



Cover Story

'Skilling India' takes off

BASE – Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment – a livelihood project funded by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt of India, was launched.

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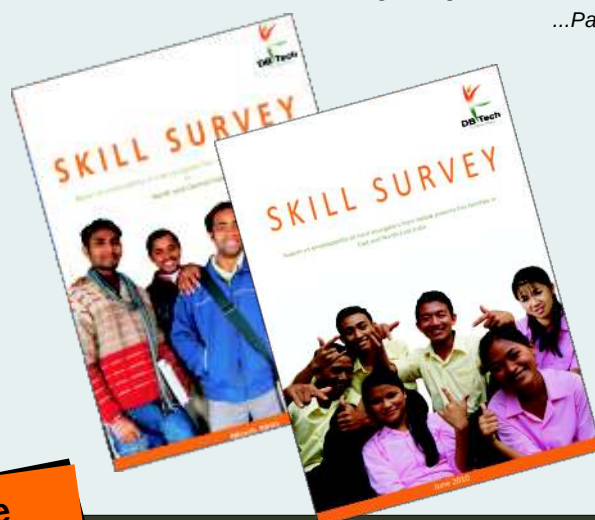
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Guwahati

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Rising Star: Anjelus Minj

Failure is the pillar of success

Anjelus Minj hails from the backward village of Gohaibheti of Udalguri district in Assam. He was born on 15th October 1991. His father was a small cultivator, who struggled to make both ends meet and provide for the joint family of six. That is when Anjelus decided to take things into his hands and shoulder responsibility for the family.

"I could not appear for the matriculation examination due to poverty and I had lost my dad a few months earlier," says Anjelus. "And, in order to help my family in future, I decided to join some technical course of short duration." Asking around, he came to know about the Don Bosco Technical School, Maligaon, from his guardian Fr. Joseph Congadi, who also generously provided him full training expenses. To fulfill his own dream and his aged mothers' aspirations he took admission in the Motor Mechanic course in the institute in the year of 2009. He showed keen interest in the training and was regular in class. He says, "I got every opportunity to learn the technical skill as well as inculcate life skills through training programmes, seminars, games and other extra-curricular activities."

Through DBTS, Maligaon, and with the intervention of PRT placement cell, Anjelus is now employed as a mechanic with Abhishek Motors, a principal dealer of Tata Motors. He aims to gain good experience from his current workplace and become better in his job. The firm, recognizing his great potential to excel in the profession, sent him along with another Bosconian Arun Hembrom for one month higher training and skill up-gradation to Kolkata twice in the months of May and December 2009. He now earns Rs. 3,500 per month with other benefits like PF, E.S.I, etc.

Mr. A. K. Nath, Deputy General Manager of Abhishek Motors highly appreciates him for his sincerity, discipline, punctuality and hard work. Anjelus is now an independent person. Being the eldest son of the family he is now able to look after his family also. Looking back, Anjelus feels proud of his achievement and has a word of advice to other youngsters like him who are on the brink of losing hope. "Failure is the pillar of success," he says emphatically. Anjelus also dreams of setting up his own garage one day.



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Message from Executive Director



It gives me immense pleasure to share the latest developments of the DB Tech Society with all of you. The BASE program is gaining momentum across India, with over 40 centres already functioning at various states. The response of youth to the skill development initiative is highly contagious and remarkably outstanding. So within few months, we will be reaching out to 10000 youth at any given time.

Some of the comments of the trainees of the MoRD programme has been very encouraging. In Ranchi they, very enthusiastically and confidently expressed their satisfaction and joy of participating in this programme. The comments like - "It has given us a new life."; "I thought my life is over, but DB Tech training makes me confident that I can do anything in my life." were highly encouraging and motivating. During parents' meeting, parents were filled with gratitude while expressing their joy in the transformation of their wards through the programme. The induction, soft skills and other orientation programmes provide ample opportunities to become enthusiastic and to have positive outlook towards life and society.

We appreciate and acknowledge the support and collaboration we receive from various quarters, Salesian Institutions, Government, local bodies, NGOs and Industries in collaborating in this programme. With a group of dedicated staff, we hope to achieve the target at the earliest.

Don Bosco Tech office is shifted from Don Bosco Specialized Training Centre at Okhla to Don Bosco Yuva Kendra, Najafgarh. The new office provides ample space and facilities to carry out various activities across India. We thank the Province of Delhi for accommodating DB Tech for the last three years and Don Bosco Yuva Kendra for sparing space and facilities to accommodate DB Tech activities in the present vocational Training centre.

Don Bosco Tech is registered under Societies Registration Act, having its Registered Office at Don Bosco Yuva Kendra. The new programmes and projects will be undertaken by this society.

We are happy to welcome all the new staff especially Fr. Raju Philip to DB Tech family. He will function as the Assistant Director of DB Tech. We wish everyone a long and fruitful stay and growth in DB Tech.

My sincere appreciation and thanks to all the staff and contributors to this issue of the newsletter. My good wishes and thanks to all.

Fr. Aikarachalil Joseph

Message from Program Director



Six roller coaster months later, I assure you things are as exciting as ever at the DB Tech national office. Project roll-outs, centre initiations, new trainers, regional teams, corporate tie-ups etc have kept us busy and on our toes. Lives are mostly being lived out of suitcases. I place on record my thanks to the team and all stakeholders who have made this possible. And the most special thanks from each one of us to our families, who have been the most supporting, accommodating and tolerant these last few months. Their constant support, tolerance and cheering from the sidelines is what counts most. Thanks a zillion to our families.

With the team on board, now it is time to communicate to everybody, what our organization stands for and is trying to achieve. I am sure, the best way to define the core purpose of the organization is to let you all debate and decide the zenith you all want to achieve in your personal lives, the values you all want to imbibe in your professional lives, and the ambitions that you all want to outline for the future that will ensure all of us peace of mind when we go to sleep and elation and excitement in the morning to leap into our work-world.

To arrive at a consensus on organizational core statements of purpose, vision, mission, values etc, we organized a workshop 'Team Synergy' at Nainital in Uttaranchal. The senior and middle management team national and regional offices participated wholeheartedly in preparing the blue-print for our future endeavours. As a pre-workshop process, a 'where do we want to go' questionnaire was circulated and shared with all participants, which covered all aspects right from designing the lesson plans through institute capacity utilization to organization vision statements. This was followed by the 'team synergy' workshop. The result of three day workshop helped us to have a consensus on our core statements of vision and purpose. Following are the outcome of the workshop and our reason for existence:

Mission: Skill India

Vision: Bridge digital, social and economic divide in India by significantly contributing to the development of marginalized youth by enhancing the employability and life management skills.

Target: 20 by 20 (i.e to skill 20 lakhs youth by the year 2020.)

Core Values: Don Bosco Credo, Transparency, Accountability, Excellence and Inclusion

These core statements for sure will inspire each one of us to stay focused and achieve excellence in all programs that we take up at Don Bosco Tech. Lets stay aligned with these in our plans, designs and implementation.

Minu Thommen

DB Tech (National Office) moves to new premises

In June, Don Bosco Tech (National Office) shifted to the following address in Najafgarh (New Delhi):

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‘Skilling India’ takes off

DB Tech – MoRD Livelihood Project Launched



The Big Moment: (From left) Fr. Michael Peedikayil (Provincial, Don Bosco), Rev. Fr. Maria Arokia Kanaga (South Asian Regional Head, Don Bosco), Dr. B. K. Sinha, IAS (Secretary, MoRD, Govt. of India), Mr. Rajan Kohli (Advisor, FICCI), Dr. Vimal Kishor (DGM, NABARD Consultancy Services) at the inaugural function. (Inset) Dr. B. K. Sinha addressing the gathering.



New Delhi, March 20: BASE – Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment – a livelihood project funded by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt of India, was launched by Dr. B. K. Sinha, IAS (Secretary, MoRD, Govt. of India) at Don Bosco Technical Institute, New Delhi. Other dignitaries who attended the inaugural function included Mr. Rajan Kohli (Advisor, FICCI), Dr. Vimal Kishore (DGM, NABARD Consultancy Services), Rev. Fr. Maria Arokia Kanaga (South Asian Regional Head, Don Bosco), Fr. Michael Peedikayil (Provincial, Don Bosco) and heads of various Don Bosco educational institutes.

With funding from the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, under the Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), DB Tech aims at empowering youth from below poverty line through the Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) project. Under this project, around 46000 underprivileged youth from 24 states will be trained in market-driven course and placed in entry level opportunities in various sectors. “The tie up with Don Bosco will ensure the Ministry programmes reach out to the rural hinterlands of India,” said Mr Sinha as he inaugurated the project. “Don Bosco with its 125 training centres spread across most of the states in the country is the largest NGO operating in India at the moment,” he added.

After the formal inauguration of the function, Fr. Michael, on behalf of the Don Bosco family, welcomed all the dignitaries as well as the members present for this inaugural function. This was followed by an inspiring and motivating speech by Rev. Fr. Arokia praising and blessing the DB Tech Team for its wonderful efforts to this Herculean venture. Fr. A.M. Jose (Executive Director, DB Tech) in his introductory speech, expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards MoRD, FICCI and NABCON for their support

Chief Guest Dr. Sinha, in his address, also emphasized the urgent need for different government bodies to collaborate with non-government organizations towards achieving the common goal of making India a developed nation. With the kind of infrastructure Don Bosco has, the target of training and placing youth can be easily achieved. Mr. Rajan Kohli reaffirmed the credibility of Don Bosco by stating that the MoRD has made a good selection in partnering their mission of Rural Empowerment. On behalf of FICCI, he offered Don Bosco the support of its wide network for better placement and better exposure required by the

beneficiaries of this project. Ms. Minu Thommen (Project Director, DB Tech) presented the findings of Youth Survey having huge sample size of 30000 questionnaires conducted in eight states of North and Central India. The objective of the first of its kind of survey is to assess the attitude of youth towards various aspects of the skill based training.

The occasion also witnessed the launching of the brand new website of ‘Don Bosco Skills Bank’ by Dr. Vimal Kishore. The web based application connects institutions, job seekers and employers across the country. The portal also eases the placement process by directly linking alumni to employers and vice versa. Besides that, a documentary film ‘Meri Zindagi, Meri Zimmedari’ was released by Mr. Rajan Kohli which will be used for mobilization of needy youth for the BASE skill development program. The film features how DB Tech handholds each and every youth who enters its premises and fulfills their glimpses of hopes.

The volunteering initiative ‘Freedom with Five’ was launched by Rev. Fr. Arokia which is a programme for contributing donation both in terms of money as well as time in multiples of five. Under this volunteering initiative, anybody can participate by contributing money or time towards this noble cause. As a volunteer, you can donate multiple of 5 rupees or spare multiple of 5 hours for different volunteering options.



Rev. Fr. Maria launching the volunteering initiative, ‘Freedom with Five’.

Fr. Adolph Furtado (Director-DBIT, Kurla) thanked all the eminent members of the Govt and public sectors for being present for this inaugural function. He highly appreciated and thanked the DB Tech National team for the hard work put in towards the successful launch of this project.

Youth Survey Reports released

Don Bosco Tech conducted 'Youth Survey' to assess the employability of rural youngsters from 'Below Poverty Line' across the country. DB Tech administered over 55,000 questionnaires in four regions to assess caste distribution, educational status, employment status, the youths' willingness to migrate for employment and other correlation amongst these variables. To assess the demography and the current socio-economic status of the community, DB Tech conducted this survey in the pre-implementation phase of the project.

Two Youth Survey Reports for North-Central and East & North-East regions were released by Don Bosco Tech during this quarter. In the North-Central region, a total of 24,000 data collected from Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. Out of which 13,292 data were analyzed to understand youngsters' interest towards skill development program, opportunities available in their locality and their willingness/preparedness for migration. In the East and North-East region, 16,694 data administered from West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura, chance for better productive life. On the bManipur and Arunachal Pradesh out of which 15,167 data were analysed. The findings highlight that there is a pool of unskilled or semiskilled youth waiting for right opportunity for

vocational training which in turn gives the youth a basis of the findings, the strategies will be designed for effective implementation of the project.

The copies of the report were submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, and other nodal agencies.



Planned effort to execute the BASE project

With financial support from the Ministry of Rural Development (Government of India) under the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), DB Tech has been rolling out the first phase of the Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) project.

To facilitate easier administration and better penetration, DB Tech divided the country into four regions (North-Central, East & North-East, South and South-West). The North-Central region comprises the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar; the East & North-East region: West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim; the South region: Kerala, Karnataka and Goa; and, the South-West Region: Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Before implementation of the project, DB Tech made an effort to conduct 'Youth Survey' in these four regions to assess the caste distribution, educational status, employment status, the youths' willingness to migrate for employment, and other correlation amongst these variables. These Youth Survey Reports certainly enlighten to the effect that clarify the need for the project intervention and the availability of the target group.

Based on the findings, 14 centres in North-Central, 10 centres in East & North-East, 15 centres in South, and 29 centres in South-West will be started in the first phase of implementation. As per the



current status, 9 centres are operational in the North-Central region; 10 centres in the East & North-East region will be started by the first week of July; and, the centres in South and South-West region will be operational during the month of July.

Placement interfacing has been initiated with various corporates to ensure that as the first batch passes out in August, DB Tech is ready to provide them with employment opportunities in the respective industry.

We welcome Fr. Raju

We are pleased to announce that Fr. Raju Philip has assumed charge as Assistant Director of Don Bosco Tech. We welcome Fr. Raju to DB Tech family. His extensive experience and tremendous passion for philanthropy will add great value to the DB Tech's mission.

Fr. Raju values people who take on responsibility with integrity and vision. With an open manner, he encourages team members and supports them in their work so that shared goals can be reached.

All of us at DB Tech look forward to the unique skills and experience that Fr. Raju will bring to the organisation.



Training Programs

Igniting the Leadership Quality

DB Tech National Office organised a Management Training Programme in the Don Bosco Provincial House, Okhla, on 18-19 March 2010. It was a two day training programme on Leadership led by the renowned trainers, Mr. Raja Krishnamoorthy and Mr. Shekar Rajan.



Mr. Raja Krishnamoorthy, the human resource specialist, has been a guide, coach and advisor to CEOs and HR Heads of corporate organizations. With his unique strength of conceptual frameworks and organizational models, he has supported a wide range of organizations in various areas of organizational development.

Mr. Shekar Rajan has more than a decade of experience in handling training programs in organizational development and leadership development. He has wide exposure to a range of training programs and workshops for various industries like IT, manufacturing, services, and education.

There were 46 participants including the principals and managers of some of the Don Bosco Technical Institutes across the country, Project Heads & Province Resource Team members. The training was well conducted with discussions, personal works, sharing, and other dynamics of training workshops. Personal experiences, and illustrations and imagery, and challenges enriched the entire training workshop.

Training on Life Skills



A Training of Trainers (TOT) for Life skills was organised at Don Bosco Provincial House, Okhla, for all the DB Tech trainers involved with the MoRD Project from 22- 26 March 2010. The training programme was facilitated by the master trainers from Edulever. 17 participants from different states like Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagaland, Mizoram, Goa, Jharkhand, Assam and Delhi

attended the life skills training. This training was carried out with the view of creating master trainers for different provinces who would be further training the trainers involved in the MoRD Project.

The master trainers from Edulever included Mr. Chetan Kapoor, Ms. Amrita and Mr. Prerit, who trained the team on the two main components i.e., Workplace English and Work-Readiness, of Life skills module. This life skill module is developed by Edulever in response to the core competencies the organizations and companies nowadays look for in their employees which include good communication skills and basic mannerisms and etiquettes which demands for an attitudinal change in their learners' behavior.

Creating Team Synergy

A training program 'Team Synergy' was organized for senior and middle level executives of DB Tech in Nainital from 1-3 June 2010. The three days training program was conducted by eminent trainers Mr Raja Krishnamoorthy and Mr Sekhar Rajan of the famed training organization Talent Maximus.

The objectives of the training program were to understand the stages of team effectiveness, pinpoint the team's current level of development, recognize and eliminate blockages to maximum performance, enhance the communication flow vertically and horizontally, and defining mission, vision and values.



The training programme was attended by 25 participants from the National and Regional offices. Team synergy is a complete training program that revolves around key issues that can block team effectiveness. Using learning instruments, hands-on activities, and an interactive team simulation, teams gain a clearer sense of direction, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve operating processes, and bolster both interpersonal and inter-team relationships.

New Partnerships

DB Tech inks MoU with Sobha Developers

Don Bosco Tech has entered into a training partnership with Sobha Developers, one of the largest companies in the construction arena, for providing functional vocational training in carpentry, masonry, tiling, plumbing and other trades to youth from the weaker sections of the society.

As per the pilot partnership agreement, Sobha has agreed to train the students mobilized from different Don Bosco communities in the trades of masonry, plumbing, tiling and general work supervision. Besides the training, Sobha will offer them stipend, food and accommodation at subsidized rates, and finally in



placement. The first batch of 90 students would be initially trained starting mid-July, and based on the initial response from the students, the project will be replicated or scaled-up in scope and reach.

Endeavour to reach out to more youth



In partnership with Accenture, Don Bosco Tech (DB Tech) started a pilot project to identify and make available potential demand-driven livelihood options for 500 poor and marginalized urban slum youth. Under this partnership, DB Tech has been providing vocational training in the Hospitality domain to the youth from impoverished families in Boriwali, Chinchwad, Bengaluru and Delhi.

Being the leader in Hospitality sector, the Taj Group has extended its support as the knowledge partner for quality training to the students of DB Tech. Besides training, the Taj Group supports for curriculum development, training of trainers, on-the-job training and also certification to the students. Over 250 youth are being trained and placed in various facilities of Taj Group.

Satisfied with the success of this pilot project, Accenture and DB Tech are venturing into replicating the project to other parts of the country. The locations for these new centres will certainly ensure uniform spread across the country and wider coverage with hospitality industry leaders.

MoRD Centre Inauguration

Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow: The first BASE centre was inaugurated at Don Bosco Technical Institute (Lucknow) on May 21, 2010. The dignitaries invited to the function included Fr. Joseph (Director - DBTI, Lucknow), Br Cyriac (Administrator – DBTI, Lucknow) and parents of the students. Over 65 students enrolled the vocational training in Retail Academy and Sales & Marketing.



Fr. Joseph highlighted the changing demands of job market and the importance of vocational training to their needs. According to him, the job-oriented training certainly helps them to find out an entry level job in the new economy. Br. Cyriac briefed the students about the life of St. John Bosco and his mission to empower the less privileged youth.

Orissa



Karmunda: The first Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) project, funded by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) was inaugurated in Orissa on May 31, 2010. The inaugural function was organized by Fr. Jyotish (Administrator, DBVTI) at Don Bosco Centre (Karmunda, Orissa). Shri Mangla Kishan (Hon'ble Member, Rajya Sabha) graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Fr. Charles Lobo (Rector) presided over the function. The Chief Guest encouraged the trainees to make use of the three months' training program which enables them to enter into the main stream of the society. Over 603 applicants filled their application forms to enroll for the vocational training program, out of which 172 were selected for Electrician, Welding, ITes, ISMO and Hospitality. The overwhelming response from the community certainly makes the program successful.

Upaya: The second BASE centre was started at Upaya to empower the youth from Below Poverty Line. The centre was inaugurated by Fr. Mariya (Director, Upaya Vocational Training Centre) on June 4, 2010. Over 120 students enrolled the vocational training in MST, Welding, ITes, S&M and Driving. This inaugural function was also attended by the parents of the trainees who enrolled for the 3-months training. The objective of this function was to give an orientation to the trainees as well as their parents about the vocational training.

Kerala



Vaduthala: The first centre of BASE project (South region) was officially inaugurated at Cheranellore, (Kerala) on June 21, 2010. Fr. Devassy Chirackal (Rector, Don Bosco, Vaduthala) was the Chief Guest at the function, which was presided over by Mr. A. A.

Mathew (Panchayat President, Cheranellore). Dr. K.S. Radhakrishnan (Former Vice Chancellor, Sanskrit University) officially inaugurated the job oriented vocational training program. The program was attended by the trainees and their parents who enrolled the vocational training in Computer & IT related courses.

Assam

Guwahati: BASE project was formally launched in East and North-East region Maligaon centre on July 1, 2010. The inaugural function was organized at Don Bosco Technical School (Maligaon). Shri Ramen Kalita (MLA, West Guwahati) was the Chief Guest and other dignitaries included Fr. Johnson Parackal (Executive Director, Bosco Reach Out), Fr. Abraham Kanattu (Director, DBTS, Maligaon) and project team members.



Fr. Abraham Kanattu welcomed the guests and all participants. He committed to make available all logistics for MoRD project implementation. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest informed that he would provide all possible help to make the project a great success. Fr. Johnson Parackal, in his speech, highlighted the aims and objectives of the project. The centre is now ready to implement the first phase of the project for training and employment of rural youths of the region. More than 70 eligible trainees have been selected for Welding, Motor Driving and Motor Mechanics.

Jharkhand



After an intensive mobilization, third center of BASE project was inaugurated in Jharkhand. The Dumka centre was inaugurated by Shri Balram Mahato (Asst. Project Officer, DRDA, Dumka) and Shri Debasis Saha (Asst. Project Officer, SGSY, Dumka) on July 4, 2010. Other government officials and parents of DB Tech students were also present in the inaugural function. 90 students are enrolled in Welding, Air Condition & Refrigeration and Electricals domains.

Valedictory Functions

Bangalore: A valedictory function was organized for the students of Hospitality Management Course at Taj Residency, Bangalore, on June 9, 2010. While the 3-months vocational training



programme is funded by Accenture, the Taj Group of Hotels contributed by being the knowledge partner. Mr. H. N. Srinivas (Senior VP-HR, Taj Group) presented the most coveted course completion certificate to all Hospitality Management students of Don Bosco Training Centre (Lingarajapuram). Other dignitaries invited to the function include Mr. Saleem Yousuff (General Manager, Taj Residency), Fr. George Mathew (Provincial Economist, BREADS), Fr. Joseph Elavanal (Executive Director, BREADS) and Fr. Nicholas.

In his presidential address, Mr. H. N. Srinivas stressed the importance of discipline in life and asked the trainees to build up self confidence and the ability to face difficult situations. He congratulated the management and the staff at Don Bosco for the selfless and dedicated service to the society and promised to give all possible assistance.

Borivli: The first batch of 52 students was awarded their course completion certificates during the valedictory function held at Bosco Boys (Borivli) on March 6, 2010. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Mr. Vasant Ayyappan (Director-Corporate Sustainability, Taj Group). Also present on the dais were, Fr. Ajay Fernandes (Vice Provincial), Fr. Savio Silveira, Fr. Anacleto D'Mello and Fr. Anthony Santarita.



The students were trained in Hospitality Service, Restaurant Service, Indian Cookery, and Bakery & Confectionery. Besides the classroom sessions, the students received hands-on experience in different hotels, and were taken for exposure visits to the Taj President Hotel at Cuffe Parade and to the Taj Sats Air Catering Centre.

Some of the students came forward to share their experience of the past months and to express their gratitude to the institution. They were full of praise for the excellent training that they had received and for the personal interest taken in them by the management and staff.

Shaping in the 'DB Way'

Induction training plays a vital role in the overall shaping up of the new trainers in the 'Don Bosco Way'. The objective of conducting induction training is to introduce the unique process to the newly recruited trainers which will equip them to handle their respective centres. In the induction program, the trainers cover facilitation skills, adult learning methodology, life skills, soft skills, MoRD & MES process and BASE process. The trainers add vigor and enthusiasm with their active participation in the training programme. Each trainer is given the opportunity to conduct mock classes related to their respective trades and professions. The sessions are packed with various activities like role plays, games and group discussions, story sharing, video/audio recording and case studies, which bring out the best in the participants. In the last quarter, seven induction programs were conducted in New Delhi (2 ToTs), Lucknow, Bangalore, Kolkata, Guwahati and Mumbai.

1. April 12-16 at New Delhi for 33 trainers from Jharkhand and Chattisgarh.
2. April 19-23 at Lucknow for 37 trainers from Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar.
3. May 10-12 at New Delhi for 8 trainers from Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.
4. May 17-21 at Kolkata for 34 trainers from West Bengal.
5. May 25-28 at Bangalore for 23 trainers from West Bengal.
6. May 24-28 at Guwahati for 46 trainers from Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram.
7. June 14-18 at Mumbai for 22 trainers from Maharashtra and Chattisgarh.



Centre in focus: Don Bosco, Guwahati



Flanked by luscious green hills on one side and the majestic Brahmaputra on the other, Don Bosco Institute (DBI) in Guwahati blends in with the surroundings like a verdant dream but stands out as a majestic tribute to the aspirations of a whole region. Starting off in 1991 as DBYM, the centre always had youth at the epicentre of its activities with the programmes based primarily on four themes – vocational education, volunteerism, leadership and national integration. Over the years many new programmes were added, covering new horizons and addressing new target beneficiaries. One notable addition was the Bosco Barefoot College which provided livelihood training to school dropouts.

The DBI, in its present campus, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on November 22, 2004, who said during the ceremony, "What you are doing shows us the way forward. May your path be blessed". And blessed indeed has been the giant strides taken by the centre towards its mission to nurture the dreams and shape the lives of the youth in the North East. The MBA programme was started in August 2010 which aimed at bringing affordable, world-class, management education to the region. Besides this, there are a host of other training programmes for youth from all strata of life depending on their attitudes and inclinations.

Interview

Moulding the youth for tomorrow

An interview with Fr. V.M. Thomas (Director, DBI)



In addition to standing as a tall testimony to the dreams of the north eastern region, for the realisation of the true potential of the youth and in helping them secure social and financial future, DBI is also active in the comprehensive development of the state as well as the region. For this, the centre spearheads several social action initiatives like networking and advocacy, runs a

Disaster Preparedness Project, conducts several in-service training for Maths and Science teachers and organises the activities of the Junior Red Cross in the region. "A few years ago, we even organised a Peace Initiative," says Fr V.M. Thomas, Director, DBI "it was our effort to take us one step closer to our dream of peace in the region and discover our identities as

brethren. The initiative was attended by the several stalwarts from different sectors and was a huge success."

Fr V.M. Thomas, a renowned educationist, is the pillar on which the centre and its myriad activities rest today. He is literally the proverbial rock upon which the state-of-the-art centre, overlooking the vibrant Brahmaputra, was built. "Many tried to dissuade me from undertaking such a challenging task as a construction of this magnitude that too right by the banks of the mighty river," Fr V.M., as he is fondly called, reminisces. "With some basic inputs from the architect, I went on to draw the blue print, that too with little experience in architecture." Hard to believe? Not really, when he hastens to add, "My hands were led by some mysterious power and all roadblocks got sorted out on their own as if by some superior intervention, nothing short of divine." This 'mysterious power', as Fr V.M. calls it, has continued to lead him since in all his decisions and has been instrumental in making DBI the symbol of quality training and commitment it symbolises today.

Q: Fr V.M., DBI is one of the prestigious vocational training centres in the state as well in the country. Surely you must be feeling proud when everybody looks up to the centre and the great work it does?

Fr. Thomas: DBI has come into national and international focus mostly by dint of our perseverance, hard work, commitment to the development of the region. It is also looked upon because of the varieties of services and programmes offered to the youth as well as educators. There have been words of appreciation from different quarters for our work which definitely makes us feel proud at the



same time propels us to improve our services in terms of its quality and quantity.

Q: When the youth icon Rahul Gandhi visited your centre and spoke so highly about it, surely you would have been on Cloud Nine. Do the words of the scion spur you to greater heights?

Fr. Thomas: The visit of Rahul in 2009 was certainly a great honour for DBI. His approach was totally different. He came as someone who wanted to have first hand information from the students and address them. That he was impressed by the infrastructure and the quality of the training is manifested by the sentiments he expressed while addressing the gathering here as well as by the generous praise he showered on the centre when he wrote to DoNER later.

Q: What are the courses offered by DBI?

Fr. Thomas: We have a host of vocational and professional courses on offer here. Of these, those in most demand are the diploma and certificate courses in computer application, DTP,

diploma in electronics and service engineering, modern office management and secretarial training, certificate course for primary and high school teachers. Our professional courses like Networking, ADCA, Enterprise Administrator, Accounting, etc are also a big hit with the youth in and around Guwahati.

Q: You have a fantastic infrastructure here. How do you ensure that these are used to its potential? How does your institute reach out to the maximum number of students?

Fr. Thomas: DBI always believes in giving the best to the least. The 'fantastic' infrastructure, as you call it, was intentionally created so that the poor who do not have access to such facilities will find it in DBI. Initially it was tough to motivate youngsters to come forward and join the vocational courses. But today, we are getting applications exceeding our capacity. Over the years, our courses have gained popularity not through any advertisements but through word-of-mouth.

Besides the courses conducted at DBI, we have several outreach programmes across the state of Assam where we give educational support to 3500 children. Through our Bosco Barefoot College and other youth development initiatives, we train about 10,000 youth every year.

Q: Do you select your faculty personally? What are the facilities here at DBI?

Fr. Thomas: Yes, I am personally involved in selecting and training our staff. We are blessed with a young team of committed, hardworking and qualified staff who understand our vision, mission and values.

Our facilities are really world-class: 150,000 sq ft of built up space, five air conditioned lecture halls and conference halls, library, computer labs, language labs, amphitheatre, dining rooms, separate hostels for boys and

"You are second to none, not only as an institution, but more importantly as students; you are capable as anyone else in the country."

Rahul Gandhi, MP

girls, Internet and a mini stadium.

Q: DBI is an active partner in the landmark livelihood programme of DB Tech with the Ministry of Rural Development. What do you think about the programme?

Fr. Thomas: Partnering with the programme is a milestone for DBI because of its sheer reach – covering several thousands



beneficiaries across the country every year. The MoRD programme is very much in line with the spirit and mission of DBI and we will do everything possible to make this a grand success.

Q: Any suggestions to better the programme?

Fr. Thomas: The induction and the orientation should be devised in such a way that the participants emerge well motivated. There should be a systematic follow up on the staff performance as well as regular feedback from the trainees should be collected. These are very important especially for a programme of this magnitude and scale.

Q: What are your plans for the centre? Any new courses in the near future?

Fr. Thomas: My plans for the future are the 3 Es: Expansion, Excellence and Equity. Expand services in terms of quality and outreach, networking. Improve quality and provide better facilities – excellence. Equity – bring in more programmes for the less privileged.

Q: Can you share with us some of your memorable moments at the helm of the centre? And some defining moments of DBI?

"I am happy that Don Bosco has taken the initiative in the direction of vocational education."

Shri Tarun Gogoi
Chief Minister, Assam

Fr. Thomas: The inauguration of the centre by the PM, visit by Rahul Gandhi, the agonies and ecstasies connected with starting off seven schools for deprived children in Kokrajhar and Chirang....the many miracles from that mysterious power. (Smiles)

Q: As a renowned educator, what would you like to tell our



thousands of students across DB Tech centres in India?

Fr. Thomas: India is emerging as a global economic power and a job factory for the world. With millions of talented young people, India has the immense potential to emerge as a developed nation. All that is required of you, young people, is to equip yourselves with skills, be empowered and transform yourselves and thereby, transform India. The future of India is in your hands. You can shape it and help India emerge a global superpower.

"It is a dream that is in the making here. Yes, this is a dream that we all have for the north eastern region."

B.K. Handique
Minister of Mines and DoNER

A great opportunity is offered to you at the DB Tech centres all over the country. But our centres cannot build the future for the youth, it can only build the youth for the future. Use these centres, join our courses, come to our facilities and build your future and shape the future of your nation.

