

Buonanotte dell'Ispettore INM
“Salesian Province of Chennai”
18th March 2014

The glorious province of Chennai (INM) comprises of the northern part of Tamil Nadu covering six dioceses and ten civil districts, the union territory of Pondicherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Fujairah (in the UAE).

Numerically, the province of Chennai is now the largest Salesian Province in India, having **372** members of whom **235** are Priests, **118** are Scholastics, **19** are Brothers, (**19** are Novices and **3** are Bishops, namely: Archbishop Chinnappa Malayappan, Bishop Joseph Antony and Bishop Soundararaju Periyannayagam working in nearly **52** institutions.)

No doubt, the province has been blessed with a good number of vocations, and a number of pre-novices, novices and students of theology are in the process of discernment and formation. The Missionary Aspirantate started recently caters to missionary vocations.

True to the charism and spirit of our founder Don Bosco, the province is attentive to the signs of the times, and manifests itself through a variety of activities and apostolates, all directed to the service of the young, especially those most in need.

Proclaiming Christ and his values, nurturing and strengthening the faithful is at the heart of the Parish ministry. We have **21** parishes, located both in urban and rural locations, carrying out various pastoral activities and at the service of evangelization.

Don Bosco cannot be separated from his system of education and we have a number of educational institutions offering educational service, forming the young minds, giving special focus to the poor and underprivileged youth and children.

We have **46** schools, of which **16** are higher secondary schools (Eng., Tamil and Anglo Indian medium), **11** are high schools and **19** are primary schools.

We have **18** orphanages, boarding, semi-boarding for young boys & girls, **3** working men's hostels, **25** youth hostels, **281** night study centers for poor children, **3** transit homes and **3** community colleges.

Don Bosco network has the highest number of technical institutes in India, second only to the Govt. of India. In this province we offer technical education to several thousand youngsters through our **2** polytechnic colleges, **1** agro-based institute, **5** formal technical institutes and **17** non-formal institutes. The youngsters who undergo training are sure to find jobs as soon as they complete their courses.

We have also **11** centres catering to higher education, Sacred Heart College at Tirupattur (is 60 years old), Don Bosco Arts and Science Colleges at Dharmapuri, Karaikal and Yellagiri Hills, Don Bosco College of Art and Design and the B.Ed and Teacher Training colleges at Karaikal, Dharmapuri and Vellore. This year we are in the process of starting an Agricultural College. Plans are afoot for a college of Engineering too.

Youth work is at the core of our Salesian mission and we have **29** active youth centres in the province through which thousands of youngsters are being formed. Some of the prominent youth centers are those at Broadway, Siga, Vyasarpadi, Basin Bridge, Ennore and Katpadi.

NEW FRONTIERS:

The province of Chennai has pioneered number of specialized services for various sectors of needy people – street children, old people, slum work, prison ministry, gypsies, thurumbars, HIV affected children, self-help groups, etc.

YOUNG AT RISK

The Anbu Illam (Young at Risk) was first started in 1985, to work for “street children” only which offers food, accommodation and education. But in the course of time it has developed into a huge network reaching out thousands of children and young people in any situation of risk: for example,

- children on the streets, child workers, abandoned orphans, children/youth in conflict with law, young prisoners, young substance abusers, young victims of abuse, victims of ethnic violence and armed conflicts, children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, refugee children, trafficked children, school dropouts and others.

We have **9** such centers with more than **350** inmates, reaching out to hundreds of marginalized and vulnerable sections of youth in the State.

Salesians in India care for more children and young people through our “Young at Risk” ministry than through our schools. Through the “Young at Risk” ministry, every day we meet **292,704 youngsters**, while through our schools, we meet only **253,702** (*Statistics 2011*).

We have nearly **112 centers** directed totally to the poor and downtrodden people, especially the suffering and the oppressed, through our social ministry.

VAZHIKAATTI (CAREER GUIDANCE AND JOB PLACEMENT)

- This venture was started in May 1997. It helps young people to make the right choices with regard to their education and employment by discovering God’s plan for them and by getting to know themselves and their aptitude.
- Target group is the economically poor and marginalized rural job seekers as well as students.
- There are 8 sub-centres across the province
- Job Placement activities: employment registration, visiting clients, organizing campus interviews, job orientation programmes, counselling, self-employment.

MINISTRY FOR HIV/AIDS:

This is a ministry that we started only about two years ago. We offer two types of services to the youngsters affected or infected by HIV.

1. **Residential Care at “Anbagam”** at a place known as “Pope John’s Garden”. There are 45 children (boys and girls, aged 3 years to 22 years) under this programme who are given all the care and support to cope up with the stress and pain of the disease. Most of them are sent to schools to pursue their education.
2. **Home-based care in Vellore region.** There are 180 infected children who are given care and support in their own homes. These children are looked after by their relatives at home and they are given nutritious food, medical care and educational and psychological support by our team.

We have the VIA –Village Integral Animation Centers in Polur, Veeralur and Maranodai which aim at attaining socio–economic empowerment of women and youth in the backward areas.

We have special works for the “Thurumbars & Irulars” (two highly marginalized communities in the State), who have been neglected and oppressed by the society.

We have six centers for the gypsies, through which education, empowerment and rehabilitation programmes are offered to this much neglected community.

We offer a number of services for the tribal people in the hills of Jawadhi, Yellagiri, Kotagiri, Andaman Islands, Kadambur and Thalavadi, through our educational and empowerment ministries.

Forming and empowering the youngsters and women through Self-Help Groups, has been another vital area through which lot of awareness, formation, social involvement, upliftment and transformation is being brought about.

Prison ministry, apostolate at Government Juvenile Homes and Correction Homes has been another important area of intervention, through which prisoners and young people in conflict with law are helped to renew and reform themselves through a process of education.

We have two homes for the aged, one at Vyasarpadi and the other at Redhills, which cater to the needs of the sick and abandoned aged people.

We have rehabilitation centers for leprosy patients at Pope John’s Garden, Madhavaram, Vyasarpadi, Balpart at Balaramapuram.

Being relevant, efficacious and credible have always been the watchwords that have guided our initiatives in these areas.

The province has a number of animation centers through which young people are given spiritual and psychological support.

KALVI SOLAI

is a center for education and culture giving training to children, parents and teachers, creating networking among schools.

DEEPAGAM

the centre for Catechetics caters to faith education and promotion of values through its programmes for teachers and animators.

DON BOSCO VAZHIKAATI - 10

the vocational guidance cum job placement centre catering to the employment needs of the youth and the students. Through seminars, training programmes and job fairs the centre offers vocational guidance and job placements for needy youngsters.

DBICA -

Don Bosco Institute of Communication Arts, is the media hub which incorporates media literacy programmes, academic courses, productions, media seminars and short film festivals through which convergence and networking have become possible and hundreds of needy youngsters have established a career in mainstream media. DBCAD - Don Bosco College of Art and Design, is an exclusive art and design college, an off shoot of the Academic department of DBICA forming and training hundreds of young people in the field of Art, Design and Media.

Arumbu Publications

is the province publication centre which carries out the work of publications as well as training programmes in the field of journalism and publishing. A number of monthly magazines, journals and newsletters are also published through it.

DBYAC -

Don Bosco Youth Animation Centre at Ennore offers a number of youth animation programmes, retreats, counseling and other formative programmes for young people and youth groups all over the state.

BPS –

Bosco Psychological Services - is the centre that offers counseling services to all sorts of people, specially to the young in all our institutions.

DBSARC -

Don Bosco Social Action Research Centre - gives importance to social, economic and political empowerment of the underprivileged people.

SURABI

the Strategic Urban and Rural Backing Institute, looks after the developmental works and the sustainability of the different works and activities of the province.

ARULUDHAYAM

is an ashram that takes care of the spiritual needs of the young people.

The province is fairly able to carry out all these works, with the timely help received from the funding agencies, from benefactors both local and global. Their solidarity, generosity, collaboration and support have made many of our efforts possible and relevant.

A good number of scholarships and educational helps are given to the poor and needy children in almost all our institutions. There are also additional sponsorships and scholarships that we receive from other organizations for the education of the poor children.

It is our ardent desire to keep alive and real, the dreams of all the missionaries, the early Salesians who have sacrificed so much and built up this glorious province, with so much of love, commitment and dedication.

We have sent one confrere to Hong Kong to look after the Asian migrant youth who are in situations of risk there.

We have two priests in Canada.

We have at present one community in Fujairah (UAE) with a parish and two schools. Next year we will be starting another school in Dubai or Abu Dhabi.

Radical living of Religious life, Credibility in our Mission, Giving the best to the least and Reaching out to the poorest of the poor through our services have always been the characteristics traits of the province.

Don Bosco is very much known, loved and imitated by the young people and we his followers strive to make this mission relevant, vibrant and credible fostering new hopes and profound aspirations in the young people, forming them to be upright and honest citizens.