and transformed. This is the story of an organisation that stands in a big way with the oppressed and sings and holds hand and sometimes cries. The story that goes on.

LWSIT is many different things to different people. Remember the old fable of the four blind men of Hindustan? They each had personal hands-on contact with an elephant and each attempted to describe the elephant to others. One had felt the elephant's tail, another leg, another trunk and another side. So they argued bitterly about the nature of this thing called 'elephant' each with the dogmatic stubbornness of a man who knows he is right. I presume when people talk about LWSIT, nothing is more important than to know which piece of LWSIT that the person has experienced. What one believes about it is a result of what part of it he has seen. It is common to meet people who have fixed opinions about LWSIT which are entirely product of single circumstance. The

oppressed understand LWSIT better than any one.

Not being in LWSIT family for long, there are certain limits to my information on the subject, but not many. In all the watching and listening I could hardly fail to develop my own point of view. I have been for the past several years something of a professional. I have pulled the elephant's trunk, leaned against his side, yanked the tail, shinnied against his side and even sat on his back a time or two. I think I know the nature of the beast. This is the perspective with which I write. I have not kissed my brains good bye and have not stopped watching the LWSIT phenomenon with a critic eye.

When you want to understand LWSIT, you begin by looking at the people. LWSIT is the embodiment of few individuals, Dr. Hodne, LWF/DWS, funding partners, beneficiaries and the rest. They still call the shots, keepers of the flame and folk heroes in the largest and best sense of phrase. Both donors and beneficiaries are our partners. LWSIT's relationship to them virtually defines the word "partners".

Promises to keep

To Dr. Hodne LWSIT is just not an organisation. It is a cause; commitment and celebration are rolled into one. LWSIT is one of those organisations about which everyone seems to know a little, but very few people know a lot. One might argue that the past era of the organisation sounds like grand sentiments and how the present localised set up is going to take it to even greater level? But an exchange of "love in action for the oppressed" is the glue that has always held the LWSIT phenomenon together and the amount of unusual influence it has in the lives of its people. Something cannot be charted on a graph with colours, but they are real nonetheless. Love for the marginalised is one of those things. We shall continue to take this message across with even more emphasis. LWSIT has promises to keep and miles to go. We shall stay right and advance the cause. LWSIT is not just a way of making an organisation. It is a cause to serve the oppressed with love, dedication, grit and determination.

Dr. Vijayakumar James
Executive Director - LWSIT



**LWSIT National Staff
at the Retreat**



**Physical exercise
in the morning
was part of the daily
routine
in the retreat**



RDRS Team

Staff Retreat

Staff Retreat on the topic "Introspection" was conducted. All LWSIT National Office staff as well a few invitees from the unit offices attended. It was held at the Regional Resource Training Center (RRTC), Umran, Meghalaya from 4 to 8 June, 2010.

Those four days were packed with sessions on various topics, followed by games, outings and entertainment.

It was a time to recall and reflect on the 36 years of legacy that had been built with the efforts and sacrifices of innumerable staff and caring donors. As LWSIT continued working towards completing 40 years in the development field. It analyzed how close it had come to fulfilling the objectives, vision and mission of the

organization.

The sessions were conducted by the Executive Director and Staff of LWSIT. There were sessions on The Core Values and New Vision of LWSIT, Changes and Adaptability and Professional Attitude. The Past, Present and Future of LWSIT were also part of the discussions.

Apart from the regular sessions the day began with exercise led by Polly to refresh the body and mind. During the cultural program many exhibited their talents such as singing, acting and playing music. A skit was also enacted by the support staff members.

The four days session ended with the valedictory function. The three core convergence points arrived:

1. Focus on Change for Accomplishment

- Change begins with me.
- Adopt radical, integrated approach in community building.

2. Build Communities of Hope

- Provide lasting solutions.
- Leave behind good legacy.

3. Enhance Quality of Life

- Ensure quality models.
- Provide life transforming methodologies.

Similar staff retreats were organized in Tamil Nadu and Kalahandi units.

Cross Learning - LWSIT and RDRS

A team of 11 members from RDRS, Bangladesh visited 10 communities in South 24 Parganas as part of their exposure cum cross border learning on Rights Based Approach on 26 and 27 May 2010. The meetings were convened with the working committee members at the grass root (Panchayat) level, SHG and CBO members. The participants visited several communities.

They observed the transformation taken place due to the efforts of LWSIT's work. The proactive participation of women in the community development is remarkable. The SHGs and CBOs shared their experiences, struggle to get justice, and strategies used to build a good relationship with the office bearers. They shared all the facilities they gained through the Government

policies. The socio-economic development that took place in their families and community is noteworthy, they admitted.

The RDRS team exchanged ideas with different kinds of working experiences.

Inauguration time at Tamil Nadu and Cuttack



Inauguration of the Multi-purpose Center

Tamil Nadu

A Multipurpose Community Centre was inaugurated in Thaikaltheru Village, Cuddalore on 7 April, 2010. The center was constructed by LWSIT under IND093/ACT supported Tsunami follow up project. Dr. Augustine, Jeyakumar,

President, Board of Trustees of LWSIT inaugurated the building and dedicated the center to the village panchayat and people. Rev. Bishop Basumatary, Board member and Dr. Vijaykumar James, the Executive Director, also took part in the program. This center was built keeping in mind the catastrophe and devastation encountered by Dalits during the natural calamity and disasters every year. This center would provide safe shelter during the floods. It can also be used for other community activities.

Cuttack

It was time to inaugurate Anganwadi (crèches) center at Immampada in Cuttack. After a long struggle the women from 'Trishakti Mahila Samity' convinced the Municipal Corporator and the local MLA, to start an Anganwadi Center in their area. Their



Anganwadi Center

efforts and pursuit were rewarded. The center enrolled children below six years old for nutrition nourishment and basic learning. There is smile across the faces of every one now.

"We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly"
Aristotle

Staff Capacity Building

During this quarter, staff from different units attended 3 major training programs. Ms. Pratima Sau attended the AZEECON EETV on Combating Food Insecurity: Reaffirm our Commitments and Actions held in Nepal from 5 to 8 April, 2010. The workshop was conducted by LWF Nepal. It included participants from India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Nepal. The main objectives were to develop a common understanding on right to food in the Human Rights Perspective and to understand the operation of RBA in food security.

25 persons from different Units

attended a training on Disaster Risk Response from 20 to 22 May, 2010 at XIMB, Bhubaneshwar. It aimed to enhance the capacity of the staff working in the field of disaster preparedness and emergency operation and how they could build sustained DRR measures at the community levels, with the use of various tools and techniques.

Ms. Sangita Adhikari and Mr. LK Pathy attended the AZEECON EETV Training on Climate Change. The presentations were on Analysis of the different Conventions and Protocols on Climate Change that took Place in the UN, Carbon

Emission and the Milankovitch Cycle. It also deliberated on the role of RDRS interventions in terms of food security in times of Climate change. A field assessment trip was arranged, based on which each group would make a presentation.

All members were greatly benefitted by attending those training programs. They will continually use the knowledge gained at their respective field works.

Bridge course—JELA



Children attending class

The JELA project began in the year 2010. A Bridge Course Center was started for drop out children and the aim was to enroll all the children with formal schools.

Three such centers have been set up in Muraripukur, Udayanpalli and Mahisbathan. A total of sixty children have been enrolled in these centers.

Regular classes were held, five days in a week. Apart from studies the children also motivated and encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities. They were given snacks during the breaks.

A general and dental health check up were provided to the children.



Health Check Up



**NGO STANDING COMMITTEE-
UNHCR
CONSULTATION**
Held At Geneva - June, 2010
LWF and LWSIT participated.

Good Work Invites Visitors



Latrine Construction

Another team consisting of the District Executive Engineer, Project Officer - DWSM, Kalahandi, Asst. Engineer- Dharmagarh and J.E. Golamunda visited project in Kalahandi. They saw the latrine construction work in Mukundpur village and watershed program at Gandamer village. They were highly delighted about the committed work of LWSIT.

The State Technical Advisor cum Coordinator, Water and Sanitation Mission BBSR, visited the adopted villages at Kalahandi. The team visited the latrine construction site and mason training program held at Mukundapur and Pujiguda Villages.

Another team consisting of the District Executive Engineer,

“We can do no great things. We can only do small things with great love.”
~Mother Teresa~

Electrification for Khirapur

“What the male folk of the village could not achieve in 5 years, we could do it” - Ms. Subdhra Bag, president of Maa Mahalaxmi, SHG.



SHG Members in front of an electric pole

Khirapur is 22 kms away from the block head quarter, Ullunda. The village consisted of 22 households with total population 110. This village did not have electricity facilities.

The village leaders and other male folk approached the concerned department and different Government officials including the local MLA for electrification of the village. They all ran from pillar to post during the period 2004 to 2009, but ended up with no result. LWSIT formed a woman SHG named Maa Mahalakshmi with 11 members.

They were capacitated and empowered through the many awareness camps and trainings. Those women took the issue upon themselves to get electricity to their village.

The members decided to meet the District Collector directly and demanded their right for village electrification.

Seeing their efforts two members from a men SHG, formed by LWSIT, agreed to help them in the endeavour. They met the District Collector on 10 January 2010 and stated their plight. He promised to help them. After three months the staff from the department of electricity came and started the work.

Now the village has electricity. Ms. Subdhra Bag, president of Maa Mahalaxmi SHG said that “What the male folk of the village could not achieve in 5 years, the women could do it”.