

THE BETHANY CONNECTION

A Newsletter of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany- Northern Province



*One Smile, One Moment,
One Touch and One Word.
That's all we need sometimes
to Replenish the Heart
and Rejuvenate the Soul!!
Life is about sharing*



**Bethany Connection wishes the Readers a
Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year**



*This issue is
dedicated to the
Silver Years
of BSSSP (Regd)*



Message from the Provincial Superior

Standing at the threshold of the Silver Jubilee Year of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab (BSSSP), and looking at its glorious history, my heart overwhelms with joy and gratitude for carrying out the mission that is entrusted to us and for the mission accomplished. Bethany in the North is indeed a shining witness of the relevance of Jesus.

Pope Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium* "Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God." Without love one human being cannot touch another human being. Jesus was more human during his lifetime. He cured the sick, raised the dead, empowered women, loved children, and wiped the tears of sorrowful. **Our mission is a continuation of Jesus' compassionate mission on earth.** We are called to go to the world with solicitude for social, political, economic and cultural realities. **The Joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our times, specially of those who are poor or afflicted in any ways, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.**

Our Founder's sense of mission transformed many lives. He brought the Good News not only to the poor but also

has set us an example of preference for the poor, claiming their rights and often getting hurt in their struggles. He wants us to champion the cause of the poor. He led us and taught us how to go into those remote areas where no one would want to go.

The Founder, founding members, and the sisters of Bethany are indeed the living Gospels of Christ, who have championed the cause of those on the fringes of the society discarded, valueless and powerless. Bethany is challenged to participate prophetically in this sacred mission with great diligence and incarnate ourselves in the culture of silence of the oppressed poor. Inspired by the spirit of the Founder, and in response to the clarion call, Bethany re-commits to bring the Good News of liberation to all especially to the victims of human trafficking and helpless migrants.

Kudos to our sisters, animators, benefactors, youth and children of our social work centers. May we be such persons, whose humanity is our main visiting card. May we together with other human beings create a caring human world where love, care, concern and forgiveness become the centre of our lives and community.

On 23 December we celebrate the 59th Death anniversary of our Founder who shared the Incarnated Love of Jesus with everyone. May we be able to imbibe the double fold spirit of our Founder and sing joyfully 'Be born in us INCARNATE LOVE.'

I wish you a Joy filled Christmas and hope filled New Year 2019.

Sr Erasma BS



From the Editor

This issue of Bethany Connection comes to you in a new format. It does not carry the normal news of various communities. I am happy to present this special issue dedicated to Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab (BSSSP). Bethany Sisters have been involved in social work ever since Bethany Congregation was founded in 1921. Northern Province was formed in 1986. The umpteen social work of the Province was brought under the BSSSP(Reg) in 1993 marking 2018 as the Silver Jubilee Year.

It is apt that the *Bethany Connection* testifies the hidden services of BSSSP and appreciates the sisters and animators who are agents of kindness and compassion to those rejected by the society. I feel profound reverence for all of those who give themselves in service.

The article, *A slice of history* will give the readers more information about BSSSP. Sr Veronica has expounded the *Spirituality of service* and the *field note* highlights Tanakpur Unit, situated in one of the remotest corners of Northern Province. Sr Arpan and Sr Stella D'Souza are veteran social workers and write on the different aspects of Social Work. Out of thousands of success stories, we have published a few. Finally, Palvinder, one of the staff of Bethany Schools shares how the spirit of service is passed on to the next generation. What BSSSP does is only a drop in the ocean. Definitely, the ocean will be different because of this plunge.

Sr Grace Maria BS
gracemariabs@gmail.com

DAZZLING CELEBRATION OF TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF BSSSP



The celebrations of the glorious twenty five years of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab(BSSSP), on 13 October 2018 at Sacred Heart Convent School, Ludhiana, was a spectacular event. Being the part and parcel of the celebration committee, for me, it was not only a means of satisfying my creative urge, a festive bonanza, but was also a liberating experience. The road to the preparation of the show took me on a spiritual cleansing and awakening. I discovered on that day how I had allowed myself to be dictated by the hectic pace of life in self-indulgence, totally ignoring the need to extend a helping hand.

It turned out to be a historic move when Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, came into its physical form in 1993 by registering the Society, bringing the spirit of service under one umbrella, the Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab. The Ruby Jubilee Auditorium on 13th October 2018 was an amalgam of true heroes, selfless people- sisters and grass root level workers of the BSSSP Units, who tirelessly work for the betterment of the society.



The autumn sun scattered its silver rays as the event kick started with the royal reception extended by the School Band



to the esteemed dignitaries. Divine blessings were invoked by lighting the sacred lamp. After the Chief Guest was formally introduced to the audience, a glimpse of the fruitful work being done by BSSSP was displayed through glittering performances by a few centers like Karnal, Solan, Samalkha, and Ludhiana. The Chief Guest Mrs Harpreet Soin joined Sr Erasma, the President, to honour the Founding Members, past Presidents, Secretaries and Regional Units of the BSSSP expressing regard and gratitude towards their unconditional efforts for building a strong society where equality and justice reign.

My encounter with the real world in this course was like a lightning bolt. When I got a glimpse into the miseries of people like Tarun, an orphan, Gurpreet, a drifter and Sunil, an aggressive run away,(all names changed), I realized the peripheral blindness clouding my vision, allowing myself to believe only what I wanted to, oblivious of the miseries around me. The silver lining of the Silver Jubilee celebrations was the motivating and encouraging words of Sister Erasma, the President of BSSSP and Mrs Harpreet Soin, the Chief Guest. Life does go on but the true sense of living is understood only when we learn to give and the Silver Jubilee Celebrations made me realize the essence of giving and thus celebrating life.



Mrs Nandini Sharma
Ludhiana, Punjab

A SLICE OF HISTORY OF BETHANY SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY, PUNJAB (BSSSP)

From our correspondent , Karnal, Haryana

Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, was registered on 14 June 1993 under the Societies Registration Act XXI 1860.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF BSSSP

- To promote and inculcate integral development including spiritual, moral, psychological, educational and recreational activities among the poor and oppressed.
- To undertake relief and rehabilitation work among the backward and Scheduled castes and tribes so that they may stand on their feet.
- To organise and facilitate study courses, training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences in relation to development of people.
- To arrange proper education for children in recognized schools, literary classes and non-formal education.
- To initiate, undertake and aid schemes for providing medical and occupational facilities.
- To care for the needy, sick, illiterate and women and children of backward classes.
- To create and facilitate self employment schemes, by providing relevant training.
- To promote agriculture, rural employment schemes, savings and cooperatives.
- To promote community health by establishing health care units, dispensaries, nursing homes or hospitals.
- To spread and propagate naturopathy, herbal remedies and other alternative systems of medicine.

THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF BSSSP



Sr Wilberta BS



Sr Miriam BS



Mr Kamal Nayyar



Dr E M Johnson



Mr Gur Iqbal Singh



Mrs Eleanor Joseph



Ms Kiran Sharma



Sr Zelig BS



Sr Elsie Vas BS

PAST PRESIDENTS

Sr Wilberta BS	1993	Founding President
Sr Miriam BS	1993-1997	
Sr Wilberta BS	1997- 1998	
Sr Nora BS	1998-2006	
Sr Maria Leena BS	2006-2014	
Sr Jyoti BS	2014- 2018	
Sr Erasma BS	2018-	

PAST SECRETARIES

Sr Chantal BS	1993-1998
Sr Helima BS	1998-2004
Sr Christine BS	2004-2005
Sr Zelig BS	2005-2007
Sr Chantal BS	2007-

THE PRESENT OFFICE BEARERS OF BSSSP



President
Sr Erasma BS



Secretary
Sr Chantal BS



Treasurer
Sr Maria Leena BS

KUDOS TO OUR SISTERS WHO ARE TOTALLY INVOLVED IN THE SERVICE OF THE POOR AND THE MARGINALISED

Sr Stella D' Souza
Sr Arpan
Sr Preeti Margaret
Sr Diana Serrao
Sr Rositta
Sr Eugene
Sr Lancia

Sr Pressy
Sr Neeti Maria
Sr Prabhat Nalini
Sr Priyanjali
Sr Jospha Minj
Sr Emerentia Kujur
Sr Sabina Lakra

Sr Molly
Sr Gracy Vas
Sr Malaya Manjari
Sr Neeti Tigga
Sr Amrita Ekka
Sr Madhuri
Sr Geeta Bengra

ANIMATORS OF THE UNITS UNDER BETHANY SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY, PUNJAB

Jesus says, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me..."



Jeevan Jyoti Vocational Training Centre,
Ludhiana, Punjab



Sacred Heart Vocational Training Centre,
Barnala, Punjab



St Joseph's Vocational Training Centre,
Bathinda, Punjab



St Theresa's Vocational Training Centre,
Karnal, Haryana



Bethany Jeevan Dhara
Tanakpur, Uttarakhand



Karunalya-Human Life Centre
Karnal, Haryana



Ashadeep, Ramdas, Punjab



Regional Unit, Samalkha, Haryana



Shanti Ashram, Berhampur, Odisha



Disha, Bethany Vocational Institute, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh



St Theresa's Tribal Girls' Hostel, Maluka, Jharkhand



St Luke's Vocational Training Centre, Solan, Himachal Pradesh



Sacred Heart Community Centre, Ludhiana, Punjab

BSSSP SERVES THROUGH...

Anti human trafficking; counteracting child labour; formal and non-formal education, coaching centres, adult literacy programme, rural and tribal girls' hostel, migrant workers, open schooling and technical education, ITI's; women empowerment, capacity enhancement training, care of the elderly, forum of bonded labourers and domestic workers, formation of youth groups, kishori groups, auto rickshaw drivers' association; village and school health programme, alternative system of medicine, massage centres, physiotherapy; beauty culture, animal husbandry, farmers' club, seed bank, promotion of kitchen garden,.....



THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES GALORE

We are a happy lot today

We reside in a slum in Karnal, Haryana, without even having the bare necessities of life. From our paucity we had to shell out Rs 300 per month for water which itself is a huge sum for us. Sr Malaya and Sr Josepha got us organized and with a signature campaign we approached Mr Balvinder, the Municipal Councillor of our ward, seeking assistance for running water. Mr Balvinder helped us with a hand pump. Today, we are a happy lot.

From a slum in Karnal, Haryana



I am an empowered woman now

I came in contact with BSSSP in 1996. Sr Linus helped me do my Diploma in tailoring from Jeevan Jyoti Centre. With the support of BSSSP, I overcame all the hurdles of my personal life, brought up my children and secured an employment at the Jeevan Jyoti Centre, Ludhiana. Presently, I am a respected, successful and empowered woman.

Mrs Bimala, Ludhiana, Punjab



Spiritual and emotional succor

Words cannot explain the emotional and spiritual support I received from Bethany Sisters in painful moments of my life such as the death of my only son, my husband and now during my sickness. The spirit of faith, optimism and friendship of the sisters is my anchor.

Mrs Protima, Himachal Pradesh



A respectable position in society

With the training and experience I gained by serving at Bethany Jeevan Dhara Centre, I have become a Self Help Group leader and possess my own shop and house. I have now umpteen opportunities to inspire other women.

Mrs Kanjan Devi, Tanakpur, Uttarakhand



A long wait

For the past 15 years, I've been waiting to be reunited with my family. The sisters at Karunalaya Human Life Centre traced my family in Uttar Pradesh and today I am with my family.

Mrs Priya, Uttar Pradesh



An enviable position

Rahul and I had been good friends from childhood and enjoyed playing in the slum together not knowing what opportunities life held for us. Bethany Sisters cajoled us and lovingly taught us in the non-formal school at the Community Centre in Ludhiana. Today I am a choreographer doing my MBA and my friend Rahul is a florist. Many of our friends envy us.

Mr Arun, Ludhiana, Punjab



Arun



Rahul



Sparks

A large family and poverty had tied me down to child labour. The Tribal Girls' Home in Maluka, Jharkhand, gave me a chance to pursue my studies and today I am doing my graduation. The spark that Bethany Social Service Society created in me is a fire today.

Josepina Tiriya, Maluka, Jharkhand

Education for fullness of life

BSSSP- helped us combat the custom of early marriages prevalent in our villages and pursue our graduation at Ashadeep Centre, Ramdas, through Guru Nanak University, Amritsar. We can now dream big!

Students of Ashadeep, Ramdas, Punjab



SOME PEOPLE COME TO OUR LIFE AS A BLESSING



Speaking about my childhood, those days in my vicinity, no girl could continue education after V standard. Marriage was forced upon the girls, by the conservatives, leaving the girls helpless. My fate also would have been the same, but,

providentially I met the Bethany sisters for the first time in 1994 and my fortune changed. A frightened and shy girl that I was, education through Open School conducted by the Bethany Sisters helped me complete my education and gave me further impetus for learning. Yes, I became the first girl from my area to complete the 12th Standard. Our Bethany sisters motivate everyone without any discrimination of caste, colour and creed. They guide the strayed, help the needy and work to uplift the backward class of the society.

My only dream was to serve people after the example of Bethany Sisters and it came true in 2003 when I got an opportunity to work with Bethany Social Service Society, Solan Unit. I found the sisters caring like a mother, strong like a lioness, guide like a teacher and helpful like a friend. They taught us to face the difficult situations with ease and earn rather than depend on others. They do not teach us to bind with religion but to connect with religions. I cherish my relationship with Bethany Sisters. Bethany Congregation surely is a priceless gift of Father RFC Mascarenhas to society.

Mrs Hemlatha Kashyap
Solan, Himachal Pradesh

DEVELOPING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH BETHANY SCHOOLS



Education has played a pivotal role in the mental and technological upliftment of human being who is the most intelligent creation of the Almighty on this earth. But education doesn't only mean 'Learn to Earn'. It also stands for his inner awakening and social responsibility. This conceptual ideology is being transmitted by the Bethany schools to develop the

collective conscience of the young harbingers of change. The BES schools uphold the holistic view of education for experiencing the fullness of life. The inner awakening is considered as an essential integrant of the education system. The social conscience educational activities like the 'Joy of Giving' week celebration, visits to orphanages, social awareness marches and cyclothons stimulate the children about the social concerns and issues beyond the self. Through the 'Joy of Giving week' these schools have always played a significant role in making the students as well as parents discern a sense of responsibility or concern for the problems and injustices of society. Giving is one of the best investments one can make towards achieving genuine happiness. The management, teachers, students and parents have been constant companions in stepping out of their own world and venturing into the world of the less fortunate, lessening their burden and trying to bring smile on their faces. This hand-on-experience helps the children navigate many modern day challenges. These endeavours expedite the children to live by the divine command i.e. compassion and empathy for our brethren and to have God experience. The Bethany schools meticulously sensitize the young minds and configure their decision-making skills for the amelioration of society. May the Bethany Schools be an agent of Transformative Education.

Mrs Palvinder Brar
Bathinda, Punjab

INVOLVEMENT OF BETHANY IN THE NORTH, IN ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Inspired by the call given to the Women Religious all over the world by the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) of Women Religious, on Countering Human Trafficking in Persons, Sr Jyoti BS, the then Superior General, was awakened to the heart rending realities of the modern slavery(Human Trafficking) when she represented the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) in Rome in 2007. Moved by the call of Jesus and his words "I have come so that they may have life; life in its fullness" (John 10:10) she motivated other women religious of South Asian Countries (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh) to join hands to combat this heinous crime - Human Trafficking and



founded a Network called AMRAT – Asian Movement of Women Religious Against Trafficking and she was its first President too.

Responding to the XVI General Chapter mandate and encouraged by Sr Jyoti, Bethany took up the cause of

addressing the issue of modern slavery in a big way. In Northern Province it is gaining momentum as courageous stalverts – Sister Social Activists have plunged into action.

At present, Sr. Arpan BS, the former Provincial Councillor heads AMRAT as the President - a credit to Bethany's leadership. Currently, she works as India Coordinator for ARISE Foundation a London and US based organization to combat modern slavery. Recently she headed a team of five

sisters of different Congregations who went to London to be trained for Project writing and to represent AMRAT at the World Conference. Bethany is proud of Sr Arpan and her contribution to Bethany's thrust for the poor and the marginalised.

Sr Grace Maria BS
Ludhiana, Punjab

BE FEARLESS IN THE PURSUIT OF WHAT SETS YOUR SOUL ON FIRE



Social work is founded on noble purposes and provides rewards that are unexplainable, unseen, and immeasurable but can only be experienced.

I have spent more than two decades in the service of humanity, a passion evoked in me as a young aspiring religious in and through the life and ministry of the Servant of God Raymond FC Mascarenhas, the Founder of 'The Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany.'

The happiest people I know are those who lose themselves in the service of others. As we lose ourselves in the service of others, we discover our own lives and our own happiness. I have found true joy and contentment in risking and consecrating myself for those who cannot speak for themselves, for those who cannot lift their heads in dignity and for those who could not be what they are today.

It has been a very rewarding experience and a sense of fulfilment as I spent my youthful years of religious life serving, empowering, bringing new life and light to women, children, the helpless, the sick and the elderly in the villages of Orissa and Jharkhand, slums and Shelter Home in Karnal, Haryana. It has taught me true meaning and value of life. I have learnt through hardships, pain, discouragement and loneliness that it is worth suffering for the cause of those who cannot repay us in earthly rewards but create a niche in their hearts and call us their own.

Bethany has groomed me, trusted me and provided me with opportunities to realise the dream of our Founder by becoming a succour to the deprived. My friends and benefactors have boosted my morale in trying moments. Most of all, the strength I draw by communing with *God – the Divine* gives me a sense of purpose and fortitude to go ahead in all odds of life.

“The best way to find oneself is to lose oneself in the service of others,” says Mahatma Gandhi. Yes, I have found my vocation in the service of others.

Sr Arpan BS
Delhi

MOST FULFILLING EXPERIENCE



As a coordinator of Social Work, my most fulfilling experience in the recent past is working for the trafficked, the migrants employed in the brick kilns and factories and getting associated with the child labourers, bonded labourers, domestic workers and migrants.

About 3,750 households with a population of 16,500 in five Centres of BSSSP were surveyed by us. The migrant families mainly hail from U.P, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Nepal. They encounter many problems. They live in small huts in unauthorized areas or rent out a room for the whole family. Some of them shift their residence frequently because of the nature of work. They do not have regular employment or source of income. Working in the unorganized sector for low wages they have no residential proof or identity proof for any official upgrading. Most of the children do not attend the school as ID proofs cannot be produced. Basic amenities like safe drinking water, sanitary facilities, electricity, healthy environment and safety for the children are not accessible to them. Young children find the open roads their haven when parents are out for work. Young girls work with their mothers as domestic aides. Due to unhygienic environment they are susceptible to all kinds of illness. Unhealthy living conditions, sexual abuse of young girls, substance abuse, gambling, stealing and such other practices have made their vulnerable situation more deplorable and pathetic.

Appropriate measures are taken by BSSSP to address these issues through non-formal and technical education in places like Ludhiana Community Centre, Samalkha, Bathinda, Solan and Karnal. Other community based organizations such as, Kishori groups, Vigilant committees, Children's Parliament, Self help groups, Rickshaw pullers and Auto- drivers' groups assist them in counteracting their de-humanizing situation. In this way Bethany Social Service Society sides the needy and rejected assisting them to lead a dignified life.

Sr Stella D' Souza BS
Karnal, Haryana

THE SPIRITUALITY OF SERVICE

Spirituality is the essence of life. It is the light that shines in our lives, illuminating our paths, bringing light where there is darkness, joy to the sorrowful, healing to the broken hearted and meaning to the incomprehensible. The essence of Spirituality is nothing but service - service of others, service born out of love, service born out of God experience, especially service to the poor, the neglected, the rejected and the oppressed. That's what the Lord Jesus Christ did – when He emptied Himself totally and pitched His tent among us as a human person, although He was God. He bent over and touched the lepers, raised the dead to life, gave sight to the blind, restored the human dignity of the lost and the least, reaching out in compassion, love and service to others. He stooped down at the feet of His disciples emptying Himself of His divinity and washed their feet. He revealed the compassionate God to us. His teachings urge us to be compassionate to the needy and suffering as seen in the parables of Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) and the Last Judgment (Mt.25:31-46).

Yes, the essence of spirituality is service. As one goes deeper and deeper on a spiritual path and as one gets closer and closer to Realization and Enlightenment, one realizes that the Divine is present and resides everywhere, in everything and in everyone. All is Him and all is in Him. When one realizes this truth deeply, one becomes filled with an insatiable desire to care for and serve all God's children – God's creation. Therefore, those who are suffering such as, a widow, an orphan, a destitute and an ailing person capture the hearts of the enlightened. The enlightened or God-experienced persons become the embodiment of compassion, love and service. Compassionate and loving service changes people. It refines, purifies, gives a finer perspective, and brings out the best in each one of us. It

makes us look outward instead of inward. It prompts us to consider others' needs ahead of our own. It helps us overcome selfishness and sin; cleanse ourselves and become purified and sanctified generating love and appreciation.

Our Founder RFC Mascarenhas, the Servant of God, as the close disciple of Lord Jesus, followed His footsteps and trod the path of compassionate love and service to all. In the footsteps of the Founder, Bethany Sisters, being enlightened by their Master Lord Jesus, reach out crossing all the barriers, to thousands of poor, the marginalized, women, youth and children, in service born out of God experience and love.

BSSSP (Bethany Social Service Society Punjab) is the outcome of many enlightened souls – seeing the Divine in all and in everything. It is a dream of the Founder envisioned and shared with collective responsibility and partnership—where BSSSP has been qualitatively enriching the lives of so many poor and underprivileged women, children and youth through education, health care, rehabilitation, agriculture and socio economic empowerment.

May the Spirit of the Lord continue to guide and enlighten BSSSP and all those who share this vision. May the lamp that the Founder lit continue to brighten many lives!



Sr Veronica Monteiro BS
Delhi

FIELD NOTE

BETHANY JEEVAN DHARA HEALTH CENTRE, TANAKPUR

Sr Grace Maria BS, Ludhiana, Punjab

A three hour drive from Bareilly will take an eager traveller to a small town, Tanakpur, in Uttarakhand at the foot hills of Himalayas. It is a gateway to Pumagiri temple and forms the border of Nepal.

Bethany Jeevan Dhara Health Centre, a Unit of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, in Tanakpur easily draws the attention of a passerby on the Pithoragarh Road. This Centre has become a much sought after Health Centre and is a solace to the locals and even people from Nepal.

On entering the Health Centre one finds the smiling and compassionate Administrator Sr Rositta, who does not hesitate to move out and accompany the helpless patients

to the Centre. Seen in the picture is Mrs Kiran who had an attack of paralysis and was bedridden for months abandoned by all the doctors. With the massage and physiotherapy administered by Sr Emerentia, a Physiotherapist at the Centre, today Kiran can move around with assistance and is on the way to complete recovery.



Wax therapy, Magnet therapy, Cupping therapy, Preparation of Herbal Medicines for various diseases, School Health Programmes, Village Health Programmes, Screening for diabetics in the villages, Care of the differently abled, Home Nursing and Door to door health services by the health workers are some of the services rendered at this Centre.



In partnership with the Social Work department headed by Sr Pressy, the Socio-Medical service of Bethany covers forty villages in twenty Panchayats. Machhi gali is one of the slums where Sr Pressy and the animators organise women and children giving them a better direction in life. The pathetic and inhuman conditions they live definitely need an upgrade.



Moving through the Boragod slums, I encountered a beaming Kanjan Devi who joined Bethany Jeevan Dhara in 2005 after completing Cass XII. Kanjan Devi steadily rose high in life. She was trained as a Health Worker, became a supervisor of the Centre, then a coordinator, and subsequently received training in massage, physiotherapy and herbal medicine at the Centre. Being rewarded for her selfless services, Sr Pressy and Sr Rositta sent her for the training in National Rural Employment Scheme.



Empowered by all these, today she owns a home and a shop. A proud mother of two children she could also manage to help her husband buy an e-rickshaw.

The people in the villages and slums have a lot of stories to tell about their kitchen garden, waste



management, self-help group, herbal huts, rallies they hold, the way they manage with drunken husbands and other substance abuse, anti-natal and post-natal care they receive from the Centre and the support they obtain from the visits of sisters and animators. Holding the manure and the worms from the vermi culture in their hands are Bimla and Maya. They proudly explain the method to anyone who wants to hear about it. One is astonished to see the adept manner in which the animators make manure from the waste and have taught the same to the villagers.

Lalita, another animator, squealing with excitement speaks against the fertilizers and boasts of the Aayurvedic Insecticide they make from Calatropies, Castor oil plant, Bush morning glory and Neem leaves which grow in the campus of Bethany Jeevan Dhara.

To the surprise of our sisters they have located forty four disabled children of whom twenty two are registered at the Diocesan Social Service Society from where they get various kinds of aids.



Marriage between the close relatives has emerged as the main reason for this handicap. Counselling in this quarter has become a prominent area of our social workers.

Over the years, the sisters have reported of cancer cure and healing of many cases given up by the local doctors. "Some of them come to us after trying all the methods and wasting a lot of money," says Sr Rositta. When a group of us visited the Centre during our Diwali break, and saw the magnitude of work carried out by a group of four sisters, eight animators and social workers, we were taken aback. They are there in the garden, in the pharmacy, at the physiotherapy, in the herbal garden, slums and villages. Their energy comes from their commitment.

Sister Pressy, the head of the community and the Social Worker, Sr Rositta, the Administrator of the Health cum Nurse, Sr Emerintia, the Physiotherapist and Sr Niti, the



Nurse cum Social Worker hail from Mangalore, Chennai, Jharkhand and Delhi respectively. Different culture and family background, yet, one vision and goal—the uplift of the poor. They have no barrier of language for they are united by the Charism and Spirituality of a Bethany Sister

and the love of Jesus. They serve a society where people of different faiths live together in harmony. They move in the slums and villages with no selfish aspiration to achieve. They shower love, kindness, compassion, peace and good feeling to all. Wild animals such as elephants, leopards and monkeys frequent their campus. But, they are not shaken as their faith in God is their shield.

“If you have any favourite in this world, it must be the poor,” said, Father RFC, the Founder of Bethany Congregation. The community of Bethany Sisters at Tanakpur proves this in action and the legacy of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, is carried on gracefully with commitment and courage. I looked at the four Sisters in awe wondering how they can totally get lost in the service of the poor. A Bethany Sister truly stands by the needy and the rejected.

Compliments

Sr Rose Celine, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore.



Heeding the voice of the Lord to become compassionate and merciful, BSSSP was registered to reach out to the poor and the marginalized of the society. In line with the vision of Bethany Congregation, BSSSP has catered to the neglected sections of people in the northern part of our country. It has empowered the poor, supporting various social service projects and uplifted the human dignity through acts of merciful love becoming a credible witness to the compassionate face of Jesus.

I deeply appreciate the collaboration of the people of different faiths in promoting the objectives of BSSSP.

On the occasion of the Jubilee, I convey my heartiest congratulations to the past and the present Governing Body Members, Office bearers, the Members of the BSSSP and above all the animators who are serving at the grass root level. I pray God's bountiful blessings on all.

Sr Lillis BS, Asst Superior General



On this happy occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, I place on record my deep appreciation for its commendable service to the downtrodden. I had many opportunities to visit the different Centres affiliated to this Society. The commitment with which the sisters and the social workers render service to the poorest has always impressed me.

Jesus has said, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren you do it to me." This implies that through all its activities, Bethany Social Service Society has been serving God. What a great privilege! Great indeed will be the blessings that the mighty God will shower on this organisation.

I salute Sr Erasma, the President, Sr Jyoti, the past President,

Sr Chantal, the Secretary, and all the trustees and the members of the General Body.

Congratulations to the editor of Bethany connection for dedicating this issue to Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab.

Sr Jyoti BS, Former Superior General and President of BSSSP



I heartily congratulate the first Executive Committee Members and Sr Wilberta BS, the Founder-President. They dared to twin education with social service and their initiative has created joyful ripples in the lives of those who are on the periphery of the society. One such ripple is found in the St Theresa's Rainbow School, Karnal, where the integration of Education and Social Service are visible in a tangible way. May the Silver Jubilee of BSSSP find flowering and bearing abundance of fruit of Bethany Social Service Society Punjab spreading compassionate love of God through all its branches. May Bethany Educational Society and Bethany Social Service Society, Punjab, jointly create new synergy through the flowering of education into social service, to reach out the unreachable – the least, the last and the lost humanity with the divine-human touch.

Mr Sameer Nayar, Industrialist, Ludhiana



I feel honoured to offer my compliments to BSSSP. I recall the initial days when this Society was a tiny seed. Today, it has grown; more members are added to the General Body; the members have imbibed the values of the Society and are transmitting it around. I am personally inspired by the magnitude of service our sisters and animators persistently carry out. Definitely, we can grow much faster, give more, help more and achieve more. Our sincere efforts in the uplifting of the society at large will never go uninspired. Those of us who are associated with BSSSP must carry forward its legacy.