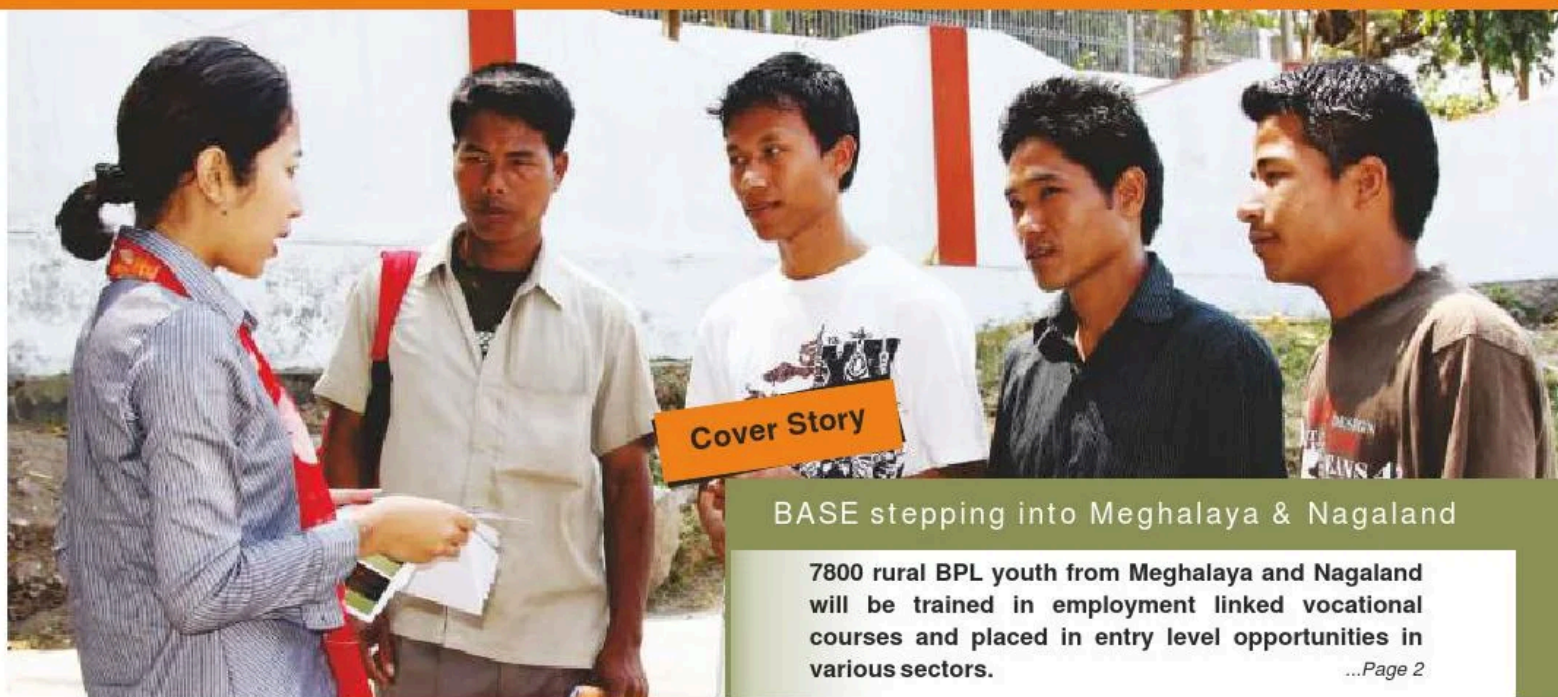




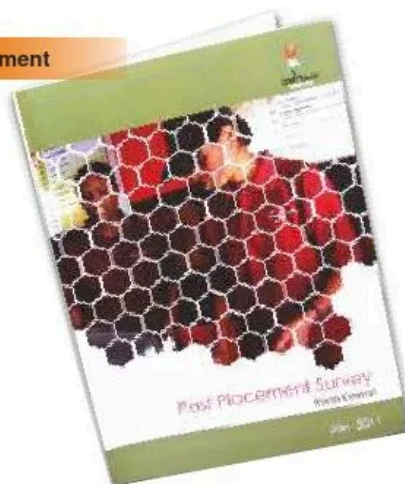
BASE stepping into Meghalaya & Nagaland

7800 rural BPL youth from Meghalaya and Nagaland will be trained in employment linked vocational courses and placed in entry level opportunities in various sectors.

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Published by
Fr. A. M. Joseph sdb on behalf of DB Tech

Feature

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Centre in Focus:
Don Bosco Centre,
Chitradurga,
Karnataka



Message from Program Director



“

Greetings, Team DB Tech!

The euphoria may be over but the elation continues. Our victory in the Cricket World Cup is definitely the high point this year. As we at DB Tech complete our first year of full-fledged project implementation, I would like to draw some happy parallels between our iconic cricket team and ourselves – after all the toil and sweat, we do deserve a pat on the back!

Despite a moderate bowling attack that we were able to pull up our socks is a standing testimonial to what we are capable of if we rely on one thing – performance. Excellence with equanimity is at the core of a true performer. There has to be team play, yes. But what stood out at the final match with Sri Lanka was individual merit, marked by fearlessness and an unrelenting march towards one goal – victory.

We are proud of the pace at which operations at all our 102 centres all across the country are moving today. We are also proud of the processes and systems that have become an integral part of our program management. In the last one year, we have attained several highs in terms of processes and systems implementation through the operations and allied departments. I would like to enumerate a few here viz. the training scheduler, the due diligence process, training of trainers and induction, refresher trainings, domain conferences, mid-batch assessments, batch reviews, post placement surveys, etc. Through effective management of these processes the operations team is on a conscious and focused mission of minimizing cost and time over run. As projections speak, we will be able to complete the pilot projects well within the tenure agreed with the funders.

While I am glad of these well-managed and concerted efforts in promoting excellence and improving process efficiency, we need to constantly better these, and incorporate similar efforts in our support functions as well. Let excellence be a habit at DB Tech, let process adherence be a way of life and professionalism be the conscious effort from every team member to make our ambitious scale-up plan to skill 20 lakhs by 2020 a reality.

Now, before I wind up let me enumerate some of the lessons corporate India has picked up from the World Cup win which augurs well with our way forward as well:

Believe in yourself – ignore the naysayers; Think big – have a larger purpose; Count on experience – use it to build and strengthen the support system; Raise the bar – surpass your own targets.

We do have a long way to go. But these will ensure excellence and efficiency in all our efforts and endeavours.

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BASE stepping into Meghalaya & Nagaland

Tura (Meghalaya): BASE – Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment – a livelihood project funded by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India was launched in Meghalaya and Nagaland. The inaugural function was organized at Bosco Youth Centre in Tura on March 13, 2011. Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Rural Development, Ms Agatha K Sangma was invited as Chief Guest for the function. Other dignitaries present at the inaugural function included Mr. Robinhood Luxluy Momin(MDC, Tura), Mr. S. Sangma (BDO, Rongram Block), Fr. V. A. Cyriac (Ex Principal, Don Bosco College), Fr. Janurius Sangma (Rector, Don Bosco School, Tura), Fr. Johnson Parackal (Director, Bosco Reach Out), Fr. Anthony Abong Marak (Director, Don Bosco Youth Center), Fr. Raju Philip (Asst. Director, DB Tech), Sunil Sharma (Head-Operations, DB Tech) and Stanley Jones (Head-Organisational Development, DB Tech).

Addressing the gathering, Ms. Agatha K Sangma mentioned that China's economy is based on manufacturing industry that requires minimum skills but there is inclusive growth in their country, whereas India in spite of being service industry based economy lacks inclusive growth because BPL youth cannot be employed due to inadequate skills. Therefore, skills need to be imparted for the country to grow. To bring a sustainable and holistic development in rural areas, Ministry of Rural Development has been collaborating with different implementing agencies to supplement the wage employment through various skill development opportunities. "Considering the presence, infrastructure and quality training, MoRD partnered with DB Tech under the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) for empowering the youngsters from Meghalaya and Nagaland through short term vocational training. BASE is the only programme in North East to ensure the youth, especially the BPL youth, to get into the mainstream," she added.

She urged the youth to take full advantage of the project.

Under this project, 7800 rural BPL youth in the preferable age group (18-35 years) from Meghalaya and Nagaland will be trained in employment linked courses and placed in entry level opportunities in various sectors. DB Tech will provide the required skills that suit to the market requirements and will also ensure placements of the trainees. Ms Sangma also exhorted the youth of North East India to make use of the training facilities available in Don Bosco to qualify themselves, get employed and become self-reliant so that they can face the future with courage and confidence.

Giving a brief update about the project, Fr Raju Philip said, "Since its (BASE) inception in May, last year, over 8,000 youngsters have been trained with 85 per cent of them getting employment through placements. The project will target the marginalised youth, the downtrodden who do not get an opportunity to avail any employment generation training."

Extending the service to these backward states, DB Tech aims at empowering youth from below poverty line through the BASE project. Through this program, DB Tech will provide appropriate skills to school drop-outs, semi-skilled and un-skilled workers which are aligned with industry needs. The vocational training program comprises 3 months' classroom training, on-the-job training, exposure visits and guest lectures. To reinforce the students' learning further, classroom teaching is supplemented with practical training, for which DB Tech provides excellent infrastructural support. The trainees are put through spoken English and work-readiness modules, which help them to understand the pulse of the industry they are getting into, and exhort them to constantly strive for advanced learning opportunities.

DB Tech News

Tracking for betterment

DB Tech in line with the requirements of the project and its own mandate ensures the youth are trained, placed and tracked. Tracking of the youth through post placement is an integral part of the overall program model of DB Tech. The Post Placement Survey (PPS) is conducted after three months of completion of a batch. DB Tech commits to track the youth for a period of one year after placing them in the industry. The main purpose of tracking the youth is to ensure that the trained youth do not leave jobs and go back to villages being unemployed again; to assess the impact on the family of the youth and the neighbourhood; and to obtain feedback of employers on quality of training and the career growth of these youth trained and placed with them.



PPS is conducted in-house by the Monitoring and Evaluation department of DB Tech. The methodology is designed to get data pertaining to the target beneficiary and is mainly done through one-to-one interaction. The strategy followed is to track 25% trained and placed in every batch over a period of one year and hence covering the entire population of trained and placed.

PPS is a tool to assess the status of youth and qualitative changes in the lives of the trained youth and also is an integral tool that enables to design the scale-up programs as it provides a rich data and analysis of strengthening the operational strategy for skill development programs of DB Tech.

DB Tech released the PPS of North Central region and the reports of East & North East and South will be released by April 15. PPS of South West is presently under process and soon the report will be shared with the stakeholders. The process and reports have been hugely applauded by our stakeholders Corporates, Government.

Ensuring quality of skill training

New Delhi: Quality Council of India (QCI) in collaboration with Don Bosco Tech conducted two-day training and assessment of Examiners of Assessing Bodies on February 18-19, 2011. The training cum assessment program was conducted at Don Bosco Technical Institute (Okhla, New Delhi). 28 assessors from various assessing bodies participated in the training cum assessment program.

In the inaugural speech, Mr Vipin Sahani (Director, QCI) drew the attention of all the guests and assessors mentioning that 500 million workers need to be trained by 2020. He stressed further upon the quality of training and the certification of these trained youngsters by an accredited board. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Dinesh Nijhawan (Director, Skill Development Initiatives, DGET) said that Modular Employable Skills (MES) was launched in 2007 and it was a good scheme to streamline the dropout youth of the country. But the



guidelines of the scheme were not followed properly by the implementing parties and the assessing bodies as well. Mr Ashok Jain (Sr. Consultant, QCI) said that India is a young country and within three years, it is going to be the manufacturing hub of the world. Therefore, the need for skilled youth is the need of the hour. The assessors should assess the trainee in such a way that once he/she completes the course, he/she should be employable in the market.

The training for the assessors was conducted by Retd. Gen. Dhir, who touched upon the various dimensions of assessment like methods of assessment, assessment parameters, quality assessments, etc. The assessors were put through three different tests touching upon the dynamics of assessment, domain knowledge and skill assessment through mock test.

DB Tech hogs limelight at Saras Mela

Ranchi: Ranchi Saras Mela, the largest mela of its kind in all over India, had started on December 10, 2010. Around 600 stalls selling various items from different states of India are making the mela grand. Stalls in the mela also include important centres for people's welfare programmes of Govt. of India like SGSY, PMEGP, PMRY, etc. The Saras Mela was inaugurated by our Honourable President, Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil.



Don Bosco got an opportunity to showcase the skill development program in this grand mela. DB Tech in partnership with Ministry of Rural Development (Govt. of India) has been imparting vocational training to the under privileged youth across India. The effort by the Government to organize Saras Mela, helps Don Bosco to reach out to the right candidates for the training programme. In this regard, the

state team put two stalls to mobilize the needy youth for different market-driven courses offered by DB Tech in Jharkhand, and also to encourage the BPL youth to benefit from this program funded by Govt. of India. Saras Mela was a good platform to highlight the skill development programmes. Some of BASE alumni were invited to this mela, who helped to mobilize the future aspirants for the training.

DB Tech: Preferred PIA at Counseling Mela

Bhubaneswar: Joining hands with Government of India in propagating the skill linked employment program under special SGSY project, Government of Orissa took a unique initiative to mobilize youth from different pockets of Orissa at one platform, there by facilitating the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) to mobilize and counsel them at one go, and enrolling them under different trades. The Panchayatraj Department (Govt. of Orissa) and Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) were key players in brining this noble thought into action. 1150 youth from 36 blocks (30 Sadar blocks and 6 LWE affected) of Orissa were mobilized and asked to join the Counseling Mela in Bhubaneswar for final counseling and tagging under different PIAs for different courses. Out of all 18 agencies sponsored by MoRD for the special SGSY project, 11 agencies working in Orissa participated in this Counseling Mela which started on Jan 22, 2011 and continued till Feb 11, 2011 at ORMAS Campus (Bhubaneswar). The Panchayatraj Minister Sri Prafulla Samal inaugurated the Mela, along with him Mr. Arbind Kumar Padhee, IAS (Director TRIPTI and NRLM), Sri S.K Lohani, IAS (Commissioner cum Secretary, Special Project), Sri S.N Tripathy, IAS (Principal Secretary) were among the guests.



DB Tech being one of the leading organizations running this project at pan India level, was absorbed the most number of students owing to its presence in four different districts, range of domains offered and having residential training facility. All PIAs were requested to appraise the youth about the domains, facilities offered at the centre, and the placement opportunities available at their end. After a formal briefing of the PIAs, the youth were tagged with different PIAs for counseling. DB Tech enrolled around 185 students from Kendujhar, Balasore, Jharsuguda, Ganjam, Phulbani, Sundargarh and Kendrapada district for its forthcoming batches. The IEC tools of DB Tech were highly appreciated by all senior officials of the Panchayatraj department. Looking at the overwhelming response of the students towards DB Tech as one of the preferred PIAs, Sri Pradhan (Deputy Director, Panchayatraj Dept, Govt. of Orissa) said that the state Govt. would like to enter into a partnership with DB Tech at the state level operations as well.

Enhancing employability skills by Accenture volunteers

New Delhi: As a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, 11 volunteers from Accenture visited Don Bosco Tech (Najafgarh) on January 29, 2011. The volunteering programme started with a

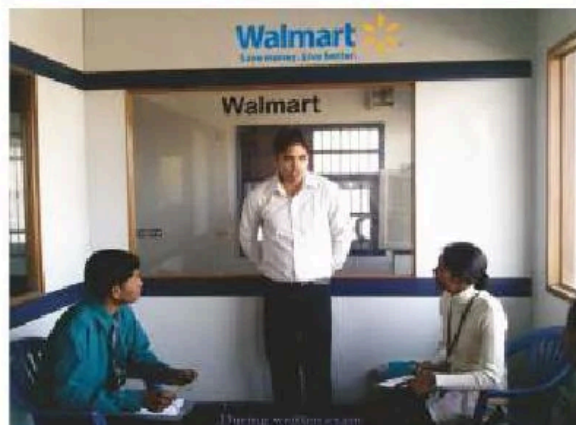
briefing about DB Tech, its mission and objectives. The volunteers were also briefed about the partnership with Accenture for imparting vocational training in Hospitality & Facilities Management to youth, especially from economically impoverished backgrounds. Before starting of any activity, the volunteers asked the students about their interests and expectations from this program. Most of the students were mainly looking for some guidance on confidence building, effective communication skills and team building skills.



The volunteers divided the class into five groups; and each group was asked to sell a product to consumers with their innovative ideas. The students used some innovative ways to sell the product given to them which shows their qualities of good salesmanship. In the second session, the volunteers conduct another activity on the prospective of Food & Beverage Service. In this session, the students were asked to think beyond the obvious and explore all probable ways of dealing with the problem. The students started coming up with beneficial and cost effective solutions to resolve the situation given to them. Regarding volunteering experience, Mr Harsh shared, "It was a wonderful experience, where I can see hopeful faces trying to carve their way to success. The youngsters are having full of positive energy and just need some fine tuning."

BASE trainees recruited by Bharti Walmart

Kunkuri (Chhattisgarh): A campus interview was organized for the Sales & Marketing students at BASE (Kunkuri) on January 21, 2011. Mr. J. Raghvendra (Recruitment Team, Bharti Walmart) had conducted the campus interview for the post of Floor Assistant in Bharti Walmart (Raipur). 57 students participated in the interview and out of that, 21 aspirants were selected for final round of interview. These students are called for final interview at Bharti Walmart in Raipur. This Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) centre located at the remote village Kunkuri in Chhattisgarh. The



centre is having maximum number of tribal students, who belong to lower economic strata and were hardly having any opportunity to complete their formal education. They never thought about any job related training that will provide them an entry level opportunity within few span of months and a handsome salary.

10 students were selected as Floor Assistant with a salary of Rs 6500 per month. The interviewers were pleased with the grooming of the tribal students and their sound knowledge in Sales & Marketing and Computer. Mr. Raghvendra said, "We are very surprised that many NGOs are working in urban and rural area but DB Tech is working in tribal areas and providing appropriate skills to the candidates in three months, and in these few months, DB Tech not only provides them training but also placement in their respective fields." Appointment letter comes as a surprise for Kishor Prakash Tirkey, who shared, "Nobody will believe that I am selected by Bharti Walmart. Everyone was thinking that as a tribal student, I cannot work in a city or in a mall. But I proved that I am the best among others so that I am recruited by Bharti Walmart. Thanks to DB Tech for giving me a chance to prove my strengths." Having a strong faith on her capabilities, another alumnus Nisha Singh said: "I am quite confident that I will be selected because I am empowered with technical skills, computers and other soft skills."

Promoting awareness of HIV/ AIDS

Trasi (Karnataka): To create an awareness of HIV/AIDS, a lecture was organized at DB Tech (Trasi) on March 18, 2011. Dr. Reni Wilson, specialist in Gynecology, was the resource person for the session. Dr. Reni Wilson began the session in a very interactive manner by asking the students to name the sources through which one can get affected by HIV/AIDS. The students shared some valuable inputs which helped the resource person to initiate the lecture. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Reni said that the HIV is not transferred through hugging, touching, wearing the clothes of HIV patients or through the saliva of the HIV positive victims. It is spread through by using unhygienic syringe, making tattoos, having unprotected sex with the HIV positive. If the mother is HIV positive then the child might get effected easily to the virus.



Further, she instructed the students not to discriminate any person having HIV positive virus but to treat them as a normal human being and show them sympathy, extra care and affection. So that they will not take any extreme steps in life. While delivering the lecture, she said, "Youngsters play a vital role to eradicate the stigma by promoting effective forms of prevention, counseling, treatment and provide needed support. AIDS may not be curable but by taking proper treatment and medicine the patient can live for 15-20 years." At the end of the session, the students thanked Dr. Reni by presenting a Thank You card, which was prepared and duly signed by them. The seminar was concluded by conveying the vote of thanks.

Chefs without hats

Berhampur: A training programme was conducted for a group of 25 students from Hospitality domain of BASE (Berhampur, Orissa) on March 7 - 25, 2010. The BASE programme is meant for only rural BPL youth, and if you look at their educational background, most of them are school dropouts or having a matriculation certificate. In the beginning of the training programme, Hospitality meant to them only cooking, serving and wiping dishes in hotels. After completion of few days of theory classes, now they can perfectly distinguish themselves as a professional in the Hospitality sector. In order to bring hand-on experience that could prepare them for practical challenges, the trainees underwent three weeks of training at The Nandan International – a premier hotel in Berhampur.



After initial discussion regarding DB Tech's objectives, Mr. Mirza Aslam Baig (GM, Nandan International) expressed interest for on-the-job training to the trainees. Divided in groups, the students went in morning and evening shift after attending their theory classes. Trainees were excited for the practical exposure where they can experience the real time activities of different aspects like housekeeping (bed making), table layout, taking food orders & serving, banquet, mis-en-scene, wiping, etc. During the period, they understood the environment, customer dealing, discipline, mannerism and tolerance. The officials of Nandan International expressed their satisfaction over the trainees' passion and hopeful of their placements.

Exposure Visits

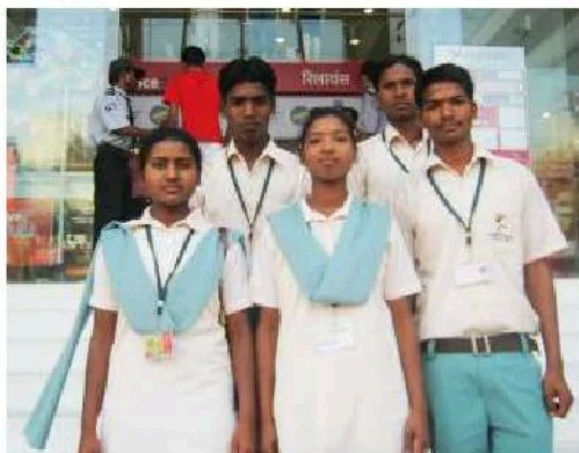
Cuttack: An exposure visit for the Hospitality domain of BASE (Kendrapada) was organized on March 15-16, 2011. The trainees of Hospitality domain visited the Hotel Grand Residency – 3 star hotel of the Silver City Group. The entire field visit was facilitated by Mr. Nirmal Dash (Hospitality Trainer) along with Mr. Pradipta Kumar Sahoo (Sr. Captain, F&B Services, Grand Residency). The objective of the field visit was to get the insight of the Hospitality work culture and dynamics of star hotels.

Mr. Nirmal Dash appraised the General Manager about the objective of the exposure visit and how DB Tech is contributing to the sector through this project. On behalf of Grand Residency, Mr. Pradipta accompanied the team. He briefed about the Hotel and took them through various Departments of the Hotel such as Banquets (Chankya / Ashoka / Terrace / Kianishka), Restaurant (Grand Darbar / Bar Jalsa), Different types of Rooms (Business Class / Executive Class / Platinum Class), House Keeping Department, Kitchen Department, Staff Cateria, A/Cs Department, Admin Department, HR Department, Time Office / Security Office, Main Store, Departmental Store and the Front Office. During the course of time,



Mr. Nirmal shared some valuable inputs related to the specific subject with the trainees. The officials of Grand Residency were quite pleased to know about such an initiative taken by DB Tech and assured them cooperation in future with regard to placement of the students.

Hatia: A field visit for Sales and Marketing students of BASE (Hatia) was conducted on March 30, 2011. Three groups consists of 25 students visited the outlets of big malls like Big Bazaar, Reliance Trends, Vishal Mega Mart, Shoppers Mart, Kolkata Bazaar and Big Shoppe located in Ranchi. The trainer of the Sales & Marketing domain accompanied the students for the visit. He briefed the officials of these malls about the purpose of the visit so that the students will get the maximum benefit out of this. During the exposure visit, students were interacted with the staff and alumni to know the real-time practices. In most of the malls, BASE alumni are working in different levels, who were really assisting the trainees to understand the various components of the Sales & Marketing and how it is useful at the work place.



Mr Manoj (Store Manager, Reliance Trends) said, "Such field trips are certainly exposing them to experience outside the classroom. These students may be belonging to BPL families but their interest level and passion towards the course really help them to get right opportunities in the specific sector." Students are very happy with such exposure visits which give them experiential learning experiences and concrete skills about Sales & Marketing. One of the students shared that field visits like this will give us the chance to experience and witness things they have only read in the classroom.

Centre Inaugurations

Park Circus: Second batch of BASE project was inaugurated at Park Circus on January 17, 2011. Mr. Nari Karamchandani (Manager, Little Shop-Kid's Little Retail Store) was invited as Chief Guest. Other dignitaries were present at the function included Fr. Kaniyattukunnel Jijo Jhon (Asst Principal), Fr. Ramesh and Fr. Vadakel Siby (Rector and Principal). Besides the guests, BASE alumni, trainees and parents were also present at the function.



The program started by a welcome speech by Fr. Jijo. He introduced all the guests present at the dais and welcomed everyone at the AV Hall of Bon Bosco Tech. In his speech, he highlighted about the mission, ethics and various courses offered by Don Bosco. The program was inaugurated by lighting the lamp. After the inaugural speech, Fr. Siby addressed the trainees with a motivational speech about the transformation after completion of training, which was certainly created a ray of hope in the mind of trainees. Followed by the speech of Chief Guest, Mr Nari shared a blue print of the workplace ambience and technical & soft skills requirements by the industry in the new economy. In this inaugural function, the Retail alumni Ms Sagarika and Ms Sukla also shared their work experience, which motivated other trainees for a bright future. The programme concluded after giving a vote of thanks to all the guests and participants for their cooperation.

Silchar: Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) centre was inaugurated at Silchar on January 11, 2011. The dignitaries present at the inaugural function included Fr. Sebastian (Principal, Don Bosco Tech), Br. Reggie (Director, Bosco Tech) and Fr. Ignatius (Deputy Director, Bosco Tech), Ghanashyam Pathak (State Coordinator, DB Tech) and Mousumi Khanikar (State Placement Coordinator, DB Tech). Besides that some panchayat functionaries were also present in the occasion.



DB Tech News

The training programme was inaugurated by Fr. Sebastian by lighting the lamp. Addressing the gathering, Br. Reggie had given a very warm welcome speech and also briefly explained about the programme. He requested the community members to extend their support to this ambitious programme, which will lead us towards social and economic empowerment. Fr. Sebastian delivered an encouraging inaugural speech to the audience. He called upon the students to enroll in skill development programme. To motivate the students, he cited different beautiful examples of hard work which are necessary for success. "It is really a good opportunity for the people of this area to have this ambitious project in Don Bosco Tech (Silchar) for the needy section of the society," he added. Mr. Ghanashyam Pathak explained the process of project implementation to the gathering. He also answered the queries raised by the students regarding admission and placement. At the conclusion, Fr. Ignatius has given the vote of thanks to the guests and audience.

Nitika: The second batch of BASE program was inaugurated at Nitika Don Bosco on January 11, 2011. The starting of a new venture always entails a mixed bag of feelings. This was no different for 50 students who walked into the Nitika Don Bosco center on this inaugural function with apprehension, joy and a whole gamut of other expression writ large on their faces.



The inauguration ceremony was flagged off with a brief introduction and lighting of the lamp. The welcome address was given by Fr. I. C Jacob (Rector, Nitika Don Bosco) and followed by an audio-video presentation on Don John Bosco and DB Tech as an organization. The AV presentation was followed by an inspiring speech by Fr. Jose Pampadiyil (Vice Provincial, Salesian Province of Kolkata). Mr. Bisewswar Talukdar (Regional Coordinator) introduced both the teaching and non-teaching staff members, while extending a warm welcome to the new batch. The memorable day was brought to an end after snap shots of the first batch and distribution of certificate to the exemplary students of the previous batch. Finally, the ceremony was closed by Fr. George Myppan (Center In-charge) rendering the vote of thanks.

Chullikkara (Kerala): The first batch of BASE project was formally inaugurated at Don Bosco (Chullikkara) on March 19, 2011. The dignitaries present at the inaugural function included Mr. P. G. Thomas (Director, DRDA, Kasargod), Ms. Soumya Venugopal (President, Kodom Beloor Panchayat), Fr. Jose Pathickal (Center Head, Don Bosco, Chullikkara), Fr. Saji Elampasseril (Administrator, Don Bosco, Chullikkara) and Mr. Soujith Antony (State Coordinator, DB Tech). Besides that all DB Tech staff, aspirants of skill based training and their parents were present to witness the inaugural function.



The function was presided over by Mr. P. G. Thomas. In his presidential address, he reiterated the role played by Don Bosco Tech to uplift the poor and for skilling the young people of India. Mrs. Soumya Venugopal inaugurated the meeting by lighting the lamp. On her inaugural address, she urged the trainees to make use of the golden opportunity available at their door step for a decent living. Mr. Soujith Antony (State Coordinator, DB Tech) presented the project details. Fr. Saji Elampasseril felicitated the gathering and Mr. Tomy Varghese delivered the vote of thanks.

Yadgiri: The second batch of BASE program was inaugurated at Don Bosco Tech (Yadgiri) on March 22, 2011. Mr. Dattatreya Karnad (Circle Inspector-Vigilance, Yadgir) was invited as Chief Guest. The dignitaries present at the inaugural function included Mr. Basvaraj (President, Taluka Panchayat, Yadgir), Mr. Sharanappa, Member (Zilla Panchayat, Hatthikuni), Rev. Fr. Joy sdb (Regional Coordinator, DB Tech), Sr. Ivy Joseph (MSMHC Provincial), Rev. Fr. Saji sdb (Administrator), Rev. Fr. Pius sdb (School Incharge) and Rev. Fr. Regi sdb (Director).



The program started with a welcome speech by Fr. Sunny by greeting all the guests. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Dattatreya appreciated the contribution of Don Bosco towards the community by shaping and helping the youngsters in finding a way of living. He exhorted the students to make use of this opportunity which will help them to find out a sustainable way of livelihood. Mr. Sharanappa, highly appreciated the Heads of the Don Bosco institutions and thanked them on behalf of everybody for the good work done in Yadgir. Fr. Joy Nedumparambil explained the MoRD project in detail and motivated the students to blossom and come up in life. He also spoke about DB Tech and explained the reason as to why the Govt. of India has given this responsibility to DB Tech.

Kalyani: The BASE project of Bon Bosco Tech was inaugurated at Don Bosco Youth Centre (Kalyani) on March 21, 2011. Mr. Pradhan (Head, Village Panchayat, Saguna) was the Chief Guest for the occasion. Welcoming the gathering, Fr. Samuel Mondol (Rector) said, "It was a dream of Don Bosco Kalyani to offer the BASE programmes; and today this dream is being realized."



During the welcome speech, Fr. Mondol introduced the trainers to the dignitaries, who were mobilizing the students, and now assuming the task of facilitating them the trades. He also shared that besides learning the technical skills, the soft skills imparted to the students in the form of 'spoken English' and 'computer basics' that would take them to greater heights. "We are hopeful that there will be 100% job placement at the completion of the training," he added.

Mr. Biseswar Talukdar (Regional Coordinator, DB Tech) challenged the students to take up the hardships involved in completing the course. He assured them that DB Tech would link the students to great industrialists, who would pay them on a fair scale. 80 students have enrolled in the skill based training program in the domains of Hotel Management, Construction and Industrial Sewing Machine Operation for a period of three months.

Domain Conferences

Three domain workshops were organized in Automobile, Electrical and Industrial Sewing Machine Operator (ISMO) domains in the last quarter (January – March). The objectives of the domain workshop are to update/standardize existing curriculum to suit the prevailing market needs; to update trainers' handbook, with more emphasis on practical training to build learners competencies to face the existing job market; to develop necessary learner centric teaching tools to make facilitation effective; to standardize the assessment methods and frequency of the assessments; to identify topics for preparing a students' handout which would help the students to retain the information even after the completion of course; and to standardize the equipment list.

Automobile Domain Workshop

New Delhi: The Automobile domain workshop was organized for the trainers of Automobile domain of BASE project at National Office on February 22-24, 2011. Nine trainers from Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand attended the three-day workshop. Himender Raj (GM, Tata Motors) and Mr. Richard Noranha (Faculty, St. Joseph's Industrial Technical Institute, Mumbai) invited as guest lecturers for the workshop. There was a detail discussion on updating of curriculum keeping in view of the existing market needs and training hours for each topic in order to have a standardized training method. Understanding the importance of some of the topics, it was also discussed that the domain handouts



need to be distributed in the classroom so as to help the students retain notes and information even after completion of the course.

Mr. Himender Raj took the trainers for a Merry Go ride on the various types of vehicles, types of engines and safety measures. Mr. Richard Noranha took sessions on multimedia curriculum and explained to them how it can make the classroom training enjoyable and more interesting.

Electrical Domain Workshop

New Delhi: An electrical domain conference was arranged to standardize existing curriculum to suit the prevailing market needs at DB Tech National Office (Najafgarh, New Delhi) on February 15-17, 2011. The three-day workshop was attended by 17 trainers from Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, West Bengal, Dimapur, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. Mr. Manoj Kumar, (Nandi Shikhawa Pvt. Ltd., Gurgaon), Rev. Fr. Noble



George (Principal, Don Bosco, Okhla, Delhi) and Rev. Fr. Jijo John, sdb (Don Bosco, Park Circus, Kolkata) invited to share their expertise with the trainers.

To have a symmetric training method in all the centres, the exact training hours devoted for each topic, theory and practical were finalised. To update the curriculum as per the recent market needs, the curriculum was divided into four modules (i.e. basic electrical, house wiring, repair of home appliance and industrial wiring) and discussions were held on these modules. The theory and practical assessments, frequency of the assessments and new ways of assessments which would make the student interested in undergoing the evaluation were discussed. Importance of guest lectures, OJTs,

proper uses of tools and equipments were also emphasized during the workshop.

Rev. Fr. Jijo exhorted the trainers to look out for innovative methods of training as they are dealing with adults who are either drop-outs or has less interest in studies. He said that the training can be supplemented with examples, videos clippings or pictures, so that the trainees would understand the subject easily. Rev. Fr. Noble asked the trainers to take up this noble cause of educating the youth in such a way that their life would be changed. Mr Manoj Kumar interacted with the trainers on the aspects and expectations of industries for the entry level jobs in electrical sectors.

ISMO Domain Workshop

Bangalore: The Industrial Sewing Machine Operator (ISMO) domain workshop was conducted for the domain specific trainers at Ashalaya on March 7-17, 2011. 18 trainers from south and south-west regions participated in the workshop. The main objective of this workshop was to make trainees aware of the course structure and the practical approach to the ISMO course so that they can facilitate the



same in a better way during the training period. This workshop structure was planned to make the trainers aware of the demand of the skilled operators in garment industry, which has huge demand of the manpower as it is a labor oriented industry.

The trainers were briefed on the technical training, practical aspects, machine types, part and functions of the SNLS machine. The focus of workshop was on challenges on BPL training, rules of training, safety precaution in factory, sewing fundamentals, importance of quality and practical fabric exercises. Paras International, one of the industrial partners for ISMO domain, shared their views about the industrial culture, work flow and working system. Trainers were happy to be the part of this technical training which helps them in both professional and personal level.

Induction Programmes

Ranchi: An orientation program was conducted for the new trainers from the centres in UP (Bijnor and Hamirpur), Odisha (Behrampur, Kendrapara and Baliguda), North East and West Bengal at Don Bosco Youth & Education Services (Ranchi) on Jan 17-21, 2011. 29 trainers, who were recruited for domains like Hospitality, Sales & Marketing, Electrical, Nursing, Welding, ITeS, Security Guard and Communicative English, attended the orientation program. Mr. Felix Jajo and Ms. Baishakhi Sarker from Learning and Development team were the resource persons for the training program.

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 facilitators cover facilitation skills, adult learning methodology, life skills, soft skills and BASE process. The facilitators added vigor and enthusiasm with their active participation in the training programme. Each participant was given the opportunity to conduct mock classes related to their respective trades. 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.

New Delhi: A five-day induction cum orientation program was organized for the newly appointed trainers at DB Tech National Office (Najafgarh, New Delhi) on March 1-5, 2011. A total of 19 trainers from the North-Central region (Punjab, UP, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa,



Chattisgarh) and Andhra Pradesh participated in the training program. The trainers are recruited for various domains like Welding, Electrical, Sales & Marketing, ITeS, Hospitality, Automobile and Communicative English. The induction training was facilitated by the team from Learning and Development of DB Tech.

In the welcome address Rev. Fr. Raju Philip, sdb (Assistant Director, DB Tech) introduced the society of Don Bosco to the group and called upon them to work earnestly in bringing about a change in the society through the little initiatives that they can take up. The BASE process (Pre-Implementation, Implementation and the Post-Implementation) was introduced to the trainers, which was supplemented with activities and role plays. Besides the process, the M&E team made a presentation on various aspects of Monitoring & Evaluation and reporting system. The program was filled with fun and laughter as various activities on life skills modules were introduced to the group. It was a training program of learning with fun.

New Delhi: An orientation training programme was organized for new team members of Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) department at DB Tech National Office (Najafgarh, New Delhi) on March 7-10, 2011. Seven M&E/MIS executives from Jharkhand, Guwahati, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka, Odisha and Gujarat, participated the training program.



The induction training started with the introduction to the program by the L&D team, who oriented the trainees about the skill development initiatives of DB Tech. The M&E component was introduced by Ms Chitra Iyer (Head, M&E). She briefed about the overall concept and the process of M&E/MIS and also gave an insight of the operational functioning of the project. The participants were explained in detail about M&E/MIS process and database management by the Managers from M&E, MIS and IT. The training program concluded with an exposure visit to the BASE centre in Mohanlalganj (Lucknow). This exposure visit was planned to give an opportunity to observe the functioning of a centre. The centre has good infrastructure for both service and manufacturing trades.

As the documentation of the MBA visit is very important, the trainees were asked to prepare a mock MBA report of the center. The training program was designed in such a way that the trainees were capacitated enough to go back to their respective states and take immediate and independent responsibility as the state M&E/MIS representative.

Kolkata: A five-day induction programme was conducted at Nitika Don Bosco (Kolkata) for the trainers, who had recently joined the DB Tech family, on March 14-18, 2011. 14 participants from new centres (Monshada, Liluah, Mirpara and Basunti) of West Bengal attended the training programme. These trainers were appointed for domains like Hospitality, Sales & Marketing, Electrical, Construction, ISMO, Retail Sales, ITeS, Security Guard and Communicative English. The training programme was facilitated by Ms Baishakhi Sarker (L&D Department, DB Tech).

The induction started with an introductory speech by Fr. Ramesh Cherian (Director, DBDOC). He gave an introduction about Don Bosco, the preventive system of education and Don Bosco as an organization. Ms Baishakhi then briefed the group about the vision, mission and objectives of the organization. She explained in detail the skill development program and the association of DB Tech with the Ministry of Rural Development (Govt. of India). The operational and process related activities were conducted to give an insight of BASE process. Mr. Sagneek Poddar (Placement Coordinator, West Bengal) addressed the participants to brief about hurdles related to placement of trainees, which is a vital component of the training program. Besides that representatives from MIS and M&E

introduced the formats related to BASE program to the participants. The program was filled with fun and laughter as various activities on team building, decision making, managing money, goal setting, perception & values, handling emotions, self esteem & attitude and many others were discussed.

New Delhi: With the initiation of many new centres across the country, the Learning and Development Dept has been conducting



induction and orientation program for the newly recruited trainers. An induction and orientation program was conducted for the new trainers of Jammu & Kashmir at DB Tech National Office (Najafgarh, New Delhi) on March 15-19, 2011. There were seven participants who were recruited for Pulwama, Kupwara and Srinagar centres in Jammu & Kashmir.

The objectives of the orientation program are to introduce to them the DB Tech's vision, mission and objectives. Besides that the trainers got an insight on how to go about mobilizing the rural youth supplemented with activities and role plays, which helped them to understand the whole process better. Various topics like team building, decision making, managing money, goal setting, perception & values, handling emotions and self esteem & attitude were discussed.

Raipur: With the scale up of the skill development project across India, many new centers in North Central Region were also initiated. An induction cum orientation program for the newly recruited trainers from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar, was conducted at Xavier



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Institute of Social Action (Raipur) on March 28-31, 2011. The trainers are from varied backgrounds, selected for different domains and assembled together to acquaint themselves with the project. The participants briefed about the skill development program of MoRD and the rationale behind the partnership, which is imparting skills to the rural BPL youth, giving them employment and thus creating sustainable livelihood amongst the rural families. DB Tech follows a well structured program model for implementing the project. This model helps not only in achieving the target but also helps in maintaining the right approach to achieve the Mission of the organization. The pre-implementation, implementation and the post-implementation stages of the BASE Program were discussed in detail. The trainers got an insight on how to go about mobilizing the rural youth. The approaches were supplemented with activities and role plays which helped them to understand the whole process better.

Goa: An Induction training programme was organized for trainers of BASE projects MoRD and Accenture-ITC at Don Bosco Provincial House (Odxel, Goa) on March 28-April 1, 2011. 23 participants from Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu participated in the five-day training programme. Fr Jose Sequeira (Director, Konkani Development Society) welcomed the trainers and explained the need to impart quality training to the students so that they will be successful. Fr. Micheal Mascaren explained the importance of the skill development especially for the poor youth and the mission of Don Bosco to train marginalized youth for employment. Encouraging the trainers, he said, "The task that we have taken up to train the poor youth is a noble cause and I wished the trainers all success in their career."



Mr. Maheish Shetty (Asst. Manager-L&D, DB Tech) was the resource person for the training programme. The induction programme helped the trainers to understand the vision, mission and objectives of the DB Tech in achieving the goal set for the organization for skilling the youth in India for a better future. The trainers also learnt classroom delivery skills, which would help them in their centers.

Valedictory Functions

Vaduthala: The course day and the Inauguration of the placement drive for second batch of BASE project were successfully conducted at Don Bosco (Vaduthala) on February 6, 2011. Ms. Hima (Senior HR Manager, Big Bazaar) was invited as Chief Guest. Other dignitaries present at the function included Mr. Joby Thomas (Senior Technician – Mechanical and Electrical Section, FACT, Eloor, Ernakulam), Rev. Fr. Shibu Davis, sdb (Centre Head – BASE Project) and Rev. Fr. Devassy Chirackel, sdb. Trainees along with their parents attended the programme with a turnout of about 200 participants.

The programme commenced with the welcome address by Rev. Fr.



Shibu. Rev. Fr. Devassy in his presidential address focused on fundamental qualities of a good worker, like punctuality, sincerity and commitment to work. In her inaugural message, Ms Hema outlined the dignity of job, the importance of taking appropriate decisions and prompt actions as per the demands of situations in work and personal life. Appointment letters were also distributed to trainees, who are placed in leading companies like LISCOM, CRY SOL etc. The ceremony concluded with very positive feedback from attendees.

Borivali: 100 students from the tribal region of Jawhar Whada, Nashik and Amravati, enrolled in the three-month skill based training program at Don Bosco Technical Training Institute (Borivali). Under this BASE program, these students trained in various demand driven courses like Hotel Management, Automobile, and Welding. After three months, around 83 students successfully completed the training. To felicitate them, a valedictory function was organized February 26, 2011. The event will always be remembered by these students, who came into the Institute as caterpillars and now turned into beautiful butterflies ready to explore the cooperate world. The guests present at the function included Mr. Bernard D'souza (Executive Assistant Manager, F&B, The Club), Mr. Shashi Misra (HR Manager, The Club), Mr. Baburao Ghorpade (CDO, BMC), Mrs. Verma (Social Worker) and Fr. Anthony Santarita (Director, Don Bosco Technical Training Institute).



Fr. Anthony thanked all those who supported this project and wished the students success in their journey of life. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Bernard D'Souza expressed his gratitude and thanked to the institute for all the support - students of Don Bosco Technical Training Institute helped for banquet functions – since November 2010. One student from each domain shared their experience related to the training program. The course completion certificates were given to the students who have successfully completed the training program.

Centre in Focus: Don Bosco Centre, Chitradurga



Don Bosco Centre, Chitradurga

Holding a passport-sized photograph of her son to her bosom, she says, "He had gone to appear the matriculation examination. When he was leaving for examination, he looked back to say goodbye. But I told him not to look back while going for examination. He was supposed to be back after the examination, but I spent whole night waiting for him. He didn't return." Tears well up in the eyes of his mother, Jaya Lakshmi, as she narrates how sixteen-year-old Raghu went missing from her locality in Chitradurga. Hesitating for umpteen visits to the police station, she came directly with her relatives to Don Bosco to share the heartrending story. "Now I am sure that Don Bosco will search my son; and I will again hug him in my arms," she said with lots of faith in her eyes. This trust factor always attached with this CHITRA - the social development wing of Don Bosco (Chitradurga). This epicenter of various developmental activities is located at the west side of the fort town 'Chitradurga', which is often referred to as Kallina Kote or the Place of Stones. The bold rocky hills and picturesque valleys with huge towering boulders offer nature at its best at Chitradurga.

The huge infrastructure is the reality of the vision that dreamt by three board members of the Bangalore Salesian Society in 1995. Recounting those days, Fr. Jose Churavelikudilli, sdb (Director, Don Bosco Institutions) says, "We were returning from a visit to Don Bosco (Hospet), where vocational training and child labour rehabilitation work was going on. As we are passing through the Chitradurga town and the adjoining villages, we realised the socio-economic backwardness of this area. When the mission of the congregation is to empower the youngsters, we thought to start some developmental work, which will improve their living conditions." Chitradurga is one of the most backward districts of India. Other than some mining and oil industries, hardly there is any opportunity for the natives of this district. It is also a drought prone region; and out of 107 years, almost 55 years people of this district are suffering by drought. That's the reason for World Bank to

implement the *Sujala* Watershed Development Scheme in Chitradurga.

To make a difference in the lives of really deprived people, Don Bosco intervened in those sectors, which needed to address instantly. On the basis of socio-economic survey in 30 villages around Chitradurga, it was found that 15 villages were most backward in education and health facilities. On June 12, 1996, the Don Bosco initiated the entry point activities like evening tuition centres and mobile clinic in these villages. "For any transformation of idea or society, we need to have a long term perspective of duration at least 20 years. To make a complete transformation, we adopt a systematic way of approach by targeting the children first and then the less privileged youth in which we involved all the spectrum of people," says Fr. Jose. In the next phase, Don Bosco made a significant step to empower women. The empowerment is not essentially political alone in fact; political empowerment will not succeed in the absence of economic empowerment. The formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) has transferred the real economic power in the hands of women, who are living below poverty line, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of both the villages and the slums. In this regard, about 420 SHGs were formed having 7100 members in villages and town areas with an average membership between 15 to 20 members in each group. In other words, Don Bosco (Chitradurga) has a large network of above 7100 families in a total area of 875 sq km.

Besides that, Don Bosco Centre (Chitradurga) has started a gamut of activities to realise the vision. The empowerment process for the poor and marginalized women, youth, children and the small, destitute groups and marginal farmers has successfully implemented various programs to have a complete transformation in almost 80 villages of Chitradurga district. There is a steady growth in the developmental works of the community. It is nothing but the sincere effort of the salesians and dedicated staff of Don Bosco.

Enabling and empowering the marginalized

An interview with Fr. Anil D'sa, sdb (Director, CHITHRA Don Bosco, Chitradurga)

Passionate and full of energy; A man with pioneering ideas towards upliftment of destitute and less privileged; Fr. Anil D'sa, sdb (Director, CHITHRA Don Bosco, Chitradurga) is a new generation leader. He often dreams how world could be made better. He is not daunted by the seemingly impossible. Instead, he looks for ways to bypass the impossible, innovating his way to solving the problems of those people who are far away from developed society. Chitradurga Don Bosco is a laboratory for him where he tried lots of experiments and succeed in making complete transformation of that region. Above all, the BASE centre at Chitradurga, which runs under his guidance, appreciated by senior management for continues qualitative and quantitative performance batch after batch. The credit certainly goes to the team which is captained by Fr. Anil. DB Tech News team got an opportunity to have a conversation with the Fr. Anil.



Fr. Anil D'sa, sdb (Director, CHITHRA Don Bosco)

DBTN: What motivated you to involve with congregation?

Fr. Anil: I had never heard about Don Bosco. I had a desire to become a priest. After my class ten examination, I went for vocation camp at Bangalore. There I came to know about Don Bosco, a saint for the young. Never imagined that there is a saint for the young. The work, Salesians do for the young all over the world, attracted me to the Salesian Congregation.



A practical session at a ISMO course

DBTN: How would you express your understanding of what your institute stands for and how does this fulfill the ideology of your congregation 'upliftment of the youth'?

Fr. Anil: It could be summarized in the vision of the institution that is "To Accompany, Enable and Empower the most marginalized and the exploited poor without any distinction of Caste, Creed or Gender, both rural and urban, to develop themselves economically, socially, educationally and culturally, and to educate and train them to manage and regenerate the natural resources available in the villages in the district of Chitradurga". Special emphasis is given to the youth by various initiatives like skill training, youth clubs, young farmers clubs, etc. This is very much keeping with the ideology of the congregation.

DBTN: What is the meaning of 'CHITHRA' and tell us about the significance of naming the institute?

Fr. Anil: CHITHRA is Center for Human Intervention and Training in Holistic Rural Action. It is the social action wing of Chitradurga Don Bosco Society and the brain child (daughter) of Fr CM Jose sdb who is the founder of many such innovative initiatives like BREADS (Bangalore Rural Educational Development Society), SPIN

(Self-help-groups Promoting Institutions Network), etc. We believe that empowerment can take place not just by charity but train them to stand on their own. We try to train them to fish rather than giving them the fish. This is what ringing in the mind of Fr Jose when established CHITHRA. Number of training programs have been conducted in different fields for different groups and followed up as per timeline.

DBTN: Besides skill based training, what are the other activities conducted by the institute?

Fr. Anil: The list could be quite big. May be I could limit to some activities. We have 420 Women Self Help Groups, 30 Youth SHGs, 50 Men SHGs, Destitutes' SHGs, Young Farmers Groups, Skill Training at Community Managed Recourse Centre (CMRC), 40 Evening Study Centres, Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre, Missing Child Bureau, Mobile Computer Classes, Health Programmes, Watershed Programmes, Child Rights Clubs, Children's Saving Clubs (Pitani Sangha), etc.



Fr. Jose Churavellikudil, sdb (Director, Don Bosco Institutions)

DBTN: What do you consider to be your greatest contribution to the community you have worked in, in light of that, what do you feel you can bring to the institution?

Fr. Anil: This is a tough question to answer because my contribution to the community is a drop in the ocean or like carrying coal to New Castle. Here the system was very well established and varieties of activities were already initiated by my predecessors. I just need to follow-up the work which was well carried out in the past. I just carried the baton. Today the institution is very well known for its dedicated service and excellence. All credit goes to Fr Jose and all the Salesians worked here in the past and present.



DB Tech team at Chitradurga centre

DBTN: All the activities in Don Bosco (Chitradurga) are either children-centric or health-centric. When BASE - the short-duration skill development training program - was launched, what was the first question striking to your mind about the success of the programme?

Fr. Anil: Our work is neither children-centric nor health-centric but it is community-centric with special emphasis on youth and children. We were very much sure about the success of the BASE programme because it was a great opportunity for us to enhance the work that we were already doing for the youth. Our network in Chitradurga district is very strong; and every family in this locality is connected with Don Bosco in some way or other. This network and the hard work of the DB Tech staff made the BASE programme a great success.

DBTN: When most of the students for BASE program are from very low socio-economic background and have hardly completed their schooling. Are you confident that the training that is imparted to them is sufficient to meet the demands of the industry?

Fr. Anil: Yes that has been a big challenge. Most of the students did their studies in the Govt. School and they have just managed to pass. But we were able to achieve something thorough follow-up and hard work of trained trainers. The employers are quite happy with the skill imparted to the students. Sure there is still room for improvement.

DBTN: You have vast experience in social sector. Is there anything you found which we need to change in our approach / any improvement in this programme?

Fr. Anil: We believe in empowering the people and making them depend on us all the time. We need to address issues according to the need of every individual. Just giving mass benefits and money will make them slaves. When we have given them the best, the same also must be demanded from our beneficiaries and even the trainers.

DBTN: Now two batches are completed with 87 and 84.8 percentage placement. What are your strategies to place the trainees in the respective sectors?

Fr. Anil: We are in touch with some of the firms and major employers. Now our focus is on improving our product (Trainees). If our trainees are capable then nobody can deny the job. Communication and soft

skills are very crucial in obtaining jobs and we are taking care of every student for improving these skills. Together with training, motivating the trainees to migrate and to take up the challenges is our focus.

DBTN: Please share some of your best practices that will help others to follow.

Fr. Anil: Today presentation plays a major role. We try to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way. Trying to give a professional touch to whatever we do and keeping a record of all the activities with proper documentation help us to do things in an innovative manner. Motivating the trainers to be innovative and committed can take BASE to the great heights.



Understanding computer basics

DBTN: How do you track your alumni? Do you have any tool as how to connect with BASE alumni?

Fr. Anil: We have registered all the mobile numbers of the students with way2sms.com and send regular sms to them keep in touch. They are also invited to the major programmes of the institutions. Once in a year, we conduct a summer camp for getting connected with our alumni.

DBTN: Any message to those alumni who have completed the course from DB Tech?

Fr. Anil: I would like to repeat the same what I used to say to all the batches 'If you have learned something good here, please share with others too, let the goodness spread. If you are satisfied with our intervention, tell others and if you are not happy, tell us, so that we will improve our service'.

DBTN: What is the best moment which you really cherished?

Fr. Anil: The cherishing moments were when I saw the smiles of confidence in the students, when the students called and said, "I got my first salary in life and I am grateful to Don Bosco." When some of the students came to Don Bosco with sweets after they have got their first salary, when the employers called me and told that our students are well behaved.



Rising Star: Lakshmi R.

UNBEATABLE SPIRIT

Unless she takes a step forward, you may not notice that she is physically challenged. "Being first daughter itself is a burden but my disability doubles it for my parents. My life took a new turn at the age of four when I was labelled 'Disable'. I suffered from heavy fever, and after that, I don't know but I lost strength on my left leg," says 25-year-old Lakshmi recollecting the reasons of her disability. She hails from an extremely poor family in Koverahatti, a remote village about 25 km from Chitradurga (Karnataka), which is tenuously connected to the outside world. Lakshmi's father Ranganathappa, a poor farmer, gets too little yield from his poorly irrigated land to support his family of five (wife, two daughters and a son). "It is a traumatic moment for us. Sometimes I just curse my poverty because of which I could not provide quality treatment to my daughter," says Ranganathappa. He makes barely Rs 1000 a month from his small piece of land, which remains mostly dry through much of the year. He always wanted to educate Lakshmi so that she will not suffer like him in future. Though there is no primary school in their village to start her studies, he enrolled her in a school located at neighbour village, where she completed her matriculation. Recalling Lakshmi's virtual school, Ranganatha says, "Since childhood, she always converted our hut to a classroom, where she was the teacher and all the wooden pillars were students. Holding a wooden stick in her hand, she used to spend the whole day with her students (Wooden Pillars). From that day, I used to tell myself that now I have a teacher in my family. Now onwards, no one will be illiterate in our village."

Lakshmi was good at studies, and managed to complete her Class XII. But she could go no further, as there was no money in the family to pay for her education. She tried hard to find some means of earning a little money for the family, but nothing came by. Apart from the little academic knowledge that she had gained at school, Lakshmi started tuitions for the school-going children in her village. It was during this difficult period that Lakshmi heard from Mr Muqthar Javeed (ITeS Trainer, DB Tech) about a vocational training program called Bosco Academy for Skills and Employment (BASE) being organized in the vicinity by Don Bosco Centre, Chitradurga. "I approached Lakshmi because she actually needed a chance to prove herself. She has a burning desire to come out of the poverty and take care of her family," says Mr Javeed. Lakshmi enrolled in the course and took the 'Interest Inventory' check administered by her trainers. They counseled her that ITeS would be an appropriate domain for her to take up.

During the training period, she tried to make all possible effort to maximum utilize the time, infrastructure and guidance of her trainers. "I had not even touched the computer before joining DB Tech. Here in DB Tech, I learned ITeS technical skills, punctuality, discipline, communication and teaching skills that help me a lot in my professional career," says Lakshmi. She is a fast learner and whenever she got an opportunity to show her teaching capabilities, she always came forward to demonstrate. "She used to work as an instructor in the practical classes. Looking at her teaching abilities, I taught her some teaching skills," says Mr Javeed. Not only computer, she is good at other skills like, communicative English and life skills. Recollecting the valedictory function, Mr Christopher Regan (Communicative English Trainer) says, "The valedictory function is a memorable for all of us where Lakshmi spell out her life completely in English. It was appreciated by the dignitaries. She has the determination to fulfill the goal of her life."

Her hard work paid off. Lakshmi completed the course with a fine performance record, earning the appreciation of her facilitators and fellow-aspirants alike. She was soon offered a job as a Faculty in Sillicon Computer Education, with a starting salary of Rs 3500 per month, plus other incentives. Appreciating her qualities, Mr. Pandu Ranga (Centre Manager, Sillicon Computer Education) says, "Sillicon provides similar skill based training to the BPL youth. Lakshmi has that potential to handle these youngsters with her teaching proficiency. Although she is physically challenged but she has a big dream which she wants to convert into reality." Today Lakshmi empowers many youngsters by facilitating the skills that she was being taught by her trainers in DB Tech. Though she has a dream to become a good teacher, certainly this opportunity gives her chance to fulfill her goal in life and also satisfaction to enrich many lives like her.



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