

# National Conference on

## **Educating the Youth for Social Transformation: New Paradigm and Inspiring Praxis**

Two day National Conference on the theme Educating Youth for Social Transformation: New Paradigms and Inspiring Praxis was organized by Don Bosco Higher Education Tiruchy on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019, at Don Bosco Media Centre, in Tiruchirappali. Educators and other stakeholders numbering about eighty five participants and fifteen volunteers were at the conference. As it was an initiative of Don Bosco Higher Education India (DBHEI) Fr.Maria Soosai SDB, the Secretary welcomed the gathering. Fr.Marcelo Farfan SDB, IUS Coordinator delivered the inaugural address. Fr.Amala Jeya Rayan, the Organizing Secretary of the Conference presented the dynamics of the Conference.

In the first session, Dr.Devanesan, former Professor of HRM, at St.Joseph's College, Trichy discussed on Integral perspective of Social Transformation which set the tone for the conference. He summed up the whole perspective on these two premises that thoughts are the paradigm and the action is the praxis. Action without mission is a nightmare and vision without action is a day dream. His quotation from Rabindranath Tagore: "Into that heaven of freedom my father let my country awake" was the mark of his talk.

The third session was a Panel Discussion on the topic *Engaging Youth for Social Transformation* inwhich Dr.Joseph Dunston served as a Chairperson. The first speaker Dr.Antony Stephen, Professor of Social work from Madras School of Social work drew the difference between entrepreneurship and Social entrepreneurship.

Mr.John Peter, Executive Director, People solidarity Association, Trichy gave a provoking talk on Social Transformation, an NGO Perspective. The experiential narrative pinpointed the prevailing social injustice despite the Qualitative change promoted by the NGOs. He called for the re-birth of NGOs by updating themselves to newer ideas and innovative strategies. Those NGOs which never meet this change will disappear.

The third speaker Mr.David Monsingh, Director of AA Community College, Thiruvaiyaaru presented his perspective through the success story of Community College that fostered social transformation in the society through the youth.

The afternoon session was devoted to sharing on Inspiring Praxis, chaired by Dr.Pious Missier, the Principal, Don Bosco College, Keela Eral. Fr.Berchmans SJ, the Director of Shepherd programme of St.Joseph's College, Trichy portrayed the impact made by the Shepherd programme in the adopted villages around Trichy. The transformation effected in the mind of a RSS leader was a point of great appreciation among the participants.

Mr.S.Jeyaraj, Director RIDE, Chengleput shared his experience of pursuing social transformation through his NGO in the rural areas in Chengelput District. The problems and Challenges he faced in the process was converted into opportunities for social transformation.

Ms.Rajee, Mr.Jason, and Mr.Manoj from AICUF State Office, Trichy shared their experiences in involving the University students in the cause of social transformation. The history of AICUF and the jalleekattu Dharna of the Youth at Merina Beach showed the eagerness of the youth for social transformation. The Cycle Rally from Kanyakumari to Chennai, created awareness on the ill effect of Koodankulam Nuclear project. Voice of the youth was clearly heard in the presentation.

Rev.Sr.Dr.Elizabeth, former Vice-Principal and Professor of Mathematics highlighted Higher Education model of engaging Young Women in reaching out to the villages for social causes. Repeated exposure of the students and involving them in social causes transform them towards social consciousness. She presented the quality of the work in Auxillium College, Vellore to prove her point.

The last session was chaired by Rev. Fr.Alex Diviya, Don Bosco College, Keela Eral. Folk Arts as a strategy of young women for social transformation was the message of Shakthi Folk Culture Centre, Dindugul. Rev. Fr. Felix SDB introduced the Troupe and Rev Sr.Felsi ICM and Rev Sr. Vanaja ICM presented the programme as the young women portrayed their talents in various arts. The team presented the message of women emancipation as a basic social transformation.

Rev. Fr. Andrew Stephen Raj, Mr. Mark Antony from Don Bosco Vazhikatti, traced the path of Vazhikatti for the past twenty three years in creating placement opportunities in Colleges and Schools. The Career Guidance Programmes have carved a niche for themselves in Chennai and surrounding areas.

The Youth Centre Model as an inspiring praxis was presented by Mr. Anand, of Broadway Youth Centre, Chennai. He enlisted the grand success stories of Don Bosco Youth Centre in engaging youth for social transformation.

The Non-Student Youth Model was given by Rev. Fr. Casimir Raj and Mr. Robert James, Former Director and Youth Coordinator, Nehru Yuva kendra, Madurai. He, with lot of examples threw light on how Yuva Kendra model can work wonders by involving Youth for social transformation.

The second day began with a brief summary of the previous day sessions presented by Dr.Joseph Dunston. The first session was chaired by Rev.Dr.John Dharman SDB. The first speaker Rev.Dr.Xavier Alphonse SJ spoke on New Education Policy 2019 as an arising Challenge for Higher Education. He subtly pointed out the threats the minority institutions are going to face in the wake of the New Education Policy of India.

The second speaker Mr.Vetrivelan from *Pooulakin Nanbargal* won the participants attention with regard to climate change and the need to care for the earth to face the future challenges. We should create an awareness among the youth and involve them to a clean and green environment.

Rev.Dr.Maria Charles SDB, Secretary, DBHEI, Delhi spoke on communication for social change among young people. He enumerated several innovative and effective communication strategies by which we could draw the attention of youth for social cause. He also stated how the same could be effectively be used for resource mobilization.

This session was followed by the paper presentations followed by a discussion on deliberations of the conference drawn by a core group and presented by Dr.Joseph Dunston.

During the Valedictory session Rev.Dr.Marcello Farfan released a book titled *Salesian Charism and Higher Education*. The Conference ended with the message of Fr.Maria soosai, Fr.Januarius, Fr.Agilan and the vote of thanks proposed by Fr.Amala Jeyarayan.