

INDIA – EAST PROVINCE

Official Languages: **Oriya, Hindi and English**

Vision Statement

Rooted in the Word to become Transforming Missionary Disciples to create a just society

Mission Statement

As Divine Word Missionaries, impelled by the love of Christ, we commit ourselves to transform our personal and communal lives, to reach out to the poor, the marginalized, especially Dalits and Tribals.

1. Societal Setting

India – Eastern province (INE) activities are mostly concentrated among the tribal and dalit populations who are underdeveloped socially, economically and educationally. Dalits are considered the lowest in the caste system and untouchables in most part of the country and the state. This creates a wide social inequality and they are exploited and economically oppressed. Tribals have still not been able to reap the benefits of modernization for lack of education, communication and because of their displacement. The rampant industrialization and the exploitation of the mineral rich areas of the land for mining have displaced many people and they are forced to migrate to urban slums or to other states for



their livelihood. Fast growing industrialization has eroded the moral, cultural and religious values which had been the characteristic marks of these communities. This province consists of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal states. Most of our confreres live in Odisha. The population of Odisha in 2017 is 45.5 million. Among them, the following are adherents of various religions: 94.4% Hindus, 2.4% Christians, 2.1% Muslims and 1.1% others.

The memory of anti-Christian riots in Kandhamal district in 2008, which disturbed the religious harmony and created great division among the religions in Odisha, is still fresh in our minds. A lot more needs to be done to achieve a complete healing. Hindu revivalism and fundamentalism have raised their ugly head and have caused division among the various religious communities. At present an atmosphere of religious intolerance is sweeping India.

2. Ecclesial Setting

The Catholic Church in this area is comprised mainly of the tribals and partly of the dalits. The Church understands her mission as a mission of liberating these people from poverty, underdevelopment, ignorance, exploitation and marginalization by people of higher classes/castes. The Church does this through her educational and social apostolates.

The local Church basically consists of tribals and dalits who are the most marginalized sections of the region. They are economically poor, educationally backward, and socially marginalized. However, they have inherited a rich culture and tradition which keeps them together. In the recent past, it is encouraging to note a steady increase in the local vocations both to priesthood and religious life from this region. Among the 6 dioceses where we work,

5 dioceses are shepherded by the native Bishops from Odisha state. As for personnel, the dioceses are becoming self-sufficient. They still have to go a long way to go to achieve financial self-sufficiency. Some efforts in this line are made through English medium educational institutions.

The Kandhamal riot in 2008 was an eye-opener for all the Christian denominations who were involved in their own ministries without much interaction with one another. The riots made it necessary for them to come together and dialogue with one another in an effort to understand one another and to fight for their common cause against the prejudiced administration in the state.

The SVDs inherited a part of the Chotanagpur Mission of the Jesuits, called Ganpur Mission. From the start, we concentrated on the pastoral ministry in this area, giving a special place for education. Thus, we established schools and hostels in all the parishes where we worked. We also established a technical school to train the unemployed youth. Together with the pastoral care, we gave attention to the socio-economic development of the area. As we move

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on to the dalit and Ho tribal mission we still continue the same pattern in these new areas.

3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	40	28.2	37.5	36.7
Education	28	19.7	20.5	16.7
Schools	28	-		
Universities	0	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	13	9.2	10.0	8.3
Administration/ Support	6	4.2	7.0	9.8
Other Apostolates	28	20.4	15.9	22.0
JPIC	15	-		
Bible	1	-		
Communication	3	-		
Mission Animation	1	-		
Others	9	-		

Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/ Orientation	10	7.0	4.1	4.9
Retired/Sick	14	9.9	5.0	0.8
Others	2	1.4	0	0.8

The main ministries in our province are pastoral ministry, education ministry, formation, youth ministry, family apostolate, biblical apostolate, communication ministry, JPIC ministries which include care for the lepers and rehabilitation for the differently-abled children, vocational training centers and work among the slum dwellers.

Characteristic Dimensions

Biblical Apostolate: As members of the Society of the Divine Word, proclaiming the Word of God to all is our priority. We have a full-time biblical coordinator, who conducts seminars and retreats in our parishes. He is also actively involved in social media, publishing Gospel reflections for the Sunday liturgy in English and Sadri. Booklets and pamphlets are published in English, Hindi and Sadri on the spiritual content of the Bible for the use of the laity.

Mission Animation: The Society has taken special interest in expanding to new areas. In order to strengthen the missionary commitment of the confreres, workshops and seminars such as parish administration, effective proclamation of the Word of God, and promotion of SCC were conducted. Animation of confreres, ongoing formation for young confreres, and promotion of Lay Associate groups were also organized by the mission secretary.

JPIC: We actively promote the JPIC concerns in our province. Besides the well-established

centers like CWS Rourkela, Adibasi Sanghatan, Tangarpali; Upaya, Rajgangpur; Vikas Bhavan, Bargarh; Karunalaya, Puri; DTVTI, Jharsuguda; SVTI, Jujumura; DSS, Jharsuguda; etc., which cater to the particular concerns, we are also actively involved in a rights-based approach which promotes justice, peace and equality for all. The JPIC department is actively involved in migration, human trafficking, environmental concerns, land rights, and education of the poor through remedial classes. Interreligious prayer services, dialogues and inter-denominational meetings are platforms promoting peace and harmony in the society.

Communication: Communication ministry is a priority in the society as it engages in effective proclamation of the Word through various communication techniques. Confreres individually and in collaboration with the communication department of the province undertake various outreach programs, seminars, training programs, etc., through audio-visual programs and print media. The communication ministry also organizes summer courses in music, dance, fine arts, and language.

Priorities among Congregational Directions

Prompted by the directives of the 17th General Chapter, our province discussed at various community, district and province levels and chose the following priorities from the Congregational Directions *ad extra* and made an action plan for their implementation: Primary

and New Evangelization, Education and Research, Family and Youth and JPIC Concerns: migration, social justice and poverty eradication, integrity of creation and reconciliation and peace building.

Primary and New Evangelization: Primary and new evangelization is still a part of our missionary ventures in the province, especially in our parishes. In our new mission areas like Bezda in West Bengal there are possibilities of mission expansion as people are responsive to Christian faith. In order to implement the Congregational Directions, we have drafted a pastoral policy for our province. This policy spells out our plan to strengthen parish pastoral councils, parish finance committees, and parish liturgical committees and work out an annual pastoral plan. The Characteristic Dimensions of our Society are highlighted by celebrating an SVD Day in our parishes with inputs about these characteristics of our Society and conducting competitions among the parishioners on these features.

Education and Research: We have worked out an action plan to achieve our vision and mission in the educational apostolate for the integral growth of the children and making them responsible citizens of the country. According to this action plan, educational counselling, parental guidance, updating seminars for teachers, social awareness programs, Founder's Day celebration, World Mission Solidarity Day, and National Integration Day are planned.

Family Apostolate: As part of the Province's Family Apostolate, our provincial coordinator visits our "SVD parishes" as well as other parishes of Rourkela and Sambalpur dioceses with audio-visual programs meant for those who prepare for marriage and for married couples. He has also published a book in Sadri language entitled *Joys and Sorrows of Family Life*.

Youth Apostolate: Initiatives to revitalize the youth by vocational training, leadership programs, talent contests, Bible classes and Bible quiz competitions at parish level, district level and province level are taken by the province youth director along with parish priests in consultation and collaboration with Upaya and JPIC coordinator. DSS in collaboration with Upaya, Dinabandhu Technical and Vocational Training Institute (DTVTI), Sarvodaya Vocational Training Institute (SVTI) and the province youth coordinator are exploring the possibility of guiding the youth into various trades.

Social Concerns: After the 17th General Chapter, the Divya Seva Sangh (DSS) has taken up migration and human trafficking on a priority basis. It conducts awareness programs in villages on these issues and has initiated data collection on migrant workers and networking with other NGOs. Efforts are made to give legal education in our parishes and awareness about pollution and prevention of deforestation. Water harvesting, organic fertilizer and tapping of solar energy are also encouraged and promoted in our parishes.

For the de-addiction apostolate, one of our confreres is actively involved in psycho-spiritual treatment of alcoholics and victims of other addictions. He has established 16 groups of sober alcoholics in various parishes of Rourkela by applying the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). About 250 alcoholics have achieved sobriety through these programs. Twice a year they gather together for renewal and sharing of experiences.

Collaboration with SSpS and Others

At present we are working in collaboration with the SSpS in the pastoral field in 5 parishes. In our JPIC concerns we work in collaboration especially in the ministry of migration and human trafficking. Another major congregation with whom we collaborate is the Handmaids of Mary. In the pastoral field we work with them in 7 parishes and their sisters are working with us in socio-developmental works at UPAYA, Ramabahal. They are also collaborating with us in the ministry of education at St. Arnold's School, Bagdehi. In most of the other parishes we collaborate with other congregations which have enriched our missionary activities.

SVD Lay Association

A lay association named St. Arnold Lay Members' Association (ALMA) is formed in Rourkela which generously helps us in our mission work.

4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012	2005
Bishops	4	3	3
Clerics	121	124	117
Brothers (final vows)	11	12	12
Scholastics	18	17	6
Total	154	156	140

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012	2005
Average age	55.6	54.2	49.6
Nationalities	1	2	2

Spirituality: In our communities we give importance to community prayers, Bible sharing, participation in the daily Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation, and regular retreats and recollections.

Community Life: Efforts are made to show care and concern for confreres, especially for the young and old, to share responsibilities among the community members and to bring about transparency in dealings and relationships.

Leadership: We are taking steps to activate the role of district superiors according to the SVD Constitutions and Handbook for Superiors.

Finance: In the province we plan to take more and more self-sufficiency initiatives by starting new English medium schools, land and property development, income generating projects, better investment of the resources that we have, etc. Every confrere is asked to contribute for self-sufficiency – personally, from communities and from institutions. We are working with a lay partners group for mission support.

Formation: We are committed to promote vocations and formation for the Society and for the local Church. Special attention is also given to the promotion of vocations to brotherhood. In our formation program we organize outreach programs to stay in villages, slums and give opportunities to our formandi to get involved in JPIC issues. As far as ongoing formation is concerned we organize a yearly program for updating and renewal of the young confreres for the first five years.