

CNI SBSS... Appointed over Nations

“The sharing from the members of Manav Haque Sangharsh Samiti (MHSS) completely changed my perception and thinking about social work. I used to think of ways and make plans about helping the communities. But I realised that it is not how we implement our plans on them but how can we accompany and support them in their plans that makes our involvement more effective”. Said Sadhna Halder SBSS Board member from Kolkata, after hearing Deepak and Chintamani’s sharing about their work and struggles with MHSS.



The CNI SBSS board members, staffs from headquarters, four resource centres and DBSS along with People’s representatives from the community took time out to be with each other at Goa from November 5-9. Taking heed to Bishop P K Samantaroy’s (Chairman of CNI SBSS) invitation to discover the positive things about each other, being generous, open and available the participants broke barriers and built bridges.

The sharing and insight by Rev Mani Chacko was the most appropriate beginning to the retreat. It helped in the journey for the next few days. He helped the participants in getting a holistic understanding of the theme: *“...I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”* Jeremiah 1:10. He explained the importance of taking the message from the Bible in totality and not in isolation. He stressed that we should not abuse and misinterpret the Bible. He shared how Jesus was not just the speaker but also doer and in doing we speak but in speaking we do not do. The quote from Bishop V S Azariah’s speech in World Missionary Conference 1910, where he asks for Love and Friends is an important message along with the call to climb down the mountain tops and create room for others.



In the journey from the word of God to God’s people, Deepak, Chintamani, Jamuna and Kalyani from *Manav Haque Sangharsh Samiti* (MHSS) a People’s Organisation from Nagpur shared about their work and struggles. It gave an insight on how one decision can make a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of people. Despite no support from CNI SBSS for a period of time, they sustained their struggle. They are the real

heroes and the power to make changes lies within them (the people), we just give our accompaniment. Their experience gave us an insight in our work related to People's Organisations. It is not the community that suffers in our absence but it is our loss if we do not engage with them. Their grit and determination to continue their work was an inspiration for all. Their love, affection and emotions expressed the value that they attach to our mere acknowledgement. It was sad when Deepak shared that "*Gunah koi karta hai aur uski bharpai koi karta hai*" (someone else commits the crime and others have to pay for it).



All the participants were invited to witness the CNI SBSS Board and Business meeting, putting into practice its strong belief in transparency and accountability. The Board intends to continue this practice. In the meeting it was announced that Dr. Shailendra Awale would continue to accompany CNI SBSS in the capacity of Chief Coordinator and Chief Secretary for the next tenure.

The staff meeting and interaction after the departure of the Board members was a golden opportunity to communicate face to face with the colleagues. The participants were given space to share their experiences and concerns with each other. There was free flow of thoughts and opinions. All the concerns were discussed and addressed to with possible ways of rectifying the short comings. The interaction and stock taking with the Chief Coordinator, Group Facilitators, Resource Centre Staffs and DBSS Staffs reinforced the value CNI SBSS attaches to Accountability. The continued response and communication after the Goa meet demonstrates the sense of responsibility among the participants to address the issues that emerged during the interactions there. It reflects the journey from interaction to intervention.



The presentation by the new promising staff was good and their sharing exhibited their passion towards the work of CNI SBSS. It was a good opportunity for each one to reflect back at the

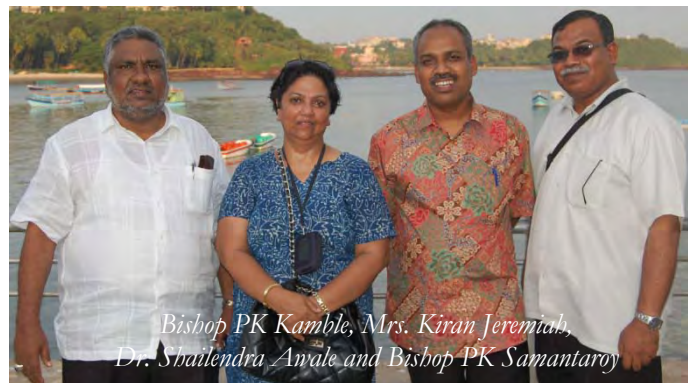
purpose with which they began their journey at CNI SBSS. It helped to understand how to synchronise ones responsibilities in the organisation with their purpose in life.



The guests from MHSS were thanked and felicitated for their contribution in enriching our knowledge about the People's Organisation on the final day. Three staffs Mervin, Sudeep and Elizabeth were also felicitated for their good work and contribution to the organisation.

The sightseeing and excursions took the pressure off the participants and renewed their enthusiasm and energy to participate in the staff meetings and discussions that followed. The visit to the Aguada beach to see the ecological catastrophe of disappearing beaches reminded us of the lurking danger of Climate change.

Finally, it was a wonderful experience; more like a family get together with bitter sweet experiences. The need to continuously be in link with the communities and not work from the office emerged strongly. It is not the community that suffers in our absence but it is our loss if we do not engage with them. At the same time we have to



look at the larger picture and not restrict to a problem solving approach. A learning process for all, it did break walls and bridged gaps. Participants developed a comfort level to communicate with one and all. It helped each one to know and understand individuals beyond their names and designation.

