

## **THE REPORT OF PRISON MINISTRY INDIA FROM 2016 to 2017**

**Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, National Coordinator and Secretary to C.B.C.I for Prison Ministry.**

### **Introduction**

**“A little deeds of love,**

**A little deeds of kindness**

**Make the unwanted and rejected**

**A repented soul, a better person**

**Come on brothers and sisters**

**Joining the hands together**

**Step forward courageously**

**Comfort and console them”.**

**It is the melody of the Prison Ministry India.**We try to serve 419623 prisoners in 1401 prisons. There are 134168 convicts and 282076 prisoners are under trial prisoners excluding 2562 detenues and 817 others as per the NCRB report of 2015. There are about 17834 female prisoners in India and there are about 6185 foreign prisoners.

About 6000 people across the country as volunteers, well wishers and benefactors are constantly in contact with prisoners and victims and their families for making a better society. It is really wonderful to acknowledge with gratitude the support of the bishops, priests, sisters, brothers, lay persons and congregations, other organizations and institutions of the church. We may not be able to do big things in prisons but we try to keep a little hope to continue their lives in the prisons. We have received the charity of all the people whom we have met during our prison ministry journey in order to put together the bits and pieces of lives of the prisoners. Every prisoner even those who are condemned to death has the right to listen to the word of God” was quite inspiring for the members of Prison Ministry India. Jesus even at the cross accomplished his duty of proclaiming the word of God to the thieves on his right and left sides of him. Let us also accomplish our duty of ministering the word of God and love of God to the people behind the bars..

We would like to mention some of our extra activities done in most of the prisons other than the regular activities in this report.

**The theme of the year** of 2016 for Prison Ministry India was“**prisoners no more but brothers and sisters**” and “**Forgiveness cannot undo the past but can enlarge the future**” for the year of 2017. We make journey to the prisons with this concept that they are not

strangers but our members of our family. They are our brothers and sisters. Forgiveness help them to lead a new life.

**The activities of 2016.**

**EXTRA ORDINARY JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY AND PRISON MINISTRY INDIA**

**16 POINTS TO BE OBSERVED BY PMI VOLUNTEERS.**

1. MERCY DAY by opening Holy Door in every Prison by the bishop during this Lenten season.
2. Release at least 10 prisoners who are innocent or involved in petty cases.
3. Take initiative for Victim offender reconciliation at least for 10 cases
4. Visit 10 families of victims and hand over request letter of asking pardon from the offender.
5. Encourage 10 families to visit the prisoners who aren't visited by the family since more than five years
6. Arrange parole or furlough for those who are not gone out even after ten years of imprisonment.
7. Visit 10 young offenders' families even beyond the state.
8. Visit the government homes for the children who are in conflict with the law.
9. Women's day celebration with special gifts, games and input sessions in prisons on 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 2016.
10. Re-patriation Day on 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2106.
11. Home Day for Rehabilitation Centres on 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 2016.
12. Observe prayer day with prayer and fasting for volunteers, benefactors, prisoners, and prison officials on August 1<sup>st</sup>,2016.
13. Letter posting day to prisons by volunteers for the brethren behind bars 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2016.
14. Elder's Day for the inmates of the prisons who aged 65 and above on 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2016
15. Children's day celebration with special gifts to the children with mothers in the prison on 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 2016
16. 'Prison Service Personnel Day' on 19th of November, 2016.

## **January**

### **Capacity building programme in West Bengal**

In order to motivate the prisoners “Capacity building programmes “were conducted for the inmates in Alipur, Dun Dum, and Krishnagar correctional homes in West Bengal on 29, 30, and 31st of January, 2016. The professional team has given input sessions for the inmates in order to enhance them and positively motivate the prisoners to participate in the rehabilitation programmes of the jails.

### **Premature release of the prisoners.**

At the premature release of the prisoners Bangalore had witnessed the release of 151 prisoners on 26<sup>th</sup> of January. Prison Ministry India, Bangalore unit has spent more than Rs. 146000/. for the resettlement of released prisoners both men and women to families of the prisoners and paying up of their partial fine amount.

## **February**

### **Prison Welfare Day in Alwaye, Kerala**

“It does not take a giant flame to light the wick of another candle”. Each celebration is like a sparking of an inspiration to prisoners to renew them. Jail welfare day was celebrated by Prison Ministry India in Alwaye, **Kerala** on 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2017. **Training programmes for the volunteers in Shimoga Diocese**

### **Volunteers Training programme in Shimoga, Karnataka**

The prison is very complex and rules have to be kept up with utmost care by the volunteers. A special training programme was conducted for the prison ministry members of **Shimoga Diocese** on 3<sup>rd</sup> of Feb. 2016.

### **State Level training programme in Tripura.**

The sixty best practices of Prison Ministry India are well accepted by the prison officials. Fr. Ronnie SJ, the State coordinator, has arranged one day training session and holy hour in Agarthala, **Tripura** for the members in connection with the year of Mercy. There were 45 members including priests, sisters, brothers and lay people participated in the programme.

## **March**

### **Classes for the sisters in Jnanodaya, Bangalore.**

There were 3 days full time classes for the 43 sisters who are undergoing one year theology classes in Jnnodaya, Bangalore. There classes were led by Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, Sr. Adel, Sr. Clara, Fr. Edward and resource persons from ECHO.

**International women’s day celebrations** are very much common in prisons by the volunteers of Prison Ministry India. It is an occasion to listen to their cry and expressions of

lost hope. “My son lost three fingers in a machine last week; now I cannot eat and sleep; I think about my family”, said by an elderly woman in Berampur Prison, Odissa. Any celebration in the prison is an occasion to express their feeling to the volunteers. Various competitions were conducted in all the prisons for the ladies and prizes were distributed by the volunteers. There were wonderful reports from Tihar, Bangalore, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil nadu, Assam and other states. The west Bengal state has taken even a theme, “Empowering women; Empowering humanity” for the women’s day.

### **Washing of the feet of Third gender people along with others by Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, under the initiative of Prison Ministry India.**

Prison Ministry India has taken a lot of initiative to interact with third gender people in Bangalore. Bangalore prison has got the presence of two or three third gender people. We keep a track of these people and other members closely associated with them. So on Holy Thursday we have invited four third gender persons to our Jeevodaya Ashram for the Holy Thursday Ceremony. Their feet were washed and given them sumptuous meal.

### **Lenten Season and Prison Ministry India in the year of Mercy.**

On the 1st September, 2015 Pope Francis wrote to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization and the details of the opening of the Holy Doors in the Jubilee Year. The Pope writes that the imprisoned may obtain the indulgence in the chapel of the prisons. “May they all be touched in a tangible way by the mercy of the Father who wants to be close to those who have the greatest need of His forgiveness.” This message is taken by the Church as a whole. Washing of the feet and Lenten services and retreats were conducted in most of the central and district prisons of India. Nuncio, Most Rev. Salvatore Pennacchio and other bishops of Delhi were in the Tihar Prison complex for washing the feet of prisoners.

### **Medical Camp conducted in Thaloja and Arthur Road Prisons in a regular basis.**

It is really noteworthy to see the doctors spend their time, money and medicines for the sake of prisoners in Thaloja prison and Arthur road prisons in Mumbai..

### **April**

#### **Repatriation of Foreign nationals.**

We have released so far 18 girls and repatriated to their mother countries. Mostly they are from Bangladesh and it was repatriated from Tamil Nadu with the hard work of Tamil Nadu State. We have travelled to Bangladesh for making all the arrangement. In the month of April we had repatriated a lady, called Macumaya who was in Bangalore prison for the last one year.

### **Tamil Nadu coordinators and secretaries Training Programme.**

In Tamil Nadu we decided to give one day training program for the core committee members of all the dioceses. The Coordinator, Secretary and the treasurer from each unit (Diocese) were being invited for the training program. It was conducted on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 in JeevaJothi Ashram, Coimbatore.

### **The 17<sup>th</sup> State gathering of Tamilnadu.**

State gatherings are conducted to keep the bond of this togetherness and training them in counseling and legal matters. Prison Ministry volunteers from all the dioceses of Tamil Nadu State gathered in JeevaJothi Pastoral Center, Coimbatore for the 17<sup>th</sup> State convention from 12<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2016.

### **The sad demise of two Prison Ministry Leaders, Sr. Mary Jane and Swami [FR.] Sadanand**

**The sad demise of Sr. Mary Jane**, the former superior general of SFN from Goa on 21<sup>st</sup> of April was real loss to Prison Ministry India. She was the pioneer in prison ministry, Goa and worked zealously for 18 years in the prisons of Goa. Her funeral was attended by many dignitaries such as Archbishop of Goa, Mr. Elvis, IGP of Goa and others.

We also lost another leader, **Swami Fr. Sadanand** on 25<sup>th</sup> of April who converted the killer of Sr. Rani Maria to a repented person. He is the pioneer of victim offender reconciliation programme in India and took the killer to the house of Sr. Rani Maria to ask pardon and forgiveness. He made many journeys to the prisons for consoling the prisoners. The bare foot walker left the volunteers leaving the fruitful images to the volunteers of prison ministry.

### **May**

### **FIRST CENTRAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE, PUNE, 13 – 15 MAY, 2016.**

The first Central Regional Conference was held at the Papal Seminary, Pune from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. The volunteers of Prison Ministry India from the ten states that comprise the Central Region, participated in the meeting. The 3-days conference was very interesting, enlightening, thought provoking and memorable.

### **All India diocesan coordinators and secretaries Meet – 2016**

On 16 of May, 2017 all India diocesan coordinators and secretaries meet was conducted in Pune Seminary to discuss about the future plans of the Prison Ministry India. All of the coordinators shared their vast experiences and shared the practical challenges faced by PMI volunteers. We chalked out 60 best practices for the volunteers and many common regulations for the state coordination of prison ministry.

## **CLASS ON PRISON MINISTRY INDIA at the VINCENTIAN FAMILY MEET**

Vincentian Family India arranged a formation program for the members of different branches from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Fifty five members from various parts of India participated in the program.

### **June.**

**Kolbe Home** was officially opened for the children of prisoners and children of Observation homes and there are 16 children at present. They find a home and education under the care of Prison Ministry India. Sr. Gertrude became the mother for the children of the home.

### **The national full timers training programme at Bangalore**

It was conducted for the 31 full timers from 1<sup>st</sup> of June to 16<sup>th</sup> of June, 2016 at Camillus Pastoral Centre, Carmelaram, Bangalore. There were classes on Prison Ministry, Legal classes, counseling sessions, Management skills training sessions and sessions on ministry for the children in conflict with law and other visits to rehabilitation centres.

### **The sad demise of Rev. Fr. Joseph Kavalakatt, the one who was so Passionate about Prison Ministry.**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of June we had to leave our Fr. Joseph Kavalakatt to his heavenly abode with sorrow. He worked as the North Regional Coordinator for 12 years and he became the pioneer regional coordinator of North India for Prison Ministry India. May God give him eternal glory.

### **July**

The fantasy 2016 national pencil drawing competition was conducted for the prisoners across the country. Prizes to award winners and certificates to all participants were distributed.

### **Classes at Alphonsa Bhavan, Bangalore.**

There was one week class for the sisters who are undergoing special training in Alphonsa Bhavan, Bangalore.

### **Classes at Common Novitiate House in Carmelaram, Bangalore.**

There were about 68 novices who participated in the prison ministry classes in the month of July.

### **International Board meeting of ICCPPC is participated by National coordinator.**

Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, the Asian Delegate of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care participated in the board meeting of the organization at Edinburg in Scotland from 17<sup>th</sup> of July to 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2017.

## **August**

### **The awareness programme for the youth.**

The Somascan Brothers organized one day program for the Catholic youth of surrounding parishes on 11/08/2016 in (Premalaya) situated near Dharmaram College, Bangalore on the topic, *Vulnerable youth in the Dominant Social Media*'

### **Prison Ministry Sunday and Maximilian Kolbe Day**

**Do not expect your friend to be a perfect person but help your friend to become a perfect person that is the true friendship says St. Mother Teresa. Maximilian Kolbe became a true friend for another prisoner in the Nazi concentration camp. Prison Ministry Sunday make the entire nation through the church to be true friends to the people behind the bars. The theme of the Prison Ministry Sunday is very true to the occasion, "prisoners no more but brothers and sisters".** We celebrated the **Prison Ministry Sunday** on 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 2016. The pastoral letter by Most Rev. Bp. Peter Remigius is circulated by all the dioceses to be read in all the churches.

### **Release of the prisoners**

**The Vincentian family** had allotted an amount of Rs. 150000/. for the release of prisoners who are involved in petty offences and showing the renewed hearts. Many congregations have already come forward with Freedom mission venture. **Franciscan Clarist Congregation** spending a lot of money has already released more than 60 prisoners with hard work of sr. Celine and Sr. Archangel.

Bangalore diocesan Unit has arranged Rs. 95000/. with the help of organization called, "Peace makers" at the time of second stage premature release of prisoners in Bangalore.

### **Value based Magic show with Prison Ministry India in Bangalore.**

With the professional magician Rev. Fr. Ivan Martha the national office team had gone to different schools of Bangalore performing one and half hour magic show. Thus we spread the message of "Crime free children of today; Crime free India of tomorrow" to about one lakh seventy eight thousand children [178000] of Bangalore.

## **September**

### **MIRACLE .....Mushroom in jail.....Beur Adarsh Central jail, Patna**

**The 5<sup>th</sup>**September, 2016 was a remarkable day for the inmates of Beur Adarsh Central jail, Patna. On this day Prison Ministry Unit started mushroom cultivation in the jail by the inmates.

### **Legal Class in the prison of Beur Adarsh Central jail, Patna.**

**Mr Shashi K. Thakur**, the head of NGO and the advocate of S.C and H.C. Patna also holding a legal Action cell, came forward to give legal help to the brethren behind the bars. - Sr. Joel, Bihar State Coordinator is behind all these good works in the prisons.

### **Inauguration of the new Central regional office of Prison Ministry India**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of September an office at Goragaon Seminary is blessed and inaugurated by Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan with the presence of Fr. Alwyn, the president of Justice Commission of Bombay Archdiocese. We gratefully thank Most Rev. Cardinal Oswald for his willingness to share an office for prison ministry purpose and acknowledge the support of Fr. Alwyn. The newly appointed regional coordinator, Sr. Dhanam has taken the responsibility of leading the region. May I take this occasion to thank Most Rev. Abraham Viruthikulangara for the last 12 years in rendering an office and accommodation in Nagpur Archdiocese as we shift the office to Mumbai.

### **Mothers' day at Bangalore prison.**

On 24th September 2016, Mother's Day was celebrated with the help of Vincentian Family.

### **Presentation of a paper on rehabilitation by Prison Ministry India in All India I. Gs of Prisons Meet, 2016 in Delhi.**

Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), MHA had organized a National Conference of Heads of Prisons on Prison Reforms at New Delhi on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 with Prison Ministry India was invited to present a paper on rehabilitation of the prisoners arranged for all the I.Gs of Prisons of the stage. Mr. Jesu Raja, the national executive member presented the paper.

## **October**

### **Elders Day at Bangalore Prison.**

On 13th October 2016, Elders Day was celebrated for the men. Around 80 senior citizens participated. This initiative was also assisted by the Vincentian Sisters and the Vincent De Paul Brothers.

### **Participation of St. Mother Teresa's sainthood celebration at Vigyan Bhavan and sendoff meeting to Nuncio at Nunciature on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October.**

Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, the national coordinator participated in the functions arranged by the C.B.C.I.

### **Mission Reach out 2016 -17**

The national office team members started its time bound reach out mission 2016 to all the regions of India.

**Mission Reach out North Region.** Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, the national coordinator with the help and support of Rev. Savari, and Br. Naveen reached to Lucknow, Jammu and Kashmir, Jalandar, Udaipur, Bijnor and following diocese in coming days.

**Mission Reach out North East.** Fr. Arogyaraj, the assistant regional coordinator with the support of Sr. Latitia, the regional coordinator has started his journey to Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and other states in coming months.

**Mission Reach out to Central Region** will be led by Sr. Diana, the national secretary with the help of Sr. Dhanam, the regional coordinator. Rev. Fr. Rahul, the state coordinator has already taken initiative to arrange meetings in Chatisgarh state.

### **The activities of 2017**

#### **1st Prison Ministry India State Level Conference of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana States under Telugu Catholic Bishops' Council**

The Prison Ministry India (PMI) of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana State had organized their **1st State Level Conference under Telugu Catholic Bishops' Council on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017** at Jesus Centre, Nellore Diocese with the theme **“Compassionate to the Wounded.”** There were around 108 delegates from both the States representing 9 dioceses.

#### **Prison Ministry India Madhya Pradesh State Level Conference**

Prison Ministry India Madhya Pradesh State conducted its 7<sup>th</sup> state level conference at Meghnagar, Jhabua on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2017. It was wonderful experience for 65 volunteers of Prison Ministry India.

#### **Participation of Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, Asian Delegate in the International Conference of International commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care under Holy See in Panama.**

Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan, the national coordinator and the Asian Delegate of ICCPPC participated in the international conference from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2017 conducted in Panama city in Panama. It was most enriching experience for meeting the people from different countries and learning from each other.

#### **International women's day**

International women's day was celebrated in most of the prisons with the initiative of volunteers of Prison Ministry India. It was for the uplifting of the women in the prisons even though they are in the prisons.

#### **Award for the members of Prison Ministry India for working with women in prisons and at risk areas.**

**Sr. Clara Alappat, national executive member** of Prison Ministry India was awarded as the best women award from the archdiocese of Bangalore in connection with international women's day. Sr. Clara is working with women released prisoners and girls at risk for last 20 years and at present as directress of Jeevodaya, the rehabilitation centre under the umbrella of Prison Ministry India.

**Sr. Alexia, the state coordinator of West Bengal** was also awarded by Open Arms Education Trust in connection with women's Day.

### **Holy Week Celebrations in prisons.**

Easter spells out beauty, the rare beauty of new life. Many of the prisons of India witnessed the presence of many bishops, priests, sisters, brothers and lay people during the Holy Week. Many of the prisoners got the chance of making the confession, listening to retreats and witnessing the washing of feet, the most humble act of a person.

### **Marie Paussepine's Girls Home, New Rehabilitation centre for the prisoners' children in Jharkhand.**

From April 7, 2017, the Dominican Sisters, under the leadership of Sr. Jini, in Kanke Road Ranchi started rehabilitation centre for the children of the prisoners.

### **Prison Ministry India National Executive meeting**

It was conducted at Pastoral Orientation Centre, Kochi, Kerala on 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017. The meeting was attended by 18 members of executive board. Most Rev. Peter Remigius, the patron of Prison Ministry India expressed heartfelt gratitude to Kerala State for hoisting the programme.

### **Tamil Nadu State Conference.**

Prison Ministry India, Tamil Nadu conducted its 18<sup>th</sup> state gathering in PMSS Community Hall, Kalpet, Pondicherry from 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017. There were 165 participants including two bishops, 20 priests, 70 sisters and other lay people from all 18 dioceses

### **Prison Ministry India Kerala State celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the state conference.**

Jesus Fraternity (Prison Ministry India), Kerala State celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and conducts state level conference of three days and the solemn ending of "Mercy Year" on 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017 at St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary, Nalanchira, Trivandrum, Kerala.

### **P M I national full timers training at Camillus Health Pastoral Centre, Bangalore.**

There were total of 26 participants from various states of India. The training program for the year 2017-18 was commenced on 8<sup>th</sup> May at 5.30pm. and ended on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 2017.

### **Fantasy 2017 – National Pencil drawing competition for the prisoners.**

Prison Ministry India conducted the national pencil drawing competition for the inmates of prisons of India. The result was declared on 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2017. There were about 1800 selected participants for the competition. All the participants were given the certificate of appreciation.

### **State level convention in Jharkand.**

State level conference was held in Carmel Niwas, Hazaribagh Rd, Kokar, Ranchi from June 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### **Prison Ministry Sunday and St. Maximilian Kolbe**

Prison Ministry Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017 is celebrated in all the dioceses of India. The pastoral letter was sent to all the dioceses of India and the theme of Prison Ministry Sunday was, ‘Forgiveness cannot undo the past but can enlarge the future’.

### **Maharashtra State conference.**

PMI witnessed another wonderful state conference of Maharashtra state from 29<sup>th</sup> of September to 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2017.

### **Goa State Conference on 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 2017**

On Saturday the 28 October 2017 over 50 Prison Ministry Volunteers met at Caritas Holiday Home for a State Level Convention on the theme : “ Prisoners’ Rights are Human Rights. Archbishop Phillip Nery inaugurated the convention.

### **Rajasthan State of Conference on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of November was conducted.**

The first state conference of Rajasthan was actualized in the diocese of Ajmer with the collaboration of three dioceses of Rajasthan. Most Rev. Bp. Pius inaugurated the convention  
**Odisha State Conference on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of November.**

The Odisha State conference was on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of November at Balasore Pastoral Centre. The conference was inaugurated by Most. Rev. Bp. Simon, the bishop of Balasore. The conference was concluded by the Most Rev. Bp. Appliner, the chairman of the prison ministry in Odisha.

### **Official appointment for the correction of the food management**

West Bengal Correctional Services selected PMI for the Food Commission This is to check the quality of food served to the prisoners. Freedom is given to the selected members to enter the respective prisons without the prior information and to report to the authority.

## **Inauguration of another rehabilitation centre, Karunalayam for prisoners' children in Kadappa.**

Prison Ministry India added another feather with the inauguration of the Karunalaya, the rehabilitation centre established by ODEM Congregation for the children of prisoners and children in need of Care and protection under Prison Ministry India on 11<sup>th</sup> of December, 2017 at Kadappa.

## **Release project of Prison Ministry India.**

Some of the states and diocese with the help of congregation and people have released many prisoners of good conduct. They have spent a lot of fund for this purpose. Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka Gujarat, and Chhattisgarh are the model states in this matter. Up state has arranged Lok Adalat for Release of 325 inmates. More than two thousand people have released by Prison Ministry India. We have to specially appreciate the work of Sr. Celine FCC for the release of 103 persons from the Tihar prisons within two years with the support of the congregation working with Prison Ministry India.

## **Some of the common activities conducted in the prisons of India**

1. In some of the jails we have regular tailoring classes in summer and knitting classes in winter. During last year about 164 women completed tailoring course in Bihar.
2. There are also organized hand craft, soap making, surf making & incense sticks preparation in some of the prisons..
3. In some Central jails volunteers taught them mushroom cultivation which they really appreciated.
4. Literacy, spoken English classes are going on in almost all the jails.
5. In some of the Bihar prisons there are Herbal Medicine preparation
6. The members of PMI arrange Tuition Classes (English and Maths) for the Prisoners' Children.
7. Free Medical Camp for dental Check-up was arranged in which 190 prisoners were benefited and 20 of them had tooth extraction in Chhattisgarh.
8. Some of the prisons are having regular medical camps and prisoners were provided with spectacles.
9. More than three lakhs worth books were supplied for the prisoners' Library in Chhattisgarh. The books were of various kinds such as spiritual, Bibles, prayers, motivational and educational. It is repeated in other states also.
10. The Prisoners were supplied tailoring machines, television and other necessary items by the volunteers.
11. Blanket, shawls and saris for women and sweaters and dresses for children were provided during Christmas season and winter season in some of the prisons.  
Goa
12. Music classes in tabla, keyboard, and guitar are conducted in some prisons to evoke keen interest among the inmates. Goa becomes model in this aspect.
13. Inmates who are academically inclined are encouraged to enroll themselves in the various courses offered by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and National institute of open schooling.(NIOS) in all the prisons . Currently 70 Inmates

are registered for the graduate, postgraduate and short-term courses offered by IGNOU in Goa itself.

14. In some of the States Prison Ministry Sunday is celebrated in different parishes to spread awareness about Prison Ministry and its activities and selling the handicraft items, candles, paper bags etc. prepared by inmates
15. Job oriented materials provided are provided for the released prisoners in some of the states.
16. In certain jails, the vocational trainings in such as Papad making, House wiring and Motor winding, Plumbing, Diesel engine and Bike repairing, Tailoring etc. conducted. The certificates and the tool kits are provided, as they complete the course especially in MP prisons.
17. Health and hygiene, Yoga and Counseling classes are organized in some of the jails. Games, Tournaments and competitions are organized for the youth in few jails. Cultural programs of Bible skits, dances and devotional songs were conducted on different occasions.
18. Spiritual motivation in prisons  
The only way is make the inmates to remember the Almighty. When a person realizes that God is the sources of everything and he/she feels – then there is a change in that person and in return this person changes others – this we do by way of prayer services. Moral teachings are imparted to the inmates through various programmes including cultural programmes -15<sup>th</sup> August, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, Xmas December, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 8<sup>th</sup> March etc. Uttar Pradesh is making a lot of efforts in the case of giving education for the prisoners.
19. Education:  
Adult education for 500 inmates, Board exam preparation for 24 inmates (XTH AND XIITH) IGNOU 631 inmates and Computer Education for 80 inmates are done in Uttar Pradesh itself. They have arranged 28 teachers for adult education, 8 teachers for board exams and 7 professors for IGNOU. This pattern is followed in most of the prisons of India by the volunteers.
20. Counseling:  
In all the prisons our volunteers are counseling and giving remedy for the problems of the prisoners.
21. Free Legal Aid:  
We see a lot of people in need of legal help. We are also providing a lot of fund for this purpose for prisoners by the volunteers.
22. Some of the states are having the back Home Fund and prisoners' welfare fund to the family of the prisoners and prisoners as they come out and while in the prisons. West Bengal is model for this programme.
23. Released Prisoners programmes.
  - Rehabilitation centers are the strong support for the released prisoners. We have 35 rehabilitation centres at present.
  - Chennai – Mylapore archdiocese have already begun the functioning of a rehabilitation centre for the released prisoners recently.

- Girls rehabilitation centre started by Dominican sisters is another feather to PMI
- The released prisoners continue to be part of PMI family , Supporting initiatives and extending job opportunities, within the institutions and through partner organizations
- Some of the states though they don't have the centre they follow the released prisoners up to for 6 months, until they are adjusted to their own family and environment.

## **Challenges in the prisons**

### **1. INDIAN PRISONS FACE THREE LONG-STANDING STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS: OVERCROWDING, UNDERSTAFFING AND UNDERFUNDING.**

The inevitable outcome is sub-human living conditions, poor hygiene, and violent clashes between the inmates and jail authorities.

#### **Rampant overcrowding**

According to the Prison Statistics India 2015 report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), India's prisons are overcrowded with an occupancy ratio of 14% more than the capacity. More than two-thirds of the inmates are under trials.

With over a staggering 3.1 crore cases pending in various courts of the country as on March 31, 2016, jails across the country will remain overcrowded in the absence of any effective systemic intervention. Nearly 43% of the under trial population accounting for roughly 1.22 lakh under trials remains detained for more than six months to more than five years by the end of 2014.

#### **Honourable Supreme Court told to sensitize jail staff, appoint counselors but no action is taken in considerable way.**

As for the state governments, the Supreme Court has directed on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 that they should in conjunction with the State Legal Services Authority (SLSA), the National and State Police Academy and the Bureau of Police Research and Development conduct training and sensitization programmes for senior police officials of all prisons on their functions, duties and responsibilities as also the rights and duties of prisoners.

#### **Severe staff crunch**

While 33% of the total requirement of prison officials still lies vacant, almost 36% of vacancy for supervising officers is still unfulfilled. Delhi's Tihar jail ranks third in terms of a severe staff crunch. The manpower recruited inside this prison is almost 50% short of its actual requirement. As the nation's capital, Delhi has the most over-crowded jails and suffers from acute shortage of prison guards and senior supervisory staff. States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand have the most scantily guarded jails, seeing over 65% staff vacancies among jailers, prison guards and supervisory levels.

In the absence of adequate prison staff, overcrowding of prisons leads to rampant **violence and other criminal activities inside the jails.**

### **Unnatural Death in prisons**

In 2015, on an average, **four prisoners died every day.** A total of 1,584 prisoners died in jails, 1,469 of which were natural deaths and the remaining 115 were attributed to unnatural causes. Two-thirds of all unnatural deaths (77) were reported to be suicides, while fellow inmates murdered 11, nine of which were in jails in Delhi. About 12,727 people are reported to have died in prisons between 2001 and 2010.

### **Prisoners to get more access to families, lawyer as per the direction of the Supreme Court but no considerable action is taken by states**

Realizing the importance of greater interaction between the prisoners and their families and lawyers, the bench said “visits to prison by the family of a prisoner should be encouraged” and noted that “it would be worthwhile to consider extending the time or frequency of meetings and also explore the possibility of using phones and video conferencing for communications not only between a prisoner and family members of that prisoner, but also between a prisoner and the lawyer, whether appointed through the State Legal Services Authority or otherwise.”

### **Medical facilities in prisons do not meet minimum standards**

Lamenting that it has been found that in Karnataka, West Bengal and Delhi “the medical facilities in prisons do not meet minimum standards of care,” the court said this is an indication that the human right to health is not given adequate importance in prisons and that may also be one of the causes of unnatural deaths in prisons.

### **Create Board of Visitors with eminent persons**

Observing that the constitution of a Board of Visitors, which includes non-official visitors, is of considerable importance since through it eminent members of society can participate in initiating reforms in prisons and in the rehabilitation of prisoners, the Supreme Court has directed all the states to complete the constitution of such boards by November 30.

It has also directed that the establishment of ‘**open jails**’ or ‘**open prisons**’ be considered and in this respect noted that the experiment was a success in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) and at the semi-open prison in Delhi.

Representatives from the judiciary, police and different government departments and lay people nominated from the local society, known as non-official visitors, are expected to visit periodically. It is the duty of these visitors to ensure safe, secure and humane jails by checking that prisoners are treated in accordance with standards laid down in the Prison Act and Rules. However as per the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative’s recent national report *Looking into the Haze*, **less than 1% of India’s jails are being visited as per the mandate. Most states have not appointed non-official visitors and where appointed, they usually do not visit prisons.**

## **Fund allotment.**

In 2015 – 2016, central budget of the country for prisons, the amount spent for the welfare is only 0.6% of the budget which is prime aim of the prison. The allotment of budget amount for prisons is very less.

## **2. The shocking situations of Indian Jails**

**Under trials locked up for years. Criminal gangs are calling the shots. Jails, meant to be correctional facilities, are turning into nightmares without end.**

Moradabad Central Jail in Uttar Pradesh is so chock-a-block with inmates that there isn't enough space for them to sleep. So the 2,200 inmates in the jail, which is supposed to house only 650, sleep in shifts. Each morning when 600-odd prisoners go to court for their trial, the pressure eases somewhat and some inmates get their share of a 6ft x 2ft cell.

## **Family Support**

Senior advocate AnuNarula, who works with the women inmates of Tihar jail, says that with long periods of incarceration for undertrials and lack of family support, many women have no choice but to depend on fellow prisoners, convicted of serious crimes like pushing drugs and immoral trafficking. "They unwittingly get sucked into a world of crime," Narula says. In an environment where only the toughest survive, new inmates are forced to learn the ropes in no time. "After a year in jail, an undertrial for a petty theft gets as hardened as a convicted criminal," says an official in Tihar's Jail No. 7. The poorer you are, the more you suffer.

## **Extortion**

Jails in Bihar are amongst the worst in the country. Underworld dons continue to operate from behind bars, thanks to mobile phones and lax security arrangements. In March 2010, Patna trader RandhirJaiswal was murdered when he refused to pay heed to the extortion demands of a jailed criminal. In Patna, almost every major crime is linked to the gang lords lodged in Beur jail. In February 2011, under trial Bablu Mishra, accused of selling spurious liquor, was beaten to death in Bihar's Nawada jail at the behest of the powerful liquor mafia, which feared that Mishra would spill the beans. In another brazen act, an imprisoned criminal in Nawada jail called up the Bihar Director-General of Police (DGP) Neelmani in March last year and threatened to blow up the town if his demands were not met.

## **Jail staff is attacked.**

Helplessness, frustration and psychological disorders are common. With limited jail staff, the overcrowded barracks become difficult to manage and enforcing discipline is next to impossible. A doctor in Gopalganj jail in Bihar, Budhdeo Singh, was beaten to death in the prison premises on May 29, 2011 by the inmates, after he refused to declare seven life convicts "sick"-a tag that would have stopped their transfer to a high-security jail. The other jail staff on duty just stood and watched. Dr Singh's wife Reena, who has two physically challenged sons and a widowed daughter to look after, has refused the Rs 10 lakh compensation given by the Government. She wants the government to include the jail officials in the list of the accused.

### **Immediate problems to be addressed by the Church.**

- Entry to prisons in some states become a problem in India for NGOs
- Entry to Teleghana prisons and Andhra have been completely blocked and not able to reenter even after all the efforts by the state coordinator and other dignitaries and officials
- Ways and means to eradicate the corruption and human rights violation, gang pulling in the prisons of India
- Encourage the support of the churches in order to make another leap in the prison ministry activities though we are facing a lot of problems.

### **What can we do to alleviate the problems?**

1. Promote the good relation between Government and Church.
2. Prison Ministry Sunday to be celebrated actively in all the parishes of India
3. Prison should be considered as the sub centre of the parish.
4. Encourage more volunteers according to ratio of the prisoners
5. Move from Function based Prison Ministry to Regular Ministry to Prisons.
6. Form a legal Forum to fight against injustices in prisons and to support the prisoners.
7. Develop a research centre to study about the prison situations and make sure about the rights of the prisoners.
8. Encourage the parishes for monetary support to Prison Ministry India to meet the needs of the prisoners and their families.
9. Encourage involvement of more priests, sisters, brothers and lay people in the ministry.
10. Create awareness among people, churches, and institutions.

### **The final note**

An elderly lady from the Berhampur prison told one of the volunteers, sister, “I am here for last three years; my family is in Tamil Nadu; I came for a job but they put me in prison; I don’t have any contact with my family; I have three children. Can you help me to contact them”? Prison ministry India is merely a connecting agent, sometimes with the family of the prisoners, with advocates, with victims and with God who created them and who value them as they are, not according to incidents of their lives.

We express our gratitude to Moran Mar Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the president of CBCI, Most Rev. Gerald Almeida, the chairman of JPD, Most Rev. Peter Remigius, Chairman of Prison Ministry India, members of CBCI, Caritas India and Residential members of CBCI Centre, Generals, provincials and members of Prison Ministry India.

Fr. Sebastian Vadakumpadan  
National Coordinator and secretary to CBCI for prison ministry.

