

Research Paper

CONTRIBUTION OF KANYAKUMARI SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY**P. JAYAKUMAR**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of History,
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,
Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India.**ABSTRACT**

Kanyakumari Social Service Society is the official social service agency which renders its meritorious service to the people of Kanyakumari District. It is administered by Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese of Thuckalay.1.The Society was formed on 3rd November 1972.2.The main objectives of the society are to perform works of charity for those in need, irrespective of caste, community and creed.

Introduction

Moreover, it aimed at improving the living conditions and general welfare of the poor, particularly farmers and other labours as well as poor and indigent persons of whatever occupations it established. To cherish these ambitions, social welfare centers, social training centers, technical schools social institutes, dispensaries, hospitals, work guilds, recreational centers, reading rooms, study on circles, small industries, marketing organizations, farms, palmer producing, housing institutions and related institutions. Besides, it engaged in farming food processing and allied activities to the accomplishment of the above said purpose.3It organizes and co-ordinates different programme for the sustainable development of common people within the Diocese. The society has created a new era with its thrust on empowering the powerless, particularly women based on the gospel value of love, justice, peace, equality and fraternity. Apart from these the society strived and to build up people's organization by mobilizing the local resources, to enable the poor and marginalized to achieve sustainable development through community organization. The society has given special emphasis on women development.4

Administration

The term administration is that function of an enterprise which relates to overall determination of policies and major objectives. It includes broad policy making and management.5 It is right policy that through a sound administration, a firm or institution moves to the path of progress and weak administration paves the way for decay. Regarding the Kanyakumari Social Service Society, it is apt to say that by the efficient administration of the elected committee made it to enter in to the nook and corner of Kanyakumari district to carryout charitable works.

The administrative committee consists of a President, vice-President, Secretary, Treasury and administrative staffs for the smooth functioning of the society. The General body consists of 10 directors-one president, one vice president, one secretary, one joint secretary and one treasurer and 5 other members.6The Board of Directors are elected from the members of the society at the annual general body meeting. Term of office of the Board of Directors is three years and the members may be re-elected to the Board on expiration of their term of office.7In

the event of vacancy among the members of the Board of Directors, the Governing Body of the society shall fill within thirty days. The trustees have the power to dismiss any member of the board. The president carries out such activities that may be necessary for the control of the general policies and overall direction of measures for the accomplishment of the objects of the society. He is empowered to give direction in regard to the day to day business of the society.8

The Vice president has the powers and privileges' vested with the president in the absence of the president or when warranted by the trustee.9The secretary exercise the powers to do all such activities like correspondence of the governing body, making of official reports and for the maintenance of the registers and files of the society and other such matters assigned by the board of directors. He shall convene meetings of the board of directors at least once in three months.

The Joint Secretary shall help the secretary in all matters of duty of the secretary.10 The treasurer maintains the accounts of the society. He shall exercise the powers that may be required for the proper conduct of the ordinary business and administration. He shall make an inspection of the accounts of the various sub-sections of the society.11He recruits and provides training to staff for the development of the society.

The records, annuals or other statements which are specified in the Act and Rules are prepared and filed by the secretary and treasurer of the society. The income and expenditure accounts and Balance sheet shall be audited by a chartered accountant appointed by the board. The general body meeting of the society will be convened in the month of June of every year. It is conducted to get the approval of the audit accounts. The annual report of the proceeding years accomplishments, failures, and to take up other matters currently affecting the affairs and interest of the society as are allowed by the chairman of the meeting. Notice of such meeting should be given to all the members at least 21 days before the date fixed for the meeting.12

The Governing body of the society have the right to perform works of charity for those in need irrespective of race, caste, community and creed. The society also constituted to engage in social service activities aimed at

Please cite this Article as :P. JAYAKUMAR , CONTRIBUTION OF KANYAKUMARI SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY
: Golden Research Thoughts (March ; 2012)

improving the living conditions and general welfare of the poor, particularly farmers and other working people and indigent persons.

Meeting of Board of Directors:

The members of Board of Directors may meet together for dispatch of the business of the society, adjourn and regulate their meetings. The chairman of the meetings of the Board of Directors of the society shall be the president if present, otherwise the vice-president or a chairman shall be elected from the members present. The quorum necessary for the meetings of the Board of Directors and for the transaction of the business of the society may be fixed by the said Board and unless so fixed shall be fixed by 5 members of the board.¹³

General Meeting:

General meeting of the members of the society shall be convened by the Board of directors for handling matters which are required to be determined by a General meeting of the society and such meeting shall be called otherwise regulated by the Board of Directors observing however the following. The chairman of the general meeting of the society shall be the trustee, if present, if absent provided that when neither the trustee nor the president are present at an annual meeting of the society. The members present shall elect a chairman of the said meeting but a chairman may not be elected for other general meeting of the society.¹⁴ The consent of at least three fifths of the members present in person shall be required in order to pass a valid resolution proposed at any general meeting or of a committee appointed there by shall be deemed to have carried or to have any validity or effect whatsoever if the trustee being present, shall have voted against it, or until the trustee being present, from the said meeting, shall have subsequently approved such resolution or proposition by signing the minutes of the meeting containing the said resolution.

Annual Meeting:

Once in every year during the month of June or as near there to as possible but not later than 15 months from the last meeting there shall be summoned an annual general meeting of the society to receive the annual report of the preceding year's accomplishments or failures. The society may be dissolved by a vote to that effect by not less than three fourths of the members convened in a general meeting for that purpose. If there should be a dissolution of the society and if at the time any property or assets whatsoever should remain over after the satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the society, the same shall not be paid or distributed among the members of the society or among any of them, but the same shall be delivered to the trustee for his free decision.

Educational Services:

Education is an integral part of development and evangelization. Only through education, it is possible to mould the characters of children which make them worthy person in future life. Education makes them to rescue themselves from the cruel clutches of the society. The KKSSS involved in various educational activities in Kanyakumari district. It established many pre-primary schools in various villages of Kanyakumari District. This had helped to bring about social changes and to liberate people from all evil habits and negative practices to a certain extent. The work of KKSSS has contributed to a higher literacy rate. It compels social organizations to adopt new strategies so as to provide quality education to the marginalized.

To impart pre-primary education to the children, KKSSS prepared an educational project in the year 1996.

Under this project, 40 nursery schools were established. Education is the best tool for social transformation, which requires early intervention and better formation. Keeping these ideas in mind the society is concentrating on the intellectual growth, communication skill, values and positive behaviors of the poor children. Pre-school units are functioning under this programme. All the teaching methods are focused through direct observation of the objects, which help the children to build up confidence.¹⁵

The KKSSS established Karunai Illam School for physically challenged in 1992.¹⁶ The main aim for the establishment of this illam was in connection with the community based rehabilitation programme to disseminate to the parents on rehabilitation and importance of physical exercise.

With a view to promote and facilitate educational, economic and social independence of persons with any kind of physical disability, KKSSS has taken up Karunai Illam project with the help of Terre Des Hommes.¹⁷ Its major function was to integrate such children in to the mainstream of normal life and enable them to utilize scientific and technological advancements in the area of education, which would ultimately help them to minimize the effect of their disability.

Community Based Rehabilitation was started by KKSSS for the welfare of physically challenged students in the year 1992. The main aim was to increase their will power and to decrease the disability and make the community to aware of disabled children. They provide physiotherapy exercises at their houses and orthopedic appliances. They arranged necessary services and help from various resources like government and other institutions. An intensive coaching was given to physically challenged children for helping them to become self-reliant.

The Santhi Nilayam School was established for the sake of mentally retarded students. Various classes are conducted for the total integrated developments of the children were following.

- i) Knowing the shape-painting
- ii) Making the shape-carpentry
- iii) Selecting the shape-cycle repairing
- iv) Combining the shape-kitchen work.

Indo German Social Service Society (IGSSS) has introduced the loan facilities to schools for providing vocational and technical courses to the students hailing from poor families. According to this programme, every year 20 new students will be given training on several technical works.¹⁸ IGSSS has been providing scholarship grant programme since 2001. Its main purpose was to provide interest free loan for poor students studying vocational courses or functional training.¹⁹ Good News Loan Scholarship Programme (GNP) was launched to extend a helping hand to economically backward students studying professional courses. KKSSS operates this programme with the help of various sources.

Income Generating Programmes:

The process of economic development of the people in a village is essentially a real phenomenon. The increase in economic sources and their effective utilization determines the fate of progress of an economy. KKSSS thought of introducing several income creating programmes in different villages.

Goat Rearing

In order to provide a feasible way of income generation, KKSSS introduced goat rearing scheme. The

goats were insured and in case of mortality the insurance company will compensate the loss.

Backyard Poultry

Backyard poultry programme was started in the year 1992. This programme is still continuing. At first the beneficiaries are helped by giving Rs.200 to purchase four hens and a rooster. After breeding and hatching, these beneficiaries are liable to return four hens and a rooster.

Marriage Aid Scheme

In order to provide financial assistance for the poor female children during their marriage, Marriage Aid Scheme was started in the year 1999. Now it is functioning in a full swing. This will really help the poor parents of female children.

Matha Building Components

The Matha Building Components produces cement hollow blocks for construction works. Cement hollow blocks are fastly replacing the ordinary bricks which are costlier because of scarcity of firewood.

Makkal Narpani Kazhakam

To save the interest of rural agricultural labourers and middle income families from the clutches of spurious money lenders, Makkal Narpani Kazhakam was established.

Mahila Mandal

KKSSS functions activities of Mahila Mandal are to organize a credit and savings society. The credit society helps to solve some of the immediate financial problems of the members.²⁰

Depthi Candles

Depthi candle industry is one of the cottage industries run by KKSSS for the development of women. Paraffin and bee-wax candles were manufactured. Two girls are employed here.²¹ Paraffin was received from the government under the quota system.

Geo Coir Mats

Through this programme coir mats and carpets were manufactured. 15 persons were employed in this programme.²²

Financial Aid through Banks

According to this programme loans will be given from banks. This project provided assistance to micro projects with local initiatives.

Social Welfare Activities

The civilization society is measured by love and care. As far as our society is concerned, they are its backbone. KKSSS is deeply conscious of its responsibilities towards this and as a result a number of schemes aimed for the betterment of humanity are put in to operation. It was on February 1998, one hut began burnt due to thunder. The request for relief of those families was sanctioned by CARITAS INDIA (funding agency to KKSSS). The member of the society helped the families with cash not only to constrict the house but to purchase some utensils which was really a great help for them.²³

Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI)

CHAI even after a year of Tsunami disaster, the traumatic experience of those who affected is still to be felt. They have to be restored to their normal life. With a view to restoring the normal life of affected families from this situation, the KKSSS in collaboration with CHAI has implemented the project.

Awareness creation programme

Disseminating the public with the principles of preventive and primitive aspect of health, 264 awareness generating classes were conducted in 33 village pockets of the CRDP. The subject covered in the reporting period was

the kitchen garden, herbal medicine, environmental sanitation, naturopathy and contagious diseases. Health inspections were conducted the dispensary service programme through out 30 village pockets of the CRDP project.²⁴

Health improvements

Awareness about preventive measures were widely adopted like immunization at proper time, maintaining cleanliness, garbage removal, cleaning the stagnated water and intake of sake and boiled drinking water etc were conducted often. Regular health check up was done for the pregnant mothers. The group members made regular contact with the local primary health centers and through them medicines and nutritious food were distributed to tribal settlements.²⁵

Arrangement of general Medical camp

Two general medical camps were conducted to identify the diseased persons. 896 persons were benefited in this medical camp on account of the distribution of free medicine for patients.

Women Empowerment Programme

The ultimate goal of the women empowerment programme is to make the rural women aware of the need to be organized and empowered, so as to take them capable of facing the problems of life with courage.²⁶ In order to bring it on the light, KKSSS has put up the following objectives. The general objective of the programme is to empower the unorganized women in the 32 villages of Kanyakumari District.²⁷ The specific objectives are to formulate self help group in 32 villages, to empower the women in the groups, to impart training in different aspects and to organize small scale, sustainable income generating programme through the SHGs.²⁸

Activities undertaken by the groups

The Self Help groups conducts meeting twice in a month. The president of the group presides over the meetings. The meetings are held in the members residence and chances are given to all the members. The other proceedings of the meeting are such as informal discussion, passing resolutions, collection of savings and loan dues and performing cultural programmes.²⁹ They also conduct group sessions on group utility, personals and environmental cleanliness, preventive measures, disease caused by vitamin deficiencies and herbal medicine.³⁰ They organize programmes and functions for the attainment of leadership qualities and to instill responsibilities among the women. The group have performed cultural programme in community to create awareness on prohibition of dowry, women role in the family and community.³¹ More over the members have initiated and organized interrelations dialogue, established relations with banks, getting loan, IGP programmes etc.³²

Block Level Co-ordination Committee (BLOC)

The self help groups of Kanyakumari Social Service Society in collaboration with other self help groups in the concerned blocks have formed Block level Co-ordination Committee. The self help groups have joined with other existing BLCCs. These committees used to conduct monthly meeting and planning for the collective action.³³

Panchayat Level Federation
The women self help groups in each panchayat have formed panchayat level federation. This is a new development in the women empowerment process. The members of SHGs took active participation in the PLF meeting and planning for the women development activities

collectively.

Training Programmes to the Self Help Groups

Three thousand and sixty SHG members from 153 Self Help Groups were given SHG training.³⁴ Each group was given one day training on the first schedule. Tamilnadu women Development Corporation has financed for these training programmes. Regular training programmes are carried out to strengthen the savings and credit facilities. Officials from NABARD helped them in this process.

Grant for Community Development

Indo Global Social Service Society is financing one of the projects for two years, titled "Strengthening the community based organization for sustainable development in Thuckalay Diocese."

Integrated Development through Empowerment and Action (IDEA)

This programme is being implemented with partnership of CARITAS INDIA in the selected villages of Kanyakumari District. The programme aimed at the Integrated development focused on women empowerment and to arrive as accepted development perspective among different sectors.³⁵ In connection with this, they established programme support structures and systems like Core Development Cell (CDC), Trust Area Committee (TAC) and Diocesan Development Advisory Board (DDAB).³⁶ The awareness programmes were given to boost up the rights of the beneficiaries. The field staff of KKSSS was provided with trainings on Right Based approach and they capacitated the SHG leaders on the same.³⁷ SHG leaders were enabled to identify the address issued related to their rights. Under this programme, the society developed a manual for the SHG leaders and office bearers for reconceptualization of the self help initiative.³⁸

Capacity Enhancement Programme (CEP)

The programme is being funded by CARITAS India. It aims at capacity building of the KKSSS. It includes various training programmes for KKSSS staff. Under this programme, training is given on project management, process documentation and workshop on developmental psychology. Apart from these, they trained two staff members on computer basics.³⁹

Credit Union Programme

This programme was funded by CARITAS India and the project duration was from 2005-2008. The project location was spread over 50 villages in Kanyakumari District.⁴⁰ The target group belonged to agricultural women labours.

Credit Union Programme aimed at sustainable development and poverty eradication, generating subsistence income, women empowerment and promotion of micro credit. They arranged two days workshop on leadership to 15 youth credit union units. The participations of women in SHGs made significant impact in their social and economic empowerment. The women were able to increase the income level which contributed a lot to the development of their family. In the process, many women members were able to take part in the financial decision of the family. The women empowerment programme of KKSSS helped the women to raise their heads in social cultural and economic fields in the society.

Conclusion

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society has provided outstanding services to the people of Kanyakumari district. Regardless of caste and creed, it organized social work programmes through the different mission stations and centers of the Kanyakumari mission. By the end of sixties it

was on entry in to the field of education. It is to be specially noted that mission work flourished mainly in the places where educational institutions were started. Much valuable work has been done by the Kanyakumari mission in the last twenty-five years in social and educational fields. No basic principles for missionary action were evolved in the light of the developing theologies, the signs of the times and needs of the people.

Theological reflections on KKSSS and the Kanyakumari missions are inspired by the works all over the world. Total and integral development of the individual and society in solidarity with the whole humanity is what we have to dream of in the third millennium. The missionary activity and the social involvement of KKSSS should newly be inspired by a sense of co-operation and collaboration of all those who are committed to the cause of the human.

KKSSS needs to take a new courage for radical action, with great concern for the humanity. All its work should be so oriented as to affect all aspects of life of the individual and humanity through the power to achieve a radical and lasting transformation of man and the society. KKSSS is an ever powerful liberating force to renew "the image of God" in every human person and "separate and liberate" it from the violating forces. It is making the message to permeate the total human reality. This is the new thrust. Totally its activities are a blessing to humanity and a boon to mankind.

Acknowledgement

The authors are deeply indebted to Professor and Head, Department of History, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India for their inspiring help, constant support and for providing facilities in the department to carry out the research work.

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Please cite this Article as :P. JAYAKUMAR , CONTRIBUTION OF KANYAKUMARI SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY : Golden Research Thoughts (March ; 2012)

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